

FEIT Workbook

A Practice in Exploratory Conversation

FOLLOW • EXTRAPOLATE • INSPECT • TRANSLATE

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Where FEIT Came From

FEIT grew out of a detailed study of Alan Watts's lectures: not only what he argued, but what he did with an idea while thinking aloud. Again and again, a thought would be allowed to keep its own shape while Watts followed where it led, carried it farther than usual, brought it back to something observable, or shifted it into a different image or system. In later study of transcripts of Watts in ordinary conversation, he was often much more propositional, while still using these moves intermittently. FEIT is an attempt to make those recurring motions explicit enough to practice.¹

The framework is not an attempt to imitate Watts's voice, conclusions, or personality. It trains a conversational capacity his work displays unusually well: treating a thought as something that can be turned over, viewed from another angle, and explored before it is flattened into agreement or rebuttal.

What FEIT Adds

Much conversation is propositional. A person has a claim, distinction, correction, or argument and tries to get the point across. That mode is useful and often necessary. FEIT adds a more exploratory option: instead of asking first, "How do I communicate my conclusion?", ask, "What is this thought leaning on, and how might we look at more of it?"

That does not require entering a conversation without views. You may already disagree, have a hypothesis, or know the argument you could make. FEIT asks you to keep the thought movable for a little longer: notice what it rests on, turn one part of it over, and see what becomes visible before deciding how much of your own conclusion to supply.

In propositional conversation, the speaker often tries to complete the cognition for the listener. In FEIT, it can be useful to leave part of the cognition unfinished so the other person has something to discover rather than merely receive. Done well, they may notice something they otherwise would not have—and so might you, either from the move itself or from what they do with it.

How to Use the Workbook

Each exercise gives you something a person might plausibly say: an opinion, observation, complaint, intuition, or half-formed theory. Do not begin by deciding whether you agree.

¹FEIT was developed independently through study of Watts and subsequent practice. Its constituent moves have clear relatives in existing traditions: Socratic questioning probes assumptions and implications; Street Epistemology explores reasons supporting confidence; thought experiments and reductio extend premises; phenomenological and empirical inquiry ground claims in observation; and Dedre Gentner's structure-mapping theory emphasizes relational correspondences across domains. FEIT's potentially distinctive contribution is its organization around a load-bearing structure as four trainable operations for keeping a conversational representation open to further exploration. See University of Connecticut CETL, 'Socratic Questions'; Street Epistemology International, 'How Do You Do Street Epistemology?'; Dedre Gentner, 'Structure-Mapping: A Theoretical Framework for Analogy,' *Cognitive Science* 7 (1983): 155–170, doi:10.1207/s15516709cog0702_3.

First, optionally identify one or more **load-bearing structures**: assumptions, relationships, thresholds, distinctions, causal links, values, predictions, or implied rules that are doing work inside the statement. No explanation is required. Simply notice them.

Then use the prescribed FEIT move. After that, choose one of the other three and respond again. The prescribed move builds range; the elective move builds instinct.

The goal is not profundity. A short response that genuinely changes the angle is better practice than a polished miniature essay. Early practice may take several sentences; over time, prefer the shortest move that actually opens the terrain.

FEIT in Actual Conversation

FEIT is an available conversational tool whose larger value is often to make conversation more exploratory. The workbook uses it at artificially high density because the skill is being trained; ordinary conversation usually should not.

- In normal conversation, FEIT may be an occasional insert that opens a new direction. The usual tools of conversation—curiosity, empathy, humor, explanation, direct disagreement, silence—then remain fully available.
- Analysis can happen backstage. You may notice a complicated structure internally and say only, “What makes those different?”
- Leave some cognition unfinished. Put something interesting between the two of you and let the other person participate in completing it. When this works, they may discover something—and so may you, from what you found or from what they do with it.
- One FEIT move can be followed by completely ordinary conversation. There is no need to perform FEIT turn after turn.
- Steer, but remain steerable. You may have a view; the other person should still be able to change the terrain.

