

## **Engaging Through One-on-Ones with Dorsey Sherman | 032**

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.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Hey Ops Managers, we are back today with more dialogue with Dorsey Sherman of Modele Consulting. Last week, Dorsey and I talked about - How employee engagement is really on the front end of the process that yields results?

Dorsey shared the biggest drivers of employee engagement and steps you can take around feedback and recognition. Today, Dorsey and I are talking about One-on-Ones.

Now, here's the thing, I had no idea going into this conversation that we would end up discussing one on ones. I'm really glad we did, though, because other than reinforcing feedback, which we've talked about before in previous episodes, I think that one on ones are probably the most underutilized activity among managers. Now I'm going to share more about that. But first, you're going to want to hear Dorsey's take on the human relationship and coaching side of one-on-ones. Here we go.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

So let me come back, you were talking about -- this space of being able to actually really connect and listen, and kind of what's on your mind and some of those types of things you talked about how rare that is, and I agree, not just from my own experience, as well as what I see. Particularly I think this is where One-on-Ones . . . Consistent One-on-Ones can be really helpful.

First, you're like; Hey, we're not having enough of them is probably the case in most situations. You know? Yeah, how often do you talk to your people? Oh, once a year at annual reviews, or, you know, so we get that.

The other thing that I get all the time, especially from Ops Managers to say; "Oh, I talked to my people all the time, you know, I walk by them, and I say, how are you doing?" Which is a very different experience than when it's structured, it's scheduled --- You know, like, hey, at this day, at this time, I get 30 minutes, or whatever the amount of time that has been allocated with my Leader.

And so I think the first part is, of course, having them and sticking with them and following through on your commitment, and then the second part is; so what are you doing in those conversations? Because too

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often, I think we come at it as a project meeting, or a check in. Like, have you done this? Have you done this? It's more of that compliance, meaning, instead of an opportunity to build that relationship? And so you can have some of that business related, but how much of that One-on-One conversation is really for relationship building for them to talk for you to listen? All of that stuff, Right?

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, I totally agree. I mean, and to have it is not just these transactions.

We need to take away the transactional nature of that conversation, where it's all about me finding out what you're doing, so that I can report to my boss or whatever.

It's truly about listening and getting to know someone. And you find out all kinds of things about their family and what they're dealing with and the challenges people are facing or what's really good or happy.

I mean, I just think there's a huge opportunity to do more of that

It's kind of funny to say, how do you do it? Because it's almost like what we learned in Kindergarten.

You know, it's like this with these basic things of listening and asking questions and caring about people which it seems hard to do at work in some ways.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Yeah, it does sometimes feel like --- It's like, I think there's maybe a little bit of a fear of like --- but I don't want to play therapist. You know I'm scared to ask these questions. Because I'm not a therapist. If somebody came to you and said, "Well, this is what I like, this is my fear of it". How do you think you might --- So I'm totally putting you on the spot here? What are your thoughts on this?

### **Dorsey Sherman**

No, that's okay. That's interesting. I think setting some clear intention. I mean, to be honest, I've had those situations as a coach where something gets beyond the space where I'm comfortable. And it's really saying; "I'm not a therapist. I want to support you; how can I help you to kind of get support with this issue moving forward".

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So kind of setting some intentions and boundaries, it's like or even clarifying, like, do you just need to vent? Or what are you expecting of me? -- Is this a coaching conversation? Is this a venting conversation? Is this --- I guess whatever it is so --- I guess, that can happen.

For sure, and it's not like you have to be perfect either. You know what I mean? It's like, maybe you screw it up. Like, that's okay, too. Isn't it better to ask someone how they are? To me outweighs the possible risk of oversharing or over vulnerability or whatever the word is...

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Yeah. I love that. So, first; what's the risk? And is that risk worth it?

Listening to you, how much of that fear is based off of some inner expectation, like expectation you're putting on yourself as the manager to solve it? -- Because --- can't you just listen, without jumping in and trying to solve it?

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, my gosh, that is such a great point, Jamie, and I think you're right. We're afraid I'm not going to know what to do.

