

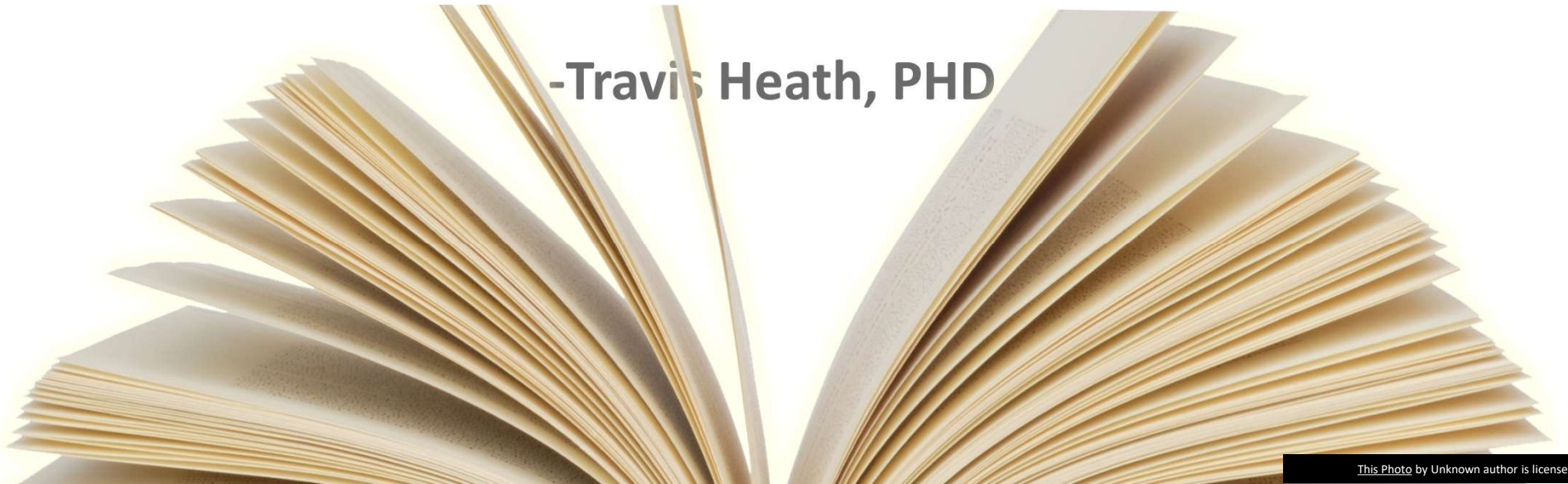
A photograph of a large group of graduates in black gowns and caps, celebrating with their arms raised and caps tossed into the air against a clear blue sky. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the graduates.

Solution Focused School Counseling

Linda Metcalf, M.Ed., Ph.D.

**Be careful about the stories that you tell yourself
or,
that others tell about you...
Those stories may begin to *live* you...**

-Travis Heath, PHD





The Mindset of the Solution Focused School Counselor



In schools, everyone is the
school counselor's client.