Challenge can vary without changing the FEIT operation, provided that exploration rather than winning remains the priority. Given “People expect too much from romantic relationships—one person can’t be everything for you,” a low-pressure Follow might ask, “What should a romantic partner be for you?” A higher-pressure Follow might observe that some partners do seem to be nearly everything for one another and ask whether those relationships are better or worse for it. Both can open inquiry; the difference is how much counterpressure the speaker introduces. The aim is not minimum pressure, but enough openness that either participant can still alter where the conversation goes.

- Keep playfulness in service of exploration. A sharp line can make an exercise fun, but if status, scoring points, or making the other view look foolish starts to overtake curiosity, the practice has drifted.

Does This Thought Presently Want Exploring?

Before moving a thought, notice what the conversation is asking of you. A statement can be rich with structure and still not be an invitation to explore it. A good FEIT move is not automatically a good conversational move.

“My mother died last week and I don’t know what to do with myself.”

Rife for exploration? Yes. Appropriate to explore right now? Perhaps not. Being present, listening, or simply staying with the person may be closer to the mark. The useful distinction is not only “Can this be explored?” but “Does this presently want exploring?”

The Load-Bearing Structure and the Four Moves

Before Follow, Extrapolate, Inspect, or Translate, there is a more basic act: notice what the thought is leaning on.

Load-bearing structure means any feature doing meaningful work inside a statement: a causal relationship, threshold, definition, distinction, comparison, implied rule, value hierarchy, prediction, or assumption. There is

often more than one. The goal is not to discover the one hidden truth of a sentence; it is to notice places where the thought bears weight.

ONE STATEMENT, SEVERAL POSSIBLE STRUCTURES

“If somebody repeatedly makes me feel bad about myself, I am allowed to cut them off. It does not really matter whether they meant to hurt me. My mental health has to come first.”

- A repeated pattern is being treated differently from a single incident.
- There is some threshold at which feeling bad becomes sufficient reason to end access.
- Impact is being treated as relevant even when harmful intent is absent.
- Mental health is being given priority over at least some relational obligations.
- Ending contact protects against further harm while also sacrificing whatever value the relationship provides.

Any of these can be a beam worth working with. Choosing a different one changes where the conversation can go.

Each FEIT move begins after the same preliminary act: noticing what the thought is leaning on. The four operations then do different things with what you have noticed.

THE FOUR OPERATIONS

FOLLOW: *Trace the structure.* Stay inside the speaker’s framing and see where one of its own threads leads.

EXTRAPOLATE: *Extend the structure.* Turn a variable up, down, outward, across cases, or toward a limit.

INSPECT: *Ground the structure.* Find something observable that bears on it and look.

TRANSLATE: *Remap the structure.* Find another object or system in which the same important relationship appears.

Follow: *trace it* | **Extrapolate:** *extend it* | **Inspect:** *ground it* | **Translate:** *remap it*

The four moves are not mutually exclusive. A single response may Follow and Inspect, or Translate while also Extrapolating. The distinctions are useful because each emphasizes a different way of opening a thought—not because every conversational move belongs cleanly in only one box.

FOLLOW — trace the structure

RETRIEVAL CUE

Where does this thought go if I stay inside its framing?

WHAT THE MOVE DOES

Follow takes something already built into the statement and gives it another step. It does not need to announce the hidden assumption first, and it does not replace the speaker’s frame with a better one. It simply tugs a thread that is already there and sees what the speaker, the thought, or the conversation supplies next.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE IT

- Thresholds — Where does a rule start, stop, or become strong enough to matter?
- Definitions and distinctions — What separates categories the speaker is already using?
- Causal links — What connects the cause to the claimed effect?
- Implications — What else follows if the statement is taken in its own terms?
- Symmetry — Does the same rule still apply when relevant roles or cases are reversed?
- Stopping conditions — What would tell us that the process, correction, or standard had gone far enough?

EXAMPLES

“If somebody repeatedly makes me feel bad about myself, I can cut them off.” → “When is making you feel bad enough to cut someone off?”

“A reservation shows effort; a walk does not.” → “So the reservation is carrying evidence about interest, not just arranging dinner.”

“My gut feeling is there for a reason.” → “If your gut could talk, what do you think it would say it notices?”

“A good relationship should feel easy.” → “There may be two kinds of easy here: no friction, and friction handled so well that it barely registers.”

COMMON FAILURE MODE

Do all the analysis, then narrate all the analysis. If the interesting move is already present, the setup may only bury it. A useful discipline is: do the analysis backstage, then delete everything before the interesting part.

