

AFTER THE DEPARTURE

FACILITATION GUIDE

Overview

These case studies are narrative accounts designed to stimulate dialogue about the virtues that shape professional life. They differ importantly from the ethical case studies most faculty and students encounter in professional training. Rather than presenting a moral dilemma to be resolved, each case illustrates the presence—or absence—of a particular virtue as it operates in everyday practice. The goal is not to reach a verdict on what a character should have done, but to explore what a virtue looks like in action—and what may be at stake when it is absent.

Cases are organized by virtue and professional context, but many will resonate beyond their primary category. A case about curiosity in a business setting may illuminate curiosity in medicine or law. Instructors are encouraged to use cases flexibly and across disciplines.

General Facilitation Tips

- Focus on virtue, not verdict. Keep discussion centered on how the virtue appears (or is absent) in the case, not on whether the character made the right call. If the conversation drifts toward “what should they have done?”, redirect gently.
- Start with observation. Open by asking what students noticed before asking what they think. Grounding early discussion in specific moments from the case prevents premature judgment.
- Use questions as starting points, not a script. Follow student energy. If a student raises a more generative question than the ones provided, pursue it.
- Push back on easy agreement. If the room converges too quickly, the case’s complexity may not have been fully engaged. Invite students to complicate their own claims and consider opposing readings.
- Invite connection to professional life. The richest moments often come when students link the case to patterns they’ve observed or anticipated: “I’ve seen something like this when...”
- Let silence work. Resist the urge to fill every pause. Students often need a moment to arrive at their most substantive responses.
- Close with reflection. Reserve a few minutes to ask students what will stay with them — a question, an image, an unresolved tension. A sentence or two naming what they now understand about the virtue that they didn’t before is a strong closing move.

Discussion Questions

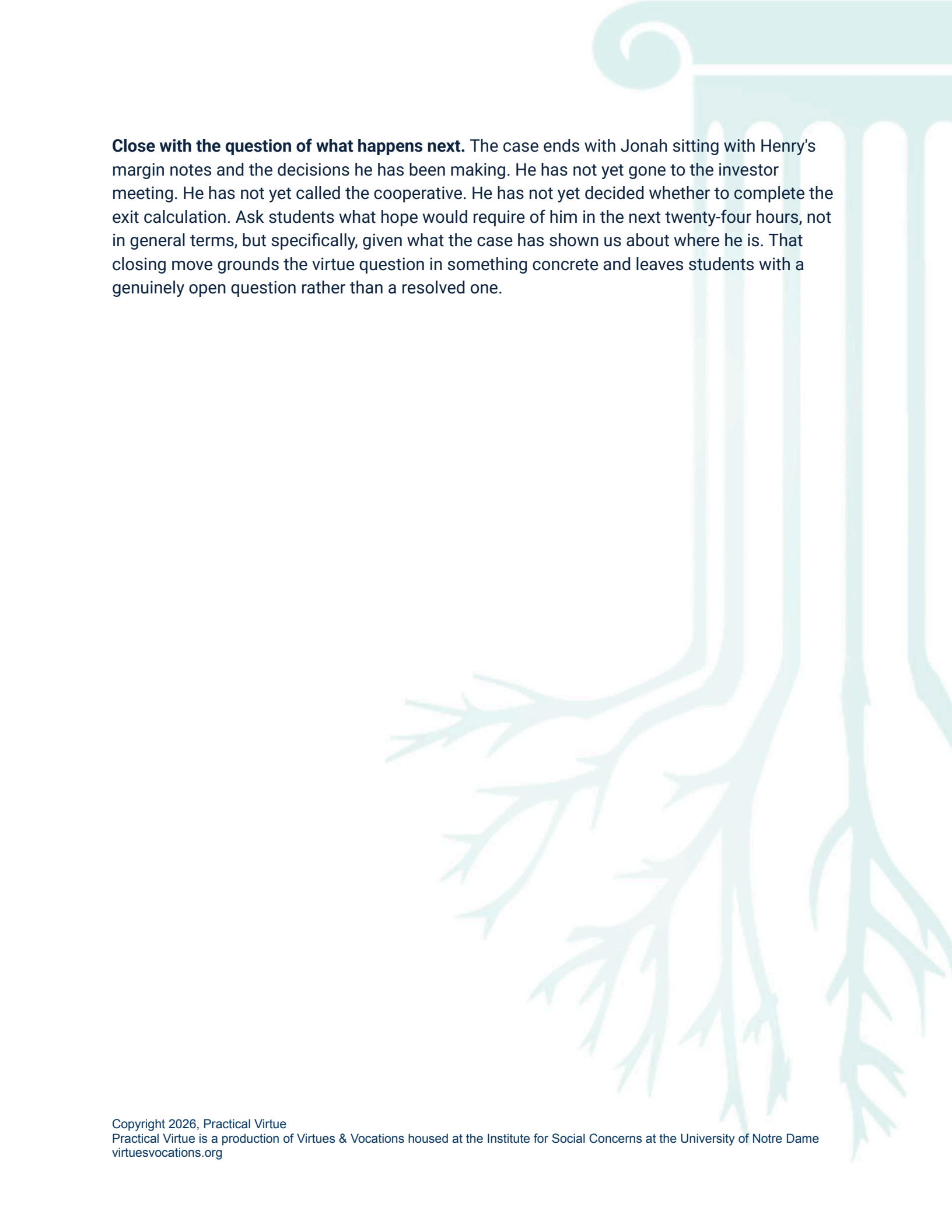
1. Jonah has been making decisions that protect himself without fully acknowledging that is what he is doing. What does hope require of a founder that self-protection does not allow for?
2. Jonah tells himself that thinking about a clean exit is responsible rather than fearful. How would he distinguish between those two things, and does the distinction matter for how we evaluate his relationship to hope?
3. Hope is sometimes described as the commitment to act toward a future good even without certainty of outcome. By that standard, has Jonah lost hope or is he in the process of losing it? Is there a difference?
4. Daniel's departure is described as something Jonah still does not entirely understand. What does unresolved loss do to hope, and what would it take for Jonah to separate his grief about the partnership from his orientation toward the company's future?

