

THE FEEDBACK

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. Priya's gratitude arrives a year and a half late, and only because she encountered a situation that made David's gift legible to her. Does the delay change the nature of the gratitude, or only its timing?
2. David's feedback felt like criticism when Priya initially received it. What does the case suggest about the relationship between gratitude and the passage of time?
3. Priya recognizes what she owes David only when she is in a position to give the same thing to someone else. What does that suggest about how professional gratitude is transmitted across generations of practitioners?
4. David responds by saying "that's the job." Is that modesty, deflection, or an accurate description of what gratitude between colleagues in a profession looks like at its best?

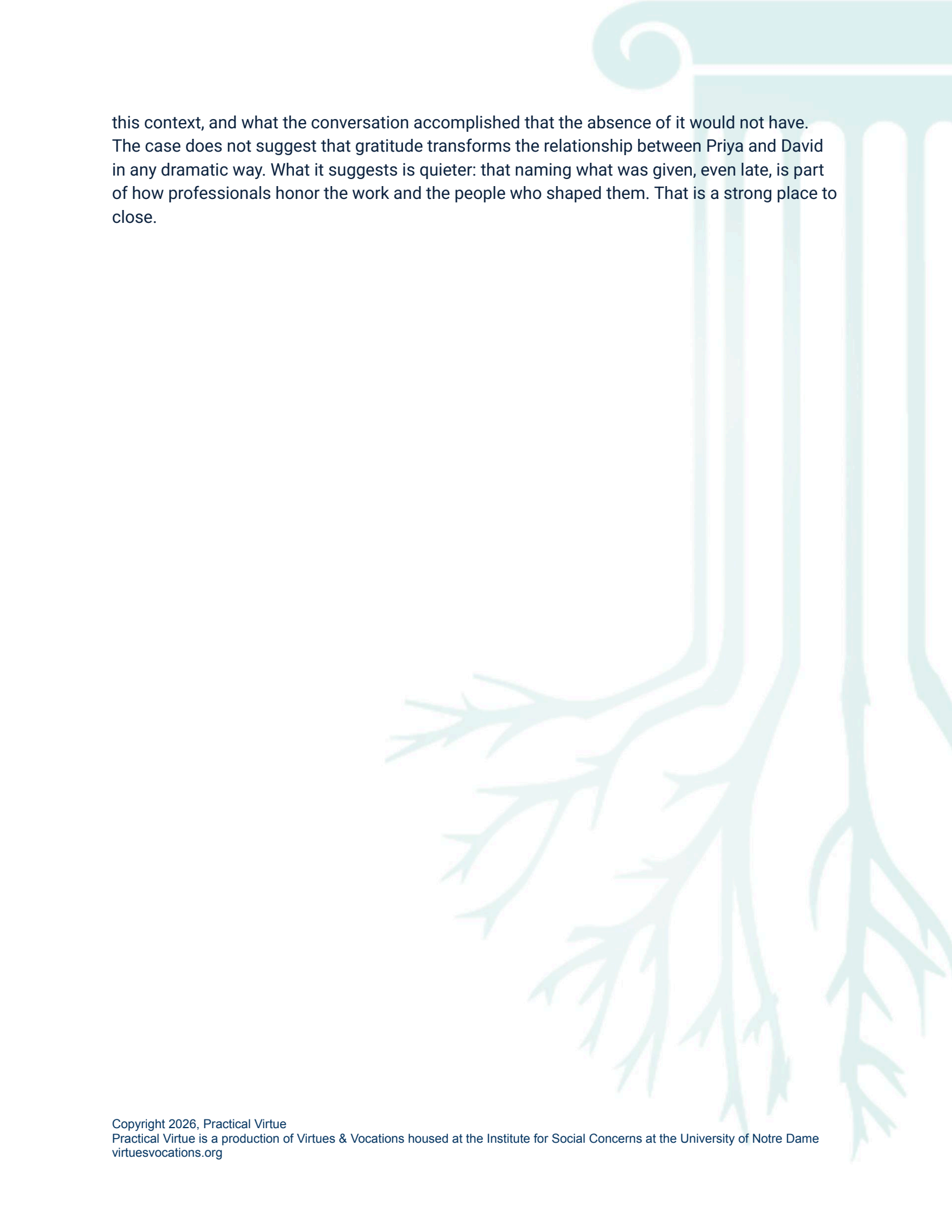
Facilitation of this Case

This case asks students to recognize gratitude in an unexpected place. Most intuitive accounts of gratitude involve a clear gift, clearly received. This one complicates that picture from the start: what Priya receives feels like criticism, and what she feels in response is closer to wounded pride than thankfulness. Before moving to any specific questions, ask students simply when they think Priya's gratitude begins. Is it when she receives the feedback? When she resubmits? When she finds herself making the same marks on her colleague's work? The answer is not obvious, and surfacing that ambiguity early sets up the most productive discussion.

Use the transmission question to open up something larger. The third discussion question asks what it suggests that Priya recognizes her debt to David only when she can give the same thing to someone else. This points toward something important about how professional knowledge and care move through a field across generations, often without explicit acknowledgment. Ask students what that chain looks like in engineering specifically, and whether gratitude has a role to play in making it visible rather than invisible.

Let David's response do its work. When Priya thanks him, David says that's the job. That line is easy to read as deflection or modesty and worth slowing down on. Ask students what David means by it. Is he saying that good feedback is simply what senior engineers owe junior ones, and therefore not something that warrants thanks? Or is he saying something more generous, that the transmission of skill and discipline across a profession is itself the point, and personal acknowledgment is beside the point? Both readings are available, and neither fully closes the question.

Close with the question of what gratitude makes possible. Priya walks back to her desk thinking that David's response was exactly enough. Ask students what exactly enough means in

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this context, and what the conversation accomplished that the absence of it would not have. The case does not suggest that gratitude transforms the relationship between Priya and David in any dramatic way. What it suggests is quieter: that naming what was given, even late, is part of how professionals honor the work and the people who shaped them. That is a strong place to close.