LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Reflected Best Self

A Leadership Study

A reflective study of my leadership style, built on the Reflected Best Self Exercise — synthesizing first-hand feedback from colleagues and mentors with my own experiences.

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Uncovering My Leadership DNA

This Reflected Best Self (RBS) report presents a comprehensive analysis of my personal and professional strengths, as seen through the eyes of peers, family, friends, colleagues, and self-reflections. Based on 36 stories collected across academic, workplace, and personal contexts, the report identifies recurring patterns in how I operate when I am at my best.

Key themes that emerged from the analysis include:

- **Empathetic Leadership**: Leading through listening, emotional intelligence, and trust-building.
- **Strategic Calmness**: Staying composed and solutions-oriented in high-pressure situations.
- **Growth-Oriented Mentoring**: Supporting others through guidance, teaching, and structure.
- **Organized Problem Solving**: Bringing clarity and order in complex or chaotic environments.
- **Community Connection**: Fostering collaboration and inclusivity across teams and relationships.

These themes are supported by visual analysis of recurring strengths (e.g., leadership, empathy, mentoring) and keywords (e.g., team, project, emotional) that appeared consistently in the stories.

The report also explores the enablers and blockers that affect my ability to operate at my best and proposes a structured action plan for leveraging these insights in both my career and personal development. The findings are further reinforced through integration with leadership and identity theories from the Leadership course, including emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, and strengths-based development.

This exercise has provided clarity not just on *what* I do well, but *how* I create impact and *why* people turn to me in moments of need, offering a meaningful foundation for my future leadership journey.

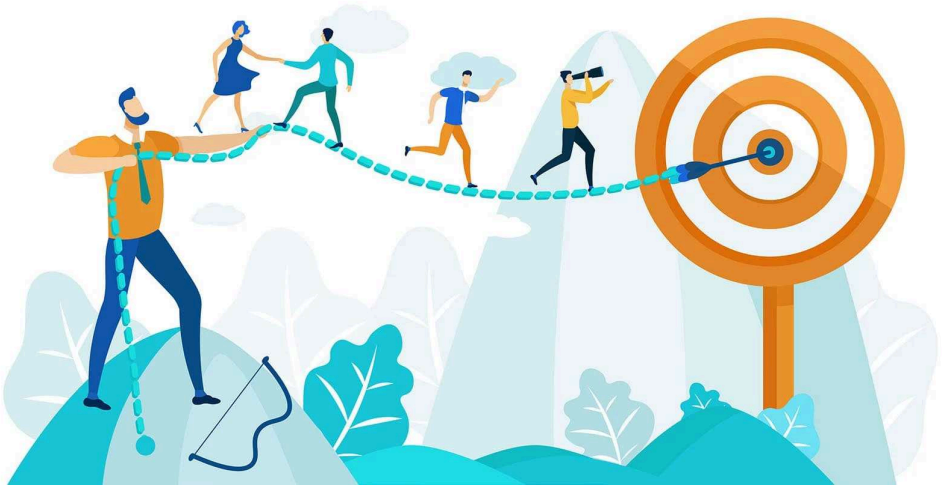
Decoding My Impact: Story-by-Story Analysis

To surface meaningful and actionable insights, each of the 36 Reflected Best Self (RBSE) stories was carefully analyzed across four critical dimensions: **Context** (where and when the story occurred), **Actions Taken** (what specific steps were involved), **Strengths Demonstrated** (the core qualities exhibited), and **Impact** (the result or influence on others and the environment). This structured approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the ways in which I show up at my best across various domains of life.

The stories were then **thematically grouped** into four major categories—Professional & Academic Leadership, Mentorship & Support, Strategic Problem Solving, and Community & Relational Depth. These categories not only reflect recurring behavioural patterns but also provide a cohesive narrative about the values and strengths that consistently drive my effectiveness. Each group is further linked to relevant leadership theories explored in the course, reinforcing how lived experiences intersect with research-backed models of emotional intelligence, authentic leadership, and personal purpose. This layered analysis ultimately offers a holistic picture of who I am when I am thriving, both as an individual and a leader.

