

## Fact-Based Leadership with Arnout Orelie | 039

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.

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How does Lean thinking work when folks on your team are stressed or frustrated or angry? When you and a team member see the same situation from different perspectives? When you're having performance problems that are turning into conflicts between people?

Today Arnout Orelie joins us from the Netherlands to share how he helps emerging leaders pursue fact based leadership. Here we go...

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**Jamie V. Parker:** Arnout, I'm so excited to have you today, before we jump in to talking about leadership, can you introduce yourself so we all know who we're hearing from today?

**Arnout Orelie:** Sure. My name is Arnout Orelie. I'm from the Netherlands. I'm an engineer. I started in the automotive industry where I got my first introduction into what we currently call Lean management. At the time that work didn't exist because this was in the 90's. I became a project manager. But that did not challenge me. And I didn't actually know what would challenge me. So I went into consultancy. There I discovered that my challenges had nothing to do with Technology. Or anything in my engineering background. It was how to get people engaged in the system we use to help customers.

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We went to the shop floor together with whoever was our contractor. He thought that we came to solve problems. And he soon found out that we were helping him to see his problems. And to understand what is the role of a leader. Which is to go where the work is. And ask questions that helps you figure out the real issues.

People already know most of the causes of these problems. So we went to the shop floor just to show that all this knowledge is there and that if you just ask people how could we solve this. We help them to learn that they could solve their own problems only if they would know what the problems were. And solve them at the source. Which is always somewhere in your operations process. We use these Lean tools to structure their problems. And the more I did that work, the more I found out about the whole system behind it.

I became a dad around that period, I always explain it. I have three sons. So that means you sometimes visit the hospital. What I discovered when visiting hospitals is that there was no such thing as a management system in health care. I decided to get in with some colleagues to renew our mission. We're going to teach health care about this awesome system that you can use to do the best possible for your patients.

Leadership to me, is not a position in the company. It's a process. Anybody can be a leader. So you need a culture where leadership is embraced. So that anybody who wants to change things like your audience, like people who have all these issues all day. Did they know what to do to solve these issues and get better? And build a foundation. I have these books in Dutch, I decided to translate one in English. So this became the Lean thinking for emerging health care leaders. My first book in English.

**Jamie V. Parker:** Congratulations. For those of us who are practicing Lean. We love all this process. Process Improvement, Process Mapping and Process Wastes.

But [00:05:00] the thing is while

Work is made up of Process. Organizations are made up of People.

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And we're people. We're human beings. We're weird, we're messy, we're complicated. We have emotions. And things don't always go right. And these problems outside of work. It's not a script. It's a relationship. It's an interaction. It's individual. So this is what we're talking about today. As people.

**Arnout Orelio:** Exactly. The old [inaudible]. They say "I wish you a lot of personnel " Because in a cynical way, for some, People are trouble. But they are not. They are the value. What we need is a way. A common language to talk about our problems. Often we feel that people's problems are mushy and emotional. And if you talk to a person about their problems, the problem only gets bigger.

Whereas technical problems they say "that's easy". The funny thing is that it depends on who you ask. If you ask people in the laboratory, they say you have it easy because you work with people. We work with machines. And they break down all the time. So we always have the other guy that's causing the problem. These problems have one thing in common. You can solve them only if you know the facts.

This is where Lean thinking has its value in general problem solving. Whatever the problem is. Personal problem or a process problem like you were talking about. It's the same thing. The first thing you need to know is what is going on. When you talk to people. Then the facts are also what is your opinion currently. Or how do you feel? But you should not judge those things.

As a leader, See them as facts. As the current condition of whoever you're talking to or whatever your issue is. Then that will help you to see the same thing both. So if you can say, let's agree that my opinion is this, your opinion is that. The problem is big or you're feeling stressed about it. What does it teach us?

It's no longer the relationship in conflict. But it's the current situation and your goals are in conflict. You can both start thinking about. These are the facts, what can we do? What would be a better way?

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How would you like to feel? I want less stress. So what are the facts now that give you the stress? I worked two over hours yesterday and the day before and the day before. And as, my boss, you'll never give me any clarity. When will this be over?

And then you understand. Oh, I'm passing this stress because I don't know if I would provide clarity, let's say over hours, till Tuesday next week. And then we go back to normal then. So and central in this. Things that you both agree on are the current condition.

**Jamie V. Parker:** I love that you're talking about leading people. I've been doing some work recently with a client on how to have productive conversations and productive conflict. We've been talking about the stories that we tell ourselves in our head. And we make all these stories and assumptions. When we come into the conversation, it's all over the place. And we have this conflict.

