**Initial Vision**

By my signature below, I certify that I have not received improper help nor given it to others in writing this assignment nor have I used any method that would give me an unfair advantage over others in the class. This assignment represents my own work only and I had no assistance from another person or any other source unless it is referenced at the bottom of each appropriate page.

Kishlay Kumar - 18/11/2022

(Full Typed Signature and Date)

We meet with hundreds of people in this world. Yet, to say the that we have truly known and connected to even a few of them is to say that we have lived a privileged life. In the short time that I have spent in this world, I have had the opportunity to meet quite a few people. Social media has helped me know about the lives of people who I would never have dreamt of knowing. In this short but eventful journey, many of these people have influenced my life and shaped me into the person that I am today.

It is said that charity begins at home. Well, so does everything else. The first people we interact with for an extended period of time are our parents. They are the ones that mould us into who we are. The values they instil in our minds and hearts remain with us forever. In this context, I would like to talk about my mother who is not just the closest person but also the biggest influence in my life. Being born in a middle-class family of 4 and having a Homemaker as a mother I had the privilege of spending a lot of my childhood with her. However, I only realised the importance of my mother in my life in the late teenage years. As I started becoming more aware of life and how the world works, I realised how much she meant to me and in how many ways I am just a reflection of her values and beliefs. I have always been someone who enjoys helping other people with their tasks. It is not just about guiding someone by talking to them about facts but more so about how I can hold their hand when they feel the need and leave it when the time is right. Being an elder brother and the eldest of four close cousins I have tried to be with and help all the little ones during the most crucial moments in their lives. This is a skill that I picked up from my mother. Being the eldest of three sisters and a brother she had a lot of responsibility on her shoulders, and if I am to believe my grandmother, she handled those responsibilities extremely well. Even today my aunt’s look up to her for guidance in matters of life and career and she is happy to sit and chat with them for hours to make them happy and comfortable. Her selfless devotion to me, my brother and my father for more than twenty-five years now is a source of inspiration for me. Whenever I have doubts in my mind regarding what kind of a person I want to be, I think about her. A flashback of the times I spent with her and all she did for me reinforces my heart with the will to do something for this world without expecting anything in return. To be altruistic but from the shadows.

My father, similar to my mother has been an epitome of selfless devotion who has guided me in my life and career since childhood. Working for a government MSME for skill development, he had the opportunity to interact with and change the lives of thousands of underprivileged tribals in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand. He interacted with these tribals and economically disadvantaged families on a daily basis and encouraged them to avail the government schemes to pursue a course at his institute. His dream for me was to become an IAS officer who works for the betterment of the most underserved sections of society. While that has not yet come to pass (nor may it ever), his ideology and way of thinking still guide me along my career path. His principles have shaped my life goal of trying to be someone who can stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. While my parents were always a source of inspiration, my younger brother has been my closest friend throughout these years. With an age gap of only three years, I and my brother were very close during our schooling. Studying, playing, and fighting, was a regular day at home during those times. I was also a little bit of a bully being the elder one in the house. But I still remember the first day that I went to college 1500 miles away from home and waking up the next morning only to find out I was all alone in my room. Away from friends, away from parents and yet the person I missed the most was my brother who had been the greatest constant in my life. Used to seeing him before going to bed every night and after waking up every morning, that moment made me realise what I would be missing for the next four years. The first few weeks in college also made me aware of my introverted nature. School friends and my brother were the friends I made at an age when I was too young to understand my own nature. But the first few weeks of college and hostel life was time when I learned most about myself and what my friends and brother meant to me.

College life was when I learnt the most about myself and also to live independently and survive on my own. Being an introvert, I preferred to spend most of my time alone in my room. But hostel life helped me open up a bit more and that is where I learned to interact with people in an environment filled with strangers. This is where I met two of my closest friends from college, Sunny and Anshuman. Being from the same city, the three of us got along really well right from the start of the course and the friendship only solidified in the years to come. Being a hardcore non-vegetarian however, you can imagine my disappointment when I came to know they were both vegetarians. I felt like I was doomed for the next four years as I could never share a good non-veg meal with them. However, as time went by and we started going out together for lunch and dinner parties, I discovered a newfound love for vegetarian food. Dining out with them, I experienced the culinary delights of local cuisines of India especially of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Also, being the cleanliness freaks that they both were, I learnt some good habits around them which included sweeping daily and keeping my hostel room clean. But being with them made me realise that I am very flexible with my lifestyle and can adapt according to the people that I spend the most time with. Both of my friends were unique in their traits and clear in terms of their goals. While Sunny was the most brilliant student, good in technical subjects, Anshuman was great with college events, co-curricular activities, clubs, and fests. While one inspired me to be more efficient yet effortless, the other taught me about the value of non-academic opportunities.

