There are a lot of people who have played a pivotal role in shaping my personality. The most critical ones are my parents. They are the purest souls I have ever seen in my life. They have struggled a lot in their life, but never made me or my sister realize what is going on in their life. They have never pressurized me to study or choose a career path. The only thing they stress is to lead a life without compromising human values and virtues. They have always stressed upon showing honesty and full commitment towards whatever work we take up.

My father is a very disciplined man. He is a source of inspiration for me. He, being in his sixties, still wakes up early in the morning, does his morning rituals (meditation, yoga and some stretching exercises) and prepares for his lecture (he is a Professor in a central university) before anyone else wakes up in my home. He is a person who motivates me to become disciplined in life and plan out things in advance of the scheduled deadline.

My mother has done a lot of sacrifices for our family. She is a highly educated woman. Though she chose family over her personal career, I have never seen her complain about her decision. She faced all the hardships with a positive outlook towards life. Coming from Kerala all the way to UP and spending the larger portion of life there, wouldn’t have been easy for her. She is the person who motivates me to wade through difficulties in life with a positive state of mind.

My sister is also a person who had a lot of influence in my life. She is eight years elder to me and has motivated me to excel in academics. We both went to the same school. I used to feel proud when the teachers there spoke highly of my sister. She is a person I looked up to when I was young. Now also, I contact her for any kind of help whenever I am in a dilemma. She was the one who convinced my parents to let me join TLP as they were apprehensive of the course as I was transitioning from regular, fixed career path in theoretical sciences to a career in applied sciences.

How can I forget my nephew? He is the happiest person I have seen in my life. He is just two and a half years old and I envy him (in a positive sense) as he is both curious and happy. I believe while growing up, fitting into societal norms kills the inner child of most of us. He is the person who encourages me to be cheerful in life, come what may.

Another person who had influence in my life is Pandey Sir, who taught me Mathematics in eighth standard. He ignited in me, a love for the subject, which I have till date. His classes would transcend me into the realm of numbers where every equation had its place and purpose. He is the person who makes me believe that a good teacher can actually change the life of student for good.

I am very much inspired by the life of Srinivasa Ramanujan, who coming from a small town in Tamil Nadu and little to no formal training in Mathematics, gave the world around three and a half thousand formulae which find themselves playing pivotal role in study of black holes and other complex astronomical objects. His pure passion for the subject was the reason why he could discover these many formulae. There are written records of him claiming to be in a **state of flow** while studying Mathematics. His life is an example of how honest devotion towards our work will yield fruitful results which benefits not only us, but humanity in general.

Sometimes some people leave a long-lasting impression on our life while some other time, events teach us something which long textbooks couldn’t teach us. In Aligarh, the place where I come from, had a small temple built by Keralites living there. The temple usually opens only on the weekends and on Sunday afternoon, free meals were provided to the underprivileged people living in the nearby villages. Me and my friends used to volunteer in making and serving food to them. We were the last ones to eat the food. But the satisfaction we got feeding the underprivileged gave us immense pleasure. They would sometimes thank us for the service. There were many things to learn from them. They seldom wasted food given to them and even if something was left, they would take it to their home waste a grain. That made me feel how I privileged I am that I wouldn’t have to think about three square meals a day. This also makes me realise that I, being privileged should also give back to community and should use my resources to make their lives better in whichever way I could.

My top three strengths are Learning, Honesty and Humility. It is also supported by both the strength assessment tests. I believe everyone should be a lifelong learner. My quest for learning new technologies and to stay updated made me choose Plaksha TLP over a traditional masters. Even after TLP, I am planning to pursue a career in research.

‘Honesty is the best policy’. This statement drives me forward in my life. According to me, being honest to one’s own self is of paramount importance to me. I vividly remember an incident in my life. I once was extremely underprepared for a test in my college when I was in my undergrad. One of my friends suggested me to take some cheating material to class as he knew the invigilator was not that strict. But owing to my principles, I didn’t take any material to class and wrote the exams with full honesty. I nearly passed the exams and my overall grades suffered due to that single exam. And the fun fact is that my friend who suggested me to cheat got way better grades than me in the subject. But till date, I have no regrets due to my act as I knew I gave the test with full honesty.

