

Transformation 1: Everything Happens for a Reason

Did you know that at around thirty-four weeks, a developing fetus can start hearing their first sounds? Hearing and listening seem like such basic actions, and I know how important listening is. I grew up listening, I think we all grew up listening. But I listened to doors slamming and loud shouts reverberating through the thin walls up the narrow building I called my home. I listened to insults and threats coupled with the pounding sound of my heartbeat in my ears, my heavy breathing when I was home alone, and the sound of tears brimming my eyes right before they spilled over. That “home” doesn’t hold any happy memories or feelings of comfort. It’s just a house.

For the longest time, I thought that I was only worthy of the insults and put-downs that I was told my entire life. It’s funny how I have to work so hard to memorize information for classes that I enjoy and am passionate about, but I can quote insults that I heard growing up as if I was reading them off the back of my hand. I wanted so badly to be enough in high school that I made myself sick from anxiety with impending tests and trying so desperately to find something that I could click with. Spoiler alert: it never clicked. I did well enough in school but couldn’t find my place; the place where I was passionate or excited about a club or a sport, or the place where I felt confident enough to be myself around friends. It was a rocky home life during this crucial transition period for me prepping for what came after high school; My dad was served with divorce papers and a restraining order the day before I had to go take my SAT’s, and the divorce was well under way when I needed to research colleges and plan my future. These distractions resulted in me doing the whole “college thing” completely solo, but to be honest, that’s probably one of the biggest reasons that I ever ended up at Fontbonne. One of the things

that I had to come to terms with was the fact that all these experiences that I went through weren't my fault, and I had no control. But college could be different because I was in control.

I am a firm believer that everything in life happens for a reason, and I know that I was meant to end up at Fontbonne, because I honestly couldn't imagine being anywhere else. From the moment I stepped onto campus, I felt a sense of welcoming in this new environment and the possibility for a fresh start for me to be whoever I wanted to be. I have changed a lot since beginning at Fontbonne, and though the transition from high school to college is often a frightening challenge, for me it was a welcome change, and a relatively seamless transition. I know there were difficult times, and an adjustment period, but the almost immediate comfort and sense of belonging that I felt made me even more sure of my decision back then that Fontbonne was the best choice for me. Looking back now, I wouldn't even recognize who I was before college, and I am proud of myself for how far I have come and who I am now. But back then, I couldn't have known how much more I would change and grow over my four years at Fontbonne, because the truth was, back then I was just getting started.



Leadership 1: Finding My Magic in Miracles

Leadership here at Fontbonne has been one of the biggest parts of my life for the last four years. If you asked me four years ago if I thought I would be where I am today, I never would've believed you. I was very reserved back in high school; I didn't have a huge group of friends, and I didn't get involved really in any capacity. But something switched in me when I started at Fontbonne, and I honestly think it was the welcoming environment that made me feel comfortable to step out of my comfort zone and sign up for a couple different organizations during the first week of classes.

There was a mini golf event taking place in the meadow during Welcome Week, the first week back of official school and classes. The event was for an organization that raised money for children's hospitals, so I walked over from my dorm by myself to check it out and let me tell you I was terrified. I started by walking around the meadow to look at images of the kids that benefitted from the money that this organization raised. Their "miracle stories" and how they were connected to St. Louis Children's Hospital or SSM Cardinal Glennon were on a stand next to their pictures, and I read every single story that night. The obstacles that these kids had overcome, most before the age of ten, really stuck with me. In that moment, I knew I had to be a part of this, so when I saw the signup table, I walked over and put my name down. I registered for Fontbonne University Dance Marathon (FBUDM) for the first time that day, and at the same time, I signed up to be on the morale team. I still really didn't know what I was signing up for right then, but looking back, that one moment set me on the course to becoming who I am today.