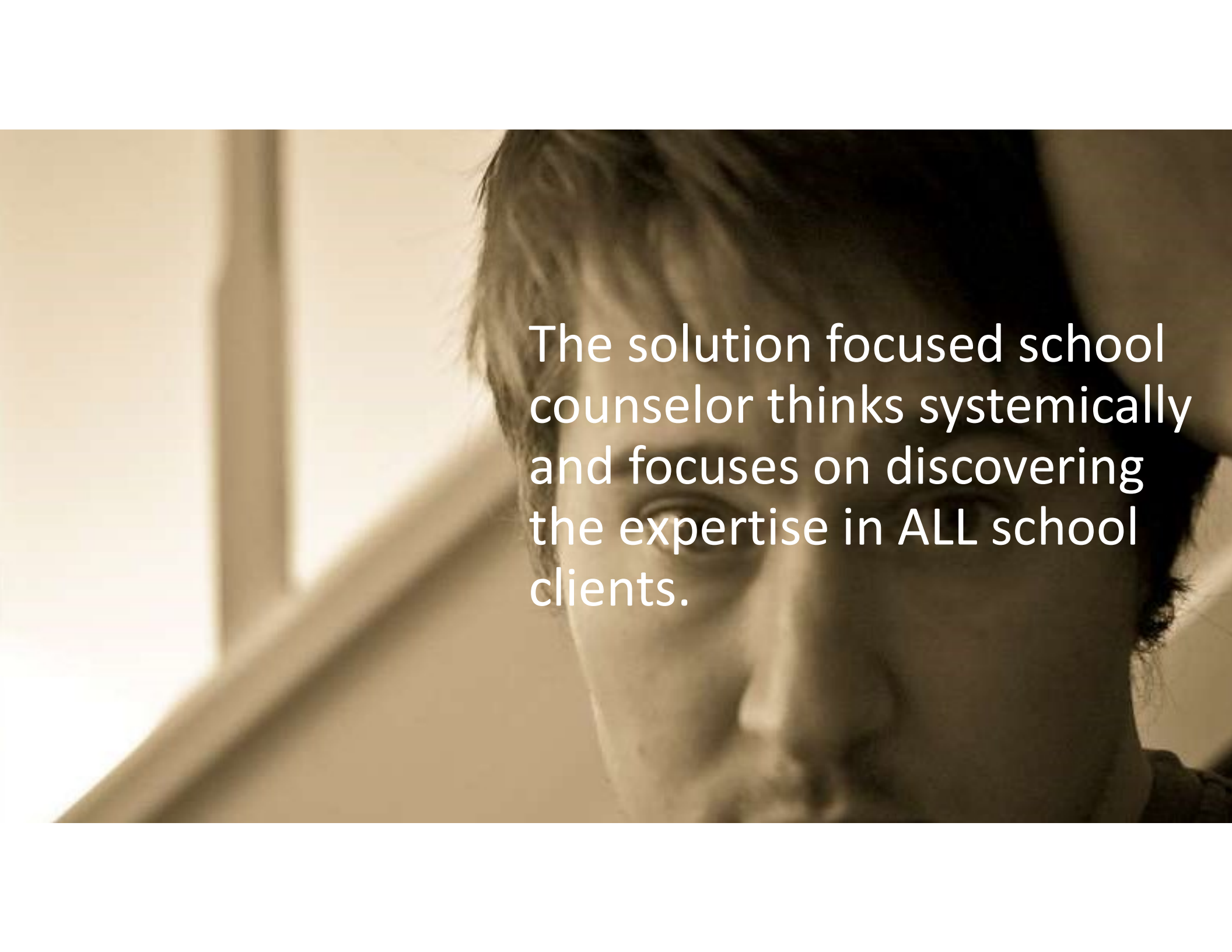
Students

Teachers

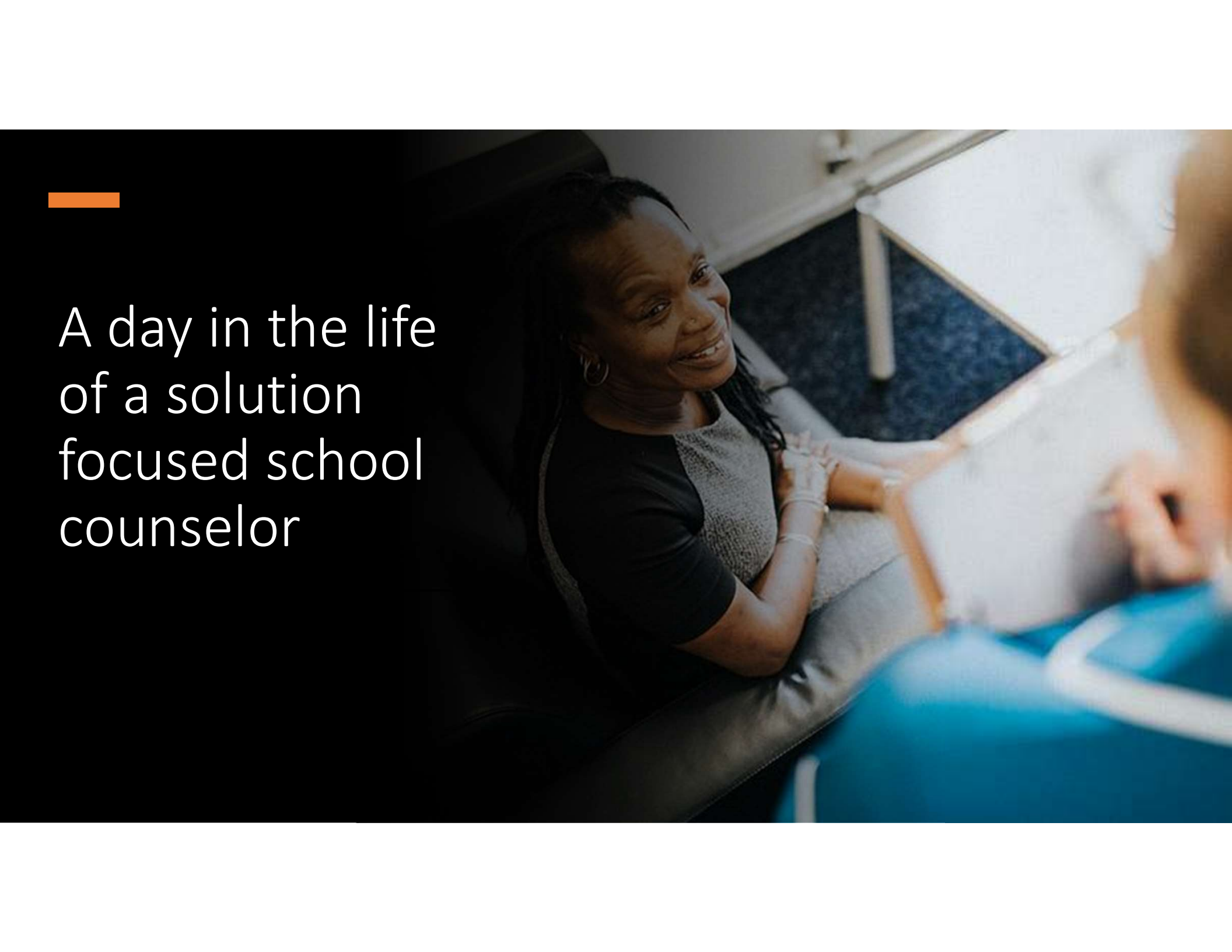
Parents

Administrators

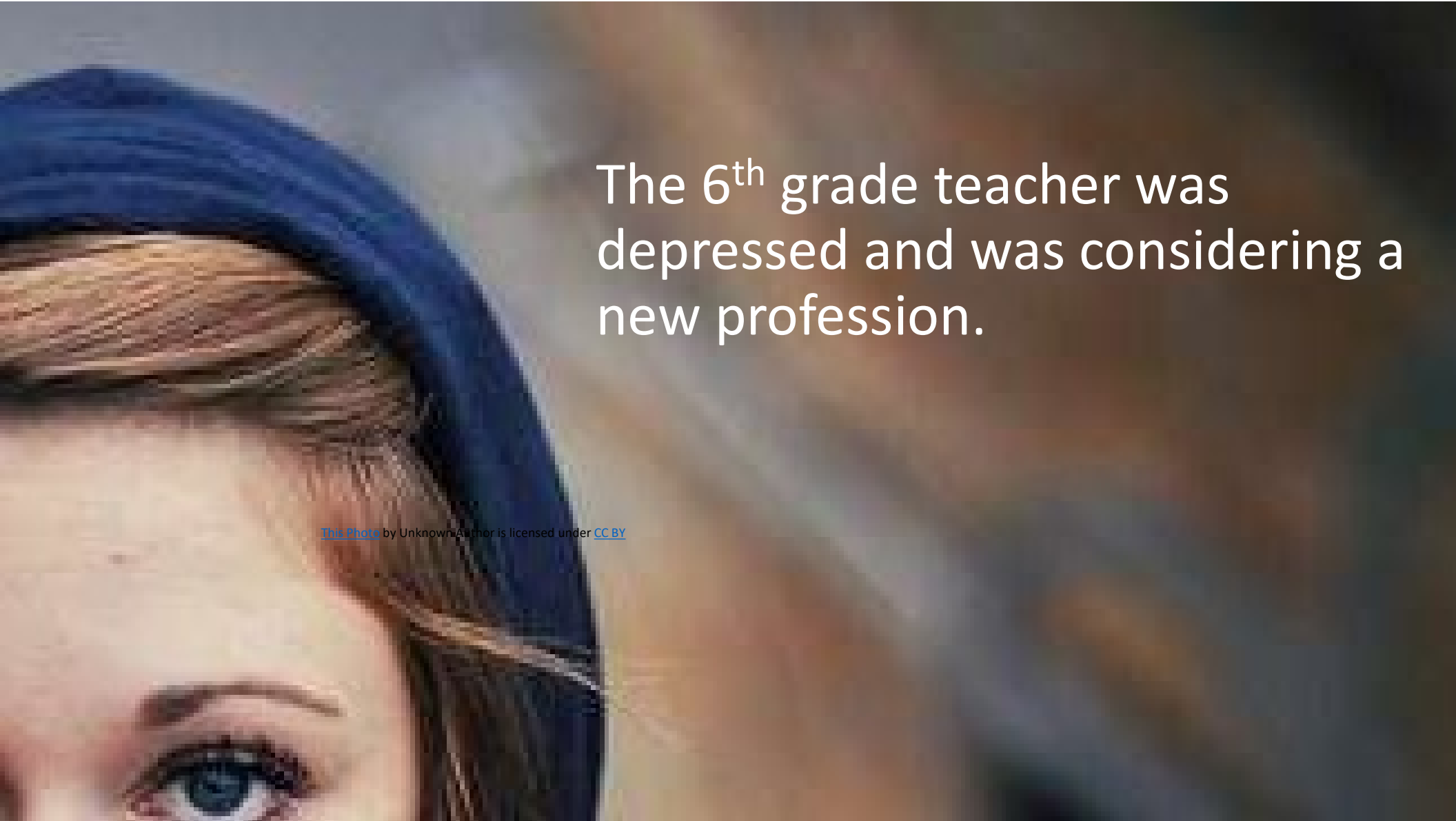
Staff



The solution focused school counselor thinks systemically and focuses on discovering the expertise in ALL school clients.