Professional & Academic Leadership

Context	Actions Taken	Strengths Demonstrated	Impact
Mentored interns at Cisco	Designed onboarding, 1:1 check-ins	Leadership, Empathy	Interns excelled; FTE offer extended
MBA Strategy Project	Restructured under pressure	Initiative, Teamwork	High-quality output on time
Capstone Project Lead	Planned deliverables, motivated team	Communication, Accountability	Client praised engagement
HP System Migration	Built middleware, aligned teams	Strategic Thinking	Seamless rollout for 1.2M users



Mentorship & Support (Trait in Servant Leadership)

Context	Actions Taken	Strengths Demonstrated	Impact
Peer in emotional distress	Active listening, supportive talk	Empathy, Presence	Peer bounced back emotionally
Guided junior engineer	Shared tools and learning habits	Mentorship, Clarity	Junior became self-sufficient
Career guidance at fair	Helped build resumes and confidence	Coaching, Encouragement	Mentee secured internship

Strategic Problem Solving

Context	Actions Taken	Strengths Demonstrated	Impact
HP migration	Created solutions across teams	Calmness, Planning	Delivered stability under pressure
MBA presentation crisis	Took charge of delegation & schedule	Strategic Calm, Clarity	Prevented team collapse
Feedback workshop	Reframed structure and feedback cycles	Organizational Thinking	Helped team adopt continuous feedback

Community & Relational Depth

Context	Actions Taken	Strengths Demonstrated	Impact
Created bonding events	Organized team socials	Emotional Intelligence, Initiative	Improved morale and cohesion
Supported cousin	Physical comfort, emotional talk	Supportiveness, Trust	Deepened family connection
Helped teammate through burnout	Set up accountability routine	Nurturing, Consistency	Teammate regained energy and focus

Behind the Moments: What My Stories Reveal About Me

The Reflected Best Self stories I received were more than just compliments — they served as an honest mirror, reflecting how I consistently show up across personal, academic, and professional spheres of my life. These stories captured not only moments of success but also the values and behaviors that others associate with my presence during both ordinary and extraordinary situations.

As I carefully analyzed the 36 stories, a deeper narrative began to take shape — one that goes beyond isolated acts of support or leadership. What emerged was a compelling portrait of **consistency in values**, where empathy, clarity, and responsibility surfaced time and again. I discovered a **versatility in action**, demonstrating that I adapt not by changing who I am, but by applying my core strengths to meet the needs of different contexts.