Humility is another strength of mine which, I think helps me understand other people’s problem and be empathetic towards them. Humility also taught me to be content with whatever I have materially and also at the same time it increased my quest to learn more which is my first strength. Humility helped me become a good learner as it helps us leave all our entitlements and become a student. I learnt to remain humble by volunteering extensively in the community kitchen event about which I discussed in the beginning. Seeing the people showing gratitude towards food, which we take lightly made me grateful towards whatever I things or relations I possess in my life.

Some characteristics I have to work upon are Creativity, Self Regulation and Perseverence. I understand that creativity is essential for me as I progress further in my career. I am trying to fix this by reading books which are not related to my areas of study. I have started reading biographies, which I believe, will boost my creativity as I could get to know how people think differently which makes them stand out of the crowd. Even at TLP, I was forced to think creatively in a course called Human Computer Interaction, where I had to keep an idea log and submit at the end of the term. One important thing which I learnt from that exercise was that there are ideas all around us, if we stop for a moment and observe our surroundings, they will automatically show up in front of us.

Regulating myself is really difficult for me especially when it comes to unhealthy eating habits. I try to change my eating habits but often I find myself indulging in unhealthy delicacies particularly sweets. I know that I have to workout but many a times I become too lazy to start exercising regularly. To lessen the problem, I have started to refrain myself from eating at odd hours and have started to restrict myself to eat thrice a day at proper times.

Similar to regulating myself I also find it difficult to finish off things which I start. ‘Perseverance is the key to success’ is easier said than done, at least for me. I often start some thing, get engrossed in it for a short period of time and find myself leaving the task unfinished. This happens with me when I take up some online courses. The interst is very high when the course commences and gradually this interest just drops and I would leave the course midway. There was an instance when I left a course just before the last week of the course. I know that it isn’t a good practice but still I haven’t figured out how not to lose motivation for the things which I have started.

I would like to become a leader whose gives back. I would like to help others by helping them with material things like money or other resources and also with the experiences I would have gained over my lifetime. I believe a true leader is the one who has a duty to serve others who directly or indirectly might have played an instrumental role in shaping his life. So it becomes his/her responsibility to give back to the society in whatever he/she can. This would ignite a sense of responsibility in the hearts of others to give back to the society when they would excel and become leaders in their respective fields. This trend is seen in people who are very rich and successful in their lives. They donate significant amount of their wealth for social good and research. This trend of giving back is exhibited by the technology sector through the use of open sources tools and technologies. Open source software is code that is designed to be publicly accessible; anyone can see, modify and distribute code as they see fit. Open source software is developed in a decentralized and collaborative way, relying on peer review and community production. Open source softwares are one of the key enablers of the technological revolution which we are witnessing in today’s world.

My strengths also align with my goal of being a giver. The Gallup test’s report said that one of my key strengths is that I am an includer. It says ‘Stretch your circle wider’ is the philosophy of my life. I completely agree with that statement. Giving back is also kind of growing our circle wider and creating positive impact on more lives. The VIA test’s report signifies some of my key strengths to be Humility, Kindness, Gratitude and Spirituality. Out of these, gratitude and kindness have more weightage in my opinion. If we are grateful for whatever we have achieved and have kindness for the society, then only we can give back to the society. The event which is told in the former part of the passage is also an act of giving back by the devotees who come to pray at the temple. My job as a volunteer was to enable the process of giving back to happen. I could sense the joy in the faces of both, the giver and receiver. The process of giving back brings a sense of satisfaction that no other activity could bring in my life.

This concludes my Initial Vision. I believe there is something to learn from every person who have come across, in my life and every incident that has happened in my life. There are strengths to hone and weakness to work on in my life. This exercise has pushed me to introspect into my life and to envision what kind of leader I wish to become.