They're going to tell me all this stuff, and I'm not going to know what to do.

Here's the thing, you don't have to do anything.

You know what I mean? And here's everything, people already have tons of ideas of what to do. I mean, that's actually the whole basis of what coaching is? --- It is like pulling out the possibilities of what somebody already has in their head.

One really interesting question to ask is: "What ideas have you already considered? -- What have you already thought of?"

Instead in your head as the coach or manager, you're totally focused on "Oh, my gosh, what am I need to say? I don't know how to help them solve this problem."

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But it's like, oh, yeah. Wait, I don't have to solve it. Okay. What ideas do you have? Oh, there's like 10 ideas on what they're going to do. I mean, that happened to me a couple weeks ago, that exact scenario, we kind of make it all about us. Like, I don't know.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Right-- I'm scared what if they asked, what if they say something? I don't know the answer. It's okay, you don't need an answer.

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Exactly. No, you don't need to solve it, nor are they necessarily expecting you to solve it. I mean, it's not always that someone says, "Well, what should I do?" I mean, that's different, I guess. Versus just the space to get it all out in those, you know.

The other kind of key questions that I think are interesting:

How are you?

What's on your mind?

What are you trying to achieve?

Or a variation: What do you want, and where are you now?

I mean, those are so anchoring --- Can really kind of lead any conversation with those few questions, and really make people think, because usually people don't know.

They're like, "Oh, I don't know. I'm not sure". You know, which is fine. But yeah, it's definitely I guess, we're point of a --- There's just some discomfort, I think, or some expectation of it being uncomfortable. That's maybe an obstacle.

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### **Jamie V. Parker**

It probably will be uncomfortable, let's be real. There are going to be awkward silences, because especially if you've been doing this -- Like, this is such a departure from how you've been leading or managing, then, sure, it's going to be weird.

And they might even question your intentions here. I mean, they're like, okay, what's going on? You gotta get through those first parts. I think sometimes people give up on it too easily, because the first one or two are awkward or uncomfortable, and they're like, Oh, see, one on ones don't work.

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, for sure. I mean, that's like people saying, "Lean doesn't work". You know what I mean?

Oh, yeah. See, we tried that, and that fails and Lean doesn't work or whatever. No, absolutely ---- Yeah, kind of working well.

And then it really comes down to your motivation, because it's like; why do you want, coming back to, what is your ideal as a leader? What kind of leader do you want to be? And that's what creates the spark to change.

So if you want to be a leader, who resonates, kind of has this positive emotional tone and synchrony with people, then you might be motivated --- That's the motivation that you need to get through the uncomfortable part, to get through the change.

But if it's something that you're doing because you feel like you have to do to get engagement and you're fine with how things are? -- You know what I mean? That's probably not going to sustain you.

Because it is a period of change. We know that and for people really to change over the long term -- has to be connected to some motivation and practice and feedback too. That's where I really think the 360 degree -- be back as a starting point can be a really kind of interesting part of this process.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Yeah, and being willing to like really listen to that feedback and not try to explain it away.

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**Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, totally.

**Jamie V. Parker**

Alright, so this has been like such a fun conversation, and we've wandered all over the place. Anything that is on your mind that you think, "Hey, you know what, I want to add this into this conversation"?

**Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, yeah. One last thing. So these were the Gallup Employee Engagement survey results from June of 2020.

**Jamie V. Parker**

Oh, wait, hold on --- like everybody -- like take a minute. Take some breath, prepare yourself. All right. Let's hear it.

**Dorsey Sherman**

Yeah.

70% of employees are either actively disengaged or not engaged at all. So 70%--- Yeah, that's huge.

Of those, managers account for 70% of the variation.

So I guess I kind of leave that as, like a bookend on our conversation to illustrate the evidence of the problem. You know, there's a huge opportunity for improvement around Engagement and around Managers role in that Engagement.

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And I guess -- the last thing, Jamie at our --- You know, last week at our Women in Lean Learning Interchange -- Tina Provost gave this data on recognition, and the vast majority of dollars spent around recognition is around ten-year.