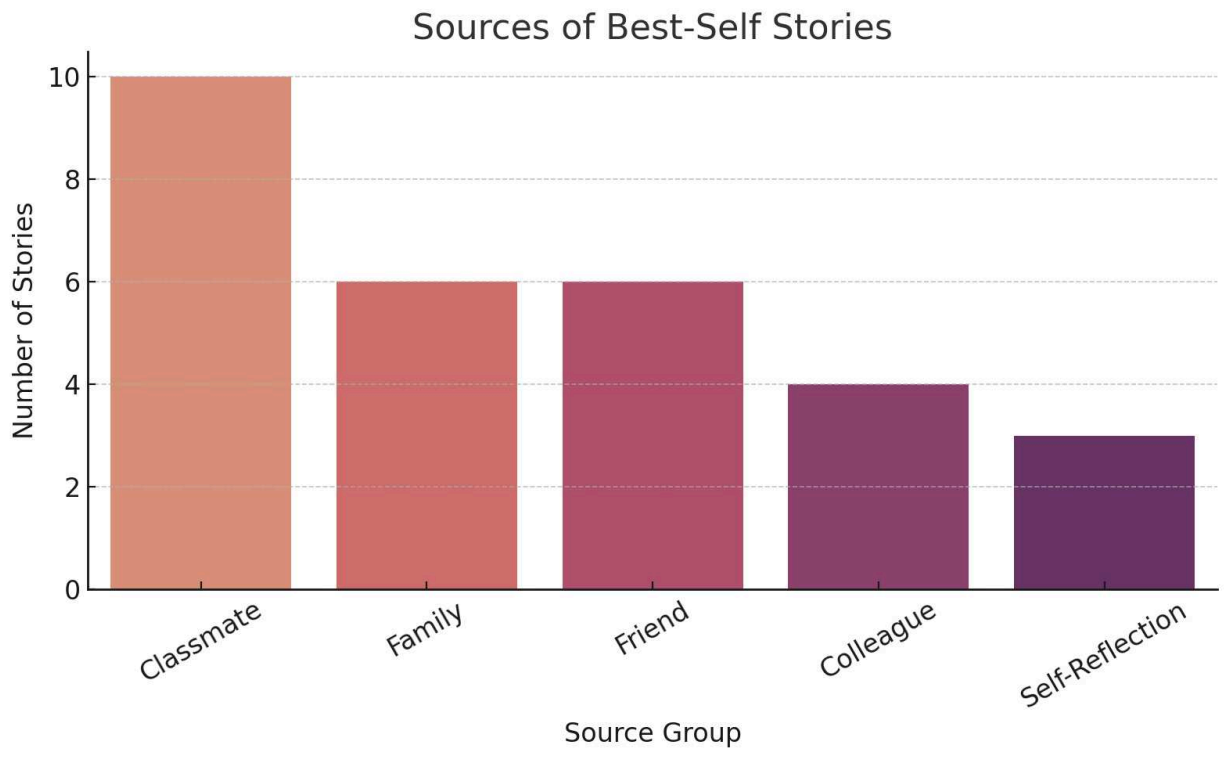
Moreover, the stories revealed an emotional undercurrent that defines my best self — one rooted in **emotional intelligence**, quiet influence, and the ability to hold space for others while also navigating complexity with calm and intention. It became clear that my impact isn't confined to formal roles or structured projects; rather, it flows through the ways I show up in relationships, resolve tensions, build trust, and create meaningful progress, even when no one is watching.

1. Who Sees Me at My Best?

A diverse group contributed to this portrait — colleagues, friends, family, and self-reflections. Each group brought its lens, highlighting both emotional and strategic dimensions of my strengths.

- Colleagues noted leadership in high-stakes environments.
- Friends emphasized emotional steadiness and support.
- The family reflected deeply on trust and quiet care.
- My own stories added technical precision and intentional growth.

Together, these perspectives confirmed that I do not change identities across spaces — rather, my core strengths (like empathy, calmness, and accountability) adapt with consistency.

