

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING:

An LMI Case Study in Leadership Development for Young Adults



Slight Edge Group
Moncton, New Brunswick
Canada 2019

**“Whatever you vividly imagine, ardently desire,
sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon
must inevitably come to pass.”**

Paul J. Meyer (1928 - 2009)
Founder, Leadership Management International

What does it take to produce confident, high-performing high school graduates who are both enthusiastic and *actively engaged* in achieving their work and personal goals?



Turns out, it takes the same principles and practices that have already been proven hugely successful with adults.

Leadership Development In the High School Classroom

*"Pretty foreign compared to normal high school classes.
[Steve] is not a typical teacher."*

- Josh Kammermann, RHS grad 2019

Over the past decade, CEO Stephen Daniels has seen more than 500 professionals graduate from leadership development programs offered through **LMI Canada** at his home office in Moncton, New Brunswick.

As part of a network of 19 branches operating across the country, LMI Canada supports practical development for essential life skills such as communication, strategic planning and motivation. LMI offers six to 24-month programs, primarily (although not exclusively) for management professionals.

However, after more than ten years of cultivating successful habits and attitudes in adults, Stephen began to wonder about the impact high-level personal and professional development could have in the lives of younger future leaders.

With a personal mission to help “re-imagine leadership in Atlantic Canada”, Daniels and his team set their sights on an exciting new target audience in 2019:

- Students about to graduate from high school.

The idea of a development program for young leaders was born. With a very short launch time, LMI Moncton partnered with the Riverview Boys & Girls Club, and Director Matt Mckeigan joined the initiative as a community representative.

Soon after, a group of grade 12 students at Riverview High School were identified to participate in the LMI pilot program, earning school credit upon completion.

"It's a different kind of work. We have to define it for ourselves."

- Regan Merservau, RHS grad 2019

The **Attitude is Everything** program launched in January, 2019 with 13 student participants and Steve Daniels serving as LMI Coach and Facilitator. After some shuffling at the beginning, ten students stayed the duration, with eight successfully graduating from the program in June.

Community sponsors were sought to cover the program materials cost of \$875 per student. Community involvement was essential to allow the program to be offered at no cost to the students. Both Stephen Daniels and Matt Mckeigan volunteered their time to execute the pilot project.



The Unique LMI Process

Founded by Paul J. Meyer (1928 - 2009), LMI is a global firm headquartered in Waco, Texas, and operates in 86 countries. Its subsidiary, LMI Canada, was established over 35 years ago and is based in Mississauga, Ont.

Meyer built his company around the firm belief that ALL people (regardless of gender, personality, social standing, or education level), could develop the necessary characteristics to achieve and live a lifetime of success.

LMI Canada specializes in Management and Leadership development through the following means:

- Transforming organizational culture
- Goal design and alignment
- Strategic planning
- Stress management tools
- Multi-sensory learning
- Work/life balance
- Attitude and behavior coaching
- Spaced repetition learning, mentoring, and executive coaching

The Total Person®

"[The program] lets us make our own definition of success."

- Braeden MacDougall, RHS grad 2019

LMI delivers a process that not only provides skill and competency development, but also changes the attitude and behaviors of the participants.

Emphasizing that "Success" in life is created and defined by each of us as individuals is essential to understanding the pursuit of our own unique potential.



Mentorship

Mentorship is an important part of the LMI process; helping to reinforce commitment, engagement, and accountability as participants navigate the challenges and rewards of personal / professional development. Aligning with LMI's program procedures for adults, the students were required to choose a mentor to support them throughout their participation.

Course Structure

The RHS leadership development program was comprised of 13 sessions, each with accompanying workbook and audio materials. In order to further support the students, additional access to facilitator Stephen Daniels by email was made available.

