

The Tenth Challah

Facilitator note: The skill is staying a beginner on purpose, with terms, instead of pretending or quitting. Keep the frame on the terms - the honest first-night sentence, one written question a week, the only-column-you-get rule - and not on shame or on talent. The instructor affirms actions anyone can copy (the honest label, the kept logbook, the asked question); she never ranks bakers, and neither should the room - Bruchy's crown loaf and Minna's week-ten loaf are both real, and the story refuses the comparison column. Do not let this become "everyone must sign up for courses" or "never accept a slower class" - sometimes the fundamentals group is the right choice; the skill is making that call from your terms (am I learning?) instead of from sting. Students are not asked to confess what they are bad at; Activity 7 is a made-up case.

Teacher answer key

1. The honest first-night sentence (claiming beginner status out loud); one written question per week, which forces choosing ("Choosing is half the skill"); measure only against her own last week ("the only column you get"). Each term blocks a specific failure: the sentence blocks pretending, the written question blocks hiding her gaps in her sleeve, the single column blocks the comparison spiral that makes week five feel like a verdict.
2. Saying it pays for itself when her "Mine didn't rise. Why?" gets taken seriously "the way you'd take a question from anyone" - and again in week six, when the whole room argues over her crust question because they already know she asks real ones. Hiding it would have cost every one of those answers: you cannot get an answer to a question you are pretending not to have, and "nodding at words like hydration" is a ten-week tax.
3. Pretend protects her image - nobody is grading, so silence is free this week and expensive every week after. Quit protects her pride - "comfortable" is a kind word for leaving before the column can embarrass her. The two columns answer with evidence ("week three: rose, even") at the exact moment feelings only have the split, gummy loaf in front of them; the column is "not a straight line, but it is a line, and it points up."
4. Beginner: 9 mistakes fixed. Pretend: 0. At 3 weeks the pretender looks better (smooth surface, no visible failures) - which matters because most quits happen early, when the honest beginner looks worst and the pretender looks best; the payoff lives past the point where looking-good stops working. Steps shown.
5. Actions can be copied by anyone this week; a rank ("real baker") is a verdict about a person and would hand Minna a new thing to protect - the exact trap the terms exist to prevent. "You're basically an expert now" would have undone the beginner's freedom: the permission to ask ugly little questions and measure by one column.
6. Open. The table should show the crown loaf, the plainer slices, the pencil card reading "MINNA'S. WEEK TEN." Strong captions quote "You labeled it honestly." or "and it is not a parade, and it is real." Any honest rendering counts.

7. Sample: Honest sentence - "'I'm the beginner here,' Devory tells the sewing circle. 'I'll ask the beginner questions - somebody has to.'" Rule - "One question a week, written down before she asks it, so she has to choose." Kind offer - "Her aunt mentions, gently, that the Thursday afternoon group moves slower, if she'd ever be more comfortable." Terms answer - "'I'm staying,' Devory says, 'not because it's going well - because my notebook says I'm learning, and that's the deal I made.'" All four parts, with names, counts; wording may vary.

8. BEGINNER row 1 columns 1-8; DOUGH row 2 columns 1-5; OVEN row 3 columns 1-4; APRON row 4 columns 1-5; CRUST row 5 columns 1-5; KNEAD row 6 columns 1-5; YEAST row 7 columns 1-5; MEASURE row 8 columns 1-7 What she claims on the first night is BEGINNER (her beginner status, on purpose, in writing); what she finally does herself is MEASURE (the flour, the cup - "You're holding the cup yourself") - accept MEASURE or, with reasoning, KNEAD.