Personal Leadership Development Plan

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Introduction and Type

If there is one thing I have learned this semester from this course, it’s that typing someone’s personality based on a limited amount of characteristics or somewhat abstract qualities is tough! This is true even when typing oneself, as I feel like my feelings or attitudes towards the world are constantly changing. Considering this, I tend to place more merit in long-term habits or qualities that shape who a person is. Based on my personal experience, I would type myself on the Myers-Briggs Chart as an ISTP, or the Virtuoso.

ISTP–The Virtuoso

The Virtuoso is someone who

- has an individualistic mindset.
- pursues their goals without encouragement/aid.
- goes about life with curiosity, ready to adapt as needed.
- loves to touch, take apart, build, and move from one project to another

An early indicator for typing myself this way was my lifelong affinity for hands-on learning. Since I was a kid, I always loved taking things apart, holding the pieces in my hands, figuring out how it all worked, and then putting it back together again. This probably explains why I was so into Legos and Lincoln logs back then. I also completed all of my schoolwork alone, because I felt like I could work more efficiently that way. Additionally, I often find myself getting my
interest piqued by random, sometimes odd topics that captivate me for a short period. This could be anything from an emerging technology to a conspiracy theory. Typing myself as a Virtuoso is also a little bit of a relief, as I am about to graduate with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. This gives me confidence that I did indeed make the right choice when choosing a major 4 years ago.

Personality Patterns

Throughout the semester, I have been observing my behaviors to better connect them with my personality. Three specific instances exhibited my Virtuoso self, and they are described below:

1. Projects – Too many, Too big
At the start of the semester, one of my first challenging tasks was to select a project for my Mechanical Engineering Senior Design course. I was overwhelmed because there were so many different paths and ideas I could work on, so I ended up meeting with my group to discuss. The possibilities were just about endless, and there were many questions – What was the scope of our project? How much work do I want to put into this? How far do we want to take this idea? As a Virtuoso, all of the questions had at least 10 interesting answers with ways we could do this, and I was interested in exploring all of them! I could not make a choice. At the end of the day, my group mates helped me narrow down our focus and answer some of those key questions,
which led us to the project we just finished (which could have a real impact on a niche industry!).

2. The “I” in Team–New Faces
Another situation I saw my Virtuoso self shining was when we met as a class for the first time and got our teams. As a Virtuoso, I’m used to being more focused on my tasks, with little concern for what the team is doing as long as they are working on what we need to. However, when reflecting on this experience, I also noticed I am introverted when meeting people at first, especially when I know I am going to be working with them on a team or for an extended period. This was intriguing to me because my thought process tells me I should be more extroverted in that situation since I’m going to interact with that person again soon. I believe it has something to do with an underlying anxiety that based on whatever I do or say now, I will have to live with my groupmates’ opinion of me for the foreseeable future. Due to this anxiety, I try to stay relatively quiet and only make strong suggestions when necessary. I believe this is somewhat helpful, as it keeps me from overstepping as a teammate or becoming too controlling. However, it also has drawbacks because it makes it hard for me to hold people accountable.

3. Onto the next before the last one is finished
Another situation showing my Virtuoso personality developed just last weekend. This was in a Zoom meeting with my senior design group where we were finishing up our final project report. We were wrapping things up and got to the point in the discussion where some “next steps” for
the project were to be laid out. We were talking about these next steps and an idea came up to start on sort of a new project, although heavily related to the one we just completed. This would improve the product we had created tremendously and would be game-changing for the industry. However, as I was entertaining this awesome idea, one of my other teammates said “I love it. Let’s get through the presentation for the current project first.” This thought stuck with me, and it forced me to go quiet and think about things for a few seconds. Although the world may say “time is money”, sometimes (especially in engineering) it may be better to take your time and do things the right way. This would probably lead to fewer mistakes and less of a chance for us to get into something over our heads. Although this sounds practical, my Virtuoso self did not consider this at first. I was too driven by the idea of moving on to the next project and failed to recognize the fact that I should finish what I started instead

Leadership Development Plan

Short Term: 3 Month

- Leverage my strengths: Capitalize on good qualities such as critical thinking, adaptability, and practicality. I can do this by effectively engaging in team-based problem-solving scenarios to exercise these skills regularly.

- Bettering my emotional intelligence: Research and focus on understanding my emotions. Explore resources like books and LinkedIn courses on emotional intelligence
to enhance my communication and team leadership skills. Get feedback from people I work closely with, such as other Mechanical Engineers at WashU.

- Identify Role Models: Identify two or three successful leaders that I can model off of and study their methods. Research and learn from their experiences and strategies for effective leadership. Ideas: Dan Gable, Dave Schultz, Mark Cuban, Elon Musk
- Feedback: Request feedback from peers and professors especially as my time in school closes out. Use their insights to fine-tune my leadership style and improve areas that need attention.

Long Term: 12 Month

- Mentorship: Once I nail down a job, I want to quickly seek out a mentor or coach who can provide guidance and support in my career journey. Their experience and feedback will be invaluable in honing my leadership skills. I want to develop this relationship over my first few months at the company.
- Long-Term Goals: Set specific, measurable, and achievable goals for my career and leadership development. I want to refocus myself on both short-term and long-term milestones.
- Reflection: Focus on regularly reflecting on my leadership experiences, noting successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. I may start a journal or some sort of record of my thoughts, so I can better track my progress.