After moving to my first job, I became friends with some of my college mates who were placed at the same company. It was at my first company that I started socializing more with new people and transitioned from a lone wolf to a more social being. My Team Architect played a very important role during my internship and first job. His guidance and support helped me diffuse seamlessly into the team without any major hurdles along the path. With his help I was able to perform at my best and earned a commendation during the first salary review. After I left my job to prepare for the Civil Service Examination, COVID struck and this period between 2020 to 2022 became a life changing experience. Staying in isolation for around eleven months in a stretch can make even the most anti-social element of society crave attention and company. COVID changed me as a person to the extent that I started becoming gregarious. Besides all these major events and people, I have had some other influences in my life. Having had the chance to prepare for civil services examination, I got to know a lot about world history in general and Indian history in particular. Some of these historical figures have had a major influence in my views on certain controversial issues and some ethical dilemmas. Be it Gandhi’s views on non-violence and truth, or Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar’s ideas on upliftment and education of women in India, the ideas of modern India’s architects have shaped my ideology. I was also influenced by Immanuel Kant’s principle of morality as a principle of practical rationality. Indian cricket has been another source of inspiration for me. The Indian team captain M.S Dhoni was my role model in terms of leadership and management. His calmness and composure in dire situations and his ability to take risks and make the difficult choice without any fear displaying immense self-confidence inspired me to develop the ability of self-assurance and self-confidence. This self-confidence has helped me tackle many problems in life especially that of stage fright and lack of confidence in job interviews.

Of all the areas that have been my strength in the past, I find adaptability to be my greatest asset. Over the years I have learned to expect the unexpected and have groomed myself to deal with such situations efficiently and effectively. As a student of 9th grade, I was terrified by math involving calculus and computer science concepts looked like alien language to me. Yet, as I attempted to face my fears and put by best to learn these concepts, I realised how much I enjoyed studying computer science as a subject. Gradually I became so passionate about the subject that it propelled me to pursue computer science in my undergraduate studies. Similarly, working as a Software Engineer at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, I faced many situations where I was asked to work on a tool or language that I had never worked with before. But my adaptability to unforeseen circumstances helped me cope with situation. Another important strength that I believe I have is humour. I try to make light of many situations in life and add humour to them. I believe that life is short and there is no point in living in melancholy or sadness. Every moment should be experienced and enjoyed no matter how difficult a situation I am in because we will never experience that moment ever again. My ability to add humour to any situation is something has always been appreciated by friends (though not at all times, for example they don’t like it when I make them laugh during a lecture or while they are presenting, even though that doesn’t stop me). This quality of mine has helped me interact with friends who are feeling low at any point of time as I possess the innate ability to cheer them up. Another strength of mine that has helped me through cope with difficult situations is self-assurance. Despite having many ups and downs in life I never lost faith in my abilities and my capability to do something good and impactful in my life. During my undergraduate years I started off with very good grades, but my scores dropped during the second and third years even though I had a strong background in computer science from my schooling. But I never lost track of what I intended to learn and do, and the sequence of poor grades never pulled me down into an abyss of despair. My confidence in my abilities helped me bounce back with even better grades in the future terms and I eventually ended up with very good scores by the end. This self-confidence and self-assurance also helped me during my first job as I was bombarded with new tools and technologies to learn in an ad-hoc manner.

While technical skills are something that I have always been good with, some of the areas I would like to improve are self-regulation. I have never been very disciplined in my life, and this has landed me in trouble many times. I can’t remember the number of times I had to skip breakfast to attend the first class during my undergrad years. Assignments and studies are always something I completed at the last moment and often in a haste I am unable to give the best that I can. Another skill I would like to improve upon is the ability to express love and gratitude. While I have always had the skill to bring humour into a serious conversation, I always found it very difficult to express gratitude. It may be due to the environment I lived in where such things are not taken seriously or even made fun of. Yet when I think of everything that my parents and friends have done for me and compare it to the number of times, I have expressed gratitude for the same, I feel a pang of guilt in my heart. Lastly, I would also like to improve on my social intelligence abilities. The ability to understand what the next person is thinking is something that I have always lacked. There are times where I have made a joke in an inappropriate situation which was interpreted as a lack of empathy. Even though my intention was only to cheer up the other person, my lack of social intelligence and what triggers the next person’s emotions has been my undoing.

To sum it up, I feel that as a leader I need to be adaptable to any situation in am faced with in my life. Leadership requires you to be creative with your ideas and thoughts. Creativity can help me navigate any change. As a leader, I would like to be updated with the latest technologies and industry standards and adaptability through creative thinking will help me do just that. It will also help me identify the right kind of person for a task. Adaptability and creativity are two great indicators of a growth mindset which is an important quality of a leader.

I would like to retain my jocular nature as a leader. But along with that I would also like to develop the skills of empathy and social and emotional intelligence. A leader is a role model for many, and I don’t wish to set the wrong example for people who follow me. Yet to have a comical side to your character is endearing to most people and contributes to a positive sense overall as people tend to enjoy your company. Also, as a leader I would like to maintain certain standards of honesty and integrity for others to follow my lead. Integrity is something that is expected in academic as well as professional life and to lead by example is the best way to demonstrate the virtues. Finally, as a leader I would like to maintain certain standards of discipline in my life. While it has never been my strong suit, the importance of discipline is something that professional and academic life teaches you in various forms like submission deadlines, product releases, code of conduct, and appropriate attire for any place or event. To maintain these minimum standards is one of things that makes us humans different from intelligent wild animals like gorillas. Hence, to expect this from my followers I would need to bring myself up to and consistently maintain these standards so that I can be the best version of myself for this world.