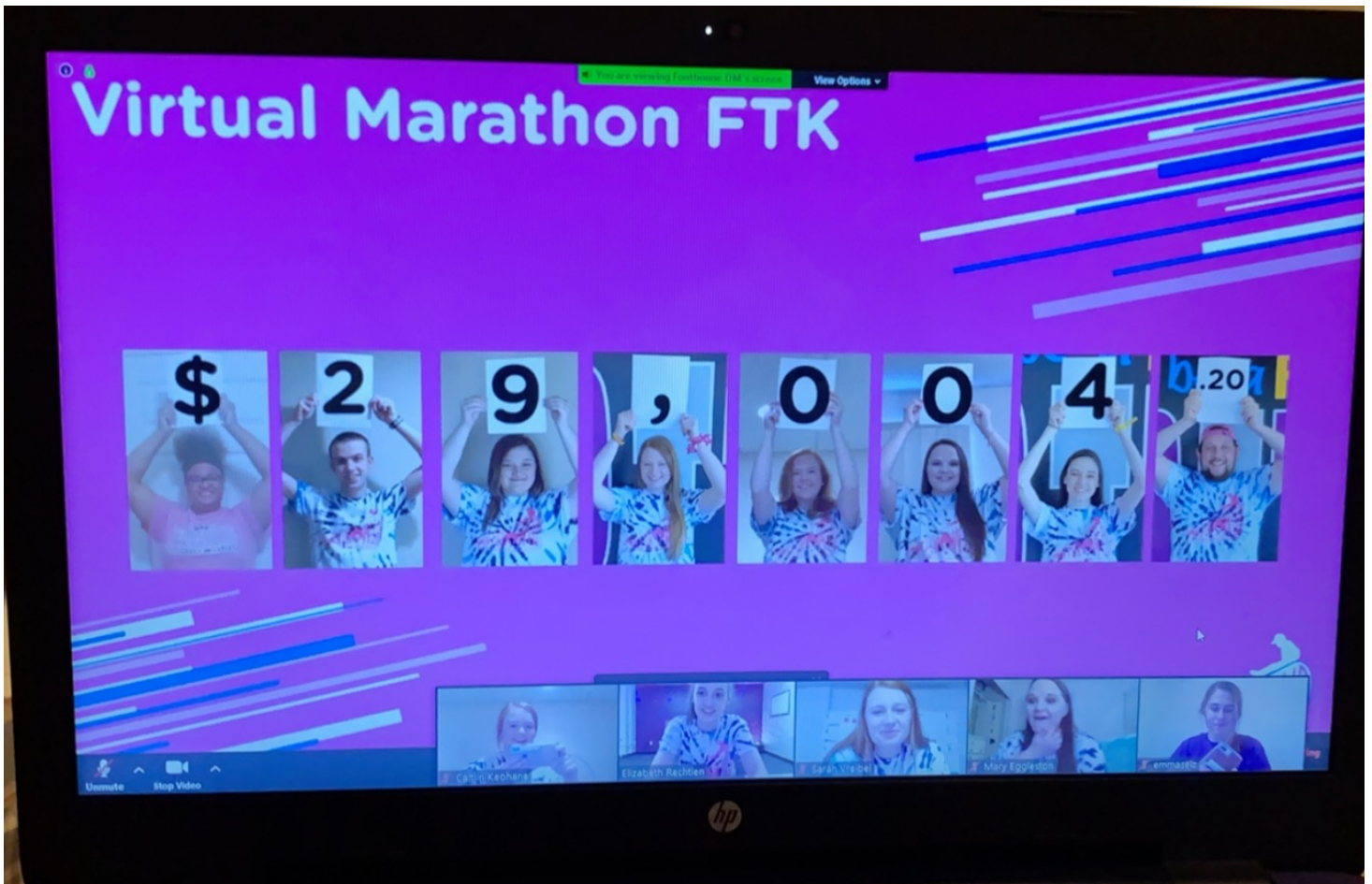
I went by myself to the first official meeting of the semester for the morale team and was completely panicked. I almost didn't go at all, but these meetings quickly became my favorite part of the week, and something that I excitedly looked forward to.

In late October, one of the members of the executive team decided they needed to step down from their role, and I was encouraged to apply for the vacant spot. I had never applied for a position like this, so I was really nervous, and contemplated for weeks whether I should actually do it. But going against my fear at the time, I sent in my application. The funny thing is, I actually didn't get the position I applied for, and I was upset. I felt defeated, that I wasn't good enough. This was the first time I had put myself out there, applying for a position that I eventually wasn't offered, and it hurt my confidence and excitement about the organization. But what I didn't know at the time was that the then-president and campus advisor were setting me up to be on a different path to eventually end up where I am now. After giving it some thought, I accepted the position as the student government representative for FBUDM and started attending exec meetings my freshman year. I was the only freshman on any executive team in the Office of Orientation and Student Engagement that year, and I felt really proud of that fact. This role opened the door for me to be even more involved in FBUDM and continue growing in my passion to help the kids and families in our local hospitals.

I finished out my freshman year of college at the mercy of COVID-19 and experienced my first Dance Marathon Main Event virtually. Sitting there watching the donations increase on my computer screen is a moment and feeling I won't soon forget. We surpassed our goal, and raised about \$29,000 that year. That amount was a reflection of all the time and hard work we had dedicated to FBUDM. Surpassing our goal in the midst of a pandemic reaffirmed that my involvement in this organization is important and that I want to continue with this vital work.

The following school year, I eagerly stepped into a new role as VP of Community Partnerships for FBUDM, which was newly rebranded as GriffinTHON. My job was to reach out to local businesses and companies for monetary and food donations, which again pushed me

further out of my comfort zone, while learning valuable professional communication skills for my future. In my senior year, I am the President of GriffinTHON, overseeing the fundraising and participation, and spreading awareness of this cause to our campus community. Like most things, there have been challenges along the way, but since joining this organization, my collaboration and leadership has been instrumental in making “miracles” that make a difference in people’s lives. I have contributed to something I will always be proud of. Signing up for this organization was my first step to making Fontbonne my home-away-from-home, and despite any challenges I faced over the years, and knowing everything that I know now, if I had the chance, I would still go back and do everything the exact same way.





Exploration 1: My Right Path

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” is a question that adults often ask children, and there’s a lot of background information that you can gather from a child based on their answer. At age seven, I wanted to be a pop star or a singer, age ten I wanted to be a doctor, age fifteen I would’ve told you I don’t know, and now I’m studying to be a speech language pathologist (SLP). When first deciding what colleges, I was going to apply to, and for what degree, I had no idea what I wanted to study and very little guidance to help me figure that out. I had participated in a shadow program through my high school with a 2nd grade teacher for my senior year, so with that experience in mind, I applied as an elementary education major to nine different schools. Eight of those schools were in the northeast where I grew up, and one in the Midwest. The odds of me ending up at Fontbonne by those numbers were very low, but everything happens for a reason.

I started my first year-and-a-half at Fontbonne as an elementary education major, and enjoyed the classes enough, but was still questioning if this was for me or not. I was hearing horror stories from teachers that I knew, and everyone I talked to said I shouldn’t become a teacher. They said it was too much work for the lack of appreciation that I would get, and that was more than enough to make me start to question my path. When taking one of my practicum observation classes, I was by chance placed in a special education classroom because there weren’t enough regular education classrooms available. The special education setting was very different from a regular education classroom to me, but I knew how similar it would be to speech language pathology (SLP), and the job of a school-based pathologist, working one-on-one with students to improve communication, and social/behavioral skills. Some of my best friends that I had made since being at Fontbonne were SLP majors, and every time they talked about their

classes or what they were learning about, I was so interested. My mom is also an SLP, so I grew up knowing about the field. That practicum, and the realization about the possibilities for me as an SLP was the first time in a while that I felt excited about my future. So, after I completed that class, I went to my advisor and told her I wanted to switch majors.

