

## **Appendix B – Reflection of VIA Survey of Character Strengths Results**

### **Top Strength: Appreciation of beauty and excellence**

I am often captivated by the simplistic beauty that surrounds us: The paradox that anything and everything can be both something that so easily is dismissed against complexities that reach far beyond what human minds can fathom. I find awe in a sunrise, yet at the same time my mind ponders on the unfathomable nature of the self organising systems involved to produce such awe.

This has been a strength I have seen to be natural. Not a day goes by where I do not choose, for pleasure, to attune to the world around me. It is rare that I cannot find something that has the innate power to captivate and inspire me towards greater openness, receptivity, creativity, and compassion

#### **Second Strength:**

##### **Fairness, equity, and justice**

I was instilled from a young age the value of equity. Growing up with a Dutch family Heritage, culture surrounded having an open heart and mind, communicating, and see people as people. No one person is “better than”, and family is the foundation of social structure. I feel this strength has always been a part of my essence, perhaps even a trait that worked it's way into my DNA. Yet at the same time I work hard at this strength in order to be an example to my daughter.

##### **Strength #3:**

##### **Spirituality, sense of purpose, and faith**

Though I believe in God, Christ as the embodiment of God, and the Holy Spirit, I also believe in the power of the light energy within humans. I actively engage in meditation, yoga, breathing practices, as well as studying many spiritual cultures and histories. I find it fascinating just how all aspects of the universe systematically reflect one another. There is no part of me that can fathom a world that exists without a grand designer, some omnipresent being that, simply put, is love.

##### **Strength #4:**

##### **Gratitude**

It has only been through my journey that I have come to show more gratitude in daily life. My awareness of the things that I am blessed with has grown since becoming more in time with my spiritual self. Making sense of my past helped me to shine light on all the amazing people and experiences I have been blessed with.

##### **Strength #5: Judgment, critical thinking, and open-mindedness**

Though my studies and my dedication to understanding I really have become critically aware, and able to make more unbiased decisions. I enjoy observing and understanding before making judgment, and though I am secured in my beliefs I am open to hearing others thoughts and feelings. Although there is a limit: When I feel unfairly judged, misinterpreted or misunderstood I am aware that I become closed, and less critically aware. I also am learning to trust my instinct more.

##### **Strength #6:**

##### **Love of learning**

I do see this as one of my strongest strengths. My love of learning has opened the door to healing and new blessings. I love learning new concepts and integrating them with my existing knowledge and memories. I also love learning about

people. Their cultures, backgrounds, understandings of the universe, and the “why” behind every concept I can fathom!

**Strength #7:**

**Honesty, authenticity, and genuineness**

I have an innate respect and value for authenticity. As an empath and someone who is quite injustice to body language and the “unspoken energy” I find I am very sensitive to when someone is hiding behind a facade. I try to be me no matter what situation I am placed in. Though I know I am not perfect, to me it is the want and strive for honesty that makes one most honest, I do believe this strength could be further cultivated through esteem building and self value.

**Strength #8:**

**Curiosity and interest in the world**

I choose to live with child like curiosity. I think that learning doesn't stop. My favourite thing is to spend an afternoon listening to my daughter experience and ask questions about the world. She has shown me that even the simplest things can be seen with curious interest.

**Strength #9:**

**Modesty and humility**

I have recently come to resonate with the saying “humility isn't thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less” CS Lewis. I like this because it reminds me that I am still worthy even when humble. That my value doesn't decrease with a modest approach. I have never liked to stand out, however my introvert nature may be due less about modesty and more about fear.

**Strength #10:**

**Kindness and generosity**

I believe in a generous spirit and I try to live by the idea that kindness begets kindness. I enjoy spending time with others and simply offering kind compassionate companionship. This isn't always easy and it is a virtue I have to truly work on to cultivate. Since leaving the oppressive culture I used to live in, I have found it so much easier to give and love freely. There is no belittling or

judgment on my kindness, and my generosity is not frowned upon.