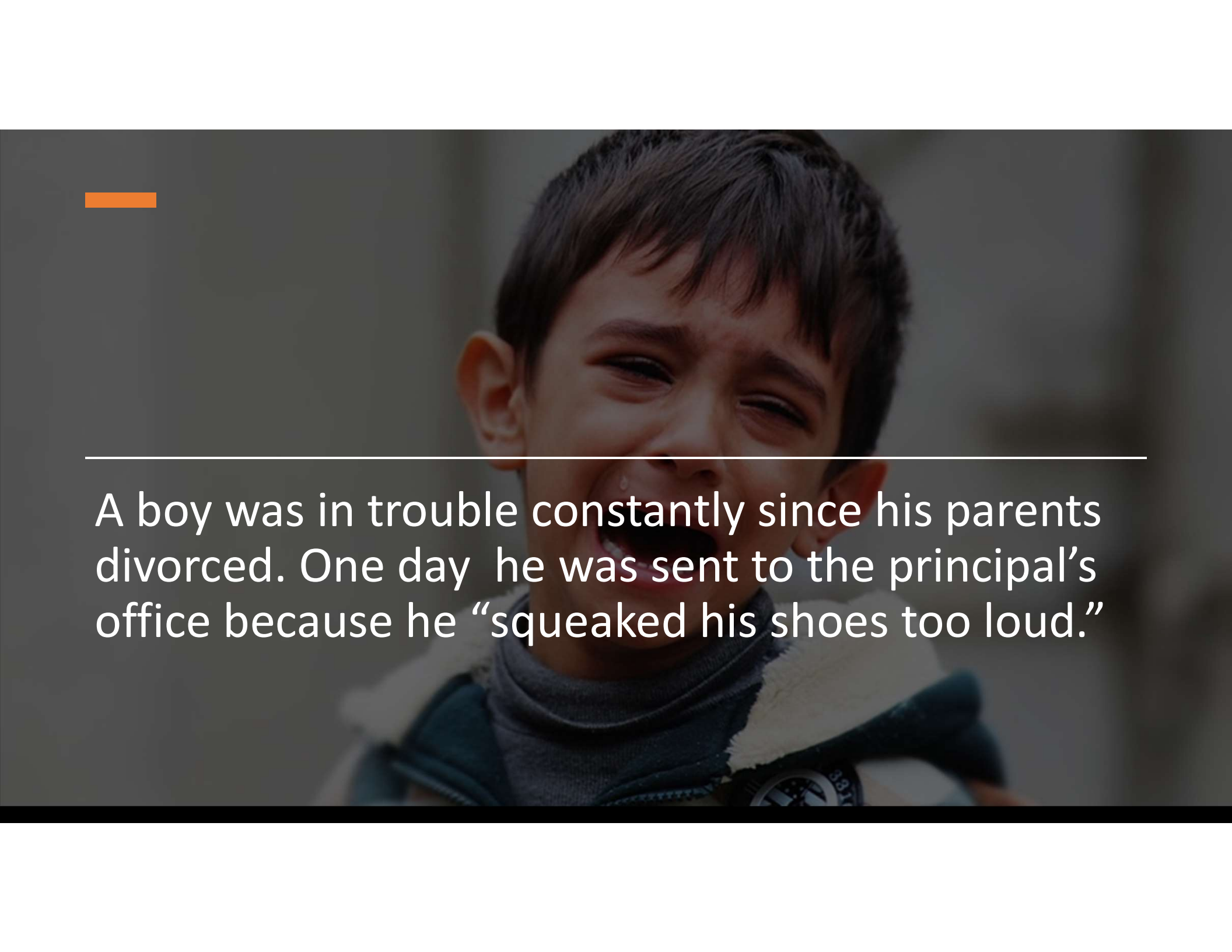
A woman with dark hair, wearing a black top and a grey vest, is sitting in a black chair. She is smiling and looking towards another person who is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a whiteboard or a large screen. The overall lighting is soft and professional.

A day in the life
of a solution
focused school
counselor



The 6th grade teacher was depressed and was considering a new profession.

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

A close-up photograph of a young boy with dark hair, looking down and crying. A single tear is visible on his right cheek. He is wearing a dark turtleneck sweater. The background is blurred. In the top left corner, there is a small orange horizontal bar. A white horizontal line is positioned above the text.

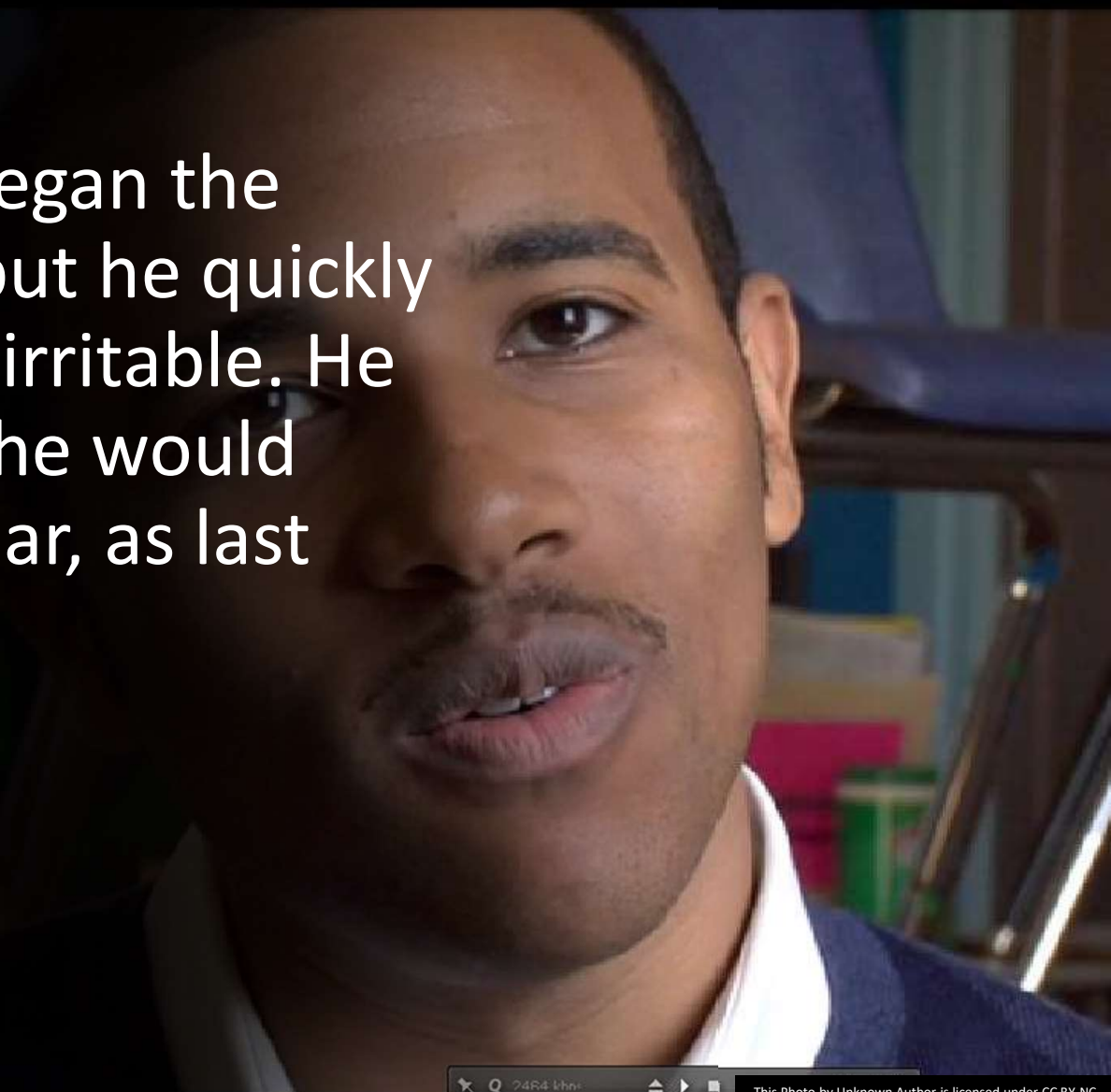
A boy was in trouble constantly since his parents divorced. One day he was sent to the principal's office because he "squeaked his shoes too loud."