So what I'm hearing you say is the person's perspective is that may be part of the factual uncovering. Help me understand what you're seeing, what you're feeling. So that perspective uncovering. But you're really changing it from being about how you and I are in an argument and disagreement to let's work on solving the problem together.  
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**Arnout Orelio:** Exactly. Most people know the PDCA cycle, which is kind of technical. But there's also a cycle that says that if you act or if something happens, it means that you put it through your beliefs. And whatever you believe about what happens makes you feel a certain way. And this emotion will give you your behavior.

And most of the time we ignore or don't see this second cycle. So if you have a good idea, you say, we do this, then the machine will run faster. But then. That means that somebody has to work harder. Because if the machine goes faster, we have to empty it faster. If you ignore that fact. Somebody will say, you have a bad idea. Because the machine may runs run faster, but you make me work harder.

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So it's very important that before you start tuning up the machine, you discuss with your team member, whoever is initiating the change, the whole situation. What is the problem this person is trying to solve? What is the current condition? And what do we need if we want to have this machine run faster? Well, we have to find a way to have this person not overburdened. This you can only do if you discuss it beforehand.

I think that most often done wrong, is that we force change upon people. Before we agree on the facts of the matter and agree on the target.

**Jamie V. Parker:** These facts could be uncovered from various things. Where there might be some observation. But discussion and conversation is really important as well to uncover those facts.

**Arnout Orelie:** Exactly. So the first thing what you need to do is to get the facts that are outside our minds. Because our minds, they don't know what's going on. The worst thing you can do is think that you know what's going on. So first, collect the facts in the process, because this is safe.

If you can agree on those facts. Then you can start discussing with the person. If you start with people, you start with opinions. But these opinions are not yet found its effects. Whereas if you collect the facts first by observation or by measurement. Then you can use those to start a conversation and to align your opinions.

The most important thing is it's your job as a leader to initiate this process of observation, of questioning. That doesn't mean that you have to do it all. It's way better to [inaudible] both to say, OK, join me and we go see. So that would be because then you're not only solving the problem, but you're teaching them leadership.

**Jamie V. Parker:** So I'm not going to go with my little clipboard and secretly go and watch and observe and, [00:15:00] you know, catch all the things and then say, hey, let's talk about what I saw, where you say, hey, no, no, no, I might have done that before in my past command and control history, by the way. So I'm telling myself here.

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**Arnout Orelio:** Yes. And it's of course, it's very tempting because, well, like they say alone, you go way faster. But together we go further. I understand completely. If you're in middle management, you're an office manager or maybe a nurse team lead. All these issues and All these fires that everybody's applauding you when you put them out, don't have the time or even the interest to engage people before you put them out.

The change is that you engage people who are involved in whatever issue you try to solve. To get that perspective. You need a 360 degree perspective on the situation before you start solving. It doesn't matter whether it's a people problem or a technical problem or a process problem. Start with getting the full perspective on what's going on. It needs to become a routine. Put in your routine. Select one issue every day to go in-depth with. To figure out what's actually going on. And then at the end of the day you asked yourself, what did I learn? that will help because it will give you the positive energy. And this will teach you that it's all about self development.

**Jamie V. Parker:** This is how you get started. Love it. For those folks who are listening who want to learn more. What's the best way for them to connect with you and explore this further?

**Arnout Orelio:** People can find me on LinkedIn, just type in my name Arnout Orelio. I made a website, [LeanThinkingInHealthCare.Com](http://LeanThinkingInHealthCare.Com) . You can either subscribe to my blog or buy my book. I offer a free strategy call. They can talk to me like half an hour or 40 minutes. And I promise you that you will know what to do next. That would be a great way for people to get to know me. what I'm all about.

**Jamie V. Parker:** You can find shownotes at <https://processplusresults.com/podcast/> and we'll make sure we have all of Arnout's information. Thank you so much for coming on today, sharing this great content. I really think this is going to be helpful for our listeners. Really appreciate it.

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**Arnout Orelia:** Thank you.

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It's so interesting to hear how common our experiences are across industries, across roles and responsibilities. across oceans. [00:20:00] I loved a lot of the things and the analogies that are brought to the table today.

And he also did the heavy lifting for me and actually gave you your next step.

Arnout recommended adding two steps into your daily routine.

1. Decide on one issue to dig into to better understand the facts of the current state.
2. At the end of the day, reflect on the question, What Did I learn?

So for your next step, I want you to ask and answer for yourself this one question. "How might you integrate Arnout's Two recommended Steps into your daily routine?" until next time.