

Not Quite Ready

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 anticipate: “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

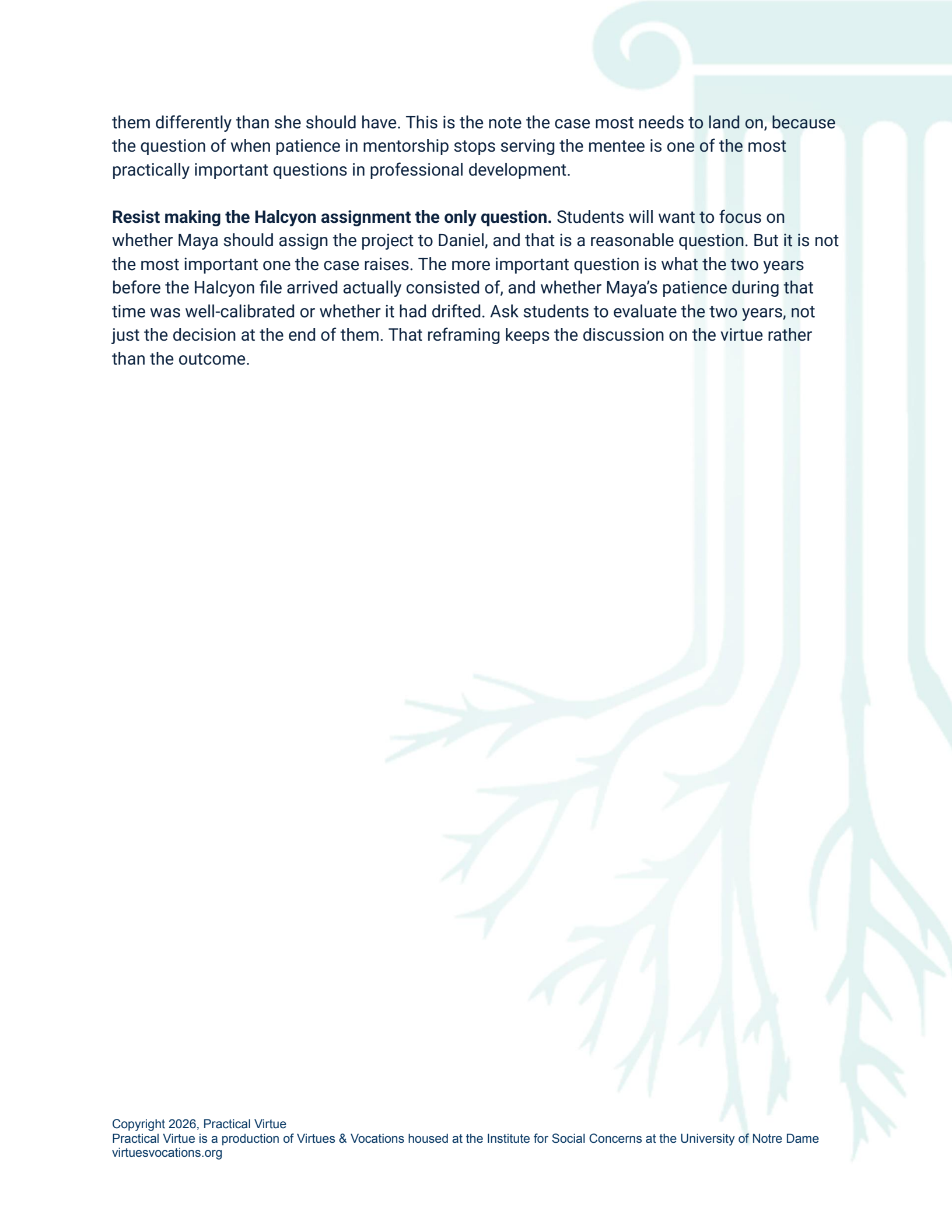
1. Maya's patience with Daniel has felt like a professional virtue. What does the case suggest about how a genuine virtue can become harder to evaluate clearly when we are personally invested in the outcome?
2. Is there a difference between patience that serves the person being developed and patience that serves the person doing the developing? How would Maya know which one she has been practicing?
3. Maya notices gaps in Daniel's development that she cannot fully account for. What does patience require of a mentor when the evidence about a mentee's readiness is genuinely ambiguous?
4. The case suggests that thoroughness and hesitation can look similar from the outside. What does that observation suggest about the difficulty of evaluating patience in others, and in ourselves?

Facilitation of this Case

Start by asking students what Maya actually knows about Daniel after two years. She has reviewed his work carefully, identified signs of growth, and also found gaps she cannot fully account for. That combination is worth mapping precisely before the discussion moves anywhere else. Ask students what the evidence actually shows, and what it does not show. The case is constructed so that Maya's assessment is genuinely ambiguous, and students who want to resolve the virtue question quickly will often do so by deciding Daniel is or isn't ready before the case gives them enough to know. Slowing down the evidentiary question sets up the patience question more productively.

Take the self-serving patience question seriously. The case asks whether Maya's patience has served Daniel or served herself, and that question deserves real time. Ask students what it would look like for a mentor's patience to be primarily self-serving. It might involve avoiding a difficult conversation, protecting an investment of time and relationship, or maintaining a self-image as someone who develops people well. None of those motivations are malicious, which makes them harder to identify and harder to correct. The case is most useful when students can name specifically what Maya might be protecting, rather than treating self-serving patience as an abstract possibility.

Explore the limits of patience in mentorship directly. Patience in a developmental relationship is a genuine virtue, but it has limits that are easy to lose sight of when the relationship is working and the investment feels meaningful. Ask students where they think those limits are, and what signals a mentor should be watching for. The Halcyon project is one kind of signal: a high-stakes assignment that will test whether patience has been warranted. But ask students what other signals might have appeared earlier, and whether Maya's patience caused her to read



them differently than she should have. This is the note the case most needs to land on, because the question of when patience in mentorship stops serving the mentee is one of the most practically important questions in professional development.

Resist making the Halcyon assignment the only question. Students will want to focus on whether Maya should assign the project to Daniel, and that is a reasonable question. But it is not the most important one the case raises. The more important question is what the two years before the Halcyon file arrived actually consisted of, and whether Maya's patience during that time was well-calibrated or whether it had drifted. Ask students to evaluate the two years, not just the decision at the end of them. That reframing keeps the discussion on the virtue rather than the outcome.