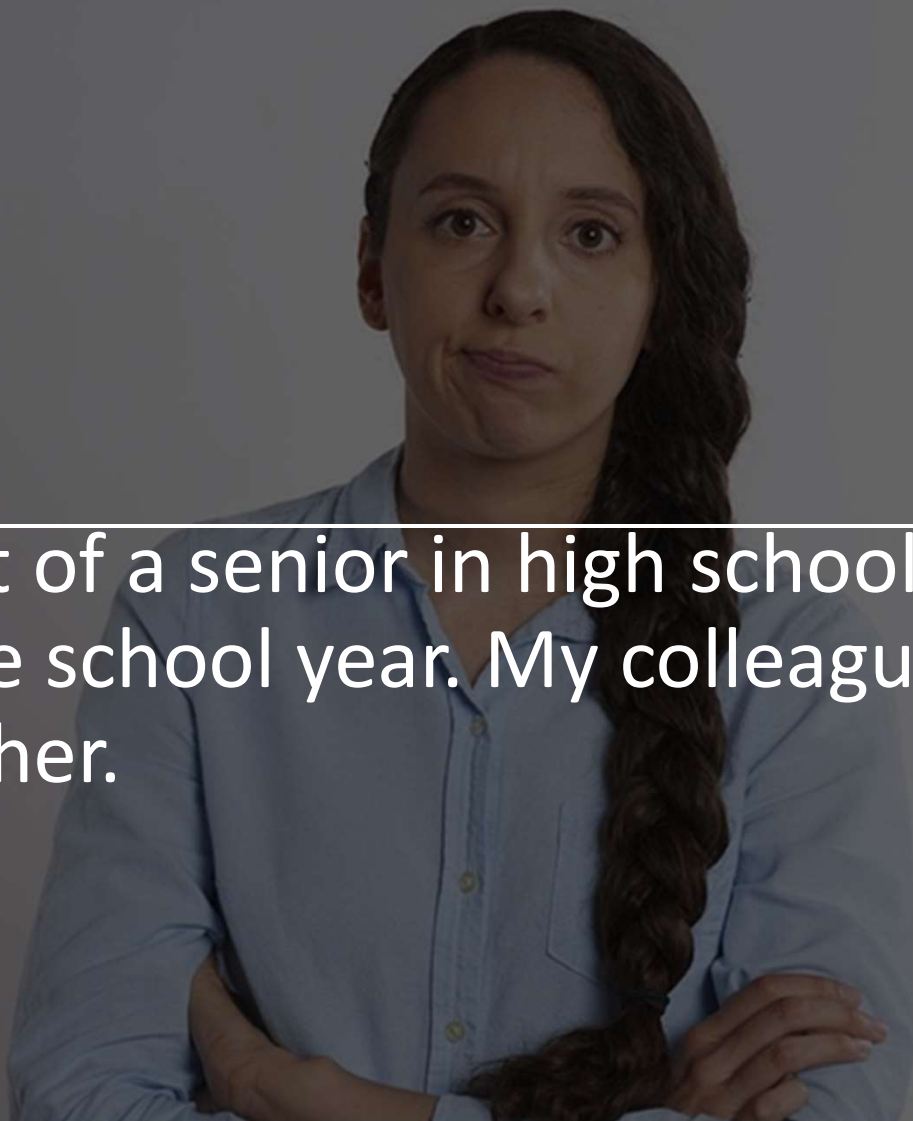
When students returned from being suspended, they only lasted a short while before they misbehaved again and were sent back...



A high school teacher began the school year with hope but he quickly became depressed and irritable. He said he wondered how he would ever get through this year, as last year was difficult.

-Matt C





The parent of a senior in high school called daily, early in the school year. My colleagues warned me about her.

— Inside every school client,
there is an expert.



The Solution Focused Conversation





Step 1- Best Hopes

“What are your best hopes for our time?”



Step 2- Preferred Future - The Miracle Question

“Suppose this afternoon, when you return to class, your best hopes come true on a small scale.

How would you know?”



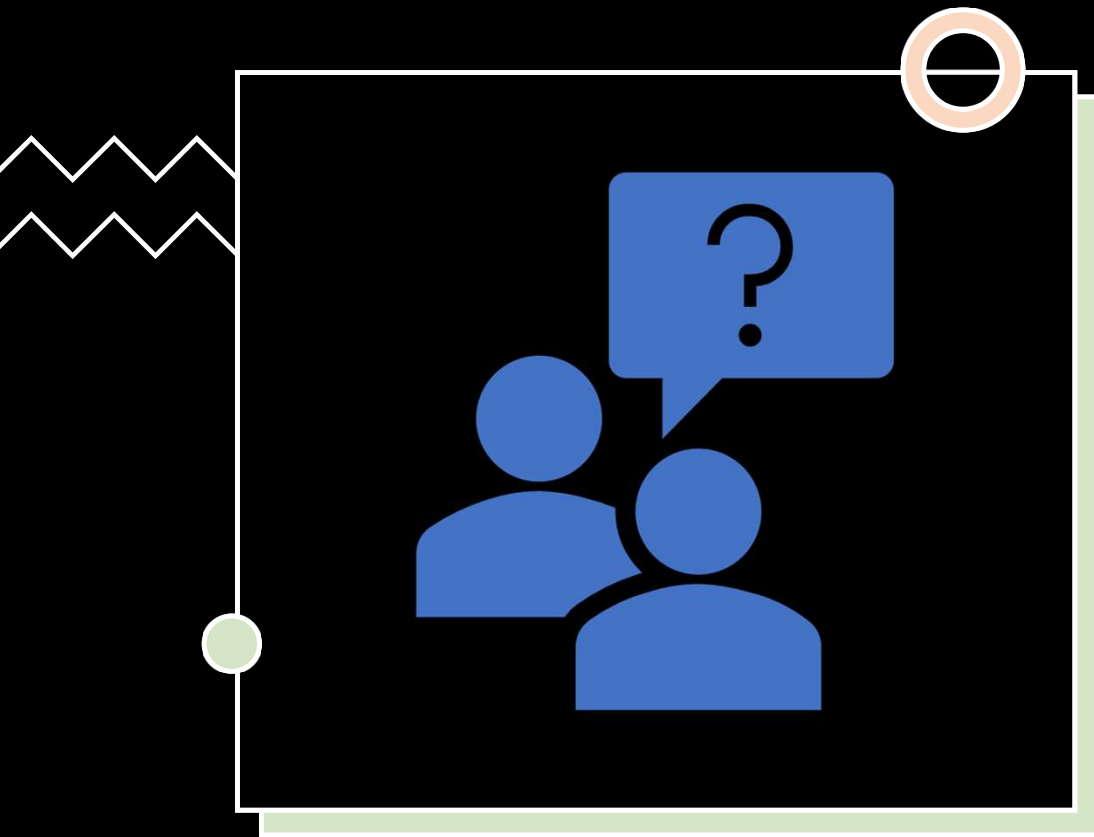
Step 3: Identify the exceptions together.

“Tell me a time when a little bit of that miracle happened, even in other situations.”



A photograph of a classroom. On the left, a poster reads "What You Say in Here, Stays in Here" with "Exceptions: Someone is hurting you, You want to hurt someone, You want to hurt yourself". On the right, a poster says "Let Go & Move On, Care for Self & Others, Have Fun!". A bookshelf is filled with books and toys. A window is visible in the background.

More applications- every day, for every situation and every student



Example of the
miracle question
for a child
overwhelmed by a
"monster in her
head."





Not make the sentence a run on sentence.

