Creating Moments to Feed my Motivation

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

After being hired as principal in September of 2021, I constantly felt behind. My entire career had been at the secondary level, so learning elementary frameworks for schedules, curriculum, and especially staff dynamics was difficult without a summer ahead of taking my leadership role. I was drowning in the tasks and not spending time with the people – staff or students – which is where my joy is rooted. Further, my superintendent in my first year evaluation made it clear that a goal for this year needed to be building relationships with my staff.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my Inquiry was to see if the dynamic in my building would change if I created time to meet my own motivational need of building close, supportive relationships.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered how my leadership would improve or change by meeting my own motivational needs? How would my relationships with my staff change? How would I better support others while meeting my own needs?
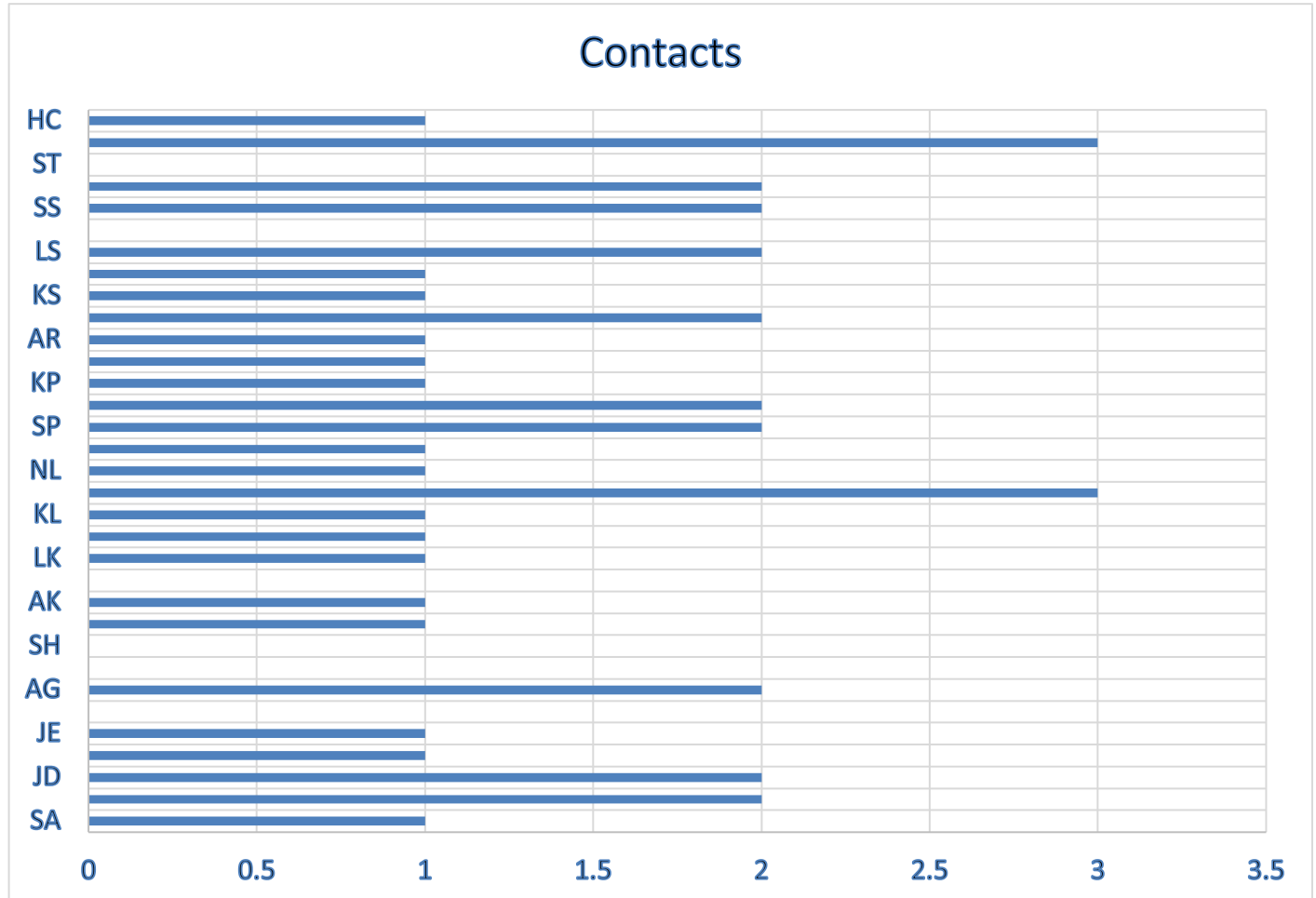
My Actions (Slide 5)

- I selected a staff member daily to connect with for a few minutes.
- After our conversation, I journaled any important takeaways to revisit with them later.
- I spent time weekly reflecting on interactions and adjusting what I was doing based on what I heard.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

I gave each staff member a page in my notebook and jotted down dates we talked and topics we discussed to help me track important information. I will also conduct my annual end of year survey to see rating scale growth.

