

Russell Lehmann

Speaker, Author, Poet, Advocate

www.TheAutisticPoet.com



Connect with me!



@autism_advocate_



Introduction:

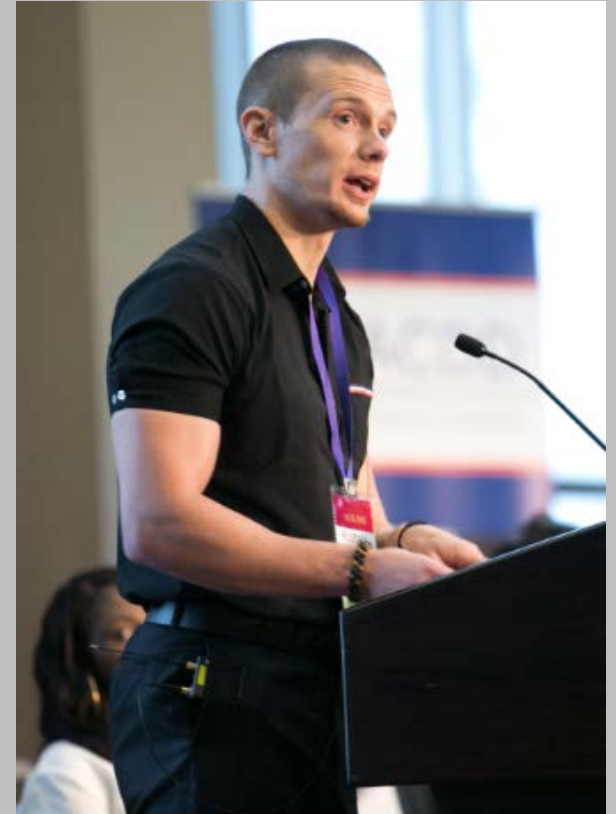
Who is Russell Lehmann?

- **29 years-old**
- **2019 MIT Sloan School of Management**
- **“Leadership in the Digital Age” Graduate**
- **2018 Reno-Tahoe “Most Outstanding Young Professional”**
- **Archived in the Library of Congress**
- **National Board of Directors, The Arc**
- **Council Member, Autism Society of America**
- **Youth Ambassador for the mayor of Reno, Nevada**
- **Former Member, Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities**
- **Former Member, Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Passion & Purpose: To Suffer and Endure



Then



Now

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me

Age 7



- **Began experiencing vicious meltdowns, panic attacks, depression and severe phobias**
- **Developed a severe speech impediment due to sucking my thumb every hour of every day**

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me

Age 9



- **Continued to experience meltdowns, panic attacks and severe phobias**
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) began to consume my livelihood, along with disturbing intrusive thoughts**

*Growing
up?*



*I was a
mess...*

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me

Age 12



- Hospitalized for 5 weeks due to severe depression, anxiety and OCD
- Ordered to attend public school without receiving any support or accommodations from the school district

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me



- Spent the school day sleeping in the principal's office, being bullied whenever I would come into contact with others
- In 2003, at the age of 12, was finally diagnosed with autism at the University of Washington's Autism Center



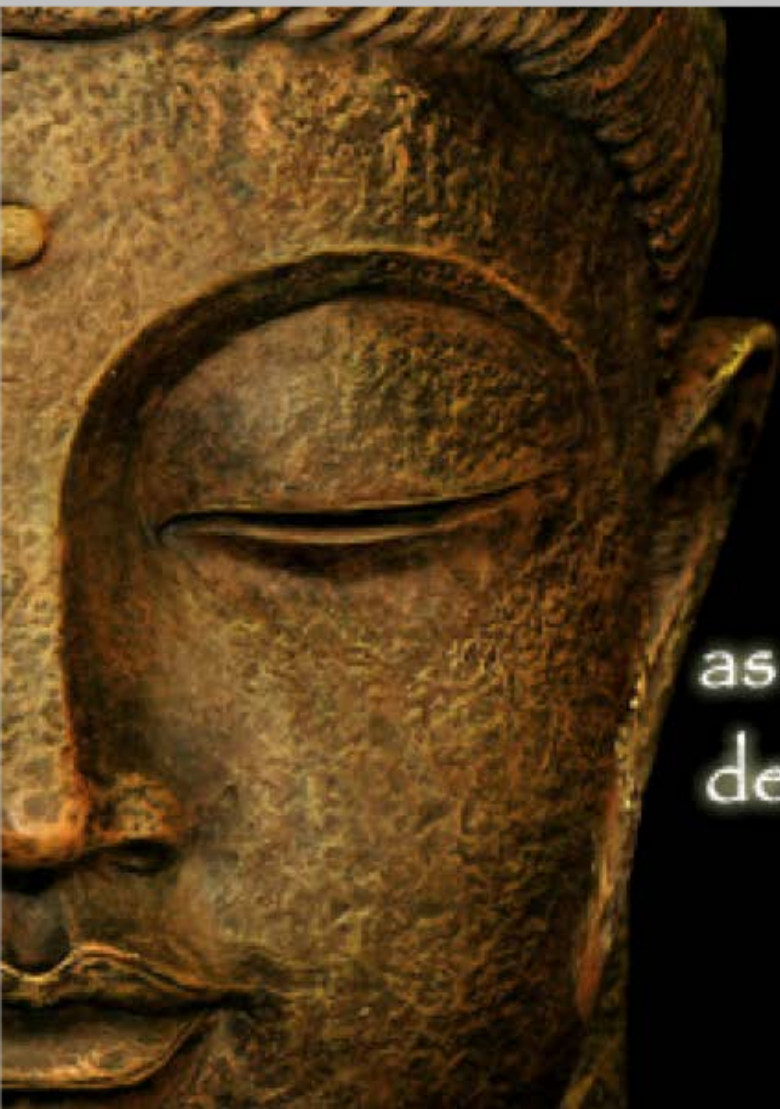
baby steps...
to big dreams.