Not repeat things they say in shows

Talk About Big only a little details

Not Erase Every little detail. only some if they're pretty bad

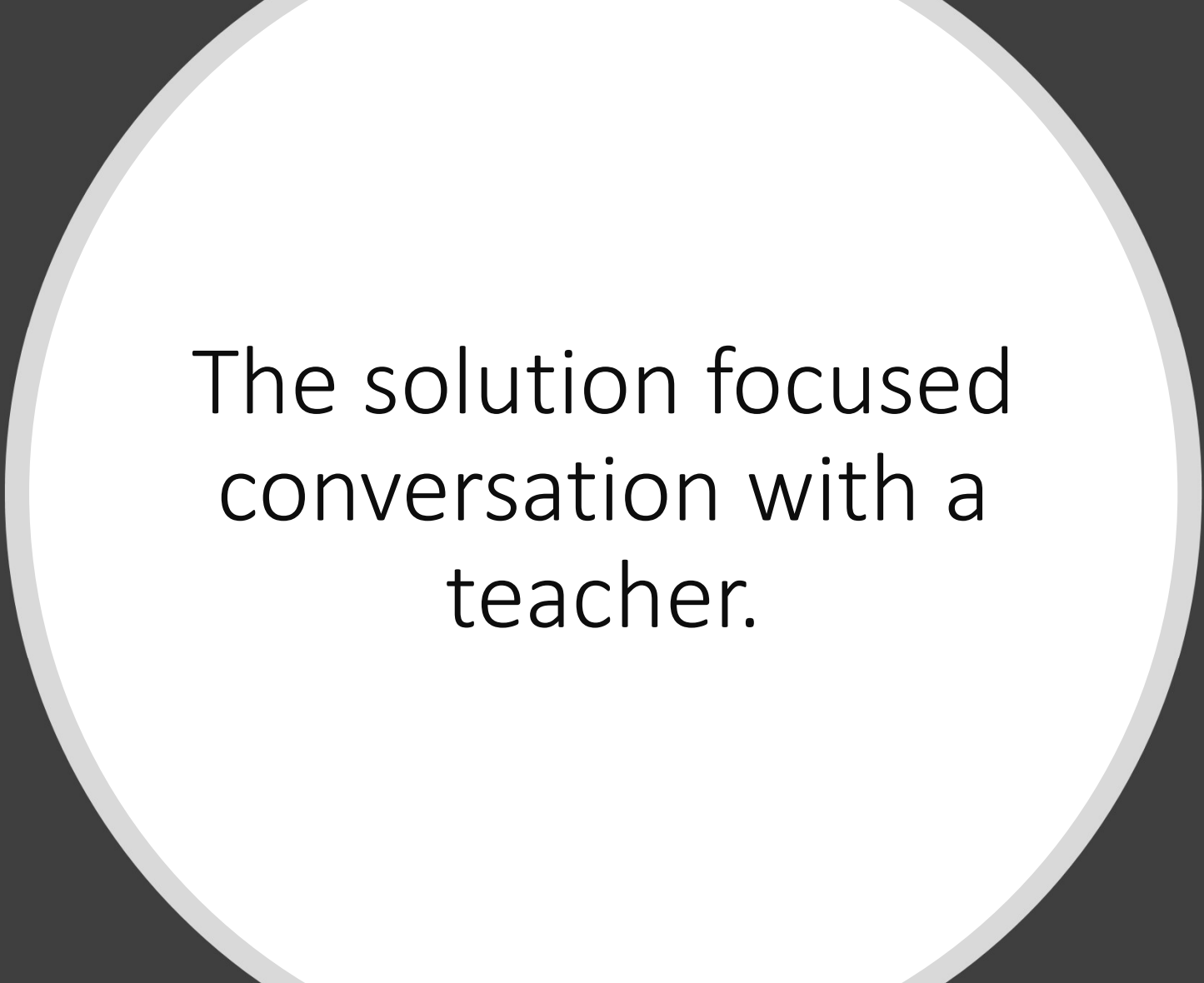
* Monste *

Defending

Powers

only brush hair 3 times a day

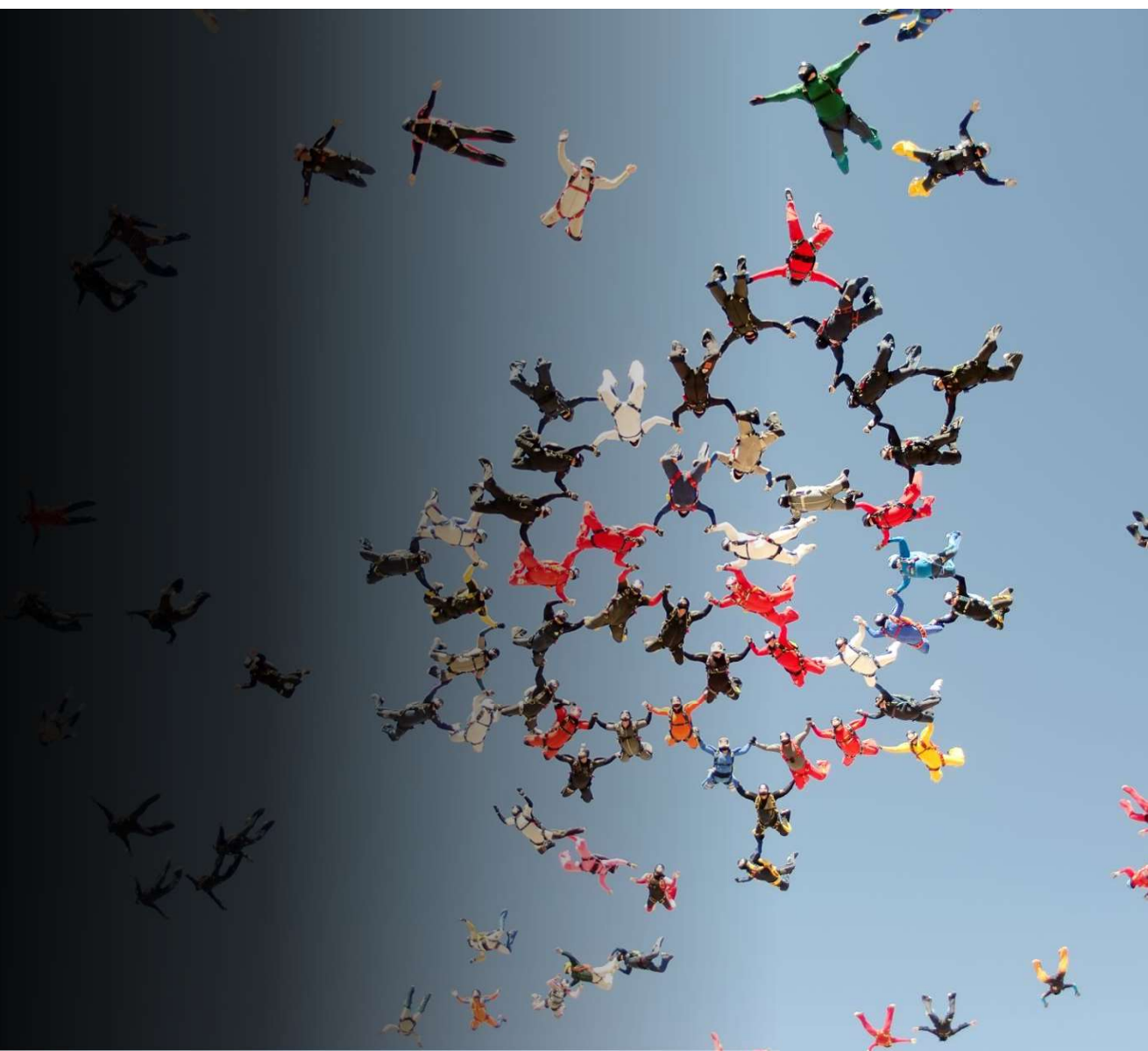
Not add every detail in sentence



The solution focused
conversation with a
teacher.