EXTRAPOLATE — extend the structure

RETRIEVAL CUE

What happens if I turn this up, turn it down, or keep carrying it?

WHAT THE MOVE DOES

Extrapolate treats some relationship in the statement as provisionally real and varies it. The aim is not always absurdity. A small change of scale, direction, domain, or endpoint can reveal where the relationship holds, where it bends, and what other variables were quietly involved.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE IT

- Turn it up — Increase one variable and see whether the claimed relationship continues.
- Turn it down — Reduce the variable, perhaps toward zero.
- Approach a limit — Carry the relationship toward an extreme and see what remains plausible.
- Expand the domain — Apply the same rule to another case that seems to belong to the same category.
- Reverse direction — If more A is said to mean less B, ask what less A should imply about B.

EXAMPLES

“Jealousy shows that someone cares.” → “Is the most anxious partner the most caring?”

“A productive day is a good day.” → “Then a perfectly good day would leave no minute unproductive.”

“Ambitious people make themselves miserable; at some point they should learn to be satisfied.” → “If less striving means more contentment, would the least ambitious people tend to be the most content?”

“An exceptional career requires sacrificing relationships.” → “So does giving less to a career tend to mean giving more to a relationship?”

COMMON FAILURE MODE

Treat Extrapolate as synonymous with *reductio*—or as a contest in producing the sharpest line. Extremes and humor can be useful, and Watts often enjoyed both, but they should reveal the structure rather than merely score against the speaker. FEIT is a team sport: if status begins overtaking exploration, try a gentler variation of the same move.

INSPECT — ground the structure

RETRIEVAL CUE

What could we actually look at?

WHAT THE MOVE DOES

Inspect leaves representation and touches territory. Find something observable that bears on the structure under discussion. Good Inspect moves have both resolution and diagnosticity: they look at something concrete, and what they look at matters to the claim.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE IT

- Immediate experience — Direct attention to sensation, impulse, emotion, attention, or inner speech when those are part of the phenomenon.
- Remembered case — Ask for a concrete episode rather than another general theory.
- Observable behavior — Look at what someone actually did rather than only the label applied to it.

- Evoked experience — Create a small instance now and notice what happens.
- Data or examples — For empirical claims, Inspect may mean looking at an actual case, pattern, or measurement. A useful cue is: “Show me one.”

EXAMPLES

“Leadership teams without representation miss things.” → “Can you describe a time when a leadership team you were near made a decision with a blind spot?”

“My gut is usually right about people.” → “Think of the last time your gut was right: what did you notice then, and what happened later?”

“The ability to leave changes how it feels to stay.” → “Bring to mind a situation where the exit became genuinely available. Notice what changed once staying was a choice.”

“People become defensive when challenged.” → “Let me challenge that: I think you may be overconfident about this. Before answering me, notice what happens in you.”

COMMON FAILURE MODE

Inspect something merely because it is experiential. “How does that make you feel?” is not automatically Inspect. The observation should bear on the structure you are investigating.

TRANSLATE — remap the structure

RETRIEVAL CUE

Where else does this same machine run?

WHAT THE MOVE DOES

Translate abstracts enough of the thought to recognize the same important relationship in another system, then makes that system concrete. Strong translations balance structural fidelity with perceptual distance: close enough that the same mechanism survives, far enough that something new becomes visible.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE IT

- Direct isomorphism — Find another system with nearly the same relationship.
- Altered causal system — Find a neighboring system where the same variables interact differently; the difference can expose a hidden assumption.
- Shared object — Choose a world rich enough to contain both your model and the other person’s rather than building an analogy that can only point to your conclusion.
- Collaborative mapping — Provide a new representational space and let the other person construct the mapping.
- Causal ambiguity — Find another system where the same observed outcome can arise from several mechanisms.

EXAMPLES

“Meaning should come from work.” → “A truck driver and a football player may get their exercise from different places.”

“Cut off people who repeatedly make you feel bad.” → “A store might kick out a paying customer if their behavior hurts the business.”

“Career excellence requires sacrificing life outside work.” → “Writing is a career. I wonder whether it is the time spent on the craft or the life lived outside it that ends up on the page.”