Facilitation of this Case

Hope is hardest to locate here because its absence looks so reasonable. Jonah is not despairing in any dramatic sense. He is still working, still preparing materials, still meeting with investors. What the case asks students to notice is subtler: a pattern of decisions that each have a plausible justification and that collectively suggest someone who has stopped orienting toward the future and started protecting himself from it. Before moving to any specific questions, ask students to map those decisions (the declined meeting, the delayed roadmap, the exit scenarios) and ask what they add up to. That mapping exercise is the most important thing the discussion can do early on.

Take the self-protective reasoning seriously without letting it close the question. Jonah tells himself that thinking about a clean exit is what a responsible founder does, that the timing on the cooperative meeting was wrong, and that the roadmap just needed more time. None of those justifications are implausible. Ask students what distinguishes a reasonable exercise of caution from a pattern of self-protection dressed up as prudence, and whether Jonah himself could tell the difference from the inside. This is where the case is most demanding, because the answer is genuinely uncertain.

Keep the discussion inside the case. Students will sometimes reach for exits, suggesting that Jonah should find a new co-founder, seek therapy to process Daniel's departure, or simply accept that the company's circumstances have changed and adapt accordingly. Those may be reasonable observations, but they are not what the case is asking. The more productive conversation happens within the situation as it exists: this founder, this Tuesday evening, this deck on the desk. Redirect students who reach for the exit by asking what hope requires of Jonah given where he actually is.

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Close with the question of what happens next. The case ends with Jonah sitting with Henry's margin notes and the decisions he has been making. He has not yet gone to the investor meeting. He has not yet called the cooperative. He has not yet decided whether to complete the exit calculation. Ask students what hope would require of him in the next twenty-four hours, not in general terms, but specifically, given what the case has shown us about where he is. That closing move grounds the virtue question in something concrete and leaves students with a genuinely open question rather than a resolved one.