This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me

Age 17



- Moved from Seattle, Washington to Reno, Nevada
- Attempted to grow my hair out, but failed miserably



*“You yourself, as much
as anybody in the entire universe,
deserve your love and affection.”*

- Buddha

TURNING
WEAKNESS INTO STRENGTH

The image features the phrase "TURNING WEAKNESS INTO STRENGTH" written in a bold, expressive, black-inked cursive style on a white background. The word "TURNING" is positioned at the top center. Below it, "WEAKNESS" is on the left and "STRENGTH" is on the right. A double-lined arrow points from the end of "WEAKNESS" towards the beginning of "STRENGTH". The word "INTO" is written in a smaller, simpler font above the arrow's shaft.

Trait/Characteristic: Sensitivity/Fragility



“Strength”:

Empathetic, High EQ,
Can Initiate Vulnerable
Dialogue and
Foster a Trusting Bond



“Weakness”:

High Risk of Being Hurt,
Hesitant to Form Personal
Relationships

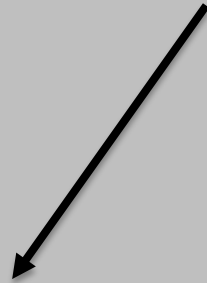




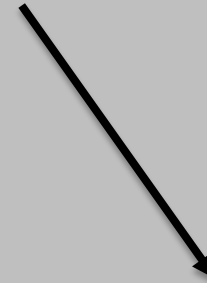
What is Self-Advocacy?



Human Rights



**Civil/Political
Rights**



**Economic/Social/
Cultural Rights**

Effective Advocacy

- **Passion**
- **Storytelling**
- **First-Person
Narratives/Perspectives**
- **Call to action**


**I may have a disability, but I *refuse*
to let my disability have me!**



PERSEVERANCE

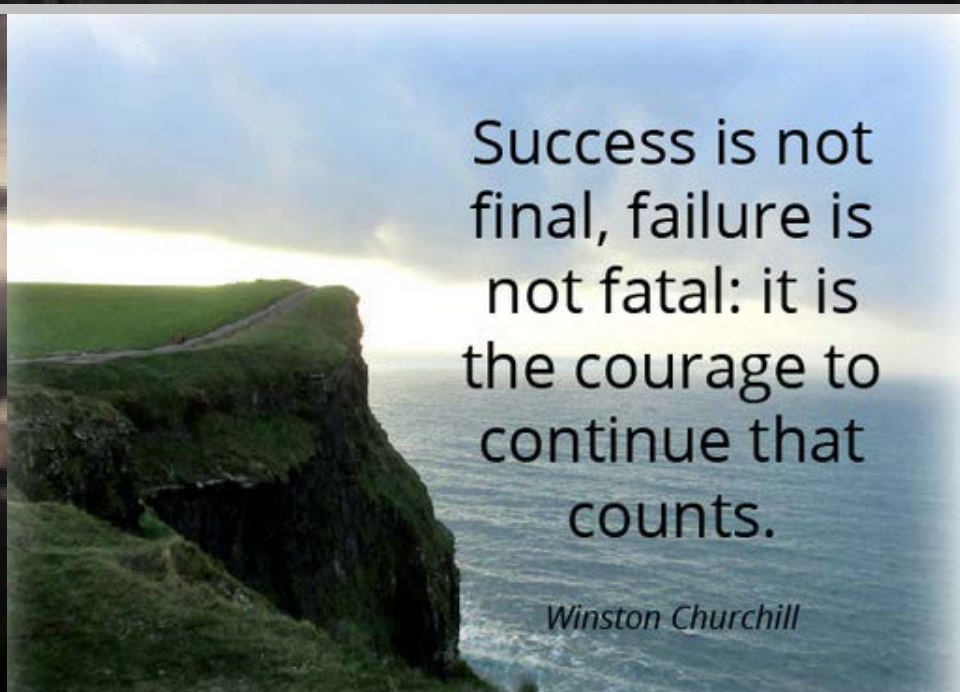
noun

1. steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement

A photograph of a dramatic sunset or sunrise over a mountain range. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright orange and yellow glow from the sun breaking through near the horizon. The mountains in the foreground are dark and silhouetted against the light.

