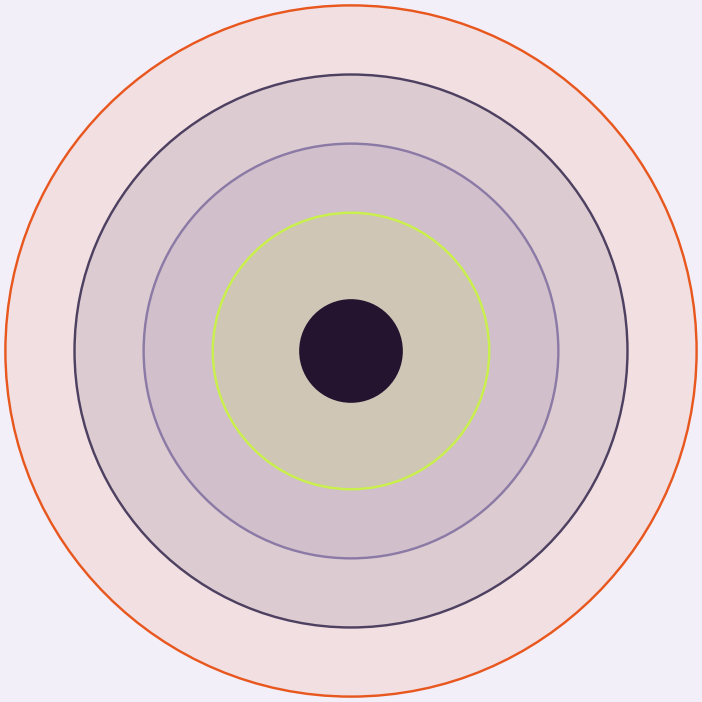


The Next Conversation

A reading of the book by Jefferson Fisher (2025)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Next Conversation, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Trial lawyer Jefferson Fisher's method for arguing less and talking more, built on three moves — say it with control, say it with confidence, and say it to connect.

Below are the 8 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You are never trying to win the argument. You are trying to make the next conversation possible.

Fisher's whole frame flips the objective: a reply that wins the moment and closes the relationship has lost.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Control comes first, because nothing said from a spiked nervous system survives contact.

The first of his three sections is entirely about what you do before you speak — breath, body check, and a phrase you say to yourself.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The pause is not empty. It is the most persuasive thing in the room.

Fisher separates the short pause, which lends weight to a word, from the long one, which lets a rude remark be heard by the person who made it.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

"Did you mean to sound rude?" hands the sentence back to its owner.

His best-known line works because it is a genuine question, not a counterattack — most people take the exit and rephrase.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Every 'just', 'sort of' and 'I might be wrong but' is a discount you applied to yourself.

Confidence in this book is subtractive: you get it by removing hedges and self-deprecation, not by raising your volume.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Start the sentence with what you need, not with an apology for needing it.

"I need" is a complete opening; the padding that usually precedes it invites negotiation over whether you're allowed to want anything.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A boundary without a named consequence is a request, and it will be treated like one.

Fisher's boundary formula is state it, name what happens if it is crossed, then actually do that thing the first time.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Connection is confirming you understood, out loud, before you say what you think.

The third section is the least dramatic and the most load-bearing: agreement on the topic has to precede argument about it.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Learn the two-breath reset
- [ ] Pick your centering phrase
- [ ] Write down your three most-used weak words
- [ ] Draft the boundary before you need it
- [ ] Prepare the three-line frame for a hard talk

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Replace one filler with silence per day
- ◯ Body-check before you reply
- ◯ Ask the question instead of returning the shot

30 days · Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

☐ SETUP 1

Learn the two-breath reset

Inhale through the nose for two seconds, take a quick second sip of air, then exhale slowly for six.

Practise it ten times somewhere calm so it is available when you are not.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 2

Pick your centering phrase

Choose one short line you say to yourself before a hard conversation — "seek to understand", "stay level" — and use only that one.

A phrase you have to invent under pressure will not arrive.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 3

Write down your three most-used weak words

Most people have a signature set: just, sorry, kind of, does that make sense?

Name yours and you will start hearing them leave your mouth in real time.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 4

Draft the boundary before you need it

For the relationship that keeps costing you, write one sentence stating the boundary and one naming the consequence.

Fisher's point is that unwritten boundaries collapse the moment they're tested.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 5

Prepare the three-line frame for a hard talk

Before the conversation: name the topic, say what you want to come out of it, and ask if they're willing to have it now.

One topic only — no rolling in old evidence.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Replace one filler with silence per day

When you feel an "um" or a "just" coming, close your mouth for a beat instead.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Body-check before you reply

Notice jaw, shoulders, chest.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Ask the question instead of returning the shot

When something lands rudely, try "Did you mean that the way it sounded?" and then stop talking.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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30 ○						

December 2026

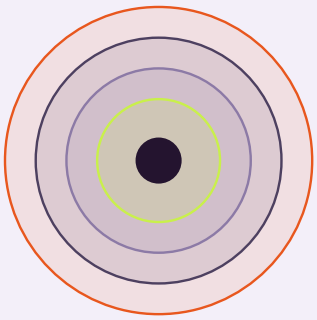
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



The most important conversation you'll ever have is the next one.

JEFFERSON FISHER