1. Introduction to Concepts

Concepts of success, motivation, & attitude changes
Success as related to past conditioning
Attitudes & habits - the effective motivators
The power of goal setting

Abundance Attitude: Results and Rewards

2. Gaining the Slight Edge

There's power in positive expectancy!
How positive expectancy works
Developing an attitude of positive expectancy

5. Focusing on Singleness of Pursuit

Establish a purpose for life
Transforming dreams into reality
Successfully managing distractions

3. What it Takes to Become a Winner

What's the difference between winners & losers?
Attitudes of winners
Behaviors of winners
Results enjoyed by people at the top

6. Psycho-Cybernetics for Winners

Successfully programming your goal setting computer
Putting the power of goal setting into action
Enhancing your self-image
Principles that get results

4. Cultivating an Abundance Attitude

Physical abundance
The abundance of mental potential
The Choice is yours
Unleashing and using your potential

7. Developing the Desire of a Winner

The transforming power of desire
Desire makes a difference!
Making desire & self-motivation a Way of Life
The hallmarks of genuine desire

8. Maximizing the Power of Enthusiasm

A key to personal & professional fulfillment
Controlling the emotional climate

Tactics for developing enthusiasm
The benefits of enthusiasm

9. A Tough Mental Attitude

The need for a confident approach
for winning
A tough attitude toward your career
A tough attitude toward yourself
A tough mental attitude toward
problems
A tough mental attitude through
goal setting

10. Never, Never, Never Give Up!

Why people quit
A plan for developing persistence
Turning adversity into opportunity

11. The Positive Forces of Life

The impact of the invisible

Choosing to change
The positive force of enthusiasm
The energizing force of desire
The magnetic power of personal
charisma
Synergizing Positive Life Forces

12. Embracing the Pure Joy of Work

A creative outlet
A fascination with work
The rejuvenating effects of work
The joys of self-discipline

13. Becoming a Total Person®

Achieving a balanced life
Facing reality
Giving & receiving freely
The freedom to become the best &
brightest You!

The pilot group were explained that their participation signifies a serious commitment to personal and professional excellence. Accordingly, they agreed to assume full responsibility for completing their assignments and course requirements.

This proviso in place, the pilot program offered the following promise:

- **When you adopt the attitudes and apply the principles in this program, you become the pilot and navigator of an incredible success journey.**

You have the freedom and the right of choosing the destination and charting the course for yourself.

Meeting the Needs of Young Leaders

Participants for the LMI's pilot youth leadership development program were selected based upon recommendations by partner Riverview High School's administration and staff.

These busy soon-to-graduate 17 and 18 year olds carry a full-time school schedule while juggling a myriad of other activities, volunteer work, and part-time jobs.

Each one was high-performing - having demonstrated leadership through their involvement in extracurricular sports, student-led groups and initiatives; as well as academically.

They're expert multi-taskers (having grown up with tech), and are fully integrated in online social media and digital communication.

Commonly referred to as "Gen z", this age group is often stereotyped for being overly anxious and uncertain about the future.

If this is true, it's understandable.

Born at the same time the "War on Terror" began, this generation has been raised in a time of shifting social attitudes, economic failures, escalating conflict-ridden media, and the vocalized threat of impending climate doom.



Surely, becoming more cautious and reserved is a predictable adaptation.

While perhaps understandable, high rates of anxiety, depression, and mental illness among teens indicate that stronger educational intervention is needed to help develop healthy, functioning young adults.

Anxiety and lack of certainty about the future were identified by the group as very real challenges.

Developing effective personal leadership skills is hugely important in equipping young adults to face the reality of uncertainty and successfully overcome the challenges of everyday work and life.

So, what is the impact of real-world, executive level self-development on these bright and active, if anxious, young minds?

Balance - Giving from A Full Cup

"I always valued other things before taking care of myself, so a big step for me was realizing that I needed to help myself before I can help other people."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad

In high school, image and peer pressure play a large role in the social environment. Now, social media adds new and complex dimensions of seeking validation from the external world.