“People do not really change.” → “What do you think about protagonists in stories?”

PLACES TO SEARCH

When a Translate does not come quickly, it can help to search a few familiar domains for the same causal shape. These are not canned metaphors; they are places to look.

- Sports — competition, skill, coaching, rules, money, bias, fairness, luck, teamwork, status.
- Business — customers, incentives, pricing, investment, competition, scale, risk, value creation.

- Machinery and control systems — feedback, thresholds, failure modes, redundancy, control, signal and noise.
- Ecology — niches, competition, symbiosis, adaptation, carrying capacity, unintended effects.
- Markets — scarcity, allocation, signaling, incentives, prices, externalities.
- Games — rules, strategy, hidden information, cooperation, tradeoffs, winning conditions.
- Bodies and medicine — regulation, protection, adaptation, overreaction, recovery, tolerance.
- Art and story — authorship, revision, audience, transformation, interpretation, practice.
- Traffic and networks — flow, bottlenecks, routing, congestion, local choices, system effects.

COMMON FAILURE MODE

Use analogy as disguised proof. As with Extrapolate, wit can help when it opens the object; it hurts when it mainly makes your side look clever. A Translate is more generative when the new object can surprise you too. If the only possible lesson is the conclusion you already wanted, the translated space may be too narrow.

Thread

A FEIT move can be structurally valid while still feeling aimless. Afterward, you may ask: “What did this make me notice?” The answer is the thread: a provisional thesis, tension, question, or direction that emerges from the exploration. Thread is where movement becomes understanding.

Thread is not a fifth move, and it need not be spoken aloud. In practice it can also serve as a self-test: did something actually emerge—or at least get a fair chance to emerge? A memorable line that leaves nothing new to inspect, vary, or reconsider may have been more performance than exploration.

In live conversation, the thread often remains implicit. In the workbook, fill it in occasionally—especially when a move surprised you, changed the direction, or felt unusually productive. The point is not to manufacture a lesson after every exercise, but to notice which movements actually reveal something.

A Watts Passage with the Moves in Motion

What do you do when somebody says, “Pay attention!” What is the difference between looking at something and taking a hard look at it? And between hearing something and listening intently? What’s the difference? ... When you pay attention instead of just looking you screw up your face, you frown, and stare. When you will, you grit your teeth; when you endure or control yourself you pull yourself together, physically, and therefore you get uptight. You hold your breath, you do all kinds of muscular things to control the functioning of your nervous system, and none of them have the slightest effect on the proper operation of the nervous system.

Now we all make this muscular strain, with the thought that it’s achieving psychological results ... and all this amounts to is this: like you’re taking off on a jet plane, you’ve gone a mile down the runway and the thing is not in the air yet, and you get nervous, so you start pulling at your seatbelt. That’s what it is.

Source: Alan Watts transcript collection supplied during the development of this workbook; punctuation lightly regularized from the transcript.

LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES

- Psychological effort is being represented and enacted as bodily effort.
- The bodily effort may not perform the mental operation it is meant to perform.
- When the desired result does not appear, the tendency is to add more of the same effort.

WHAT THE MOVES ARE DOING

FOLLOW: The thought “pay attention” is followed into what people actually do when they try: tighten, frown, hold, pull together.

INSPECT: Attention is directed toward observable bodily traces of trying rather than leaving “effort” as an abstraction.

EXTRAPOLATE: The tendency to add more effort is carried until the mismatch becomes comic: the plane is not lifting, so pull harder on the seatbelt.

TRANSLATE: The airplane and seatbelt preserve the structure of effort applied to the wrong control surface.

The moves overlap in performance. FEIT is a practice vocabulary, not a requirement to speak in labeled blocks.

Notice that Watts does not simply replace one proposition with another. He follows the thought into the body and then into another system until the mismatch becomes something the listener can see. The movement does part of the explanatory work.

What Happens After the Move?

A FEIT move is not a finished conversational product. Its value is often in what it gives the other person to do next—and in whether their response can change what you see.

A: "A job doesn't need to be meaningful. You can get meaning from the rest of your life."

B: "A truck driver and a football player may get their exercise from different places."

A: "Sure, but meaning is easier to get outside work than exercise is."

B: "Maybe. Is it equally easy for everyone to get enough of it outside work?"

