

Year 1 Inquiry Brief (AR)
Mary Beth (Riley) Fischer
November 2022

Purpose:

- Grow in my personal leadership skills

Question (Wondering):

- I wonder if I am intentional about scheduling time to develop affirming relationships with people I care about, if I will grow my understanding of how to guide others in their personal development.
 - Sources of Motivation: Acts of kindness and taking interest in personal lives
 - Subquestions: None at this time to keep the scope of my project narrow.

Method (What will I be doing?):

- Identify a focus group of people both in my personal and professional life of no more than 10 people.
- Research and understand the languages of appreciation for the people in my focus group (Book by Gary Chapman & Paul White).
- Scheduling and increasing intentional acts of kindness and appreciation through habit stacking (Atomic Habits book by James Clear) and intentional use of my calendar.

Data Collection:

- Calendar entries at least 2x/week
- Google Form completion 2x/week with the following questions:
 - Who did I intentionally affirm today?
 - What have I learned about how they receive appreciation?
 - How did I show appreciation/what did I do?
 - What was their response? Do I have any evidence that they “paid it forward” or it impacted them personally?
 - Notes/Other
- Weekly reflections about the impact of these actions on my understanding of how to support and guide others

Calendar (timeline):

- December – Research and ground work
- January through March – Acts of kindness/appreciation and data collection
- March/April – Conversations about the focus group’s personal development

Data Analysis:

- Google Sheet with quantity of affirmations and weekly reflections.
- Conversation notes about personal development and growth



Intentionally Affirming Relationships

Mary Beth Fischer
Maple Glen Elementary
fischermb@wws.k12.in.us





Background Leading to this Inquiry

- PCM – Harmonizer Base and Phase
 - Staying energized and healthy through nurturing relationships that I care about
 - Sources of motivation in leadership: acts of kindness and taking interest in others
- Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace
- Atomic Habits





Purpose of this Inquiry

- To be fulfilled as a leader in order to be my best and enhance my personal leadership skills.





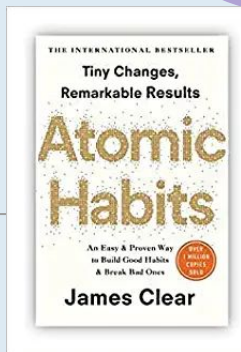
My Wondering

- I wonder if I am intentional about scheduling time to develop affirming relationships with people I care about, if I will grow my understanding of how to guide others in their personal development.



My Actions

December	Identified a small focus group of teachers and continued reading Atomic Habits
January	Researched my focus group's languages of appreciation for the people in my focus group (Book by Gary Chapman & Paul White).
February and March (8 weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scheduling and increasing intentional acts of kindness and appreciation through habit stacking, the 2 minute rule, and (Atomic Habits book by James Clear) and intentional use of my calendar.- Tracking frequency and type of appreciation biweekly with reflections.



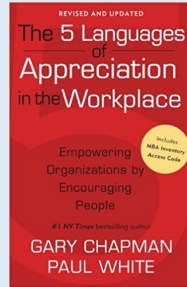
Data Collection

- Calendar events at least 2x/week
- Google Form completion 2x/week with the following questions:
 - a. Who, in my focus group, did I intentionally affirm today?
 - b. What form of appreciation did I utilize?
 - c. What am I noticing about how I am feeling when I affirm people who are important to me?
 - d. What am I noticing about how others respond when I affirm them?
 - e. Other notes, wondering, or reflections
- ~~Weekly~~ reflections about the impact of these actions on my understanding of how to support and guide others



