

## Episode 014: The 5 Leadership Interactions: Don't Succumb To Command & Control

Welcome to Lean Leadership for Ops Managers, the podcast for leaders in Ops Management who want to spark improvement, foster engagement, and boost problem solving - AND still get their day job done. Here's your host, Leadership Trainer, Lean Enthusiast, and Spy Thriller Junkie, Jamie V. Parker.

Hey, Ops Leaders. Today we are taking the conceptual definition of leadership from episode 13 and diving deeper into five specific leadership interactions that you have with your team. You want to make sure you stick around for that. But first, do you remember the movie *A League of Their Own*? I love that movie. Of course, I can't believe I'm saying this, but that movie is now 28 years old, so some of you listening might have missed out on that little gem. If that's you, make sure you go find it and stream it. It's a good one. So there are several scenes I love in that movie. One of them being the iconic scene where Tom Hanks is screaming at one of the players, played by actress Evelyn Gardner, by the way.

So he's all up in her face, and maybe saying some pretty foul things, and he turns around and he walks back to the dugout. He looks up and he sees the players standing there crying. And what does he say? Come on, yell it out if you know it.

He screams out, "There's no crying! There's no crying in baseball!"

And see, that's what I learned growing up in business too. There's no crying in business. I learned things like "Check your emotions at the door." "Leave your personal problems at home." It's not personal, it's what? Yeah, I know you just filled in the blank. "It's not personal, it's business." See, you learned the lesson too. The thing is, that business *is* personal, and leadership is a relationship.

Now, I know that since we're practicing Lean, we're trying to do this continuous improvement stuff. We love us some process. We love process mapping, and we love process improvement, and we love finding the eight process wastes. I mean, heck, several years ago, I even named my company Process Plus Results. But hear this, while work is made up of processes, organizations are made up of people, and not just any old people either, right? We're weird, complicated, confusing, messy, emotional people with a bunch of stuff going on in our lives. As much as we work on improving processes, that's just a method. It's not the point. You see, business *is* personal. That means emotion, and the awkwardness and the weirdness of humans comes with the territory. You see, leadership is a relationship. That means leadership doesn't happen through technology or visual boards or standard work. Leadership happens through the interactions between people. So let's talk a little bit more about this whole leadership thing.

Now back in episode 13, I shared my current definition of leadership; how I would define it in my own words. So here it is, again, "Leadership is serving and developing people through human interactions and relationships, towards the achievement of goals that support purpose." So we're just going to dive into one little part of that. If leadership happens through human interactions and relationships, then what are

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those interactions? And we're going to explore five specific types of leadership interactions, because we all know that leadership isn't just all rainbows and butterflies where we stand around holding hands and singing Kumbaya, right? We know it's more than that. What I'm going to walk you through is a framework, and it's how I frame leadership interactions for myself, and how I teach it to operations management teams.

Now, you know I'm a recovering Command and Control Manager, right? You've heard me say this before. I am still in recovery, by the way, every single day. I am a recovering Command and Control Manager. So this framework is called this, it's "Don't Succumb To Command & Control".

So I'm a recovering Command and Control Manager, and I say recovering not recovered because the pull to fall back to command and control is real. If I'm not purposeful in practicing better leadership behaviors and interactions, my natural state would be to go and do more telling and dictating. And I find that to be especially true when the stakes are high, when we're running behind on our production schedule, when we're short-staffed, when our KPIs are in the red, when we have a big customer at risk. It's during those high stakes times that the natural survival authoritarian instincts kick in, and threaten to take over. So Don't Succumb to Command & Control. Let's break down each word in the framework.

All right, "Don't". Don't start with the letter "D", and in our framework, it stands for direct. When we direct, we tell. I have the control and I tell you. Now, sometimes we get all whoo and we think that directing must be bad, right? It's not people, you know. If we're going to empower people, then we shouldn't direct. The thing is, directing is necessary. It's not an interaction that we can take out. We have to do some directing in our role. In fact, if you listen to the podcast back in episodes five through eight, when we talked about recognition and reinforcing feedback, guess what? That is a directing interaction. *I'm telling you. I decided what behavior was helpful. I'm telling you.* So direct is not bad. It is, however, telling, and so we just want to recognize that. All right. So "D" stands for direct.