By this time, I was a couple semesters behind in the “normal” path to graduate with this degree, which was scary, but making this change gave me a sense of power and relief that I hadn’t had in a while, almost like I knew I was making the right decision. Since that switch, I’ve never questioned that that decision was a pivotal moment in my life, and it opened new doors for what I can do in my future. With an SLP degree, I’m not confined to a single classroom, or a classroom at all. I have more autonomy in where I want to be and what I want to specialize in.

But since speech language pathology goes hand in hand with special education, I added a special education minor just in case I decide to work in a school setting. Speech language pathology is a complicated field and takes years of schooling for a bachelor’s and master’s degree, plus a clinical fellowship year, and yearly re-certifications after that, but so far, I’ve had the opportunity to work with an eighty-year-old man on word finding challenges that were the result of a stroke he suffered about a year ago, and a three-year-old who has autism and limited verbal language. These are two vastly different types of clients that I can work with as an SLP, but that is part of what makes it so exciting to me. I still don’t know for sure where I will end up with this degree, or what setting I will be in, but taking that first step started me on my right path, and the different fields, the different ages, the different locations, and all the possibilities to mold my future into what I want it to be are within reaching distance.



Change of Major/Concentration/Minor/Certification/Certificate

Caitlin Keohane [Redacted]

Name Student ID#

Major: [X] Change From: Elementary Education To: Speech Pathology

Concentration: [] Change [] Add [] Drop From: To:

Minor: [] Change [X] Add [] Drop From: To: Special Education

Education Certification: [] Change [] Add [] Drop From: To:

Certificate: [] Change [] Add [] Drop From: To:

Please obtain signatures in the following order:

[Signature] 9/17/2020 Student Signature Date

[Signature] 9/24/2020 Current Advisor Signature Date

Current Department Chair Signature Date 10.10.2020

New Department Chair Signature Date

Name of new advisor as assigned by new Department Chair

Director of International Studies Signature (if applicable) Date

Occupation 1: The Power of Language

The prospect of deciding what I wanted to be for the rest of my life didn't seem scary until I reached high school, because it finally became real that I had to plan for a future that I couldn't have known yet. Where was I going to go to college? What did I want to be for the rest of my life? Was the job I wanted going to make me enough money to support myself, and the future that I wanted?

I went to college originally studying elementary education, but changed my major shortly thereafter to pursue a degree in speech language pathology with a minor in special education so that the education courses I had already taken didn't go to waste. Speech language pathology has a plethora of settings that you can work in ranging from schools and hospitals, to nursing care facilities. I had my first "occupational experience" during the first semester of my senior year as a pre-clinician in the on-campus clinic with a seventy-six-year-old male client who suffered a stroke and was diagnosed with anomia. Anomia is a type of neurological disorder dealing with word-finding issues in verbal conversation. I was an observer during these sessions but also participated in the different activities and conversations with him that targeted his word-finding challenges. We played games like scrabble, categories, and family feud, giving him categories to list related words. While he came up with his answers, I completed the activity with him to give another perspective on words he could've come up with. Before this experience, I never would've realized how these games could be so useful in treatment.

I knew that our clinic was important and made a lasting impact on the clients and people that we provide therapy to, but it was really apparent to me seeing it first-hand with this man who just wanted to be able to tell a story or talk in conversation with friends without having to pause to remember a specific word that he wanted to use. And the fact that the work we were

doing with him was actually able to make that difference in his life and his speech was a really special experience to be a part of.

During one of the sessions, we did a worksheet where it gave him twenty different words down one side of the paper, and for each of those given words, he had to list three additional synonyms to practice his word finding. He always took about ten to fifteen minutes to fill this out, and I took this time to write my own answers in my notebook. After the time was up, the lead clinician would always check over his answers or he would share them to us, and I would share mine to compare. On one particular day, he was doing really well, producing three synonyms for almost all of the words he was given with no need for assistance from either of us, and actually did better than I did. When we were sharing the results, he seemed skeptical that I did poorly, and thought that I had done so on purpose so that he would “win.” That session, and that significant moment is one that I will never forget, because I learned a really important lesson. As speech language pathologists, we are obviously working on the actual language production, and guiding our clients in “gaining” or “regaining” their voices, but we are also working on enhancing and regaining confidence in their communication and in communicating with others.

Communicating is an innately human feature, so when someone is no longer able to use that skill, it's a very challenging adjustment that comes with lots of different emotions like confusion, fear, frustration, and anger. It was one of the greatest moments for me to be able to tell my client that I didn't do it on purpose, and that even people that don't have aphasia can occasionally encounter these challenges. I think it was validating for him to see that he isn't alone in his challenges, and even though I can't fully understand what he's going through, my struggle that day showed him that we all go through similar struggles sometimes, and that

language in general, is hard sometimes. It affirmed to me how important this job is, and how motivated I am to continue to make this difference in the lives of my future clients.

Service and Social Justice 1: What's Outside my "Bubble"?

Service has always been important to me, but I never truly was able to see what service beyond my "bubble" could look like; growing up, I only ever did service projects directly within my community, so I never really got to see beyond the walls of my wealthier town. Service at Fontbonne was my first steps outside of my "bubble" even though I didn't know it at the time. and it was the first opportunity that I got to help make more of a difference beyond my direct community.