My Data

Baseline information:
December-
mid January



RESULTS FOR BRENNA



BRENNA

S PRIMARY LANGUAGE

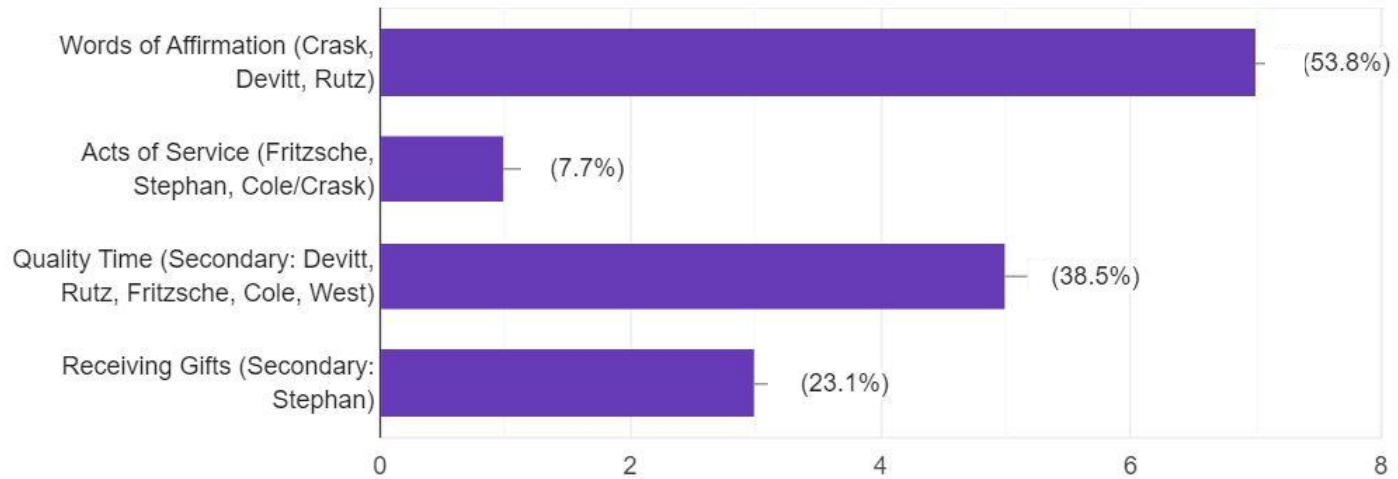
Your primary language for feeling appreciated in the work setting is **Words of Affirmation - you feel appreciated when others communicate their appreciation for you verbally.** Encouraging words can be deeply meaningful to you. Remember, however, there are different ways to communicate appreciation verbally (for example, orally or in writing; and, in private or in front of others.) We have found it is as important to utilize the proper method as it is to use the correct appreciation language to communicate effectively. So please let those who work with you know the specific types of verbal affirmation important to you, so they can “hit the mark” with their efforts to show you appreciation.

Name	Grade/ Team	What is your primary Language of Appreciation?	What is your secondary Language of Appreciation?	Are you bilingual? (Your top two scores are the same)	What is your least valued Language of Appreciation (lowest score)?	What is one take away or way you could apply this in your role/work?	What would meaningful recognition look like to you?	What does quality time with your team look like?	What does acts of service look like for you?
Teacher #1	4th Grade	Acts of Service	Quality Time	No	Tangible Gifts	To make myself available to help others	checking in to ask how things are going. Follow up with actions as needed.	Having the time to allow everyone's voice to be heard and come together to make group decisions and support one another.	Stepping in to help when a need is recognized. Also, sometimes just thinking of someone else to help them, whether it be to prep something, plan, or take on a task because it helps the whole team - but doing these things not always because they are asked, but because they see the need and want to help
Teacher #2	3rd Grade	Acts of Service	Receiving Gifts	Yes	Words of Affirmation if spoken in front of a huge group.	My scores were all the same. Two were 7's and two were 8's. So, my take away is that I appreciate anything . . .	A thank you card or someone speaking to me face to face	Laughing, food, sarcasm.	making the coffee in the third grade hallway before I do, checking in when I have been stressed, acknowledging the support I am providing with a simple thank you.



My Data

Type of Appreciation



My Data

- 40+ acts of kindness/appreciation
- Words of affirmation was my primary method of showing appreciation
- Quality time was my secondary method of showing appreciation
- A majority of acts of kindness did not have a visible response or specific feedback



Mary Beth,
I just wanted to thank you for all the love + support you showed me last week. I have more going on in my life than anyone knows + the thought of a personal health issue was beyond terrifying. Knowing I had you in my corner meant a great deal. Please know you're so appreciated. Hugs!





My Qualitative Data

What am I noticing about how I am feeling when I affirm people who are important to me?

- Rather than responding via email, I went to the teacher after school to discuss an inquiry. It led to a deeper conversation and an entry point into other topics.
- Purchasing items for a project she was working on. Delivering to her during her prep to allow time for dialogue and not just drop off. I was able to ask how she was doing and I felt good about the time together.
- Making notes or calendar reminders of events in people's lives to follow up on has been helpful. Intentionally walking to them to seek feedback.
- The time was worth it. I'm more specific about affirmations.
- I feel more connected to the teacher and it aligned with my leadership style - connecting and showing support.





