Session 55: The Honest Application: Records, Gaps, and References

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 3 — Purpose & Vocation

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 55 handout (The Honest Application) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

Employers do not need your memoir; they need to know whether you will show up, do the work, and be straight with them. A record answered plainly and briefly, with evidence of change since, reads as exactly what it is: a person whose worst chapter is behind a verifiable record of kept days. The two failure modes are lying, which a background check will find, and confessing, which hands a stranger a story they never asked for and cannot use.

- Brief, factual, forward The pattern for any record answer: what it was, in one clause; when, in one date; what has changed, in evidence — this program, this many kept months, these references. Then stop. Over-explaining reads as either hiding or pleading; the pattern reads as done.
- Gaps are explained by what filled them A gap filled by treatment, this program, caregiving, or work search is an answer, not an apology: 'I was in a recovery program; I completed it on this date.' Fill in your own program type in your own words, with staff help if needed. Dates and completions are the currency.
- References are asked, never assumed Every reference is a person who said yes, knows what job you are seeking, and can speak to recent, specific evidence (Session 27). Staff, mentors, service supervisors (Session 38's confirming names) — people who watched you keep things.

Goals for this session

☐ I can draft truthful, brief answers for the three hard questions: record, gap, and why-should-we-hire-you

☐ I can assemble a reference list of people who have agreed to be asked

☐ I can state what I will never do in a job search: lie on a form, borrow a history, hide what a background check will find anyway

Check-in

What is the line on an application — or the moment in an interview — that you dread most? Name it exactly.

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Show your record answer to your partner, or read it aloud if you choose. Your partner checks only the pattern: one clause, one date, evidence, stop. You may pass and work with the facilitator instead. Where does it plead, hide, or ramble?

2. Who are your three references, and what specific evidence can each one honestly give?

3. What question do you hope they never ask — and what is your truthful one-sentence answer to it?

4. Which of the three never-do lines is hardest for you, and what will you do instead when it tempts you?

Session 55 — Skill Practice

Application lab (solo drafting, pairs polish): each person drafts ONE hard answer in the room — the dreaded one from check-in — on the sample form or in the workbook. Partners review against the pattern: one clause, one date, evidence of change, stop. Then one two-minute mock: the partner asks the dreaded question from check-in, and the answer must stay inside thirty seconds and end facing forward. The other two hard answers are written homework, with the same pattern printed at the top of the Workbook page.

My three hard answers — record, gap, why-should-we-hire-you — brief, factual, forward: Pattern: one clause, one date, evidence of change, stop.

My three references — who said yes, what job, what evidence each can give:

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Write the other two hard answers, using the same pattern. Ask your three references this week — actually ask, and record the yes in your workbook with the date. If someone declines, thank them and replace the name before the next session.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.