For high-achieving students with busy extracurricular lives, the need for "keeping up appearances" can make it difficult to say "no", both in and outside of school.

For these students, over-committing is a real problem, as well as the pressure to excel in all areas.

"It's not about what other people want for you" LMI coach / facilitator Stephen Daniels reminded the students.

Effective personal management is not limited to developing professional skill sets - it

applies to the attitude and behaviors we bring to every area of life.

Balance acknowledges the importance of self-care, and that planning for success must also include clear boundaries, clear priorities, and adequate rest.

Since nearly every participating student was also in the process of applying to universities, the question of "balance" was also considered in how to successfully navigate academics, activities, and social life after high school.

With university bringing a whole new set of challenges, temptations, and demands, balance is an essential element for developing a healthy attitude towards personal success.

***"My biggest habit change has been
taking responsibility for my happiness...
It's helped me a lot with the relationship that I have with myself."***
- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



Goal Setting - Creating the Future

Effective personal productivity isn't just about getting *more* done.

Knowing *where we are going* (goal setting) and *what it takes to get there* (planning) is essential so that we can

allocate our focus to the right things, at the right time.

Combined with the opportunity to practice autonomous thinking and leverage personal accountability, the benefits of personal productivity were understood and embraced by the teens.

"I've discovered that I need to make goals and make a plan in order to be successful."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



Practically AND psychologically, achieving our goals creates a foundation for success by enhancing the focus, momentum, and self-confidence that comes from accomplishment.

However, the pilot program revealed that for the most part, **the students were more accustomed to being told *what to do* and *when to do it*** then determine these things for themselves.

As a result, although the *concept* of planning and goal setting was not new, the *practice* of applying it thoughtfully to school, work and activities had a huge impact on their performance and lives.

Throughout the course, the students were challenged to get clear about what they really want for themselves - and to realize the power they have over their *time* and their *choices*.

"My biggest takeaway from this class was my experience planning and organizing my days and my goals with the goal planning sheets."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



"My biggest habit change would be to write down my entire schedule, so that I stay on track and don't overbook myself. That's the biggest (and best) habit change that I'll carry into university."
- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



Integrity - A Magnetic Quality of Leaders

More than an attitude - integrity is a quality which implies morality, trustworthiness, and the ability to follow through.

Furthermore, integrity requires courage, self-reflection, and discipline to make it grow.

It means speaking and acting in alignment, which brings about an inner strength which is both tangible and inspiring to others.

The key to developing personal integrity, quite simply, is to *care*.

Truly recognizing that it *matters* what we give and how we represent ourselves makes it easier to work hard and "do the right

thing", even without promise of recognition or reward.

The students were impressed with the idea that **we are always employed at representing ourselves** - even if someone else happens to be signing our cheque.

Simply put - trying our best is powerful. This concept of "You are your own CEO" was identified by several participants as one of the most memorable program takeaways.

In a group discussion on graduation day, Stephen summarized this point from *Session 12: Embracing the Pure Joy of Work:*

"No matter what work you're doing - work for yourself.

Decide you're going to do it for you.

This changes the way you apply yourself."

- LMI Facilitator Stephen Daniels

"My biggest takeaway from this course is that Leadership is something that you have to work for; you have to earn.

It's not something that [we] are born with."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



*"My biggest habit change is caring about the things I didn't care about before... **Now I see that my work is part of me, so I actually [put in] the care to show that it expresses who I am.**"*

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



Success - By Their Own Definition

For young leaders, success is too often and easily defined by outside influences such as family, culture, the education system, and peers.

Considering the powerful influence of a social climate based in constant comparison; cultivating the right attitude towards success and failure is an empowering aspect of facing reality - and moving confidently toward the achievement of goals.

A healthy attitude towards "Success" acknowledges that:

- Each one of us has a unique purpose and function to fulfill.
- Perceived "failures" are valuable lessons that build character and strengthen us as we strive to achieve our goals.



