

Unlocking the Hidden Potential in Others

Brian Littlehale '87 marvels at LC's "Butterfly Effect" in his life and career.

By Elizabeth George

He once felt "like a dog on a chain." But his LC experience freed him, giving Brian Littlehale '87 confidence and tools to build a successful career as a corporate trainer and leadership coach.

"Landmark taught me to be curious and to never stop learning. It showed me I could be confident in myself. I learned I could set goals and achieve them; I could go out in the world and succeed," says Brian, a resident of Hollidaysburg in central Pennsylvania.

Today, Brian is engaging, passionate, and inspiring. He's observant and a great listener. He's made a 20-plus year career out of motivating others, helping business leaders across the country to improve their focus and increase their capacity to drive their organizations. In 2016, he started his own business—Vitruvian Leadership—focused on executive leadership.

"I love what I do. Training is my calling," says Brian.

There was a time when Brian thought he'd never succeed in college—let alone start a business. Diagnosed with dyslexia while in elementary school, he tried hiding his learning difference in high school through acting and being the class clown. He was 19 and working as a convenience store manager when his mom heard about a new school for students with learning differences: Landmark College.

He enrolled in 1985 as part of the first class of 80 students. For the first time, Brian was in classes with kids who were similar to him—students with learning differences. "It was like we spoke a different language

and we finished each other's thoughts," he says. "The professors understood us. They were all about being there for us. They pushed us hard, but they believed in us."

Brian says he learned to "think about thinking" and how to use the Master Notebook System.

"I finally had tools in my toolbox. Landmark taught me how to break things down, then build them back into something I could use," he says. "The ability to convert information so it was useable and memorizable was invaluable."

"It's what made me a trainer—knowing how to break things down and put them together so they makes sense," says Brian. "Even today, I use mnemonic devices and whenever I'm in a meeting, I still take two-column notes."



Photo by Tricia Stanley

Brian Littlehale '87 was keynote speaker at the Alumni and Student Networking Brunch held during Homecoming weekend, September 28 – 29, 2019.

After two years at LC, Brian transferred to Syracuse University where he studied special education. He later enrolled at Old Dominion University where he graduated in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in human service counseling and a minor in special education.

As an executive coach and certified Partners in Leadership® facilitator, Brian leads workshops in accountability and company culture. In fall 2019, he returned to campus for Alumni Weekend and led a 20-minute workshop with students and alumni.

Brian says the "seeds" sown by LC's first teachers and administrators took root in him. The principles he discovered at Landmark helped him to understand people and motivate them as a coach.

"The values, principles, and tools I learned at LC have propelled me to this here and now," says Brian. "The wonderful people at LC unlocked the hidden potential in me. I've carried it forward and I'm using it now to unlock the hidden potential in others." 🐦