



Journey of a ✦ life time ✦







Dear Snehadhara,

You have given me the best experiences and exceptional learnings I could have ever asked for. More than anything you made me feel comfortable and confident about myself and made me strong.

Either at the campus or at SJR, every day is a new journey and if I could write each one of them down here, every day would be a new page with new realisations and learnings.

I am grateful and very happy that I got to experience the life on campus and spend time with each one of you and the children which constituted to my amazing journey of a lifetime memories and learnings.









If there is anything I am happy about, that would be me contacting the organisation at the best time to get an opportunity to experience campus. In my point of view, I would not have gotten these many experiences and learnings if I was just working at the city office.

Spending four days in a row with the people and children created a bond which will last for life time and also made it hard for me to leave the place :'(



This organisation being the first ever organisation I ever worked with in Psychology sector has shown me how challenging and fun the whole experience of learning could be and that's only because of the people present in Snehadhara.







My first day at the organisation started with an environment filled with happiness, people, cake, drumming and celebration. As fun as it may sound, it was not so fun for me. Being the first day at the organisation, not knowing anyone, looking at so many people at once made me a bit overwhelmed but what made me comfortable was the way people were receiving me and tried every single way to include me in the celebration.

That was the first time I ever tried or even heard of an instrument called djembe. It was so much fun and required a lot of concentration to learn the beat. The whole environment was so inclusive that I got to learn the instruments from basics even when most of the group already knew how to play the instrument. It did not feel like I was the only new person in the group as everyone, even though they knew how to play the instrument, they started from basics.







Though my day started with celebration, I was totally overwhelmed when I got to be in a session with a child who does a lot of self talk and was kind of agitated at that point of time.



I found myself trying very hard to explain my feelings to my relatives. The worst part was, I did not know how to explain what I was feeling to people around me and when I went back home, I could not even answer to the question my relatives were asking me. I was just saying "it was all good and it's a whole different experience" because I knew that I did not know how to explain them in correct words and even if I tried explaining them, they would have derived a whole different meaning than what I actually explained.






First two days on campus were so overwhelming for me that I even called up my parents and was like I can't handle this anymore, this place is not for me. Surprisingly signal was working pretty well that time, I could hear everything my father was saying for almost 15-20 mins which never happens. You know what my father said to the statement I told him, He gave me the motivation I required in my life which very rarely happens. the whole gist of the call was "In india, women population is almost 48% and amongst these people you tried something which only 2-3% would have tried and that is bungee jumping. If you could climb one of the himalayan mountain at 15 years of age and if you could do bungee jumping which maximum people would not even have the dare to do it , how hard is it for you to work with children with special needs."

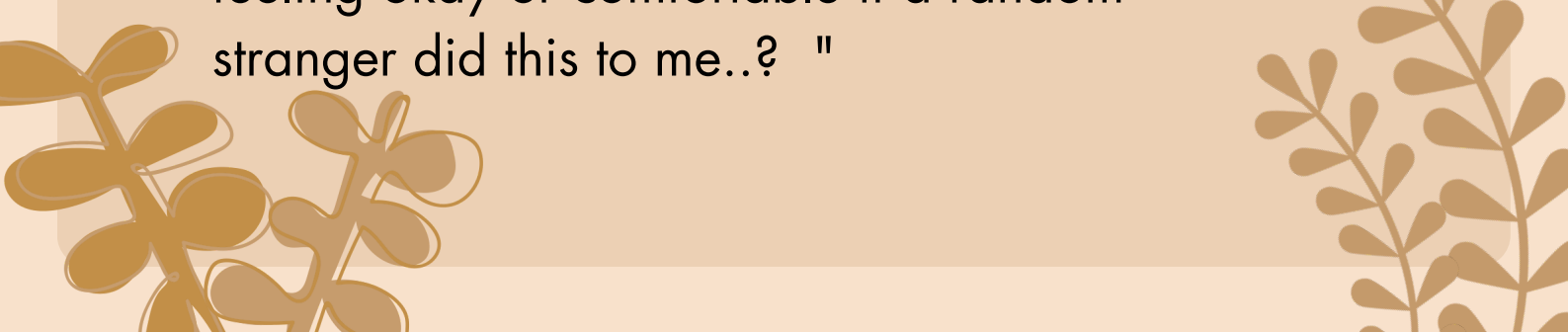
"Everyone can work with so called normal children, but what is going to make you special is when you can learn to deal with children who are on the spectrum and need special care" "all you have to do in your life is something different which most of the people can't do and that's what you have been doing all your life. Believe in your self and you can achieve anything if you give your 100% "






This gave me the motivation I needed and from then on I started to take my own time and also tried my way of calming myself down where I just used to bend my head and look at the floor for sometime when I felt like I cant process this behaviour of some child. It took me a lot of time to even observe a child's behaviour because it was making me emotional looking at them and this feeling is also because this was the first time I ever saw children behaving this way and it took a lot of emotional strength to look at them and understand their behaviour.