The Translate does not settle the question. It makes one structure visible: a need can be supplied through work or elsewhere. The reply then adds a variable the Translate did not contain—how available the outside source actually is. Both participants now have something to consider that was less visible at the start.

A NEAR ENEMY

A: "A job doesn't need to be meaningful. You can get meaning from the rest of your life."

B: "Right—so I guess everyone should spend forty hours a week doing something meaningless and just make up for it on weekends."

This is related to the same structure and may even be funny, but it mostly closes the space. It packages the speaker's view into a version designed to lose. The test is not whether a move is witty; it is whether it gives both people something worth turning over.

Four Fully Worked Examples

These examples show several load-bearing structures first, then four different ways of moving them. There is no single correct beam to choose, and the best move is not necessarily the cleverest one.

Example 1

"People spend too much time trying to find themselves."

LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES: The self is being treated as something that can be found. | Searching is consuming time that could otherwise be spent living. | There must be some criterion for recognizing when the search has succeeded.

FOLLOW: "If you found yourself, what would tell you the search was over?"

EXTRAPOLATE: "If an hour a week of trying to find yourself helps, perhaps ten hours would help more. At some point it becomes a full-time job."

INSPECT: "Think of a moment when you felt most completely yourself. How much attention were you giving to yourself at the time?"

TRANSLATE: "Trying to find yourself may be a little like trying to hear your own accent: the harder you listen for it, the stranger it gets."

THREAD: The search may interfere with the activity through which a self is actually expressed.

Example 2

"Technology is making people less patient."

LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES: Technology is changing expectations as well as objective waiting time. | Patience depends partly on what delay is taken to be normal. | Convenience can reset the baseline against which inconvenience is judged.

FOLLOW: “When did a three-second wait become a long wait?”

EXTRAPOLATE: “At the limit, the perfect service would deliver the thing before we wanted it—and we could be annoyed that it arrived without asking.”

INSPECT: “Notice the next time a page takes three seconds to load: the urge to click, switch tabs, or treat three quiet seconds as a problem.”

TRANSLATE: “If every door in a building opened automatically, the one manual door might start to feel broken.”

THREAD: Convenience can change the reference point from which delay is experienced.

Example 3

“A good relationship should feel easy.”

LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES: “Easy” could mean little friction or skillful handling of friction. | Effort can become invisible when coordination is good. | Taken far enough, zero effort could begin to resemble zero relationship.

FOLLOW: “When you say easy, do you mean that little goes wrong—or that the two people move through what goes wrong easily?”

EXTRAPOLATE: “Maybe a great relationship should be nearly effortless. And in a perfect one, the participants need not bother with each other at all.”

INSPECT: “Think of someone with whom conversation feels easy. What are the two of you actually doing while it feels easy?”

TRANSLATE: “A great dance can look effortless from the audience without either dancer being idle.”

THREAD: Ease may sometimes describe coordinated effort rather than the absence of effort.

Example 4

“You should not care what other people think.”

LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES: Caring about an opinion is different from obeying it. | Different sources are granted different amounts of authority. | Social feedback can be informative without becoming command.

FOLLOW: “Whose opinions would you still want to hear?”

EXTRAPOLATE: “If caring less about other people’s opinions makes you freer, would caring about nobody’s opinion at all make you maximally free?”

INSPECT: “Compare criticism from someone whose judgment matters to criticism from someone whose judgment does not. Notice what your attention does afterward.”

TRANSLATE: “Other people’s opinions may be sensors rather than steering wheels. A system that obeys every sensor is unstable; one that disconnects them all is blind.”

THREAD: The problem may be less that social information enters than how much control it is given once it arrives.

Four Partially Worked Examples

Two moves are demonstrated. Supply the other two. The load-bearing structures are shown to model the noticing step.

Practice Example 1

“People are more connected than ever, but many feel lonelier.”

Load-bearing structures

Connection and being met may be different variables. | More channels can increase contact without increasing intimacy.

Follow

“Who are you connected to when you feel least lonely?”

Translate

“A phone can have full bars and no one you want to call.”

Extrapolate

Inspect

Thread · *Optional*

Practice Example 2

“We say we want honest feedback, but usually we want useful feedback.”