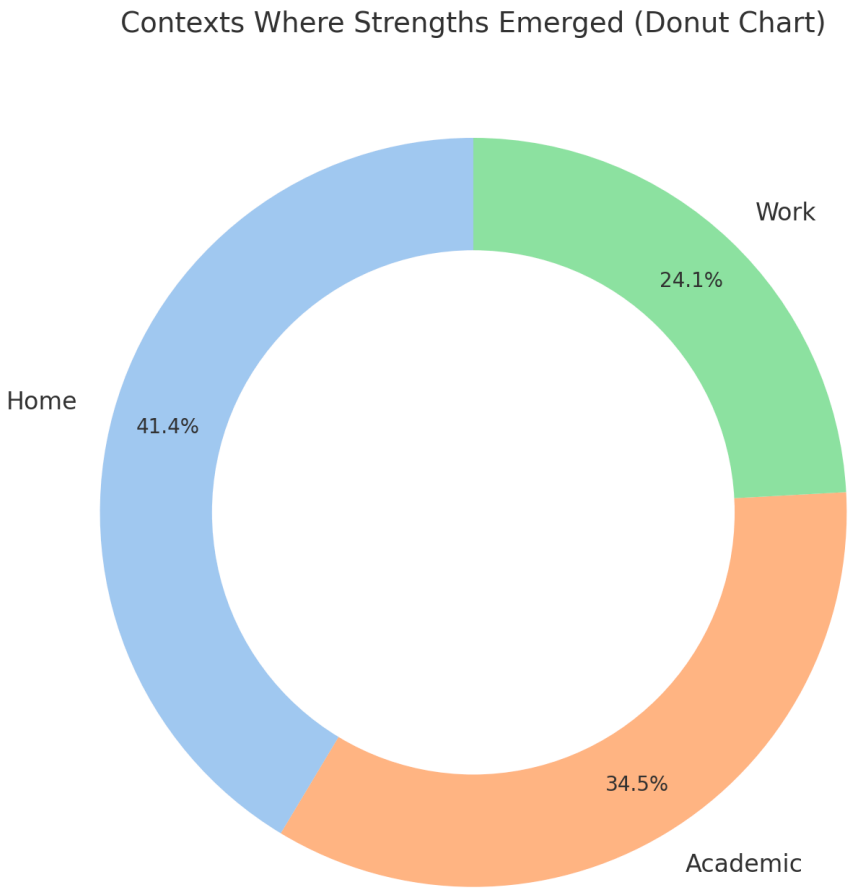


2. Where Do I Thrive?

Strengths emerged across workplaces, academic teams, and home settings, reinforcing that my impact is not domain-limited — it's character-driven.

- **Work**: Planning, decision-making, mentorship
- **Academic**: Collaboration, initiative under pressure
- **Home**: Emotional anchoring, long-term relational support

This suggests that I don't just "perform" in formal settings — my best-self behaviours are part of my everyday character.

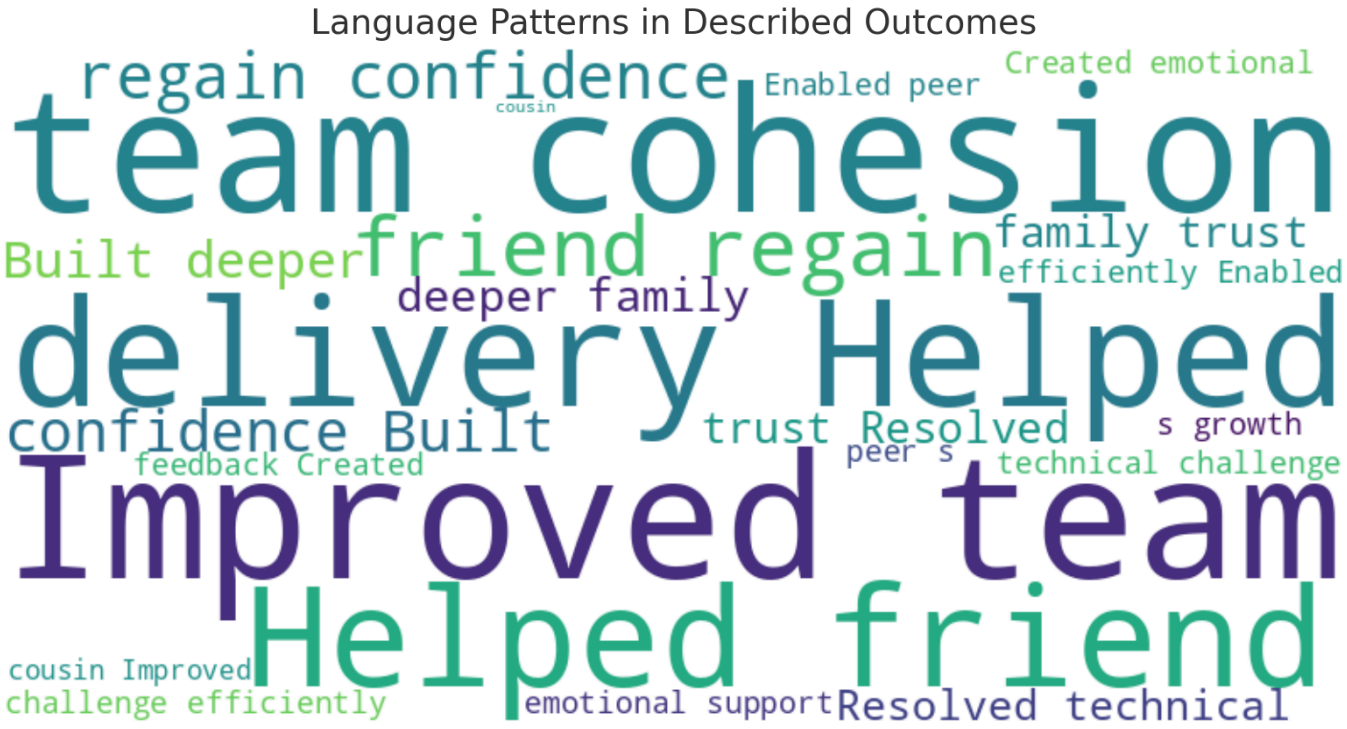


3. What Impact Do I Create?

By analyzing the language in the outcomes others described, a few dominant emotional and performance patterns appeared.