"Don't Succumb", succumb starts with "S" and it stands for share. Sharing is telling. It's actually where a lot of mentoring lives because I'm sharing with you my perspective, my suggestions, my experience. I'm still telling.

All right, "Don't Succumb To", to starts with the letter "T" and it stands for teach. As leaders we teach, both hard skills and soft skills. And teaching may happen in a classroom but usually it doesn't, let's be real. Where does it usually happen? In the everyday. Teaching is still mostly telling, but we got a little bit of asking brought in where we're checking for understanding.

"Don't Succumb To Command", command starts with "C" and it stands for coach. When we coach, we have finally moved out of telling, and now we're into mostly asking and a little bit of listening. When we

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coach, it is no longer about doing the thing, but instead about asking questions that allow the team member to do and think through whatever the skill is, maybe it's decision making, or problem solving for example. In my model, the "and" is an ampersand and we're going to skip right over that.

Control is another "C", and it stands for connect. When we get to connect, we're almost all listening. We might ask some questions, but they're really just confirmation or clarification questions, not really as much of those thought prompting questions we ask in "coach". This is where empathy is critical. It's critical. This is where we build that human connection.

So those are the five interactions of leadership - Don't Succumb To Command & Control; direct, share, teach, coach and connect - and they exist on a continuum from telling to asking to listening.

Now, the reality is that within any one of those interactions, there may be multiple behaviors and skills involved. So "direct", remember how we were talking about direct earlier. So within the "direct" interaction, there's the skill of setting direction, and the skill of delegating, and the skill of giving reinforcing feedback, and the skill of giving correcting feedback, just as examples. So these five interactions aren't five specific skills as much as they are the types of interactions that we have. We have to have all five types of these interactions when we're leading our teams.

Now, another reality is that there actually aren't a ton of interactions where we only use one of these five exclusively, right? I mean, we might be in a conversation, for example, where we move between sharing and teaching and coaching, and we actually have all three of those types of interactions in one conversation. Or in our one on one with a team member, we might do some connecting, some coaching, and also some directing, where we actually direct and provide feedback. So not only do we have to understand these five interaction types, not only do we have to develop our skills and become better at these five types, but we also have to move between these five interaction types in a way that team members can follow us so they don't question which Jamie is going to show up. You know, I mean, sometimes she asked me all these questions trying to get me to come up with the answer, and sometimes she just tells me what to do without asking so I never know what she wants. Right? That uncertainty increases stress levels. So in addition to improving our skills within each of the five leadership interactions, we also have to improve our skill to move between them in ways that our team members can follow along.

So today, we went deeper into the definition of leadership, and I specifically shared with you five different interaction types that you have with your team members. All five of them are required, and they exist on this continuum from telling to asking to listening. In future podcast episodes, I'll get into the details of what goes wrong with these five interaction types. But for now, I want you to recognize that all five are necessary and start to pay attention to where you follow them. Because remember that leadership doesn't

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happen on the visual display board. Leadership doesn't happen in standard work, right? Business *is* personal. Leadership *is* a relationship, and leadership happens in the human interactions and relationships.

So these five interactions of people leadership, Don't Succumb To Command and Control are direct, share, teach, coach, and connect.

Now, what's your next step this week? Well, I want you to observe yourself and your interactions for the next week. Make note of how often you are in each of the five interaction types - direct, share, teach, coach, connect. Which type of interaction do you have the most of? What do you notice about the amount of time you spend telling, either indirect share or teach? And how does your current state compare to what you want it to be? I'd love to hear what you learned. Until next time.

Do you manage a team of Operations Managers, supervisors or leads? Do you want to gain a competitive edge by integrating Lean thinking and effective people leadership into your management teams every day? Then let's talk. We'll hop on the phone for a quick 40-minute clarity call. You can schedule your call by sending me an email at [jamie@processplusresults.com](mailto:jamie@processplusresults.com) or by clicking the "Schedule a Call" button on my website. [www.ProcessPlusResults.com](http://www.ProcessPlusResults.com)