

LESSON NARRATIVE



CASE STUDY – Gary

Introduction:

This session introduces the first of six case studies.

- The case studies are based on real events and individuals from Edgerton Gear, with names changed for anonymity. For any current employees featured in these stories, permission was obtained to share their experiences with the class.
- Facilitators are encouraged to develop case studies using real-life scenarios from mentors at the partnering business. Changing names ensures privacy while engaging students as they try to guess which mentor the story might reference.

The case studies aim to connect students to real-life challenges, exploring character traits such as discipline, pride, laziness, and personal accountability.

Purpose:

Students will explore themes of potential, attitude, responsibility, and the consequences of failing to adapt. By reflecting on Gary's story, they will learn how personal behavior and mindset affect professional success and relationships.

Opening Statement:

"Talent and potential can take you far, but attitude and responsibility determine how far you'll really go. Today, we're going to learn about Gary — someone who had all the talent in the world but struggled with his attitude and accountability."

Opening Question:

"Think about a time when you or someone you know had the skills to succeed but struggled because of their attitude or behavior. What happened?"

- Invite 2–3 students to briefly share their experiences.
- Emphasize that while skills and potential are important, mindset and responsibility are equally critical for success.

Reading Gary's Story:

Direct students to their workbook to follow along with Gary's Case Study.

- Have students read this aloud, paragraph by paragraph.
- Encourage volunteers or assign readers to ensure participation.
- Pause after each paragraph to clarify or discuss key points, if necessary.

Discussion 1: Identifying Gary's Challenges

Guiding Questions:

1. What were Gary's strengths and talents?
2. What red flags did you notice in Gary's behavior?
3. Why did Gary's boss and co-workers become frustrated with him?

Discussion Focus:

Highlight Gary's mechanical talent but emphasize his struggles with punctuality, attitude, and following instructions. Discuss how these behaviors negatively impacted his work and relationships.

The Rest of the Story:

"Gary's boss gave him a warning about his attendance and work quality. How do you think Gary responded to this? Did he turn things around, or did he let his bad habits continue?"

Build Suspense:

"Let's find out what happened after Gary's meeting with his boss."

- Ensure a class discussion before diving into the remainder of Gary's story.
- Read **"The Rest of the Story"** aloud to the class.

Case Study: Gary – The Rest of the Story

Over the time that Gary worked at Edgerton Gear, there were events that gave insight into his character. One time he borrowed a brand-new Corvette from a friend who had a Corvette dealership. For his fiancé's birthday, Gary wanted to impress her by taking her for a ride in a new Corvette. Going way too fast and not knowing the local road, they hit a sharp bend in the road and became airborne, barely missing two trees, but still totaling the car. Gary confided that he couldn't understand his friend's reaction when Gary told him he couldn't afford to pay for the car. His friend became furious and said their friendship was over. Gary didn't understand this. His response to his friend was, "What's the big deal? Your insurance will cover it." Obviously, Gary didn't understand or care that the dealer could get in big trouble with their insurance company and the insurance rates were sure to skyrocket.

After Gary had his meeting with the boss, he really turned things around. He became more punctual and seemed to be cooperative and humble in his work. However, this only lasted for a few months and Gary was back to his old ways. He always had an excuse for being late, but it got to the point where the boss finally had to let him go. Since Gary had a good relationship with the boss, he was given a two week notice so he would have time to find another job.

Over the next two weeks, Gary was phenomenal. He was energetic, hustled all day long, didn't scrap any parts, got along with his co-workers, and was simply a model employee. Towards the end of the two weeks, his boss came up to him and asked him what had changed. "Who are you, Gary? Since I gave you your termination notice, you've been the old Gary I remember. If you can keep this up, we'd be glad to have you stay on."

Gary responded that he didn't want to end things this way and knew he could do better. He said he challenged himself to be a model employee. If the job ended, at least he could go out proving he could do a better job. He also was thankful for the second chance and gladly decided to stay.

Once again, it didn't last long. Within six months, Gary was back to his old bad habits. When his boss approached for the third time, he and Gary mutually agreed it was time for Gary to move on. He took a job in another machine shop for less pay.

A year later, an employee of Edgerton Gear was talking to one of Gary's new co-workers and complained how arrogant Gary was. He always had to do things his way and wasn't very well liked. Shortly after, Gary admitted to a friend that he really blew it at Edgerton Gear as it was the best job he ever had. Since then, Gary finally did start his own racing engine shop and was supposedly making a go of it.

Discussion 2: Learning from Gary's Mistakes

Guiding Questions:

1. Why did Gary improve after receiving his termination notice, and why couldn't he sustain that change?
2. What does Gary's story teach us about attitude and responsibility?
3. How did Gary's failure to adapt and listen to feedback affect his career?
4. Why do you think Gary's new co-workers also found him difficult to work with?

Discussion Focus:

Highlight the importance of consistent work ethic, listening to feedback, and maintaining a positive attitude. Temporary improvements lose their value without sustained effort.

Reflection Activity: Personal Accountability

Prompt:

"Think about a time you were given feedback or a second chance to improve. Did you make a lasting change, or did you struggle to follow through? What can you do to ensure you take responsibility and sustain positive changes?"

- Have students write a reflection in their journals.
- Optional: Invite students to share their reflections with a partner or the class.

Closing Statement:

"Gary's story shows us that talent isn't enough to succeed. Consistency, accountability, and a willingness to learn from feedback are what truly make a difference. Don't waste your potential by ignoring areas you need to improve."