Solution Focused Teams



PRACTICE:

A high school student is failing three out of six classes. The counselor has recommended a solution focused team meeting.



- The student has told the counselor that she knows she acts up in class but it is because the teachers are so rude to her.



Teacher Observations of Success

Dear Staff,

Next week, on _____, we will meet to talk about helping Jill. As you go through this week, please watch for times when things go slightly better for Jill. Watch closely for any times when she is more compliant, on-task, etc. Please bring those notes with you to our meeting. List them below for reference:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

FIRST: Listen to the concerns everyone present- without the student present.

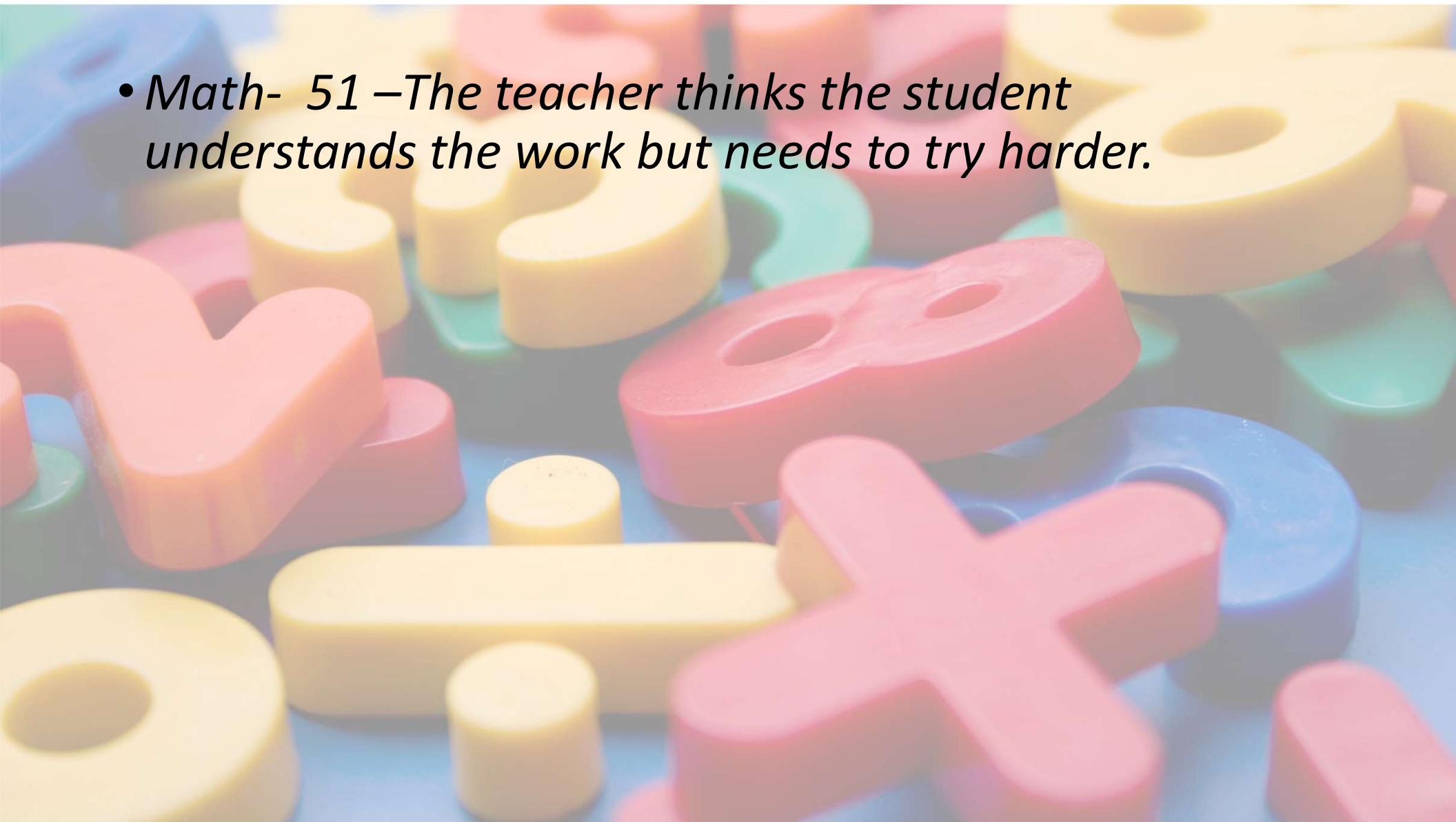
1. Best hopes
2. Preferred Future
3. Exceptions