"My biggest take away was the idea that I'm the one that is not only responsible for my success, but also [the one] who determines what that means.

I wanted to stop comparing myself to other people, and now my attitude now says: You are you, and that's okay.

And it's more than okay - it's pretty great."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad



Learning from Local Leaders



On the second last in-class session, students were treated to Q&A with a panel of successful community members; each considered a leader in their field.

The students were each given the opportunity to ask a question to the panel and learn from the wisdom of leaders from their own community.

Panel Members (from left to right):

Nigel Bayliss - Landscaping Contractor

Cathy Rogers - MLA (former Finance Minister for New Brunswick)

Anne Simmons - Mayor, Town of Riverview (former real estate agent)

Linda Carey - Executive Director at Boys & Girls Club Riverview

Mike Robart - Senior Accountant / Managing Partner at Grant Thornton

Questions ranged from:

"What is your biggest dream?",
to **"How do you stay motivated?",**
and **"What scared you the most about**
starting something new?"

As the discussion continued, themes began to emerge.

Understandably, the subject of *knowing what to do* in regards to making big life decisions was top of mind for these high school graduates.

Anxiety and self-doubt was also a real concern for the students - especially around the idea of making the "wrong" decision and the possibility of heavy financial consequences or failure.

They asked the panel to share their own challenges and self-doubts; and the panel members rose to the occasion.

"I was surprised at how much the panel opened up to the students," reflected facilitator Stephen Daniels.

"They did a great job showing that there is no one-size-fits-all path to success, and that we can change the path we're on at any time."

Senior accountant Mike Robart explained that he, too, had struggled with self-doubt and anxiety throughout his life and career.

Over time, he came to realize that "many other people who look like they have it all together are also struggling with the same things", and that it is possible to manage these experiences effectively.

Mike also explained how important it is to cultivate an attitude of humble service toward personal and career goals; adding that helping others to achieve success makes our own success greater.

"My biggest dream? Investing in the dreams of others."

- Mike Robart, Sr. Accountant

Entrepreneur Nigel Bayliss chose to follow his passion for plants (against his father's wishes) and forego the military to pursue landscaping.

For him, achieving success meant risking validation and approval from those he cared about.

But it paid off - After a very successful career, Nigel is now enjoying early retirement.

While "the choice" was clear (albeit difficult) for Nigel, other panel members revealed a less linear path to their current success; including changing careers and returning to school.

*"We have to take ourselves outside our comfort zone.
If the road changes, make that turn."*

- Anne Simmons, Mayor of Riverview

The difficulties of pursuing success while raising a family and mitigating life's unexpected twists and turns was also a topic of honest discussion.

Panel members re-emphasized the need for planning, flexibility, and focus in order to effectively manage stress and maintain balance.

*"Life is not compartmentalized.
What happens in one area affects every area."*

- Cathy Rogers, MLA

As the discussion came to a close, there was a repetition of a basic attitude toward the pursuit of success:

There is no such thing as failure.

This mental attitude provides the flexibility needed to learn from our mistakes, re-evaluate our priorities and move forward towards our goals - even if that means changing the direction of the path we are on.

The most lasting and empowering message from the day?

Changing your mind is *perfectly okay*.

There was also a strong theme of reassurance that **each one of us is unique, and no one else is responsible for defining our success.**

Whether "success" in life means becoming a top-earning CEO, running a non-profit, or being a great parent - the choice is ours to make.

"The best idea that I took away from this course is that failure is temporary. [In this course] we always talk about how failure is not something to look upon as a bad thing."

- LMI Youth Leadership Program Grad

Graduation

Student participants graduated from the LMI pilot program with final exams approaching and just under two weeks left in their high school career.

The restless excitement and reflective moods were palpable as the class assembled in Riverview High School's library, along with organizers Stephen Daniels and Matt Mckeigan.

A few parents showed up to witness the occasion, and the group assembled in a comfortable circle surrounded by colorful books and artwork - a welcomed change from the usual classroom environment.