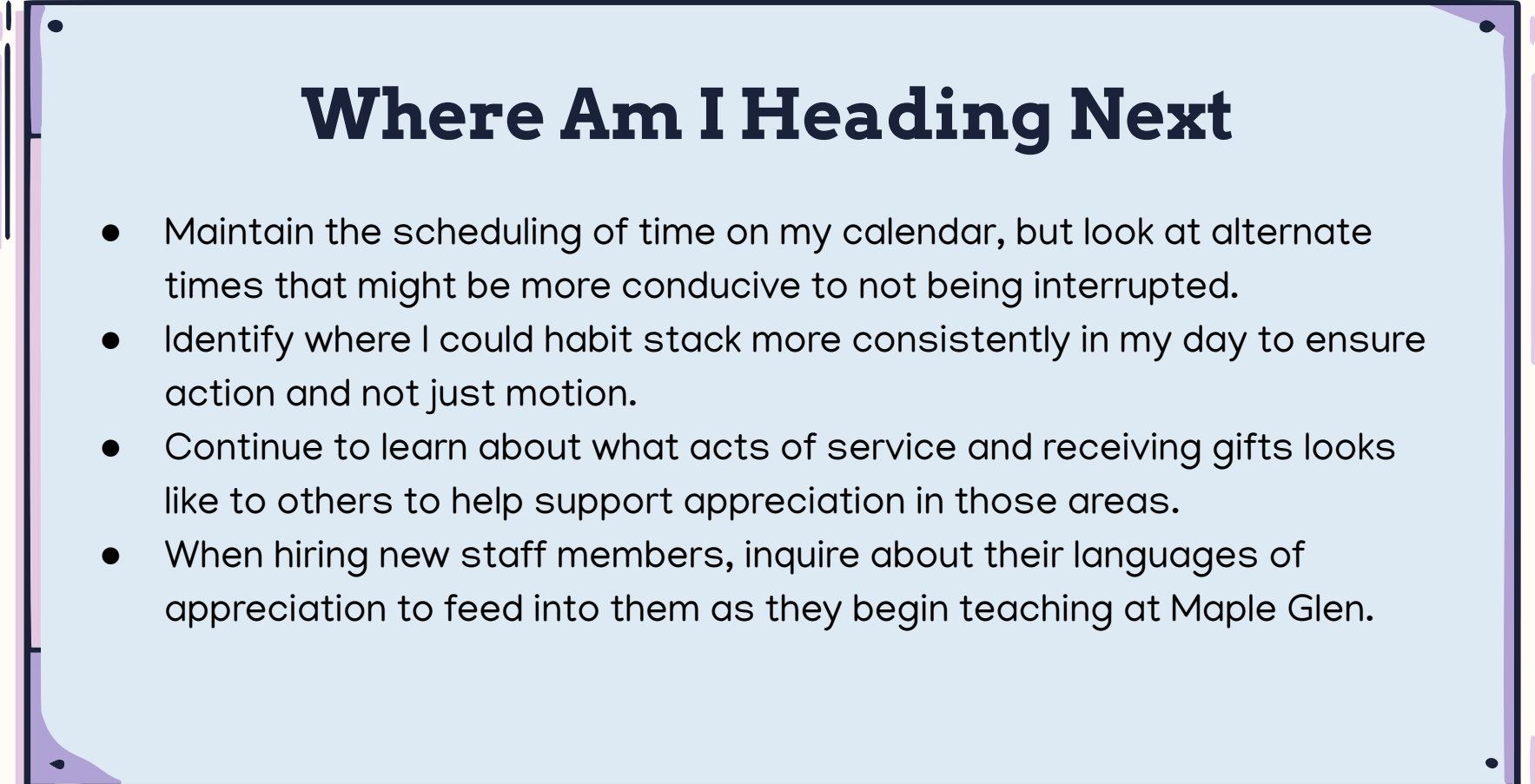
My Discoveries

- Scheduling time to reflect and act on appreciation efforts allowed me to take action on important items rather than put them into motion.
- I was meeting my phase and base needs and felt more confident in conversations when I was staying on track with my appreciation efforts and reflections. When I missed my intentional time, I could feel the void.
- It was hard for me to appreciate others in their preferred methods if it wasn't one of my preferred methods of appreciation.
- It was difficult for me to stay within my focus group the longer I was doing my inquiry project. I wanted to act on more acts of appreciation and was noticing more about the happenings around me.





Where Am I Heading Next

- Maintain the scheduling of time on my calendar, but look at alternate times that might be more conducive to not being interrupted.
 - Identify where I could habit stack more consistently in my day to ensure action and not just motion.
 - Continue to learn about what acts of service and receiving gifts looks like to others to help support appreciation in those areas.
 - When hiring new staff members, inquire about their languages of appreciation to feed into them as they begin teaching at Maple Glen.
- 





Bibliography

Dana, Nancy Fichtman. *Leading with Passion and Knowledge*. Corwin Press, 2009.

Chapman, Gary, and Paul White. *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*. Moody Publishers, 2019.

Clear, James. *Atomic Habits*. Penguin, 2018.