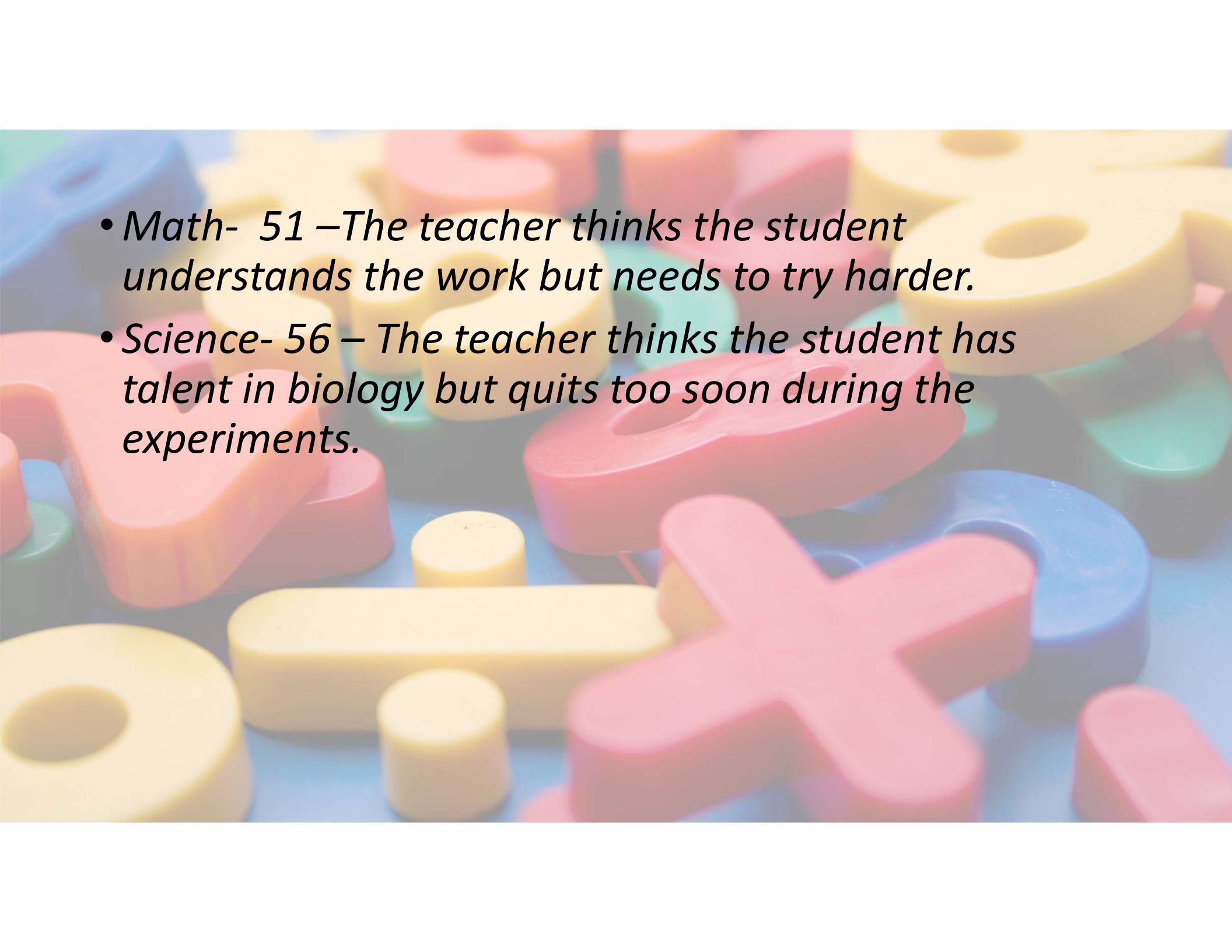


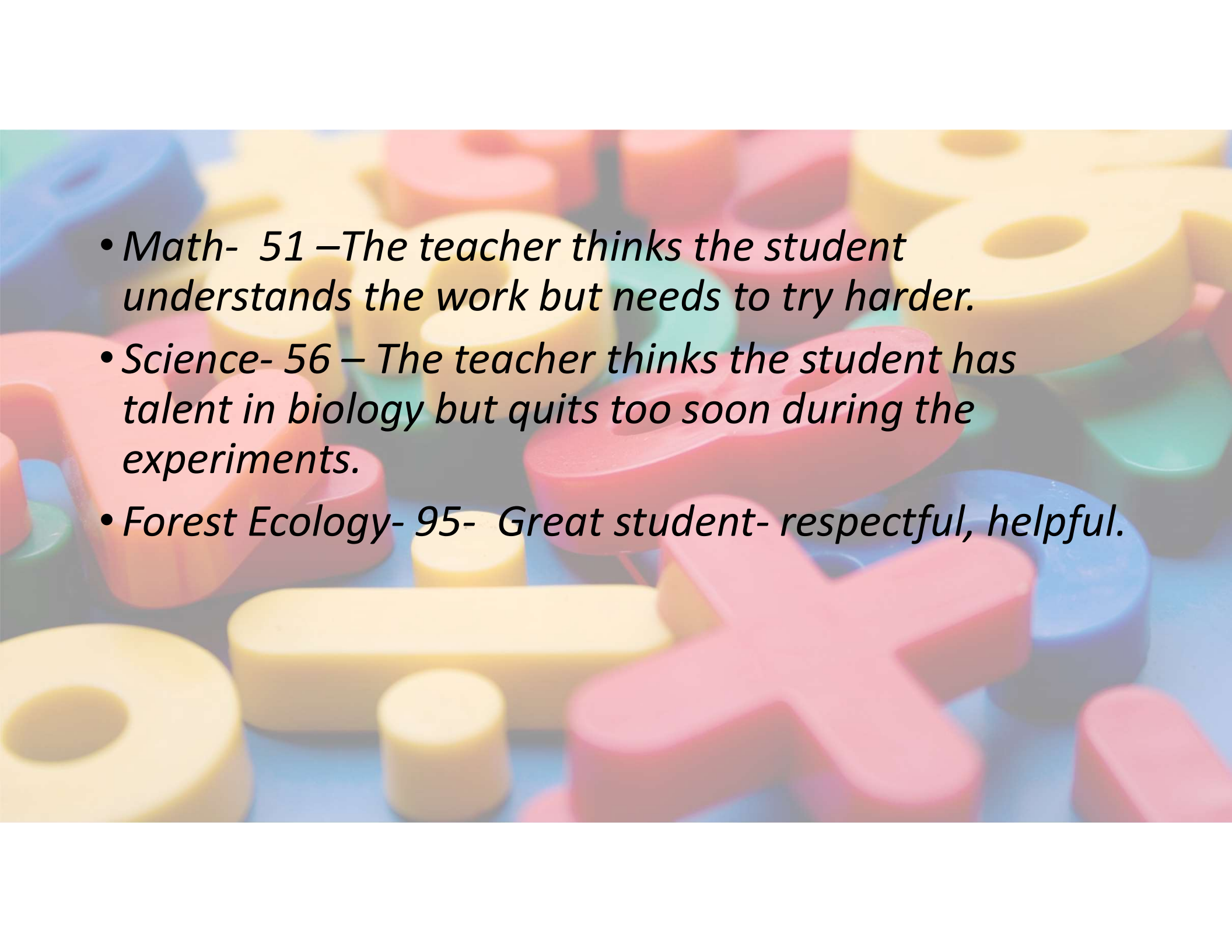
A collection of colorful, 3D geometric shapes including letters, numbers, and symbols like a plus sign and a skull, scattered on a light blue surface. The shapes are in various colors like yellow, pink, blue, and green. The text "The team meeting" is overlaid on the image.