**Strength #11:**

**Caution, prudence, and discretion**

Perhaps not a strength that comes easily. This may be tied into my fear based past. I wonder if my caution and sometimes seemingly prudent nature is due to feelings of inferiority. Perhaps knowing this opens the space for real depth and understanding of when caution is a strength, against when caution is a burden.

**Strength #12:**

**Forgiveness and mercy**

I truly understand the notion that strengths and weaknesses are on either ends of a spectrum. Though I offer forgiveness and mercy, quite often my forgiving nature is abused. I strive hard to be assertive and set boundaries in order to protect myself.

**Strength #13:**

**Capacity to love and be loved**

If I am honest in the reflection the capacity to love and to be loved is the paradox of the strengths, of my strengths. I hold the most respect for love. God is love. Love is the goal. To love with compassion and kindness. To respect all that we have received in this life. Love is the life blood. I have bounds of love within me, a desire to share authenticity and depth, hopes and joys, sadness and weakness. The paradox lies in the ability to trust enough to let love be shared. To allow vulnerability without the fear of rejection. To find like minded people who reciprocate genuine authenticity and a desire to simple be “real”.

**Strength #14:**

**Self-control and self-regulation**

Though I find strength in self regulation, this is a virtue in the past I have struggled to attain. Through breathing practice, mindfulness, and self reflective meditation I have come to develop a higher capacity to integrate body mind, and soul.

**Strength #15:**

**Leadership**

As an introvert, a slight perfectionist, and someone who struggles

with assertiveness, I have an intense dislike for leadership. I prefer to work alone and find as a leader I either shy away from directing others, or become someone I am not for fear of rejection. Perhaps the invitation is to find the self-assurance within.

**Strength #16:**

**Perspective wisdom**

I find it easy to make connections between topics no matter how complex. My studiousness allows for this. Indeed, there is a capability within me to support friends and family, and I pray I can bring hope to others in perspective and wisdom.

**Strength #17:**

**Industry, diligence, and perseverance**

I am fascinated by the study of endurance, persistence, and where exactly the strength to finish comes from. I find my strength of perseverance another paradoxical strength, for though I intuit my diligence comes from fear. Fear of rejection is a powerful motivator.

**Strength #18:**

**Creativity, ingenuity, and originality**

I enjoy the creative and original side of my personality. To call it a strength however would be to actively engage in cultivating it. For though I have many somewhat "brilliant" ideas, I struggle to share them and believe in this side of me. I am however flexible enough to make unconventional changes in order to minimize complexity.

**Strength #19:**

**Social intelligence**

I am quite an intuitive being. I rely on body language and no verbal question to guide my awareness of others. Though I am quite capable of assessing social situations and knowing what behaviours are required to "fit into" various situations, I find it exhausting. So too, I find that in many situations I am able to give and

listen, however the inability of others to do likewise leaves me empty.

**Strength #20:**

**Citizenship, teamwork, and loyalty**

Though I enjoy culture, friends, and quality relationships, my strengths of teamwork need cultivation. I am loyal and dedicated, I work hard; at the same time quite often I tend to work above and beyond at my own speed which is not true team spirit! This strength would be enhanced by an overall ability to trust.

**Strength #21:**

**Bravery and valor**

Though I have been and can be courageous, my instinct is to hide. I do not like to speak up, and though I can overcome pain and adversity, or stand up for human rights, it comes with much trepidation.

**Strength #22:**

**Zest, enthusiasm, and energy -**

There is a love of life within me, yet my zest is only expressed with like minded people. I find it frustrating when I have energy and enthusiasm and others suppress that due to their own frail egos. As this has happened and still happens regularly, I find myself hiding this aspect of myself.

**Strength #23:**

**Hope, optimism, and future-mindedness**

Though I have hope, and though I work toward achievements, though I choose a life where volition is imperative, I don't see total control of situations. And perhaps this is where I often find strength in my spirituality. Though I hope for the best, I cannot expect it.

**Strength #24:**

**Humor and playfulness**

Though I like to make people laugh, this is not a strength I choose or enjoy. I would rather listen and be connected in deep authenticity