Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Todd MBE
British Army

Andrew, tell us how you first engaged with Henley Business School, and came to be on the Advanced Personal Leadership (APL) programme

‘The MoD had created the Army Advanced Development Programme and, as part of this, three officers who had been identified as future leaders were sent on the Henley APL programme to build our leadership capability.’

What did you and the Army hope to get from it?

‘Colleagues who had previously experienced the programme made sure I was well prepared for it! They assured me that it was ‘brutal’, and that it would force me to ‘take a long hard look at myself’, but that I would come out of it a better leader and a better person. ’

‘I knew that I already had a certain level of capability, having led two expeditions to Mount Everest and commanded four tours in Afghanistan. So, while I was confident that I could lead men to do extraordinary things, I hoped it would fill in some gaps in my understanding of leadership.

‘In the Army, we crave structure, so I expected to be taught things through a series of lectures; everything that this programme isn’t!’

What impact did it have, and what were the highlights?

‘This programme stretched me in ways I could never have imagined. It transformed me. I cannot speak highly enough of the programme.

‘It was so cleverly crafted that we got the most out of each other through peer-learning. It gave me a freedom to explore my own strengths and weaknesses.

‘The highlights? For me, there was a moment of realisation after the 360-feedback that made me question my levels of self-awareness; I was suddenly able to recall past experiences with a completely new perspective. The programme creates a safe place in which you can unpack your past and examine it with fresh eyes. And it can be very revealing.

‘I now realise how much further I can go, and have to go, to reach my potential. I’m so much more aware of the impact of the things I do and say, and – perhaps most importantly – more aware of the things I don’t know. As you rise up the ranks, you can easily become detached from what’s happening behind you, and you can’t assume you know what’s going on back there.’

What made Henley different and special for you, and what advice would you offer to anyone considering enrolling on the APL?

‘It’s location, the calm environment and its history – especially its connections with the military – make it the perfect place for reflection, and an ideal backdrop to enhance profound changes in people.

‘As for advice: go with an open mind and embrace it. Trust in it to deliver, and it will pay dividends.’