Words like *support*, *growth*, *confidence*, *resolution*, and *clarity* reveal that my impact is twofold:

- I help **people** feel safe, capable, and seen.
- I help **projects** move forward with structure and accountability.



Echoes of Impact: The Leadership I Didn’t Know I Lived

1. “Arish brings structure to chaos without overwhelming others.” → [Colleague]
2. “His calm demeanor made the whole team feel like everything was under control—even when it wasn’t.” → [Classmate]
3. “You were the only one who noticed I was off that day and actually checked in. That meant more than you know.” → [Friend]
4. “He leads without demanding attention. People follow because they trust his consistency.” → [Colleague]
5. “Even when we were under pressure, you made the team feel seen and capable.” →[Classmate]
6. “I’ve never felt judged by you, only supported.” → [Family]
7. “When others give up on small details, Arish is the one still making sure no one is left behind.” → [Colleague]
8. “You helped me grow when I didn’t even realize I needed that push.” → [Friend]
9. “It was your guidance that helped me get through my first real professional challenge.” →[Mentee]
10. “You saw potential in me before I did. That’s rare.” → [Peer]
11. **“**Even when under pressure, Arish remained focused and never let the stress affect his ability to lead calmly.”→ [Team Project Peer]
12. “His presence makes others feel like they belong—he listens, encourages, and doesn’t rush to judge.” → [Friend]
13. “When no one else volunteered, you stepped up—not for recognition, but because it was needed.” → [Classmate]
14. “I always felt more confident walking into meetings when Arish was on the team.” →[Colleague]
15. “He quietly re-centers the group when conversations get chaotic—like a human compass.” → [Academic Groupmate]

The Core of Me: My Reflected Best-Self Portrait

When I am at my best, I am calm in chaos, present in complexity, and purposeful in every interaction. I create clarity where there is confusion and foster connection where there is emotional distance. My leadership is not rooted in command, but in presence — a steady force that brings others along with empathy, structure, and trust.

People turn to me when they need grounding. I listen deeply, observe intently, and act intentionally. Whether it's helping a team through a stressful pivot or supporting someone navigating personal uncertainty, I bring a sense of emotional steadiness and thoughtful action. I am not loud, but I am heard — because my influence is felt through dependability, compassion, and careful follow-through.



What makes me unique is my ability to pair **emotional intelligence with strategic structure**. I'm as invested in the well-being of people as I am in the outcome of a project. I think in frameworks, act with discipline, and reflect with humility. I thrive when I am in service to others, not just by doing for them, but by empowering them to grow. My best self is a **mentor, a stabilizer, and a connector** — someone who makes the people and environments around me better simply by showing up as I am.

Momentum vs. Resistance: Enablers and Blockers of My Strengths

Behind every moment of success lies a landscape of supportive forces — and, often, hidden resistances. By examining all 36 Reflected Best Self stories, it becomes evident that while my strengths consistently shine through, their full expression is deeply influenced by both internal and external conditions. Recognizing these *enablers* and *blockers* is key to amplifying my leadership potential and living more frequently in alignment with my best self.

What Enables My Best Self to Shine?

1. Personal Enablers:

Stories from Cisco, HP, and Laurier often highlighted my ability to stay composed, plan effectively, and lead with empathy. This suggests that my drivers include:

- **Strong emotional regulation** – I remain calm in moments of stress (e.g., recovering a presentation file last-minute, crisis during academic projects).
- **Growth mindset** – I actively take initiative in learning environments and self-organize to improve group dynamics.
- **Purposeful mentoring** – Whether with interns or classmates, I find energy and clarity when guiding others to success.