The first service project that I participated in while at Fontbonne was during my freshman year. I volunteered to participate in an off-campus service trip, and didn't know anybody, which made me really nervous, and thinking back, I can't even tell you why I went, because it was really unlike me to go and do something outside of my comfort zone like that. Regardless, I went and helped out at a church to help do housework for elderly or disabled people. I did yardwork, trash removal, repainting the siding of houses, repairing fences, and removing clutter and junk from houses. They were all pretty easy tasks, but those were things that I had taken for granted and didn't realize how many people couldn't perform those "simple" tasks on their own before participating in this project.

The people we helped that day were so appreciative of the work we were doing for them. We met some of them during and after we finished our projects, and they just kept thanking us, and I know why they were thanking us, but I also didn't want them to thank me. Those simple tasks were things that I just wanted to do, and I didn't need any appreciation or recognition for that work because I knew that it was making a big difference to those individuals, and it was an easy thing to do to bring some ease to their lives. I remember at one point I got to talk to one of the older women who I helped paint the side of her house. My group split up and some of us

worked on yardwork, trimming back her overgrown trees and bushes, mowing her lawn, and painting the house. She started telling me about how she had three kids, and a couple of grandkids, but that they all lived in different states. She was so grateful for our help because she didn't have any family in the area that was able to help her repaint the peeling coat on her house. The look on her face when she came out and saw the finished product was all I needed to feel like the hard work and time was worth it. Kind, selfless actions are reward enough.

I would like to think of myself as a relatively helpful person, in that I will do whatever someone else needs me to do to the best of my ability without having to even be asked, and I do this quite often with family members. But being able to do it for a complete stranger felt just as important, if not more important, because we were all the help she had at that time.

This seemingly trivial service project that I signed up for on a whim gave me more clarity and a better understanding of how I could do more for a community, and in conjunction with Fontbonne's mission, Serve the Dear Neighbor Without Distinction. This project put a real meaning behind those words for me and set me on a course for much more community service and involvement for the rest of my undergraduate years at Fontbonne.



Exploration 2: Finding Myself

They say that college is the time for exploring; exploring for your future, and your career, and most importantly exploring who you are, and who you are going to be. Looking back at my past and who I was before coming to Fontbonne, I don't recognize myself. I was shy until I knew someone, I wasn't confident in my ideas and never spoke up, and I let fear dictate my life and what I did and didn't do. But I am so proud to say that I am not that person anymore.

I found who I am through Fontbonne, and the many experiences and memories that I will carry with me after I graduate, but it wasn't always easy. I questioned myself a lot along the way. Part of my leadership journey through Fontbonne was focused significantly on me learning about the strengths that I possess and being able to utilize those strengths in my classroom and leadership experiences. After taking an inventory quiz in preparation to apply to be a WING leader for the following year, the online program determined that my top five strengths were Achiever, Developer, Discipline, Strategic, and Empathy. At first, I didn't really understand how these were strengths, and what they had to do with my leadership, but through the exploration of these characteristics, I was able to find how these five simple words encompassed me as a person, and eventually as a leader, and how I could use these attributes to further my success.

Achiever was one of the "strengths" that I didn't really understand at first. I had good enough grades, but it didn't seem like the most important thing to me, so at that point, I was skeptical if this was even a legit inventory. But as time went on, I realized that achiever wasn't just about getting good grades, it was about striving for success in anything that I did, and more specifically, in the things that I really cared about. Since I was going to school for something that I was actually really interested in and was involved in things that I was actually passionate about,

my achiever strength, relating specifically to striving to do the best I could in those specific areas, finally made sense.

On the other hand, my strategic strength was one that I never even questioned, but it put a name to how I planned out three different scenarios in my head before acting on anything or mapping out the most logical way to get things done. I have always had an easy time visualizing processes and strategizing how to be most efficient in completing a task, but I didn't ever label it as a strength because I didn't realize that it was a skill. To be honest, sometimes people would disagree with my ideas or plans because it didn't make sense to them, even though from my perspective, it was the fastest way to get from point A to point B. But knowing this strength gave me a newfound perspective and more confidence in how my mind works.

Discipline and developer go hand-in-hand and encompasses my ability to work diligently to create something new or come up with unique ideas, while remaining motivated and dedicated enough throughout the project to see it through. It's not enough to just see it through, it's important to me that the work is of the highest quality, and something I can be proud of.

And lastly, empathy was one strength that I have continuously gone back and forth on since the day I received the result. What was labeled as my greatest strength, has also served as a weakness since coming to Fontbonne. My innate ability to feel and understand other's emotions has, in some instances, led me to then invalidate my own feelings. It has taken time, but learning to accept that I have a right to feel my own emotions while still supporting someone else has guided me to accepting empathy as a strength again.

With these characteristics and strengths that I now both understand and accept about myself, I have a stronger grasp of who I am, and who I want to continue to be beyond Fontbonne after I graduate.

Caitlin Keohane

Your Signature Themes

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 11-15-2019



DON CLIFTON

**Father of Strengths Psychology and
Inventor of CliftonStrengths**

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Caitlin Keohane

SURVEY COMPLETION DATE: 11-15-2019

Many years of research conducted by The Gallup Organization suggest that the most effective people are those who understand their strengths and behaviors. These people are best able to develop strategies to meet and exceed the demands of their daily lives, their careers, and their families.

A review of the knowledge and skills you have acquired can provide a basic sense of your abilities, but an awareness and understanding of your natural talents will provide true insight into the core reasons behind your consistent successes.

Your Signature Themes report presents your five most dominant themes of talent, in the rank order revealed by your responses to CliftonStrengths. Of the 34 themes measured, these are your "top five."

Your Signature Themes are very important in maximizing the talents that lead to your successes. By focusing on your Signature Themes, separately and in combination, you can identify your talents, build them into strengths, and enjoy personal and career success through consistent, near-perfect performance.