The students were asked to each give a short presentation reflecting on their personal journey and learnings from the course.



One by one, they did so - providing the comments and reflections which have been included here.

Amid some nerves, smiles and enthusiastic applause; the graduating students shared their final thoughts and accepted their certificates for completion.

Completing the required LMI curriculum also earned the students course credit towards their graduation.

It wasn't easy - as noted by several of the speakers during their presentations.

But overall, each one agreed that they were grateful for the experience and glad to have pushed through the challenges.

The lessons, they felt, would most definitely help them now and in the future.

"My biggest commitment to myself next year is to remember what I've learned."



Reflections

Without question - the pilot program was successful.

The long-term impact of the program remains to be seen; however, the short-term growth and development experienced by participants is present and tangible.

By their own words and actions, the students demonstrated an integrated understanding

of the concepts and practices put forth by LMI Canada.

Representing a true collaborative effort to support young leaders with powerful new learning opportunities, it is a future goal to see the **LMI Youth Leadership Development Program** being replicated in high schools across the country, and around the world.

Challenges

Lack of lead time

Coming together in just a few short weeks, the pilot program was rushed in finalizing details between partners, securing financial sponsorship from the community, and registering the students themselves.

For subsequent installments, materials and processes will be developed to more easily

facilitate community interest, support and participation. Local media timelines will be acknowledged.

As with any new endeavor, it's important that all parties understand the purpose behind the program, and the many benefits for those who apply what they've learned.

Mentorship

Ideally, LMI facilitators will work with school administration and/or community partners to provide possible mentors to work with participants throughout the program.

Partly due to the lack of lead time, students were asked to choose their own mentors for

the initial pilot program. This resulted in several parents serving as mentors, which will be avoided for future installments.

The closeness of the parent-child relationship and potential for personal

conflict proved to create an undesirable dynamic, at times.

Scheduling

Steve Daniels can't help chuckling about the scheduling challenges faced by the pilot group.

"First thing Monday morning just isn't the best time to do this work with the kids," he said.

In addition to the (perhaps predictably) sluggish mood and low energy levels

associated with Monday morning classes; a number of public holidays and school closures disrupted the flow of classes right from the beginning.

When nearly a one-month "break" from classes occurred just after getting started, the students took longer than anticipated to become accustomed to Steve and the LMI process.

Learning Conditions

The students were somewhat uncomfortable with openly sharing their ideas, at first.

Seemingly, a school career based on providing the "right" answer created some hesitation among participants when it came time for open-ended discussion.

Standardized education does not always reinforce the exploratory, self-directed

Following final presentations by the students, community representative Matt McKeigan summed it up like this:

"One of the things that [you have] to look forward to is a lot of people telling you what you can and can't do. I think if there's one lesson that you can take from this program, it's that YOU are the only person who knows what that is."

learning styles so often observed in leaders.

Encouraging independent thought and autonomous action is imperative to developing confident, curious young adults.

For the students, learning to take personal responsibility through the LMI process also included learning how to create and express their own standards and definitions.

Final Thoughts

When Steve Daniels read that only 5% of people actually achieve the success they set out for in their lives, he knew this was a figure he wanted to help change.

Cultivating strong, confident young leaders who know how to follow their dreams is truly a worthwhile achievement.

One that will hopefully continue to grow; planting seeds for the prosperous future that we are all waiting to be part of.

*"A survey was made one time that covered a lot of people, working people. These people were asked, 'Why do you work?' 'Why do you get up in the morning?' 19 out of 20 had no idea."
- From Earl Nightingale's "The Strangest Secret"*

For Steve, it all comes down to service to the community; and re-imagining the leadership of tomorrow.

"My goal going in? If we could impact one kid..." he says, "Open their eyes, teach them how to take personal responsibility, and get excited about the future - then the program would be a success.

I think we definitely did that."