In other words, rewarding people for 5, 10, whatever years of service, which I found that fascinating. And almost like further supporting what we're saying. We're kind of putting effort and dollars into supporting people for being here a long time. But not all this other support that we're talking about, that actually really makes a difference in engagement.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

So 70% are either disengaged or not engaged, and of that managers account for 70% of the variance.

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Right.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

So for the managers out there that are listening, and they're thinking, Okay, I really want to make an impact here. Any parting words of encouragement, or advice or recommendations?

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Oh, my gosh. To me, this is so much easier than going out and fixing your process or deploying a strategy or managing your budget.

This is scheduled for 30 minutes with someone and ask them, "How are you?"

To me, this is a fun, interesting part of your job and look at it as a cool experiment, and I guess not something that you quote, "have to do". But --- I mean, if you look at it like that, you probably won't be successful.

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But how can you learn more about it? How can you kind of be curious, how can you experiment with it?

And kind of hold it lately, I guess in terms of moving forward and making some changes. -- This is very possible. We're very capable of having good relationships with people, and we know how to do that. Somehow we separate that at work, but we don't, we shouldn't have to.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Yeah, love it. So we're going to hold that a little lightly, and as we experiment our way through there. Dorsey, thank you so much for this conversation. I really, really enjoyed it. I feel like we could spend three hours just riffing here.

### **Dorsey Sherman**

I know. Jamie, thank you.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Yeah, of course. Let me ask you just as we close out, you know, like, what type of work are you doing with individuals, and then what are the best ways for people to connect with you?

### **Dorsey Sherman**

So My website is Modele Consulting. It is <https://modeleconsulting.com/> . I'm on LinkedIn, you can message me on LinkedIn.

The kind of work I'm really passionate about is; coaching people individually.

What we do together is really get clear on kind of an ideal vision, and that means what are you really clear on your values and your purpose, and your vision for yourself. Then talk about where you are now, and then figure out a learning agenda and do some practice and experimentation.



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So I really like helping people get closer to their ideal vision for their life, and I would say that it does require or can be greatly helped by a thought partner --- Someone to support you and your thinking, and listening, and that kind of thing. So...

### **Jamie V. Parker**

All right, sounds awesome. We're going to put all of those links. So you can connect with Dorsey, find her website, get all the info you're looking for at our show notes. So remember, you can check that out there, Dorsey, thank you for being on.

### **Dorsey Sherman**

Thanks, Jamie.

### **Jamie V. Parker**

Now, when I say this, half of you, at least are probably groaning. I know I get it. One-on-Ones might seem like a chore, and probably an even bigger driver of your growth is that your experience of one on ones may not have been that great, and so you might not think there is really value in one on ones. Because the ones that your boss or your last boss have with you? Well, there wasn't really a lot of value in those.

Listen, just because some people haven't done them effectively. That doesn't mean they aren't affected. So this is totally unplanned. But based on this conversation, I'm going to add an episode next week dedicated to how to hold effective and valuable ones. Stay tuned for that episode.

For now, what's your next step?

Well, it depends. I'm going to give you one next step if you have One-on-Ones, and a different one if you don't already.

If you currently have consistent one on ones with members of your team, then I want you to reflect on the plus deltas. What do you think is going well, and what do you think could be better if now?

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If you don't have consistent one on ones with members of your team, then I want you to reflect on what's holding you back? What factors contribute to you not doing them? Make a list for real, make a real written down or typed out list.

Alright, this wraps up the two-part conversation with Dorsey Sherman about engagement. If you're interested in getting one on one coaching with Dorsey or want to follow her on LinkedIn, I'm going to put links to all of her information in our show notes. You can grab those at <https://processplusresults.com/podcast/> This is episode 32.

Now, do your one next step, reflect on one on ones and then Tune in next week as we dig into the nitty gritty of how to make one on ones valuable. Until next time

I am so happy to have talked about One-on-Ones. I mean, if you could see my face, I am just glowing right now. You see, in my mind, One-on-Ones are critical. I cannot imagine leading someone and not having regular scheduled One-on-Ones with them. I just don't know how I could build that relationship and develop their capabilities.