Facilitator moves

THE MAIN MOVE

"What does that establish?" Ask which claim the evidence supports and whether the difficulty has been given authority to justify a poor choice.

Then ask: **"Who sees it differently?"**

When the room needs help

- **Silence.** Wait ten seconds. Ask, "What is actually known in the case?"
- **Dominating.** "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken and wants to."
- **Offering reassurance.** "What supports that happier forecast?"
- **Dismissing the cost.** "What practical reason makes credibility worth caring about?"
- **Defending the prepared answer.** "Which new fact would require you to revise it?"
- **Personal fear.** Thank them; offer a pause, the council case, or moving on. Do not probe.

PROTECT THE TIME

Discuss from minute 10 to 60, including the reading at question 2. Apply until minute 80. Shorten follow-ups or omit the reveal if needed; close at minute 80 and finish at 90.

When asked for your view

Offer it briefly: "Here's my tentative view. What would make you doubt it?" Keep the question open.

Notes and follow-up

Fuller explanations, sample responses, and the readings are in the July expanded guide and Meeting Primer. Key texts: Seneca, *Letters* 13.4–8; Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 4 and 9; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 6.21. *On Stoic Living*, Weeks 27–30.

When a Difficulty Becomes a Disaster

What is the difficulty—and what am I predicting it means?

Today we examine what a feared difficulty would establish and what it could reasonably justify.

THE MEETING

Date: _____ **Place:** _____

90 minutes of discussion · Courage · Discipline of Assent

Before you begin

Silence your phone, set a quiet timer, and keep this guide open. Have the reading ready on a phone or printout, and a pen for your own notes.

Open (10 minutes)

Welcome. Challenge ideas, give reasons, and share the floor. Passing is always fine. The shared case gives everyone a starting point; no experience with the weekly lessons is needed.

THE SHARED CASE · READ IT ALOUD

You're preparing to speak at a council meeting about a change on your street. You may be asked something you cannot answer. You think, **"Then none of my points will count. I must sound certain."**

Ask the whole group: **"What is possible here, and what has the speaker already concluded?"** Read the shared case aloud before asking the opening question. Hear two or three initial interpretations without settling them, then carry them into the discussion.

Discuss

1. What is possible in the case, and what has been treated as certain?

Probe: Which words turn a possible unanswered question into a settled disaster?

READ ALOUD · SENECA, LETTERS 13.4–8

Read the passage aloud from the linked text or the QR code. Seneca asks Lucilius to examine anticipated trouble, including whether the evidence supports the harm he expects.

Letters 13

Introduce this passage during question 2, where it helps examine the issue already under discussion. Read it aloud and return to that question; avoid adding a separate preliminary round.

2. What would support the forecast that all your points would be dismissed?

Probe: What could one gap establish about the rest of your argument?

3. What does fear make sounding certain seem to permit?

Probe: Would a likely loss of credibility justify inventing an answer?

4. How could you prepare without treating the imagined event as a fact?

Probe: What judgment would be worth remembering if the question came?

5. How should new criticism change the judgment you prepared?

Probe: What would make revising your view a sounder response than defending it?

GOING DEEPER · IF THE ROOM IS READY

If a feared consequence becomes likely, what remains to examine about what the loss means or justifies?

Application: test the feared claim

Work through the steps aloud. Take two or three answers at each step.

1. **Separate.** What is happening or possible, and what am I adding? Keep a possibility conditional; include any practical limits.
2. **Test.** What supports the forecast and what it seems to justify? An unwelcome outcome can be real without making dishonesty warranted.
3. **Prepare.** What judgment can I endorse and check when the difficulty comes? Confirm, revise, or leave open; new evidence still matters.

IF TIME ALLOWS · THE REVEAL

A council member asks for the source of a figure you used and points to a different figure in the published proposal.

Probe: What now needs checking? What can you acknowledge without deciding your whole case is worthless?

Success is a better-grounded judgment, including a serious revision or uncertainty. A confident performance, diminished fear, or invented reassurance is not the test.

Close

Return to the opening: **“What is the difficulty—and what am I predicting it means?”** Ask what became clearer or what remains unsettled. Hear brief answers and reasons for a changed view; passing is welcome.

UNTIL NEXT TIME

Notice a feared conclusion and ask what the evidence supports—and what it does not.

Thank members, confirm the next meeting, and finish on time. Next month we turn to the Discipline of Desire: **What deserves my aversion, and what can I learn to face?**

After the meeting: send a short recap through your group’s usual channel with one or two insights or open questions and the take-home invitation.