

The Coffee Can of Screws

Facilitator note: The skill is faithful continuation before improvement - keeping a working system until you understand what each rule is for, and earning changes instead of grabbing them. Keep the frame on the rules-as-scars idea: every rule on the card is a specific failure with a name and a time of day, not a ritual. Shimshon affirms an action anyone can copy ("That's yours now" is earned by three weeks of evidence, and the letter asks why instead of arguing); nobody in the story ranks boys, and Gedalya's improvement succeeds only after the old way runs intact. Do not let this become "never change anything" - the story ends with a change, made the slow way - or "experts must never take hard jobs" - the point is that the stand's boundary (brakes, tires, chains) was honest about what it knew. Students are not asked to disclose real failures; Activity 7 is a fictional case.

Teacher answer key

1. Ticket with name and what hurts; one bike on the stand; no promised times; screws in the coffee can; brakes, tires, chains - no gears. Scars: the can - a screw lost in the grass on a brake job, finished without it, "the brake held for one day"; no promised times - a boy waiting in the driveway "until dark" for a five o'clock, his mother coming looking; no gears - "I never learned them," and a stand that does some things well beats a stand that does everything badly. Two rules have no letter story: one bike on the stand - "You already know about one bike on the stand, I heard from my mother," and Gedalya learned it himself in Chapter 4, splitting his eyes between a clamped bike and a flipped one - and the ticket rule, whose scar is never told; he learns it by using it.
2. A habit explains where a rule came from, not why it should stay; in that narrow sense he is right. The letter converts habit into reason: each rule becomes a named event ("a boy waited in my driveway until dark"), which is why Chapter 7's Gedalya keeps rules he once called slow - he now knows what each one is standing guard over.
3. The turn is "At ten to five, Akiva comes for his bike." Four rules broke that afternoon (promised times, gears, two bikes, a bolt outside the can), but the collision is rule three plus rule five: the promise set the clock, and the gear job ate the hour the chain job needed, which is also why the bolt went missing. The other two violations are real and get their own answers: the can rule in Chapter 5's last paragraph, the one-bike rule in the letter's reply.
4. (a) Old: 20 bikes in 4 weeks. Hurry: 28 bikes in 4 weeks. (b) 4 comebacks x 30 minutes = 120 minutes - one full session's worth (the stand runs 2 hours; the fourth comeback's repair may land in week 5). (c) On paper it gains 8 bikes, but comebacks aren't finished bikes: 28 started-and-closed, but 4 came back worse, so about 24 truly done vs 20 - plus 4 walks home and a full session of repair time, and you would want to know which bikes came back (one boy's gears died entirely) before calling 28 the bigger number. Steps shown.

5. An honest limit names what you actually know ("I never learned them") and keeps your promises inside it; a lack of ambition never tests the edge at all. The no-gears rule protects Sruli twice: it keeps his bike from being opened by someone who cannot finish the job - and when Gedalya breaks it, Sruli's gears go from skipping to dead, which is exactly the protection the rule was offering.
6. Open. The drawing should show the stand, the bench, the coffee can, the toolbox, and the pad on the gate post with the note and the tin tray below it. Strong captions quote "write your own ticket - name, and what hurts" or "That's yours now." Any honest rendering counts.
7. Sample: Rule - "Nechemia is most tempted by the tab rule, because saying no to a friend at the window feels like the whole job." Scar - "Before breaking anything, he writes down what he thinks the tab rule is guarding: the graduating boy once let tabs run, and spent his own money covering what friends forgot." Letter - "After a month Nechemia writes: 'The drawer counts itself now, the bell rule saved me twice, and I added a chalkboard for sold-out items - it came from your card, not instead of it.'" All three parts, with names, counts; wording may vary.
8. TICKET row 1 columns 1-6; BRAKES row 2 columns 1-6; SCREWS row 3 columns 1-6; STAND row 4 columns 1-5; PROMISE row 5 columns 1-7; LETTER row 6 columns 1-6; RULES row 7 columns 1-5; WRENCH row 8 columns 1-6. The thing that is a scar, five times over, is the RULES on the card; what Gedalya earns the right to improve is the STAND (accept TICKET with reasoning - the pad by the gate is the change he earns).