Load-bearing structures

Honesty can vary in quantity, timing, and selection. | Useful feedback may depend on framing and trust, not only truthfulness.

Extrapolate

“If usefulness did not matter, the most honest feedback might include every passing judgment whether or not it helped.”

Inspect

“Remember feedback that genuinely changed you. What did the person actually say or do that made it usable?”

Follow

Translate

Thread · *Optional*

Practice Example 3

“Owning more things gives you more things to maintain.”

Load-bearing structures

Acquisition creates future claims on attention. | Ownership has ongoing costs beyond purchase price.

Follow

“What does an object keep asking for after you buy it?”

Extrapolate

“With enough possessions, you could become the full-time employee of your own belongings.”

Inspect

Translate

Thread · *Optional*

Practice Example 4

“People often confuse being busy with being important.”

Load-bearing structures

Busyness is visible and countable. | Importance is harder to observe directly. | Activity can function as a status signal.

Inspect

“Look at a packed calendar before any work has happened. What does the density itself make you infer?”

Translate

“Busyness can be like engine noise: it sounds like power, although a machine can make a tremendous racket while going nowhere.”

Follow

Extrapolate

Thread · *Optional*

100 Exercises

For each prompt: (1) optionally identify one or more load-bearing structures; (2) respond with the named FEIT move; (3) choose one other move and respond again. Aim for the shortest response that genuinely opens or changes the terrain.

The exercises become progressively less pre-shaped. The first quarter isolates the moves with clean statements; later quarters add context, bundled claims, ambiguity, and conversational texture. The prompts remain concise. The increasing difficulty is in finding a useful beam, not in reading a longer passage.

Part I — Clean Structures

Short, relatively clean statements with readily visible structure. Concentrate on learning the four motions themselves.

Exercise 1

“People say they want more free time, but often seem uncomfortable when they get it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 2

“The older I get, the faster a year seems to pass.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 3

“Most arguments online are not really attempts to change anyone's mind.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 4

“A house starts feeling smaller as you acquire more things.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 5

“We remember embarrassing moments far longer than anyone else does.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 6

“Some people are easier to talk to while walking than while sitting across a table.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 7

“Convenience can make small inconveniences feel larger.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 8

“The anticipation of a vacation is sometimes better than the first day of it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 9

“People often want advice when what they really want is company.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 10

“A hobby changes when you begin trying to make money from it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 11

“The more choices a menu has, the less certain I become about what I want.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 12

“Being good at explaining something can make it harder to remember what it was like not to understand it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 13

“A deadline can make a task easier by removing the possibility of doing it later.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 14

“The first scratch on a new car is more upsetting than the tenth.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 15

“We often clean the house more carefully for visitors than for ourselves.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 16

“A familiar song can bring back a period of life faster than a photograph.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 17

“People can become attached to problems they sincerely want solved.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 18

“There are friendships that survive years of silence and others that cannot survive a month.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 19

“The most expensive part of a cheap object may be the attention it consumes.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 20

“People complain about routines and then feel disoriented when routines disappear.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 21

“Being early feels responsible; being very early can feel absurd.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 22

“A city can feel more lonely than a small town despite containing more people.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 23

“The more carefully a meeting is planned, the easier it is to forget why the meeting exists.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 24

“Some apologies are really requests to stop being disliked.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 25

“We often admire spontaneity after it has worked.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Part II — Layered Statements

The statements now carry a little more context and more than one plausible beam. Notice what you choose to work with before making the move.

Exercise 26

“A photograph can make you notice that you were happy at a time you remember as difficult.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 27

“The ability to leave a situation can change how it feels to stay.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 28

“People often become more certain when they are explaining something they only partly understand.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 29

“The things we call distractions are sometimes the parts of the day we remember.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 30

“A tool that saves five minutes can become something we spend hours optimizing.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 31

“It is easier to forgive a mistake than a pattern.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 32

“The same silence can feel peaceful with one person and hostile with another.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 33

“We tend to treat confidence as evidence even when we know it is not.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 34

“A gift can become less enjoyable when it creates an obligation.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 35

“People sometimes defend traditions they do not personally enjoy.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 36

“You can miss a place while knowing you would not want to live there again.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 37

“A person can be very independent and still deeply need other people.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 38