My Data (Slides 7)

My Discoveries (Slides 8-11)

- While I knew the one person I needed to find and just talk with each day, I found I was having so many more conversations while doing other daily routines. I talked to two teachers every single morning while at bus duty. I talked to a third teacher every day at lunch duty. I was engaging with these people so frequently, I didn't need to write down what they shared to remember and go back to it for future conversations. The relationships are genuine and strong, but didn't get documented or tallied in my daily journal notes.
- I was intentionally seeking out one person a day, but I found more of my staff seeking me out as well. The text messages with a kind word or joke, the quick conversation while their copies ran, and the hallway catchups were much more frequent. I don't have data from last school year, but in my reflections it was obvious that relationships are different this year than last between me and my staff.

- The days are always busy, but it became easier and natural to build in these conversations or moments with my team. I also enjoyed the challenge of getting to someone I didn't normally see or readily connect with each day. It was surprising how many more texts I sent at night to follow up on earlier conversations. It was also a great way to model those relationships I hope to see them build with students. Lastly, the amount of problems I was able to divert by having these conversations each day, paid off. There were many times someone had a frustration or worry that I could address in a minute or two without them simmering it for days before I heard of it.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 12)

I will continue to track notes for people I don't know as well so I can strengthen those relationships moving forward. I will probably also continue drawing a name each day. It felt like a fun challenge. Moving in to next year I am going to try to do more handwritten connections – writing a quick note to leave on a desk before I go home each day. Finding ways to be creative in showing how much I appreciate each of my staff members will continue to be important.
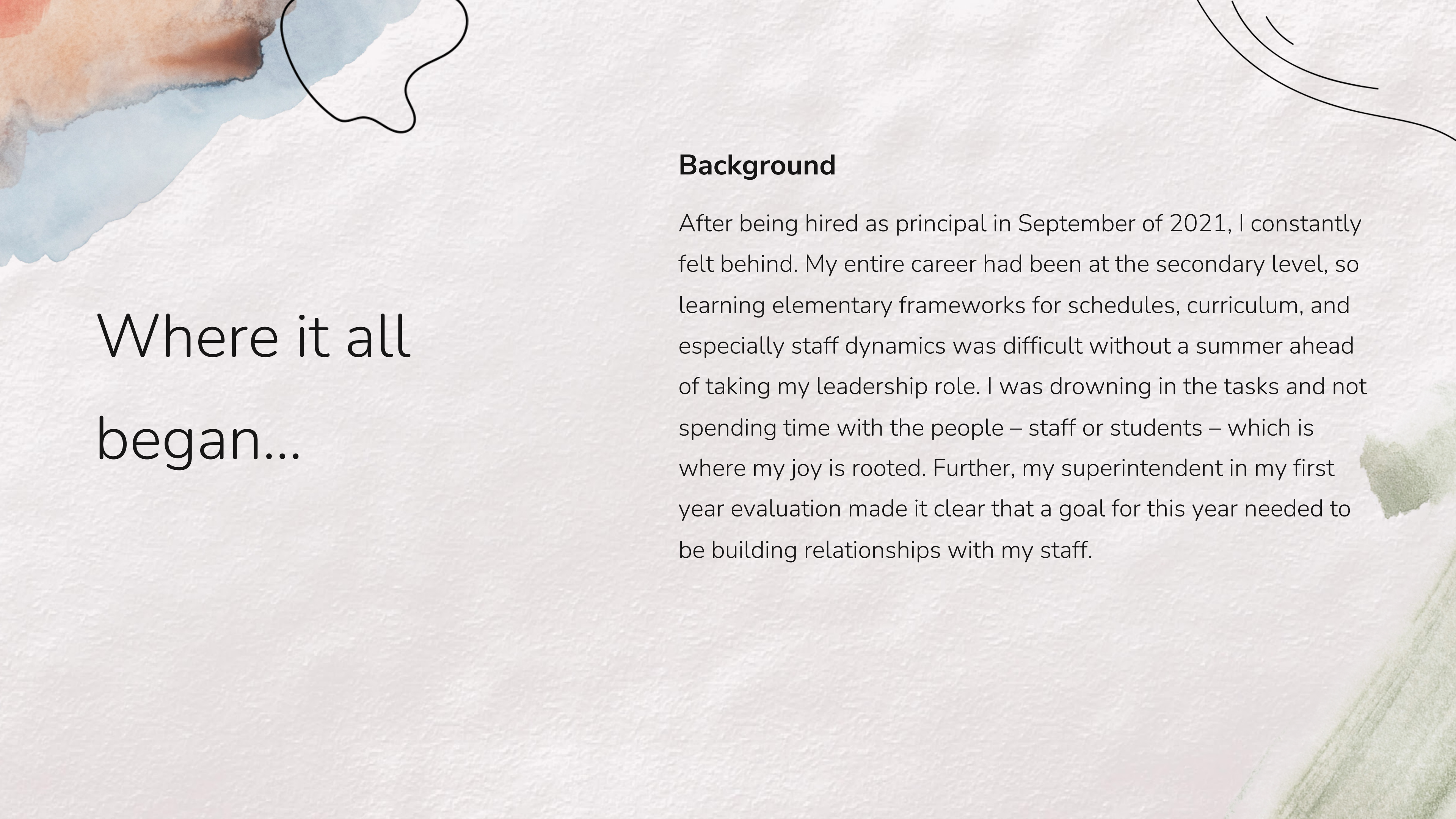
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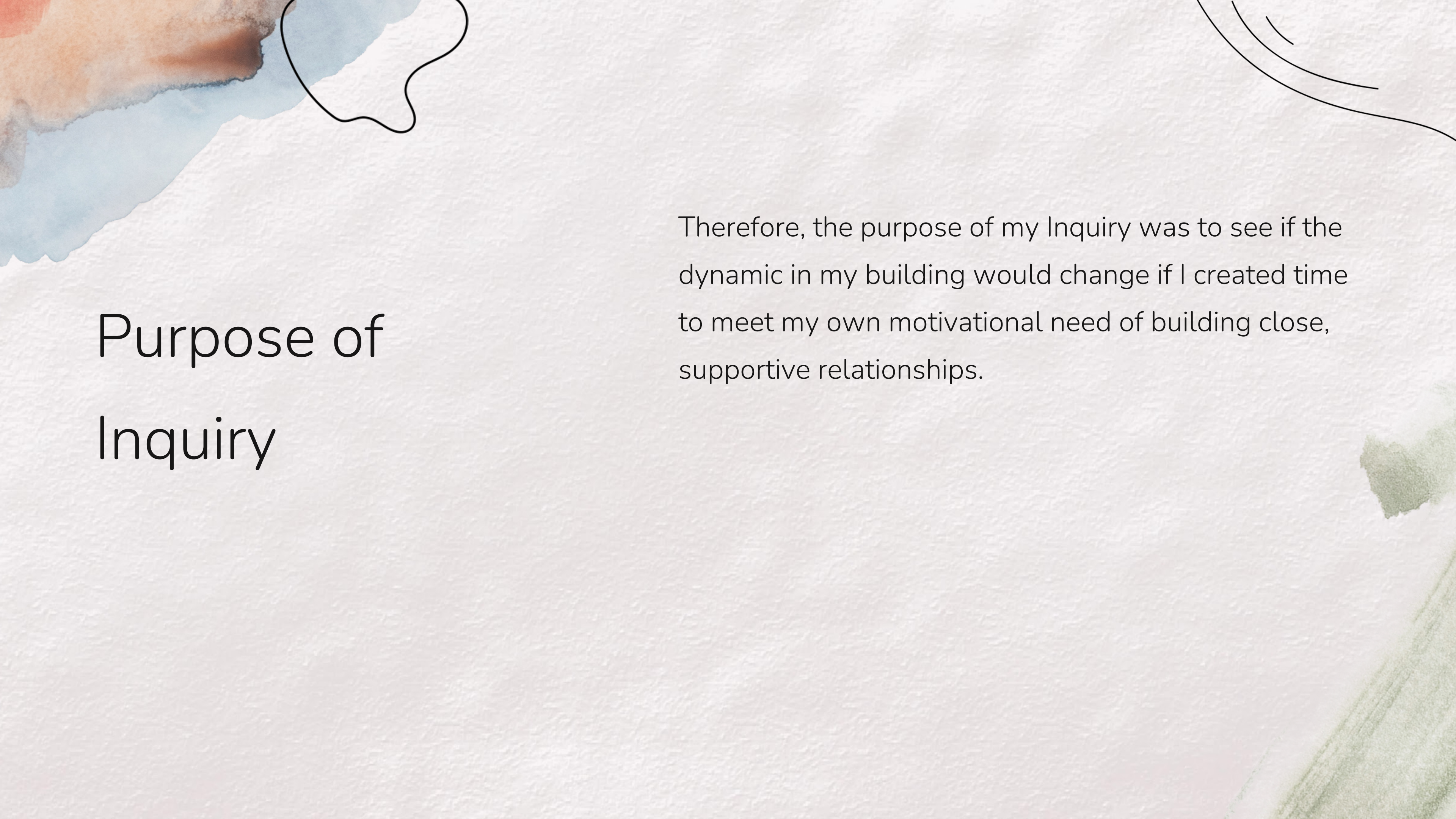Indian Creek Intermediate School
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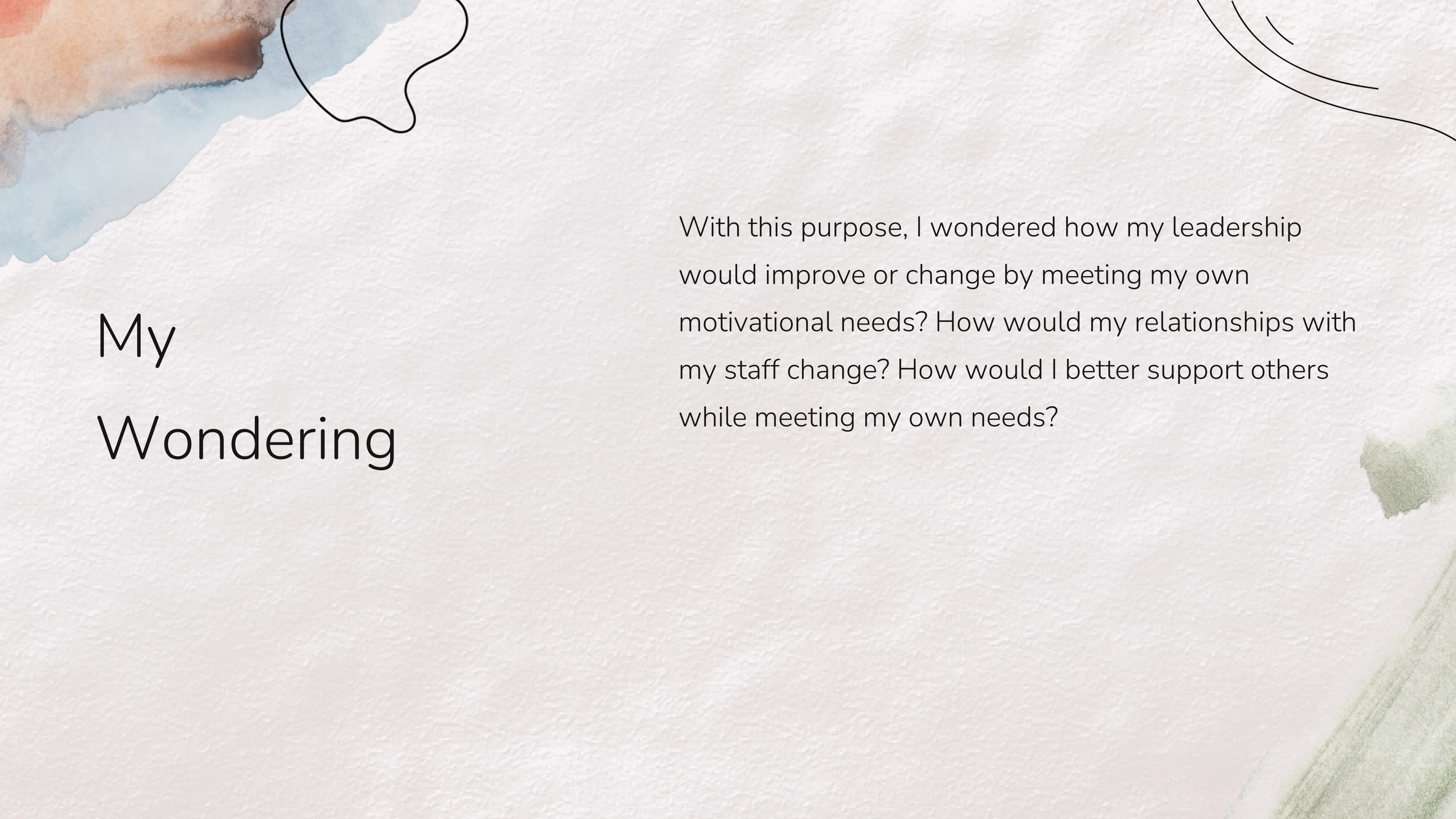
Where it all began...