Developer

You see the potential in others. Very often, in fact, potential is all you see. In your view no individual is fully formed. On the contrary, each individual is a work in progress, alive with possibilities. And you are drawn toward people for this very reason. When you interact with others, your goal is to help them experience success. You look for ways to challenge them. You devise interesting experiences that can stretch them and help them grow. And all the while you are on the lookout for the signs of growth—a new behavior learned or modified, a slight improvement in a skill, a glimpse of excellence or of "flow" where previously there were only halting steps. For you these small increments—invisible to some—are clear signs of potential being realized. These signs of growth in others are your fuel. They bring you strength and satisfaction. Over time many will seek you out for help and encouragement because on some level they know that your helpfulness is both genuine and fulfilling to you.

Strategic

The Strategic theme enables you to sort through the clutter and find the best route. It is not a skill that can be taught. It is a distinct way of thinking, a special perspective on the world at large. This

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perspective allows you to see patterns where others simply see complexity. Mindful of these patterns, you play out alternative scenarios, always asking, "What if this happened? Okay, well what if this happened?" This recurring question helps you see around the next corner. There you can evaluate accurately the potential obstacles. Guided by where you see each path leading, you start to make selections. You discard the paths that lead nowhere. You discard the paths that lead straight into resistance. You discard the paths that lead into a fog of confusion. You cull and make selections until you arrive at the chosen path—your strategy. Armed with your strategy, you strike forward. This is your Strategic theme at work: "What if?" Select. Strike.

Empathy

You can sense the emotions of those around you. You can feel what they are feeling as though their feelings are your own. Intuitively, you are able to see the world through their eyes and share their perspective. You do not necessarily agree with each person's perspective. You do not necessarily feel pity for each person's predicament—this would be sympathy, not Empathy. You do not necessarily condone the choices each person makes, but you do understand. This instinctive ability to understand is powerful. You hear the unvoiced questions. You anticipate the need. Where others grapple for words, you seem to find the right words and the right tone. You help people find the right phrases to express their feelings—to themselves as well as to others. You help them give voice to their emotional life. For all these reasons other people are drawn to you.

Achiever

Your Achiever theme helps explain your drive. Achiever describes a constant need for achievement. You feel as if every day starts at zero. By the end of the day you must achieve something tangible in order to feel good about yourself. And by "every day" you mean every single day—workdays, weekends, vacations. No matter how much you may feel you deserve a day of rest, if the day passes without some form of achievement, no matter how small, you will feel dissatisfied. You have an internal fire burning inside you. It pushes you to do more, to achieve more. After each accomplishment is reached, the fire dwindles for a moment, but very soon it rekindles itself, forcing you toward the next accomplishment. Your relentless need for achievement might not be logical. It might not even be focused. But it will always be with you. As an Achiever you must learn to live with this whisper of discontent. It does have its benefits. It brings you the energy you need to work long hours without burning out. It is the jolt you can always count on to get you started on new tasks, new challenges. It is the power supply that causes you to set the pace and define the levels of productivity for your work group. It is the theme that keeps you moving.

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Discipline

Your world needs to be predictable. It needs to be ordered and planned. So you instinctively impose structure on your world. You set up routines. You focus on timelines and deadlines. You break long-term projects into a series of specific short-term plans, and you work through each plan diligently. You are not necessarily neat and clean, but you do need precision. Faced with the inherent messiness of life, you want to feel in control. The routines, the timelines, the structure, all of these help create this feeling of control. Lacking this theme of Discipline, others may sometimes resent your need for order, but there need not be conflict. You must understand that not everyone feels your urge for predictability; they have other ways of getting things done. Likewise, you can help them understand and even appreciate your need for structure. Your dislike of surprises, your impatience with errors, your routines, and your detail orientation don't need to be misinterpreted as controlling behaviors that box people in. Rather, these behaviors can be understood as your instinctive method for maintaining your progress and your productivity in the face of life's many distractions.

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Occupation 2: Small Wins

Have you ever had an experience where you know what you want to say but don't know how to word it, or you are trying to say a word and it's on the tip of your tongue but just won't come out? How about feeling completely misunderstood no matter how hard you try to explain how you are feeling? There are people who have these struggles every day, all the time, and they can't help their automatic reactions to something that makes them upset or the struggle they have to produce a sentence they've said a million times before. That's why I love what I do.

