



The hardest moment for me is health-related. It was a hopeless time for me, trying to cope both mentally & physically with the recovery of my appendectomy. Unfortunately, it had complications, so the surgery had a different recovery timeline than normal.



# *Reflection Paper*

In life, we often focus on the skills we deem necessary just because it is required in the field that you are in, or they improve your chances for academic recognition. We fail to realize that your personality is just as important for success in general. Given this, it is important for us to have the skill to reflect and immediately assess ourselves and our actions. This skill is called “self-reflection”, an integral part of being a good person. With self-reflection, you can determine some things that you do not even know you possess, some qualities that you can only determine through the lenses of other people.

One tool that we use to assess ourselves and our innate qualities is the coat of arms. In my case, I went through deep internalization to figure out which symbols were the ones that truly represent me. It helped me understand myself even more. It helped me determine some areas of improvement. It was an enjoyable experience. Once I answered the necessary fields and figured out the best fitting symbol, it was a smooth process up until the end. I think it made me realize that I am sure of most of the qualities that I have. I figured it out because it was easy for me to fill up each section on what things would firmly and surely represent me. But if I were to choose, I think I struggled most with trying to figure out the things I want to improve on. The reason for this is as human beings, I believe that we are always in denial of the things that we lack rather than the things we possess. On the contrary, it was fairly easy for me to determine the things that I’m good at. This is a good practice, in my opinion, the very first step towards self-improvement is the action of recognizing where you are lacking.

Time plays a role in all of this. 5 years ago, pre-pandemic, I was a completely different person. I was still immature, and I was still partially free of responsibilities. We as human beings are shaped by our experiences, may it be a bad one or a good one, it contributes to our character. In my case, 5 years ago, I wouldn’t have had my surgery yet. This surgery had a great impact on me; it definitely took a hit on my self-esteem. It robbed me of a few years of my time with my high school varsity, but after I recovered, it was all different. I lost some skills and a lot of playing time. No one is to blame for what happened to me but myself. Ironically, this partially led to my growth as a person. I learned to be more humble and a good companion. The air that I had during my active years in basketball is non-existent.

Through the coat of arms, I was able to reflect, I was able to look back on fun-filled experiences and even traumatic ones. It made me proud of the growth that I've had as a person; without this activity, I wouldn't have been able to recognize it. I can relate this to the "Tripod Model" by Nick Wignall. To reflect, we must possess three important traits, namely: Openness, Observation, and Objectivity (Wignall, 2019). I learned so much about myself through being open; it made me go to some areas that I wouldn't even want to talk about. It made me recognize some things that I still need to work on, the things that I have progressed on, and the things that I have accomplished. Via observation and objectivity, I was able to address the worst moment or timeframe in my life. If it were not for these traits, I wouldn't have given myself the pat on the back that I deserve because of the progression that I've had in only a few years. Personal growth is often overlooked, and we always criticize ourselves more than we give credit. I hope that through this activity, I am headed in the right direction when it comes to self-validation. Self-reflection is a trait that most people should practice. Both Macro and Micro Reflections are integral for personal growth (Reflection.app, 2025). Being able to look back on an entire lifetime (Macro) and reflecting immediately (Micro) are both integral to being a better person and companion. Being able to address a wrong reaction takes skill and courage; it can only be done through self-reflection. Most people do reflect, but not always do they have the correct mindset and approach. Most people blame rather than asking themselves "why" out of curiosity. We humans need to have a sense of accountability, but if we were to always blame ourselves rather than gauge the situation, we would go nowhere. Self-reflection is a tool for the betterment of human attitudes and relations, not a weapon for destroying self-esteem and connections. This is why I liked the article by Wignall; he not only tried to sway us away from the blaming mindset, but he also provided us with a clear framework for self-reflection. He wants us to approach things or situations with an open mind, because if we are close-minded, our responses will be dull and thoughtless. We won't be able to accept criticisms from others, much more from ourselves.

In summary, the coat of arms is a good way to figure things out about yourself. It is a good practice, because to summarize yourself with symbols, it is important to know a lot about yourself. Through this practice, I was able to recall a lot of things that happened in my life, of course, the good ones and the bad ones. It made me realize how much growth I've had in just a few years. It was also comforting that sometimes I may question a lot of things, but one thing I'm sure about is my firm belief and faith in God. With this, I would like to make a promise to myself, from this day forward, I will continue the momentum, and I will try my hardest to improve even further. Each day, Kurt, we go closer to making our dreams a reality.