2. Relational Enablers:

- **Supportive peer dynamics** – Many stories describe a mutual trust and respect from peers, where my contributions are seen as stabilizing and uplifting.
- **Safe and appreciative environments** – Teams that welcomed input, such as in MBA capstone or earlier job roles, amplified my leadership and planning strengths.

3. Situational Enablers:

- **Clear structure and accountability** – My strengths peak when there's clarity in roles and expectations.
- **Emotional urgency or challenge** – Whether it's a crisis at work or emotional support to someone in distress, I'm often most impactful under pressure with a strong "why."

What Blocks or Restrains My Strengths?

1. Personal Blockers:

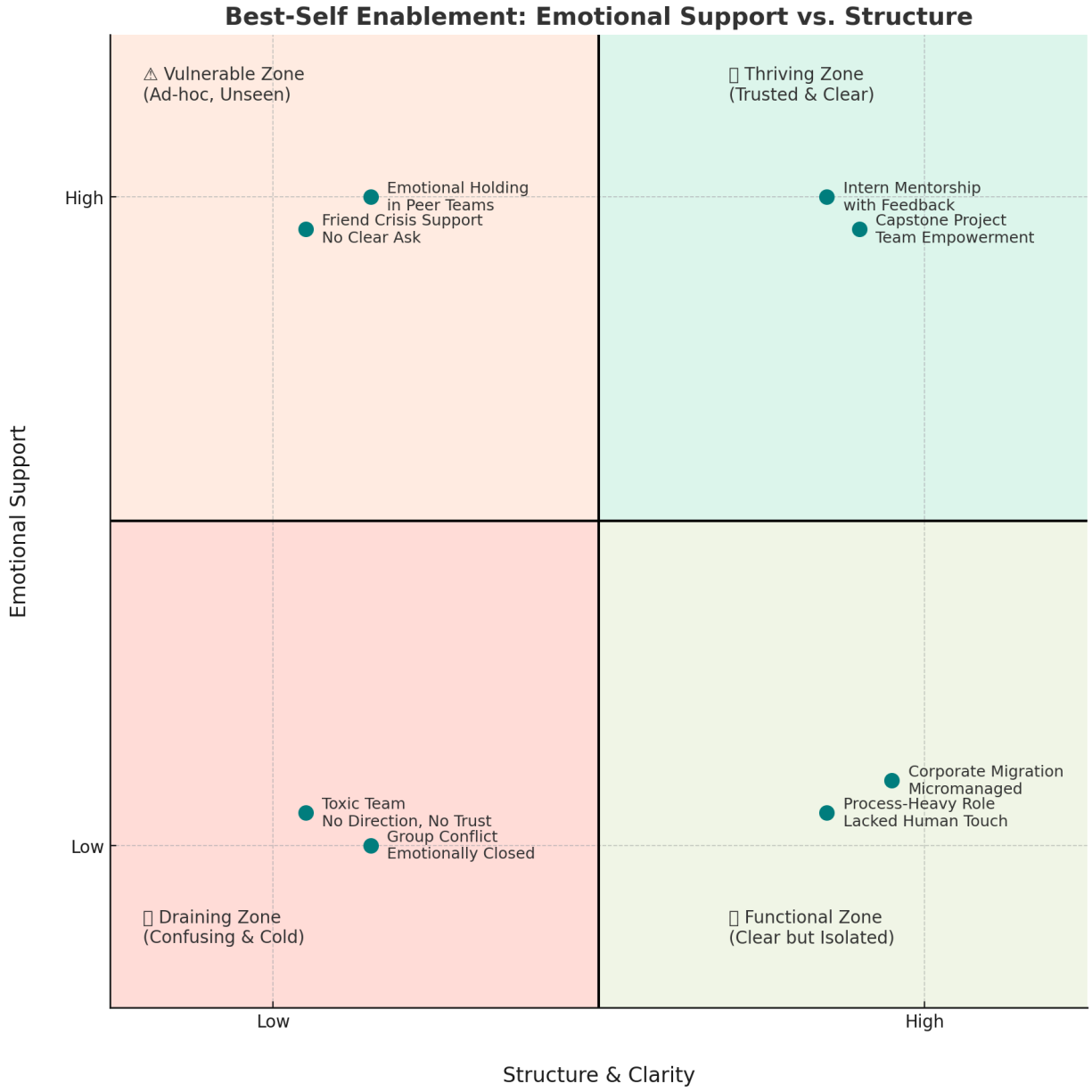
- **Over-functioning under stress** – Some stories imply I tend to take on too much during critical times (e.g., MBA project rescues), risking burnout.
- **Suppressing vulnerability** – While seen as emotionally supportive, I may at times neglect my own emotional needs to prioritize others.

