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<p style="text-align:center">Who Am I?</p>

When I was younger, my parents signed me up for every extracurricular activity they could think of, trying to find something which sparked a passionate interest. I cycled through soccer, softball, basketball, science camp, bowling, golf, gymnastics, and dance, and, while I had fun, none of these felt like the perfect fit. They soon became discouraged, worried that despite my impressive performance in school, having no real passion would lead me to unhappiness. Finally, in middle school I took classes in art and algebra and discovered two things which I truly enjoyed: creative thinking and problem solving. As a result, I was able to explore my interests and values, discover a career which aligned with them, and formulate a plan for how to succeed.

When I first began looking into careers which aligned with my interests, two separate paths seemed to present themselves: the stable, but boring math-focused path and the exciting, but risky art-focused path. Being an accountant versus being a painter seem like polar opposites, but in terms of my values they both had their pros and cons. A stable, lucrative career is important to me because I do not want to live a life filled with the struggle and uncertainty of financial issues. I want to have a nice home and a happy family, and I would like to have time outside of work during which I can travel, experience new things, engage with my community, and enjoy my hobbies. On the other hand, I do not want to drag myself to work every day filled with the dread of a dull career. I want to enjoy my work and be mentally stimulated by learning and creating things that are new and exciting. As a result, I was once again lost in the search for a

career which would be the right lifelong fit, until senior year when I took a class in Computer Science. I realized very quickly that a career in computer science would check all my boxes, and in the past 3 years of studying and practicing it this realization has only been reaffirmed.

Computer Science is a very broad field, so the next step was determining where I best fit within it. I involved myself in a wide variety of classes and clubs and found the most enjoyment in software and web development. This career involves creativity and problem solving in the design and development of applications and websites and is constantly innovating with new languages and tools, so it will never get boring. It is also oriented towards helping others in the sense that you are creating something to help someone solve a problem or simplify their life. Within this field there are two different groups of people and the two different career styles which align with these groups. When most people think of coders, they think of the Silicon Valley type; These are the go-getters who want to work for a big-name company or develop a new idea to make millions of dollars. The reality is that many coders, including myself, are not after this kind of wealth and recognition, because it requires working insanely long days and dedicating your entire life to your career. I would rather work an eight to five job at a smaller company where I can find happiness and success but enjoy an abundant life outside of work. I see myself spending as much time with my friends and family as possible, and this kind of joyful togetherness is my metric of success, not money and fame.

Once I answered the questions of what I value and who I want to be, the next step was determining how to get there. I have made progress on this with my education, being in the process of earning a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Computer Science, and with my work experience, having worked in positions involving software and web development. I am proud of this progress, but I know there is much more work to be done to achieve my goals. First, I would

like to learn how to better present my accomplishments and skills to potential employers to give myself the best chance at landing my dream job. Subsequently, I need to develop the skills to best determine which company can provide me with my dream job by learning how to thoroughly examine job opportunities. Finally, I would benefit from learning how to evaluate my own strengths and weaknesses and constantly improve the ways in which I interact with the world, to bring me closer to my goal of finding happiness both professionally and personally.

Although I was a late bloomer when it came to discovering my passion, this gave me the chance to grow into my values and fully explore a wide variety of potential interests. Consequently, I have a clear idea of the direction I want my life to go in and how I can direct it that way. Through continued personal and professional development, I believe that soon the life I want will be ripe for the taking.