“The more public a goal becomes, the harder it can be to know whether you still want it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 39

“An empty inbox can feel satisfying even when nothing important has been accomplished.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 40

“We say time is money, but spend money to save time and then spend the saved time cheaply.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 41

“Children can ask a simple question that exposes how little an adult understands.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 42

“People often call something unrealistic before anyone has tried it.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 43

“A rule can continue long after everyone has forgotten the problem it solved.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 44

“The desire to avoid awkwardness creates a surprising amount of awkwardness.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 45

“The easiest person to fool about your motives may be yourself.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 46

“Some people become more interesting when they stop trying to be interesting.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 47

“The more precisely you schedule leisure, the less leisurely it can feel.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 48

“A conversation can change completely when one person puts their phone away.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 49

“We often treat uncertainty as though it were evidence for the worst possibility.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 50

“A person can win an argument and lose the conversation.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Part III — Conversational Bundles

Claims, interpretations, values, and examples now begin to travel together. The task increasingly includes finding the beam before moving it.

Exercise 51

“I saved for years to buy a really nice mattress. For the first week I noticed it every night; now I mostly notice the bed when I sleep somewhere worse.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 52

“College exhausted me and I could not wait to graduate. Now I miss it sometimes, which feels ridiculous because I remember wanting out.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 53

“People say ‘be yourself,’ but I am different with my boss, my oldest friend, and a five-year-old. None of those versions feels fake to me.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 54

“I keep telling myself I can relax after the work is done. The problem is that there is always more work, so the relaxing part keeps moving.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 55

“If a map showed every tree, crack in the sidewalk, sign, and parked car, it would be incredibly accurate and almost impossible to use.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 56

“We started tracking how fast people closed support tickets. Everyone got faster, but I am less sure the customers' problems got solved any better.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 57

“A friend calls me whenever something goes wrong. I like being the person she needs, but sometimes I wonder what I would feel if she stopped needing me.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 58

“I stayed partly because I had already put five years into it. Leaving made those years feel wasted, even though staying would have cost more years.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 59

“I am keeping something from a friend, and every ordinary conversation with them feels harder even when the secret never comes up.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 60

“The rain ruined our picnic, so we went home and ended up having a great afternoon. Same weather, completely different reaction once the plan changed.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 61

“The better I get at my job, the more stuff people bring me because they know I will handle it. I am not sure getting better has made the job easier.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 62

“He says he almost never changes his mind because he is consistent. I keep wondering what happens when the evidence changes.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 63

“I stayed in that relationship partly because it was familiar. At the time, familiar felt reassuring even when things were not going well.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 64

“She told me I was ‘surprisingly confident’ in the presentation. It was meant kindly, but I have been thinking about the word surprisingly ever since.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 65

“I rehearsed the conversation over and over. Then she said something I had not planned for, and I realized I was barely listening because I was trying to get back to my script.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 66

“He is incredibly polite to strangers and much rougher with his family. Maybe knowing someone will probably stay changes how careful you are with them.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 67

“At the party I kept reminding myself to look relaxed—lean back, talk slowly, stop fidgeting. It took a surprising amount of effort to seem effortless.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 68

“Once I had a decent backup plan, I got much more willing to try the risky option. Before that, every setback felt enormous.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 69

“I spent most of Friday night trying to decide what would count as a good use of Friday night. By the time I chose something, a lot of it was gone.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 70

“That restaurant used to just be a restaurant. Once it became ‘our place,’ a bad dinner there somehow felt like it meant more.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 71

“I kept waiting until I felt sure about taking the job, but most of what I wanted to know was stuff I could only learn after I started.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 72

“He was trying so hard not to look nervous that every movement looked controlled. I probably noticed the effort to hide it more than the nerves themselves.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 73

“I went back to my childhood home and everything was exactly where I remembered it, but the rooms looked tiny. I could not tell what had changed.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 74

“At parties people ask what I do almost immediately. When I give an unusual answer, I can sometimes see them recalculating what kind of person I am.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 75

“I can explain exactly why I am upset, and sometimes after explaining it for ten minutes I feel farther from the feeling than when I started.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Part IV — Real-World Speech

These are closest to live conversation: still concise, but less distilled and open to several legitimate entry points. Hear the structure without needing to clean the speaker's sentence first.