I was questioning every single thing I was doing because I was new to the people and children. I was hesitating so much to force a child to participate in some activity because I knew I was the new person in the group and it would not be fair to give a child a lot of instructions from my side because I am still a stranger for them. Every single time I was doing something all that was going on in my brain was "will I be feeling okay or comfortable if a random stranger did this to me..? "






This question really helped me a lot and all I was doing in the first week was to just observe and try to make conversations with the children and figure out ways to talk to them or to make them feel comfortable and familiar with me.

It's fair to say it took me a lot of time to build a rapport with the child. Even at the end of the internship I can say I could not build a full fledged rapport with some of the children while with others, every single moment I spent with them will be a memory for me. There are certain things we don't realise at the moment but once you start to get close to them, you also know that you will be leaving the organisation in some days. I realised I built a rapport with one of child in my last 2 weeks of internship and the only way I figured this out was by comparing their behaviour at the time I joined to now and how well or frequent is the child able to follow the instructions I am giving.

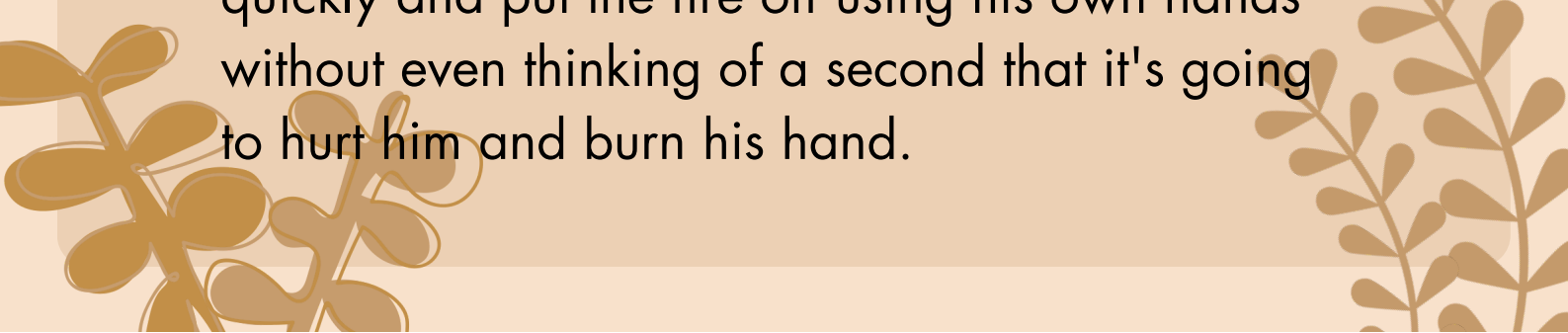






I had a lot of questions on why is this child behaving the way he/she is and when I slowly started to get answers everything started to make sense.

There was one time when a child hurt himself and Geetanjali ma'am was like, "did you not get angry at him" and the only thing that was in my mind was like "what is there to even get angry at" and till that time, I just saw the situation as it was. I just knew that "this child hurt himself" but later after talking to Geetanjali ma'am I started to realise so many things and slowly slowly I started to realise and understand the whole situation of what happened in front of my eyes, what did I hear, how alert were people and what all protocols did they follow even in such a sudden moment and honestly hats off to the people who were able to think and deal with the situation and follow each and every step in the protocol.



I still can't believe how a person reacted so quickly and put the fire off using his own hands without even thinking of a second that it's going to hurt him and burn his hand.