Background

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Purpose of Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of my Inquiry was to see if the dynamic in my building would change if I created time to meet my own motivational need of building close, supportive relationships.

My Wondering

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My Actions

Daily Dose

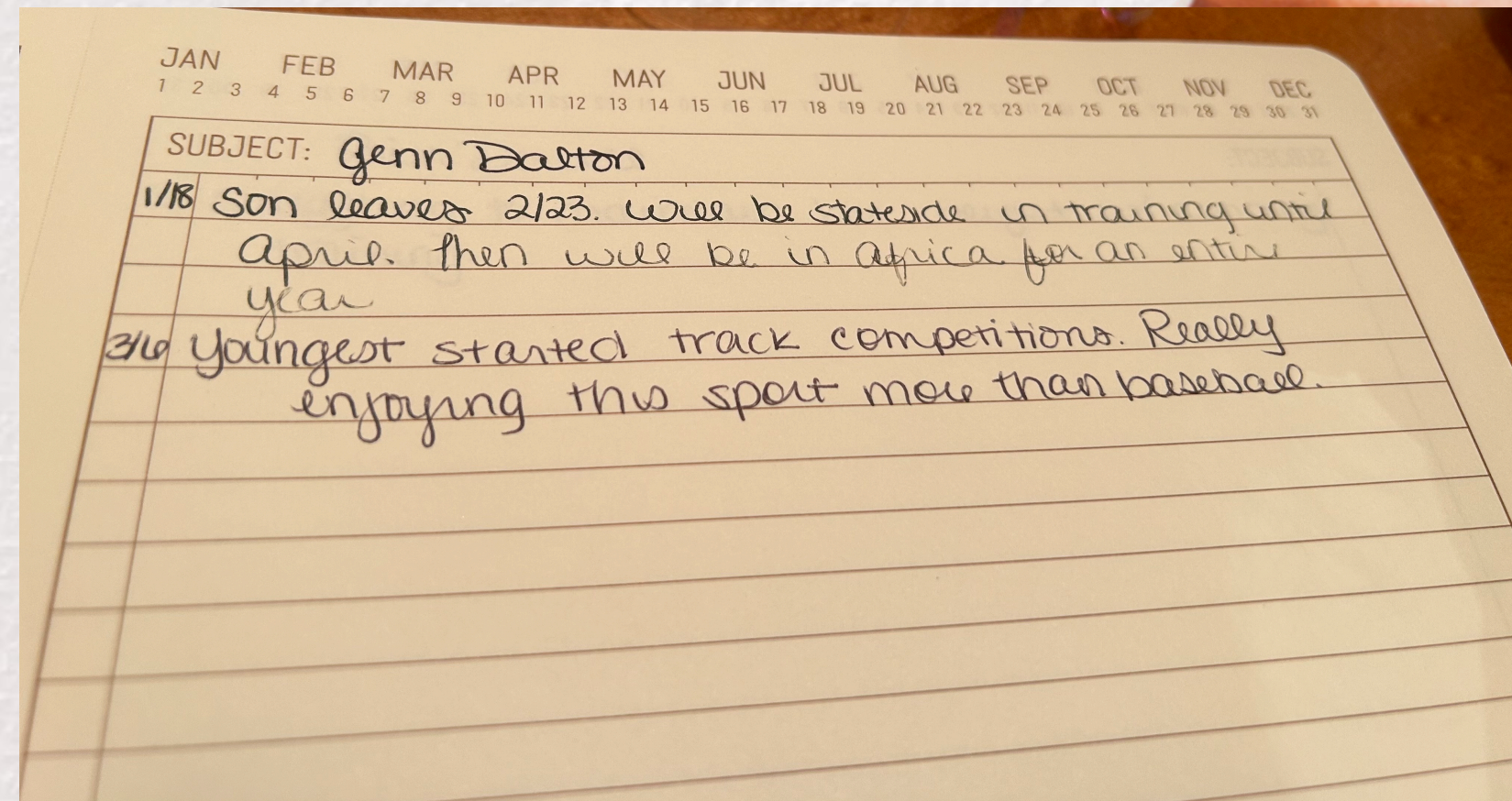Each day I picked a staff name out of my bucket.

