

# Case Study

## Advanced Personal Leadership Programme



**Dominic Smart**  
FutureLeader

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### What was your motivation for going on the Advanced Personal Leadership (APL) programme? What did you want to achieve?

‘I wanted to develop my own ability to lead, and to fulfil a new vision for the church for which I was the minister. I could see great opportunities for the church to connect in new ways with communities all over the city.’

### So what were your expectations, and did the programme live up to them?

‘Although the programme came highly recommended, and I was intrigued by reports of the experiential approach taken at Henley, it was still a bit of a mystery. But I had a lovely chat with the programme director, Kate Hudson, and realised that we were both in the personal transformation business. I’d also done a lot of background reading about leadership, including books on emotional intelligence, neuroscience and psychology. So when I got onto the programme everything just made complete sense; I clicked immediately with the Henley approach. I knew that it would be challenging at times – but in my day-to-day ministry the emotional intelligence needed to lead a congregation was very challenging anyway, so overall, I enjoyed it immensely.

‘For me, the time spent with the other participants was especially rewarding – giving and getting feedback. Although it was intense, everything was tied to our own individual personal leadership challenges and goals, making the practical benefits real and immediate, so unlike the abstract and counter-productive, build-a-raft learning I’d suffered in the past! Dealing with live issues made the whole experience so much more credible and effective, and immersion in this kind of experiential approach is crucial to training the brain.’

### Were there any surprises along the way?

‘I was a bit surprised by how tough and uncompromising Kate and Jon were; they were never rude or obnoxious, rather challenging our resilience and courage as leaders. We were treated like adults from the very beginning and it was made very clear that we had to be entirely responsible for our own actions. It was absolutely brilliant! And not a second was wasted. The spoken presentations were short and sharp, and we had to make the links between the input and the exercises ourselves. After a while it dawns on you that every tiny detail is meticulously planned, and this is fantastic value for money.’

### What impact did it have – at work, and outside of work?

‘I’m deeply thankful for the effect it had on the whole family. We’ve been through a few challenges, but the resilience the programme gave me was invaluable to the way we all came through them. I now have a much greater sense of how people and organisations work.’

### So finally, what advice would you give to anyone planning to go on this programme?

‘Despite the gorgeous surroundings, which really make reflecting and learning easier, you must expect to be seriously challenged – emotionally – but that’s exactly what makes it so good. It will hurt at times, but the return on investment is enormous.’

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