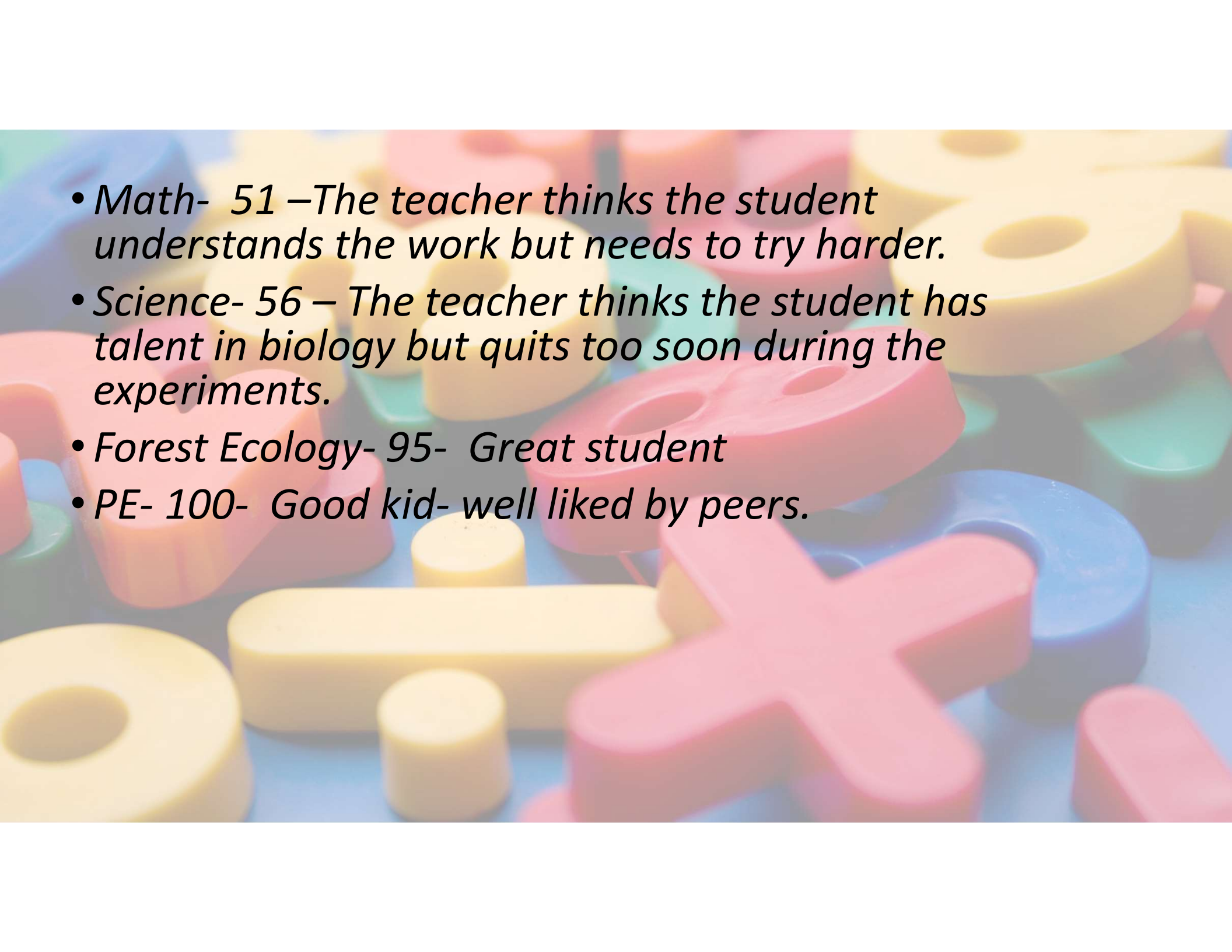
The team meeting

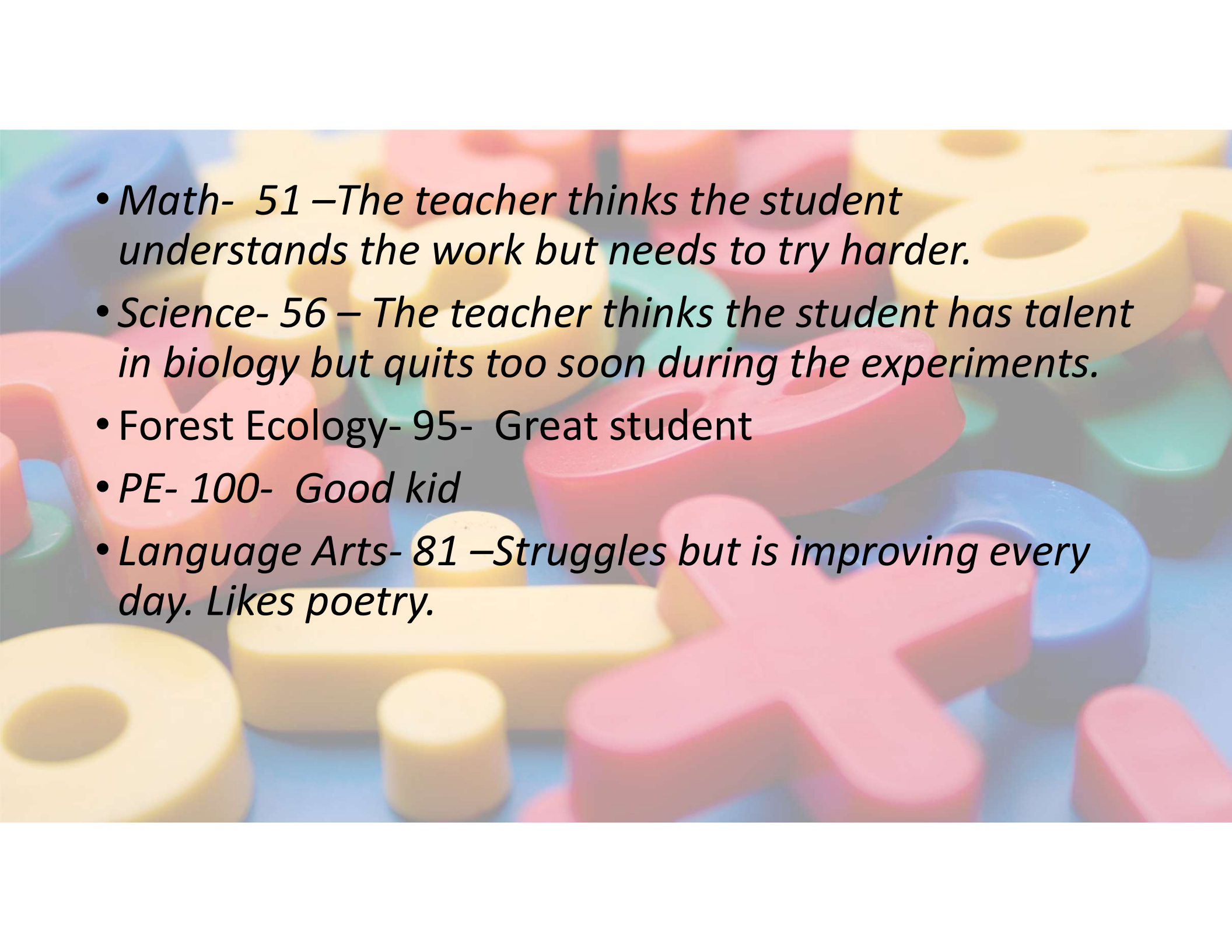
- *Math- 51 –The teacher thinks the student understands the work but needs to try harder.*



- 
- *Math- 51 – The teacher thinks the student understands the work but needs to try harder.*
 - *Science- 56 – The teacher thinks the student has talent in biology but quits too soon during the experiments.*

- 
- *Math- 51 –The teacher thinks the student understands the work but needs to try harder.*
 - *Science- 56 – The teacher thinks the student has talent in biology but quits too soon during the experiments.*
 - *Forest Ecology- 95- Great student- respectful, helpful.*

- 
- *Math- 51 – The teacher thinks the student understands the work but needs to try harder.*
 - *Science- 56 – The teacher thinks the student has talent in biology but quits too soon during the experiments.*
 - *Forest Ecology- 95- Great student*
 - *PE- 100- Good kid- well liked by peers.*

- 
- *Math- 51 –The teacher thinks the student understands the work but needs to try harder.*
 - *Science- 56 – The teacher thinks the student has talent in biology but quits too soon during the experiments.*
 - *Forest Ecology- 95- Great student*
 - *PE- 100- Good kid*
 - *Language Arts- 81 –Struggles but is improving every day. Likes poetry.*



—

TEAM CONVERSATION:

1. Ask everyone for their best hopes:

“I would like to start off by asking everyone what your best hopes are for Jill.”

- Scale it- 1-10



• 2. Create the preferred future together:

- *Imagine a day when Jill comes to class and things are better. What will be happening?*

3. Identify exceptions:

Ask these teachers to share what they see in the student and what they seem to think works.

Forest Ecology- 95- Great student

PE- 100- Good kid

Language Arts- 81 –Struggles but is improving every day.

Computer Tech- 60- A little behind on skills but getting there.

- **4. Identify short term tasks to try:**

“Based on what you have each just told me, and heard others talk about, what would you all suggest doing just for the next week, until our next meeting?”

Now invite the student into the meeting.





The team meeting with the student:

Jill, your teachers have told me what their best hopes are for you. I am going to read them to you. I am also going to mention times when they said things went better for you.



And finally, here are some plans they want to take.

What do you think about these plans?

What might you try doing, as they try out these ideas, just for a week? ■

Questions?

A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on an open notebook with a red ribbon bookmark. The notebook is open to a page with some faint text. In the background, there are several other books stacked on a wooden surface, all of which are out of focus. The overall scene suggests a study or reading environment.

A person is kneeling in a field of fallen leaves, looking down at their hands. The person is wearing a red sweater and blue pants. The background is a soft-focus field of brown and orange leaves.

To summarize
:

Solution focused school
counselors are gatherers of
best hopes and co-authors of
preferred futures.

Join the solution focused
school counseling community!



SF CONNECTION is a free,
live, bi-weekly webinar
with topics to keep you
going in the SF direction!
1 CEU

MONDAY IDEAS are sent
out each Monday, with
tips to keep the solution
focused mindset alive!



SFSU

Solution Focused Schools Unlimited



May the
solution force
always
be with you.