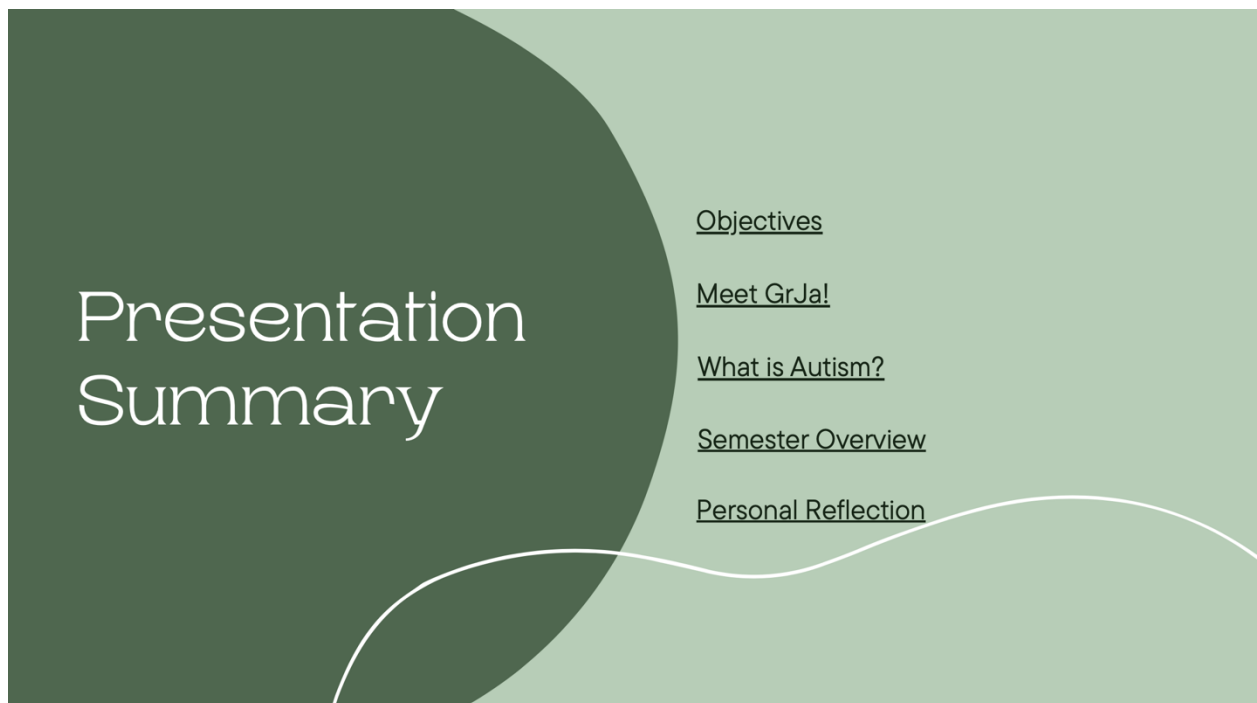
My job as a speech language pathologist (in training right now) is to figure out ways to help clients and patients reach THEIR 100%, whether they have communication, comprehension, or social/behavioral deficits from something that is out of their control. I say "their" in all capital letters because I learned early on is that anyone's 100% is going to look different, so helping someone get to that, or as close to that as possible is the ultimate goal.

This final semester of my senior year of undergrad, I had the privilege of working with an almost three-year-old little boy who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the developmental language group in the Fontbonne Eardley Clinic. Before this client, I only knew the basics of ASD, but I am a firm believer that at least 50% of actual "learning" (although it's probably closer to 80% at least) occurs in the field during actual practice and experience. And for this semester that was just what happened. Autism is a complicated diagnosis because not only does it present differently in every individual, but it can actually encompass any deficits in these three general categories: Verbal communication, which are the actual speech sounds and words produced; nonverbal communication in gestures and facial expressions; and social/behavioral skills that can include eye contact, body movements and proximity to their conversation partners. At the beginning of the semester, my client had extremely limited spontaneous verbal

communication, meaning that he wouldn't say anything without someone saying it first. For example, if he needed help, he wasn't able to communicate that until someone modeled "Do you need help?" to which he would respond "help" with rising intonation, directly mimicking the intonation of the model even though it wasn't a question.

I learned some of his responses and to read his body language to give me clues about how he was thinking or feeling, so that I could anticipate, and prompt him to then model how he should verbally communicate. I can usually tell when he needs something, and prompt "Do you need your drink?" to which he would then respond, "Need drink," and he no longer uses the questioning intonation. I learned early on that celebrating even the smallest victories was necessary to not only encourage my client, but also to encourage myself, that regardless of the percentage each session, he had at least one small win each session. The goals that we set for him for the semester included increasing his joint attention, which is basically paying attention to something with guidance from someone else to pay attention, increasing his verbal outputs with models from me, and increasing his social interactions and engagements with other peers in the group. He surpassed his goal of joint attention about halfway through the semester, staying attentive and engaged during three different activities for an extended period of time, which was a huge milestone for both of us. It was the first goal that I set that my client successfully met, and I can clearly see an improvement in him since we began at the start of the semester. He has so many increased word productions and is now more verbal and vocal. He is also starting to have increased social interactions with other children in our group, engaging in parallel play (playing independent activities while sitting next to another client), and even acknowledging some of the other kids by their name, which is huge for him and his progress in communication. Celebrating the small wins and watching his improvement was one of the highlights of my semester, and I

can't wait to continue working with other clients in my future, to help them get back to their 100%, to feel confident in themselves and their abilities to communicate.



Objectives:

- To inform about what autism is
- To learn about my client and the different ways I, as a speech language pathology student worked with him to achieve his semester goals.

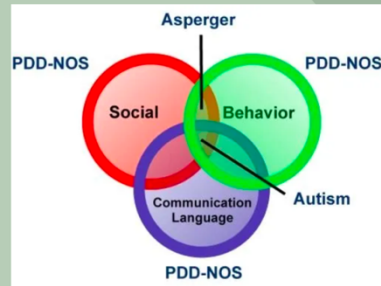
Meet GrJa

- About 3 years old
- Enrolled to start kindergarten in August, 2023
- He lives with his mom, dad, and 9-year-old sister
- He loves music and singing, and playing with toy cars
- He loves learning and playing games with shapes, numbers, puzzles and flashcards
- He has Autism

What is Autism?

- Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complicated neurological disorder that has an unknown cause
- ASD presents differently in every individual, and can impact areas of verbal and nonverbal communication, and inhibit social interactions

- Primarily four different disorders
 - Classical Autism
 - Asperger's Syndrome
 - Pervasive Developmental Disorder
 - Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- All different levels of severity



What does Autism mean for GrJa?