2. Relational Blockers:

- **Closed or non-receptive teams** – In environments where team members were disengaged or not open to collaboration, my influence was less visible or less sustainable.
- **Lack of recognition** – In some past workplace contexts, despite high output, leadership went unrecognized officially, which could diminish motivation over time.

3. Situational Blockers:

- **Ambiguity or micromanagement** – I thrive in environments that trust and empower, not those bound by unnecessary process or lack of ownership.
- **Lack of emotional safety** – In emotionally distant or hierarchical contexts, I feel my empathetic strengths retract, and I default to "functional" rather than inspiring leadership.



Moving Forward:

Understanding these dynamics helps me make informed choices about where I can thrive and where I need to either advocate for change or set protective boundaries. As I step into leadership roles post-MBA, I will aim to seek out or co-create emotionally intelligent, purpose-driven spaces that enable my strengths while watching for contexts where energy might drain unnoticed.

Fueling My Flight Path: Activating My Best Self

The journey from self-awareness to sustained excellence demands more than insight — it requires intentional action. Based on the themes uncovered in my RBSE stories, and the enablers/blockers mapped through deep reflection, this action plan outlines how I will consistently activate and grow my best self in personal, academic, and professional contexts.

This strategy is rooted in three key pillars of my Reflected Best-Self Portrait:

1. Empathetic Leadership
2. Strategic Calmness
3. Mentorship and Growth Enablement

Each action is designed to align with these themes while directly addressing potential blockers such as over-responsibility, lack of feedback, or emotionally disconnected environments.

Short-Term Actions (1–3 Months)