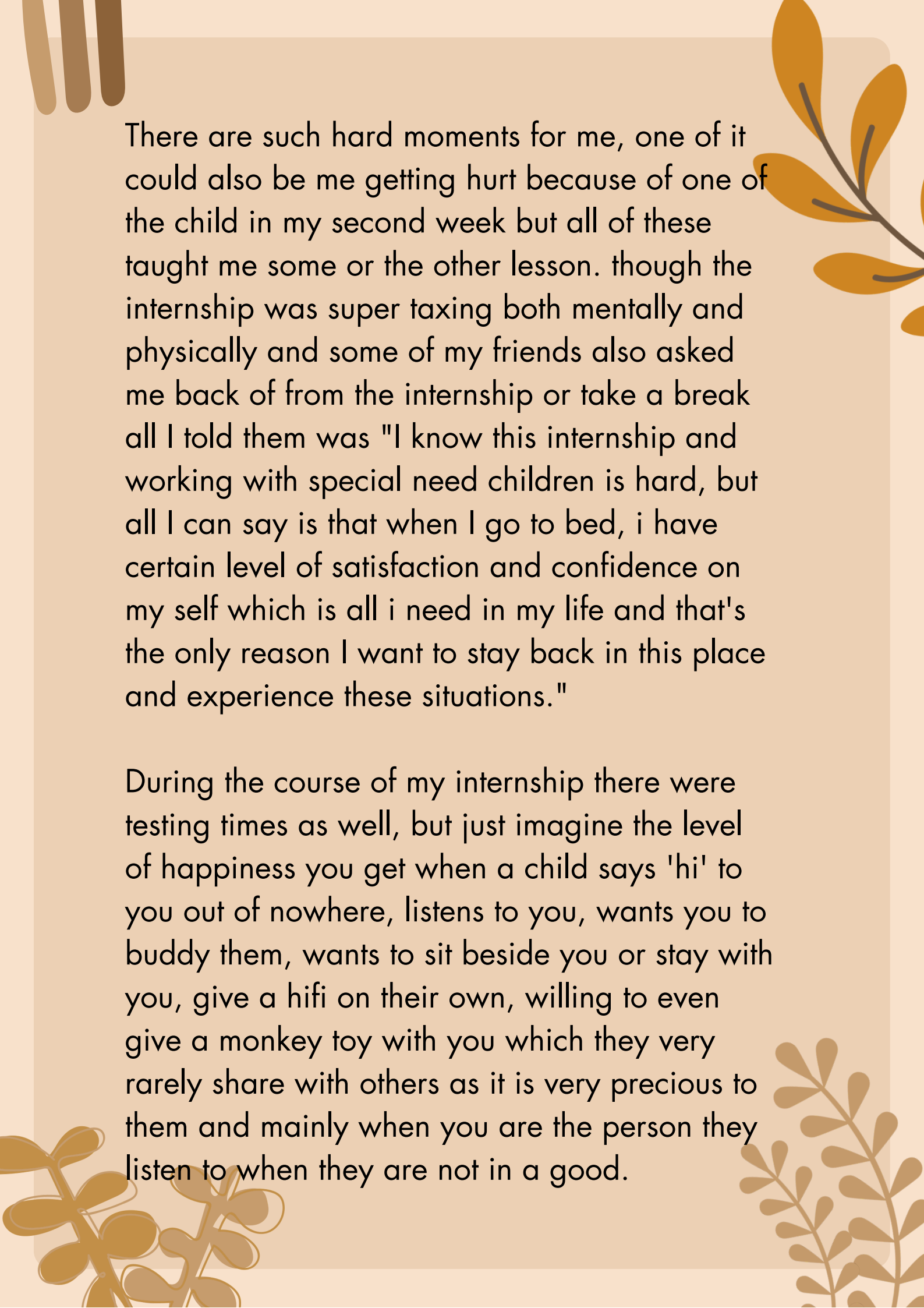




In later stages of my internship I realised why Geetanjali ma'am asked me this question of "did you not get angry at him ?" I realised this and I did get angry at him when he kept on hurting himself and hurting others. Mainly I got angry at the time when he kept hurting others.


To an extent, if you ask me (might be wrong also) it's acceptable if you hurt yourself but it is not at all acceptable if you hurt the people who are there to take care of you. There are people who are investing their whole day and trying to take care of you and create a safe place but what did you do in return, hurt them? which is not at all acceptable and after a point it just felt like every time I heard a noise the only thing that was running in my mind was "please god, make sure he didn't hurt others". It did become really difficult for me to watch him hurt other people and to also watch how calm his mother was in all these situations. the only question that used to run in my mind was "how do their parents deal with such children and how hard and taxing it would be to deal with such children"








There are such hard moments for me, one of it could also be me getting hurt because of one of the child in my second week but all of these taught me some or the other lesson. though the internship was super taxing both mentally and physically and some of my friends also asked me back of from the internship or take a break all I told them was "I know this internship and working with special need children is hard, but all I can say is that when I go to bed, i have certain level of satisfaction and confidence on my self which is all i need in my life and that's the only reason I want to stay back in this place and experience these situations."

During the course of my internship there were testing times as well, but just imagine the level of happiness you get when a child says 'hi' to you out of nowhere, listens to you, wants you to buddy them, wants to sit beside you or stay with you, give a hifi on their own, willing to even give a monkey toy with you which they very rarely share with others as it is very precious to them and mainly when you are the person they listen to when they are not in a good.



All such cute cute and very small incidents are what I care for and motivated me to stay in this place.

Every week thought me a new lesson and made me discover a new strength of mine. First week showed me how strong I am and how well I can observe situations, second week made me realise when to stop forcing a child to do some task, third week built my confidence when I was able to handle a child's tantrum and when I was able to figure out when to stop forcing, fourth week showed me how I was able spontaneously think and apply alternative ways of making a child participate, fifth week made me realise how important it is to build a rapport, sixth week showed me how well I got connected to some of the children, seventh week showed me how much love people have towards me and finally each and every week showed me how well I improved on my documentation skills, session plans, taking session and how well I can think of alternative ways to make a child participate.





Each and every day was a learning for me.

There were certain things which we don't realise until someone points it out and one of it is how well my patience has increased and how well I am able to think of ways to make a child participate in the sessions.

This whole journey has made me emotionally, physically and mentally strong and I felt really happy and confident when I was given the responsibility to take care of the bus journey to JP Nagar which no other intern ever got a chance to do. Every single time I was given the opportunity to take the responsibility of a certain task, it made me feel confident and made me realise how well I can take care of things.

All I can say at the end of my internship is THANK YOU SO MUCH for giving me this opportunity and for believing in me. You have given me memories and learnings for a lifetime.

with love,

G. Jahnavi

Jahnavi Chowdary Gutta