- He was delayed in reaching developmental milestones - crawling, walking, and talking
- GrJa received his autism diagnosis in March, 2022 from Mercy Hospital.
- He began the semester with very limited spontaneous verbal speech

At the start:

- He receives therapy services from Missouri First-Steps weekly for 1-hour sessions
 - He also receives Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy weekly in-home sessions
 - The Spring 2023 semester was GrJa's first semester receiving services from the Fontbonne Eardley Family Clinic on campus.
- GrJa joined the Developmental Language Group (DLG) along with 5 other child clients, ranging in ages 2-4
 - In the DLG, there were 3-4 adult clinicians in the room for every session
 - The DLG targets early intervention for kids with developmental, or language delays/impairments
 - We met in the DLG on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 9am-11am every week
 - A big part of the DLG is "language overload" - narrating everything, giving as many opportunities for language (in all forms) as possible

Where We Began

- Very limited spontaneous speech
 - His mom reported he wouldn't ask for things he needed or wanted
 - Struggled to separate from his mom for the sessions
 - Tended to isolate himself socially
 - Moved to areas or toys in the room that fewer kids were playing with
 - Avoided me quite often
- Started with some informal assessments
 - Observations of his behaviors
 - Language sample - didn't yield many results since his spontaneous speech was very limited

Goals for the Semester

After the initial informal assessments, Dr. Lauren Wright-Jones and I sat down and discussed goals that we wanted to set for GrJa, for long-term and the semester.

Long Term Goals:

Objective 1

GrJa will increase his verbal communication

Objective 2

GrJa will increase his ability to initiate and maintain joint attention during group/classroom activities and routines

Semester Objectives:

Objective 1

GrJa will produce verbal communication of his wants and needs containing three or more words per utterance, in 8 out of 10 observable opportunities given no more than 2 cues per elicited response

Objective 2

GrJa will demonstrate joint attention for one minute, 3 times during a structured activity with maximum cues from the clinician on 3 consecutive data collection days

Treatment methods to meet these goals:

- Clinician Models
- Enhanced Milieu Teaching
- Prompting/Providing choices
- Class Timer
- Withholding
- Utterance expansion
- Specific reinforcement for positive productions

Making Progress

Objective 1:

- Started with 2-word utterances
 - "Want car" or "Need help"
- Good Starting point

Objective 2:

- Used different manipulatives or sensory items to keep him grounded

Need _____



Progress Report

About halfway through the semester, Progress Reports are completed to evaluate where the client is at in reaching their goals, and reevaluating for various reasons

Objective 1:

He was producing 2-words per phrase adequately, so we progressed to targeting 3-or-more words per sentence!

Objective 2:

GrJa met this goal to maintain joint attention for 1 minute in 3 separate activities on 3 separate days!

Objective 3:

GrJa will initiate engagement with one peer during a structured or unstructured activity on 3 separate occasions with a clinician model

Additional notes:

GrJa greatly increased his verbal output with models and guidance from the clinicians in the space.

Current Status (as of 4/20)

- GrJa ended the semester averaging 74.25% accuracy in 3-or-more words per utterance with a given prompt.
- He had grown in his comfortability in the space, and we saw him grow in his communication, both verbal and nonverbal, and social interactions!
- His social interactions alternated almost weekly averaging 1-2 socials interactions modeled by clinicians, and engaging in *parallel play* with other clients.
- At the end of the clinic semester, we recommended that GrJa continue therapy in the group setting to continue targeting increased social interactions.

Personal Reflection

- Adaptability is key
- I was the only undergraduate clinician in the group which was intimidating
- I learned a lot about autism
- Not everything is going to go according to plan, and that isn't anyone's fault
- I grew in my confidence, and in my abilities to work with child clients, and still be able to target goals in a play-based setting

Leadership 2: The Journey is just as Important as the Destination

Anyone who knows me knows that when I commit to something, I will always finish it, and I will always do it to the best of my ability, regardless of any obstacles or challenges that I might come across. My leadership journey through Fontbonne has been a busy one, and there are a million other words that I could use to describe it; confusing, stressful, exciting, and nerve-racking are a few that come immediately to mind. The one group that remained a constant, like the north star in my leadership, was GriffinTHON, the philanthropic organization that raises money for local Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. And while all the other words I already mentioned do apply, my favorite word to describe GriffinTHON is rewarding. When something is "rewarding," it literally means that it is "providing satisfaction; gratifying," which fits perfectly to sum up this year with my "baby," the organization that I have given countless amounts of time, energy, and dedication to since I joined my freshman year.

One of the most rewarding aspects of GriffinTHON is being able to educate and inform the Fontbonne community about the importance of our Children's hospitals, how impactful it is for the kids and families that seek treatment there, and how immensely important the fundraising that we do is, and what all the money we fundraise goes towards. GriffinTHON gave me a purpose, a motivation, and an inspiration over the course of my four years to strive to make change in the lives of the kids and families going through these unimaginable difficulties.

As I said before, my path through leadership hasn't been a straight shot. In fact, it's been quite the opposite, yielding more challenges, tears, and stress than I honestly care to admit. But my motivation and drive for GriffinTHON never wavered, and I continued to show up each week because I knew with this group, I had a bigger purpose.

The goal of GriffinTHON is to raise funds throughout the year through various fundraisers, personal reach-outs, and when we are lucky, sponsorships or company donations, and with that, we continue to set goals to surpass our previous years fundraising totals. In my first year participating in GriffinTHON, which was only its fourth year of existence, we raised about \$29,000, and we have been growing ever since. For my senior year, I had the honor of serving as the President of GriffinTHON, and even with all the challenges and hardships, I wouldn't change a single thing about this year. We set our theme for the year to be "Do You Believe in Magic," and this year was indeed magical because we raised a grand total of \$62,233.23 in only our seventh year as a program. When the number flipped, revealing that we had reached our goal, the flood of pride and joy was overwhelming. It was the most rewarding feeling to know that not only had we reached our goal, but that the people in that space, my teams, and supporters, came together to make that happen, and I was proud to have led them in this amazing achievement. That experience encompasses the word "rewarding" for me, because apart from the actual number, I realized in that moment - with everyone cheering and crying and celebrating - that all the time, effort, and tears were worth it. I was proud of my team and myself for everything we did, for this huge accomplishment, and this experience that made me a better leader.