Without fear there
cannot be courage.

Christopher Paolini

A photograph of a rugged, green cliffside overlooking the ocean. The cliff is covered in lush green grass and vegetation. The ocean is visible in the distance, with white waves crashing against the base of the cliff. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds.

Success is not
final, failure is
not fatal: it is
the courage to
continue that
counts.

Winston Churchill

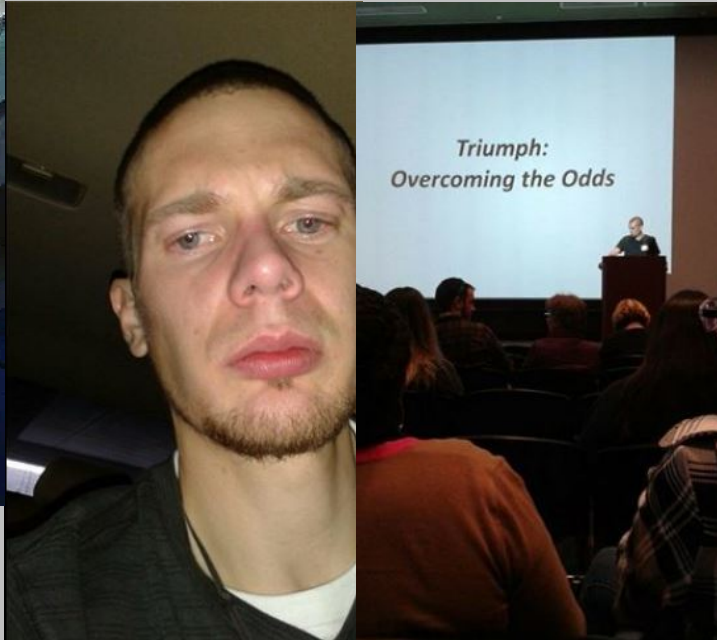
“Nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it.” - Lao Tzu



This Is What Autism Looks Like for Me

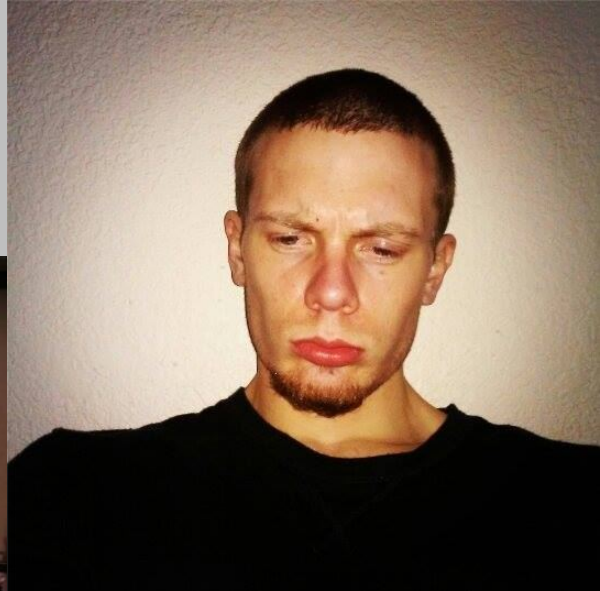


Hospitalized due to mental breakdown



Meltdown in the parking lot before a speech

10 Minutes later presenting in front of 300 people



Severe depressive episodes and meltdowns on a weekly basis

- Continue to battle my autism, depression, anxiety, OCD and eating disorder on a daily basis

- Learned to embrace my challenges, and to not run from them, but *towards* them

This Is What Autism Looks Like Now Age 29



Travel across the country spreading hope, awareness and understanding by sharing my experiences, and the lessons I've learned from them.



On the Outside Looking In: My Life on the Autism Spectrum

by Russell Lehmann

★★★★★ 8

Paperback

\$35⁰⁰

- Expansion of First Book
- 450 pages of utterly transparent view into world of autism and mental health
 - Over 80 powerful and emotional poems
 - Shared are lessons learned and insights gained
 - PG-13

Keynotes, trainings, workshops and much more!

Please contact me at

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