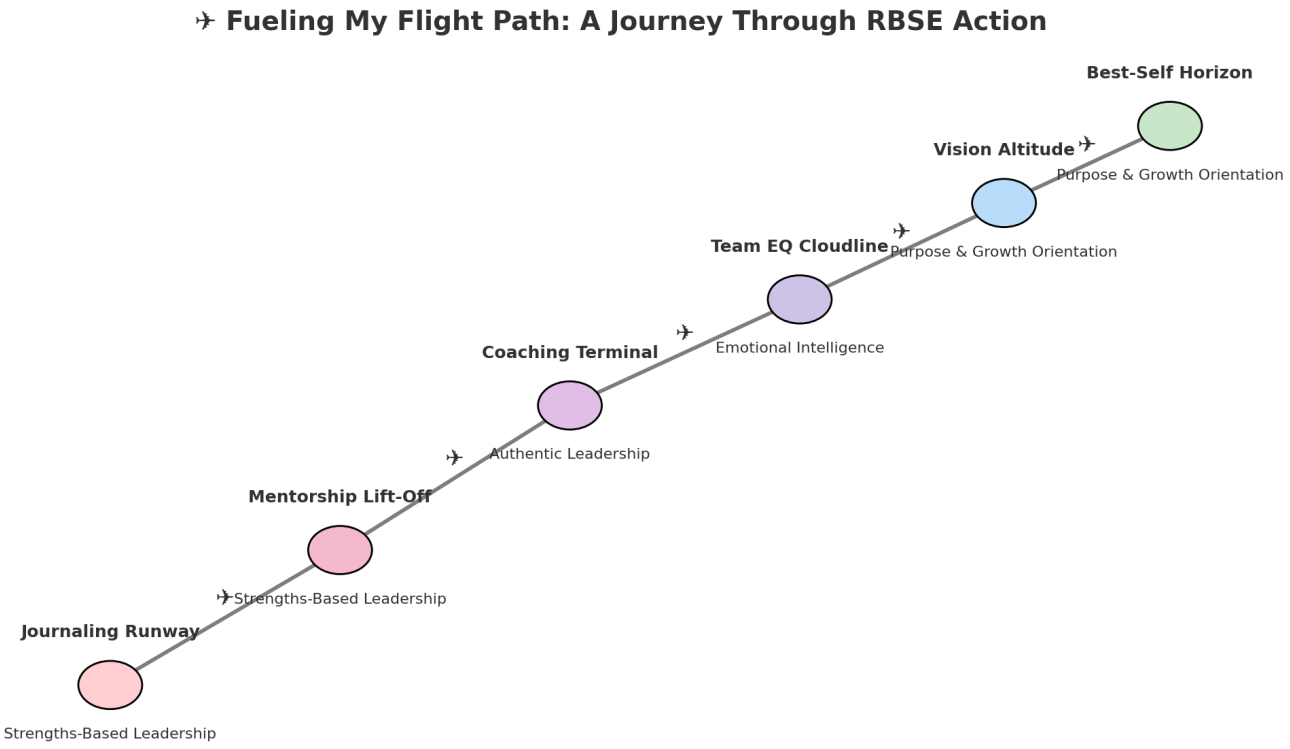
I will begin by maintaining a weekly “Best Self Journal” to reinforce self-awareness. This will involve 30 minutes each week reflecting on moments where I felt most aligned with my best self and identifying what enabled those experiences. I will also organize feedback sessions with peers and mentors using open-ended prompts to explore how my strengths are perceived and where they could be enhanced. Additionally, I will seek opportunities to mentor an incoming student or peer to activate my mentoring strength and energize through service.

Medium-Term Actions (4–12 Months)

Over the next year, I plan to enroll in a formal coaching or mentorship program to enhance my tools for structured, intentional support. I also intend to lead a project or initiative aligned with my best-self themes, where I can apply clarity, calmness, and empathy in real-time. As a part of building emotionally intelligent teams, I will co-create practices like regular emotional check-ins, gratitude rituals, or feedback loops to ensure relational safety in collaborative environments.

Long-Term Actions (1–3 Years)

In the longer term, I aspire to secure leadership roles that balance people and process responsibilities, enabling me to shape high-impact, trust-based environments. To sustain my mentoring practice, I will develop a framework for consistent engagement, templates for mentee development, and structured follow-ups. Finally, I hope to design and deliver a “Best-Self Discovery” session or workshop to help others identify their strengths and leadership voice, replicating the empowerment I experienced through RBSE.



Tracking Progress and Sustaining Growth

To ensure accountability and sustainability, I will conduct monthly reflections with a mentor or accountability partner. I’ll also monitor qualitative impact through feedback from those I support and evaluate whether my environments allow my best self to thrive. This cycle of action, reflection, and course correction will help me consistently lead with presence, empathy, and purpose.

Touching Down with Purpose: Final Reflections

This Reflected Best Self journey has been more than a diagnostic—it has been a rediscovery. Through stories shared by those who know me best, and through my moments of reflection, I've come to understand the consistency, adaptability, and emotional intentionality that define my leadership. What once felt like instinctive behaviour has now been named, understood, and purposefully integrated into a personal leadership framework.

From my ability to bring calm during complexity, to my instinct to support others in their growth, I now recognize these patterns not only as strengths, but as essential components of my identity. These insights have revealed that my impact stretches beyond actions—it lives in how I make others feel seen, safe, and supported.

Importantly, this report has also surfaced the conditions that allow my best self to flourish, and the environments that might stifle it. As I transition from the MBA into broader leadership roles, I will no longer just navigate challenges—I will architect the conditions for personal and collective excellence.

The journey does not end here. With the flight path now clearer, I am ready to soar—with empathy as my compass, calmness as my altitude, and mentoring as my fuel.