Before the final reveal, I was so worried that we might not reach the goal that we set, but I was reminded by some very important people that regardless of the number that we raised and were about to reveal, we were making a huge difference for kids that needed it, and that moment changed my perspective. The end result isn't always the most important part; you should be just as proud of the journey you had to take to get there.



Service and Social Justice 2: Where I Go from Here

I have always enjoyed “service” because I know how it is impacting or positively affecting those whom I am serving. I think it makes sense, with how prominent service is in my life, that I ended up choosing a profession that will serve people in a unique, but also necessary way.

As a speech language pathologist (SLP) my job is to help people. Whether that is with their communication, both verbal or nonverbal, their voice, or their social and behavioral skills, my duty is to the clients that I help. And no two cases are alike, which makes my future job interesting and exciting. I have already had the wonderful and informative experiences working with two vastly different clients in every sense of the word; one was an eighty-year-old man who had word finding difficulties classified professionally as anomia, and the other was a three-year-old boy diagnosed with autism, limited verbal output, and delays in social skills and behaviors. My job can help both of these people gain their voice back, gain or regain their ability to communicate with family members, and help them to be able to tell a story to their friends.

My field can be very rewarding. I say “can be” because there isn’t always visible progress after a session, or a week of sessions, or even after years of sessions. But I have been lucky enough to see real progress in both the clients that I have worked with. The older gentleman was able to tell a story without any visible struggles to find specific words to complete his dialogue, and the young boy has greatly increased his verbal output in both previously modeled language and words, and spontaneous language without any prompting or modeling from me, which is major progress.

To see this progress is not only re-assuring me that I am doing a good job (even though sometimes I still feel lost or question if I’m doing the right thing), but I can also see how it is

positively impacting my client beyond the four walls of our therapy room. The mom of my young client told me that he used to never give her hugs because he didn't understand or like that form of social interaction, but since being in therapy with me in a group setting with other kids, he has gotten more social exposure than ever before, and has made really significant progress. And before coming to therapy, according to his mom, his verbal output was very limited, and he wouldn't make requests or ask for help, but now he does. My older client came into a session one day beaming with pride about how he had carried a twenty-minute conversation with an old friend without having a single word-finding difficulty. These tangible examples are why I know I chose the right field; because I was able to help my clients communicate with others, which is my form of service that I will happily do for many years to come.

It isn't lost on me that there are going to be challenges, believe me, I experienced plenty of sessions where it didn't go the way I planned, I didn't hit enough targets, or it just wasn't a good day for the client which changed the data, but the motivation is still with me to "serve the dear neighbor without distinction," to continue doing everything I can to make to improve the lives of my future clients.

Transformation 2: This Isn't Goodbye

I know I said that I changed a lot since beginning college four years ago, and that my first-year college self wouldn't recognize my high school self. But looking back now, I think I've changed almost as much, and have really grown into who I want to be.

For me, change is a scary thing. I've never liked it, it actually tends to stress me out, make me anxious and nervous, and I get almost to a place of depression because of how comfortable and happy I am in my current situation. So, you can imagine how my last few weeks of my senior year of college have been going. Experiencing all the "lasts" has been really challenging, and things that I didn't think I would be sad about ending, have really been hitting me hard. I briefly mentioned some challenges, and let me tell you, there were more than I would've preferred, but I also believe that everything happens for a reason, and those trials and tribulations changed who I am and made me the person that is getting ready to walk across the stage and accept my diploma.

From my time as a university program intern, I learned about friendship; what it is supposed to be and what it isn't, and in that whole group, found some of the greatest people that I can't wait to continue to know even after I graduate. They changed me for the better, and I'm so grateful to them.

From serving as the student government president, I learned how to truly connect with many different people, to make sure they feel heard, welcome, and wanted.

From my time as an orientation leader, I learned to speak up for myself, and believe in what I have to say. I finally accepted that what I say matters, and that the change I want to make and can make, can only come from me.

The Fontbonne community service group further taught me the importance of serving those who need it most, and I will continue to live out the mission to “Serve the Dear Neighbor without Distinction” long after I graduate.

From my job as a nanny to four young kids three days a week after long days at school, I learned patience, and the power of just listening. It’s not always easy to express how you are feeling in words, and sometimes you can’t see what’s going on underneath.

From my involvement in Omicron Delta Kappa, I learned the importance of collaboration, and how use of leadership and the six pillars integrated in the ODK philosophy can be applied to my future. I made so many memories and friendships with these connections that I’m really grateful for.

From GriffinTHON, I learned and saw more determination from a group of people than I ever could’ve thought possible. The unending support and love that I have felt without fail from every executive team member, advisor, and morale member is inspiring in it of itself. I learned passion, and drive, and gained the ability to “Believe in Magic” to make a difference, which is a lesson I could’ve only learned from this organization and this specific group of people. This was one of my hardest “lasts” because it had been such a huge part of my life for these last four years, but I know I will be back, and hope that the inspiration and fire will continue on long after I’ve officially achieved alumni status.

This has kind of become a love note to all the people I’ve been lucky enough to work with over these last four years. I have grown more, and learned just as much through these experiences as I did in the classroom. I am really proud of who I am, and who I have become, especially considering where I started from. Fontbonne will always be a part of me. These people will always be a part of my story, and these memories will live with me forever.



SERVICE



Caitlin Keohane - Junior

Caitlin represents our Service pillar through her efforts as this upcoming year's Fontbonne Student Government President! We are excited to support you in this leadership role and look forward to you and your teams' success!