Touchpoints

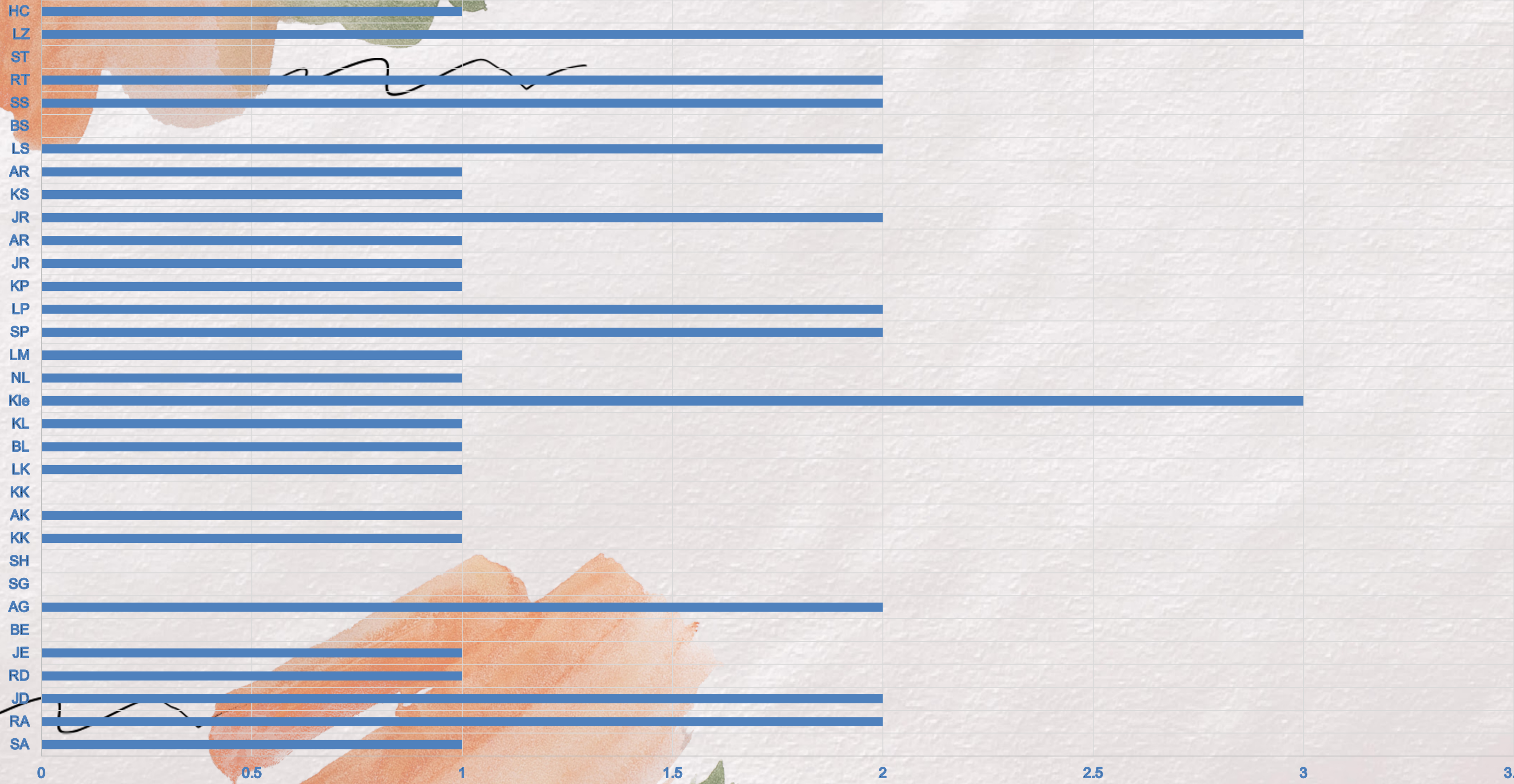Journaled any and all details to help me connect – family milestones, upcoming vacation plans, etc.

Intentionality

Space and time to reflect and reach out.

Data Collection

Contacts

My Discoveries

Daily Routine built in more than one person each day.

People looked for me to connect more frequently.

Beat of the day shifted.

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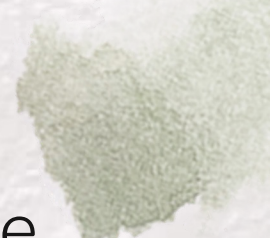
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What Comes Next

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