Exercise 76

"My calendar is packed, but if you asked what matters most to me, a lot of it is barely on there. Somehow the urgent stuff gets the boxes."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 77

"We were supposed to talk about my job, but twenty minutes later we were talking about my dad, and that ended up being the part I kept thinking about afterward."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 78

"I keep trying to make my messages shorter and clearer. They are more efficient now, but sometimes I think I have edited out the part that would have made someone actually know me."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 79

“She says staying proves she is committed. I do not know—sometimes it sounds like she is proud of how much she can put up with.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 80

“Nobody wanted to say they were confused in the meeting. Then one person finally said, ‘I don’t get this,’ and suddenly three other people admitted they didn’t either.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 81

“Everyone thinks of him as the calm one, so even when he is having a terrible day he acts like nothing bothers him. I wonder how much work the reputation creates.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 82

“When my old car makes a weird noise, I usually know roughly what it is and stay calm. When a new device does something strange, I get irritated almost immediately.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 83

“I finished three projects this week, but the unfinished one is the thing I keep thinking about in the shower and while trying to sleep.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 84

“I spent half the concert trying to get a good video because I wanted to remember it. Looking back, I remember trying to record it more than I remember the song.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 85

“I have plenty of people who know the facts of my life. That is not the same as feeling like anyone really gets what the last year has been like.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 86

“We planned every detail of the birthday so it would be perfect. By the time guests arrived, every little deviation felt like something going wrong.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 87

“I have been trying to decide once and for all whether I should stay in this career. Weirdly, it gets easier when I let myself answer only for the next year.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 88

“The house makes me feel secure because it is mine, but that is also why moving feels so much harder than it did when I rented.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 89

“I started taking that side street because it was faster. Now I take it automatically even on days when the main road is empty.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 90

“I would almost rather hear a definite no than ‘maybe.’ The maybe is better news, technically, but then I keep checking and wondering.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 91

“I have optimized my mornings down to the minute. They run beautifully as long as nothing unexpected or interesting happens.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 92

"I keep telling people I am 'not a social person.' Then when someone invites me somewhere, I sometimes decline before I have even asked whether I want to go."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 93

"I have been meaning to talk to her for two weeks. Every day I wait, I have more explaining to do about why I waited."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 94

"Once the conversation turned political, it felt like every new fact got sorted immediately into which side it helped. We stopped talking about the facts in the same way."

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 95

“I can criticize almost any project I work on, but when someone questions the one I think of as ‘my thing,’ I notice myself defending it before I have really heard them.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 96

“I play guitar differently when I know someone is listening, even if they are in the next room and never say a word.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 97

“I kept adding context because I wanted her to understand me. Eventually she said, ‘I don’t even know what point you’re making anymore.’”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Follow

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 98

“I am very disciplined about not keeping junk food in the house. I am less sure how disciplined I would be if it were sitting on the counter.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Extrapolate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 99

“I barely think about hot water until the shower goes cold. Then suddenly it seems like one of the most important systems in the house.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Inspect

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

Exercise 100

“I am grateful for a lot about my life. I also spend a lot of time wanting some major parts of it to be different, and I do not think those cancel each other out.”

Load-bearing structure(s) · *Optional*

Translate

Second move — choose one of the other three

Thread · *Optional*

FEIT Pocket Card

BEFORE THE MOVE

What is this thought leaning on? Notice one or more load-bearing structures. There may be several.

FOLLOW Trace it — where does this thought go if I stay inside its framing?

EXTRAPOLATE Extend it — what happens if I turn this up, turn it down, or keep carrying it?

INSPECT Ground it — what could we actually look at?

TRANSLATE Remap it — where else does this same machine run?

DELIVERY

Do the analysis backstage when useful. Put only the interesting move onstage. Leave some cognition unfinished so the other person can participate.

DENSITY

FEIT is an available move, not a forced style. Real conversation can move among FEIT, ordinary curiosity, empathy, humor, explanation, direct disagreement, and silence.

THREAD

What did this make me notice? Let a soft thesis, tension, or question emerge; do not force the conclusion before the exploration has room to work.

GOAL

Not merely to convince. Increase what can be seen, and remain steerable by what the other person sees too.