

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

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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When I work with management teams, there's always a part of us working on ourselves, you know, people typically want to know, how do I fix other people? How do I get them to do stuff? How do I get them on board? How do I get them to be better? But we've got to make sure we work on ourselves and understand. Understanding your underlying thoughts and how they relate to your feelings and actions will actually go a long way in helping you lead through conflict and disagreement and have hard conversations and build relationships and have empathy and all the stuff.

[00:01:05] So last week in Episode 41, I introduced the model that I learned from the book, Crucial Confrontations, where you see and hear you tell a story you feel and then act. Now we're going to dig into a different version of this model and go a little bit deeper and share the lessons learned and really what it means, particularly if you are an executive or senior leader and you're thinking about your ops managers, what do they need? Right. So let's talk through that.

Now, around 2014, I started casually following the social media posts and emails of two life coaches, Brooke Castillo and Susan Hyatt, and that's when I was first introduced to the Thought model or the Self-coaching Thought model that Brooke Castillo teaches. But it really wasn't until 2017 that I got serious with it, because that's when I hired my first one on one life coach and she was trained by Brooke.

And so this model was really central to the work we did. And you might see it out there because there have been thousands of coaches that have been trained by her. So I will put a link so you can find Brooke if you want to learn more. But if you just want some visuals to follow along with me, then you can go to our episode page at <https://processplusresults.com/podcast/> And this is Episode 42.

[00:02:34] All right, so here's how it works, it's an acronym, CTFAR. Imagine that acronym going down the left hand side of your page, CTFAR. Now C, C is for circumstance. This is the thing that happened. The circumstance is neutral. It's not good or bad. It's just the fact of what happened.

T is for thought. You have a thought about the circumstance. This is where the judgment comes in.

So that thought then creates the F F is for feeling. Right. So that thought causes us to have a feeling and emotion.

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

From that feeling, stay from that emotion, we take action a is for action and then ask for a result.

The actions we take produce results.

There's almost this loop that happens on top of it, because what you'll typically see then is that the result we get often kind of reinforces the thought that we have. So you kind of see that it strengthens the thought, right? Like proving ourselves. Right? Right. Our brain likes to prove ourselves right.

So this model sounds familiar, right?

It sounds like what Arnout Orelia mentioned in episode 39.

It sounds like what we talked about with crucial confrontations.

But here's why I'm talking about here's what has this whole episode, because I want you to really pay attention. I went much deeper with this and I have some lessons learned.

[00:03:57] So first up, CTFAR, you can interrupt the pattern at any point. In theory, technically, you can change at any point to change the pattern. And I bring this up because for a while I was torn as I would see people take a stand on a couple of different approaches to leading transformation or leading improvement or implementing Lean.

And you had on one hand, you had the "Find Your Why" crew. These were the people who put a lot of emphasis on the belief section, the thoughts and. If your "Why" is great enough, then you'll follow through and do it, right, if you have a strong enough connection to purpose.

And then on the other side, you have your act your way into a new way of thinking crew. These are the folks that say, hey, we're never going to get everyone on board and we don't have time to convince everybody. So take action through the action. The action will create the result and then that will prove to you so that then you will believe it works. Right. So you don't have to be convinced at the start.

Now, I talk through this in more detail in episode two of the podcast, and I even give an example of this in Episode Three. So if you go to our show notes, we'll link to both of those episodes.

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

[00:05:10] But here's what the CTFAR model helps me understand is that they both work and in fact, you actually should probably work on both, especially when we're talking about changing the way we think and work right when we're talking about transformation. So that's why my Transformation Trinity includes beliefs, right? Those are those thoughts, beliefs, behaviors. And then system systems is a third part because that's how we can replicate, how we can expand and how we can sustain.

So if you're an executive . . . the Transformation Trinity Model, I have not talked about this in quite a while. If you're an executive or leader or improvement practitioner and you want to evaluate how your transformation stacks up in these three areas and get a good feel for how these three play together, you can download this workbook super simple, super short. Just head to <https://processplusresults.com/transformation> .

First up is that we really want to do both, if you can interrupt it anywhere, if you're doing kind of a big change, you probably want to have both write your thoughts and your actions.

Now, that being said, I want to say that a lot of times the thoughts are the part that we miss the most. We spend a lot of time working on what people need to do, and we spend very little time working on what we people think. What do we believe, what are our shared underlying beliefs, if you look at Edgar Schein and his ideas around culture.

So while I say we can do both, the place that is underrepresented is typically thoughts.

[00:06:52] Now, the next lesson I want to share is that our leadership behaviors are driven by automatic thoughts. Right. So thoughts are not always these big, crazy stories.

Last week in Episode 41, I told you about the snow shoveling story. Remember that?

Now, that story was brewing in my head for ten minutes or 20 minutes or however long I was sitting at the restaurant table alone. And, you know, sometimes these stories in our head can brew for days or weeks, but they're not always big stories.

Sometimes they're just subconscious thoughts. They're automatic. We don't even realize it.

And in order for us to really understand the thought, we actually have to be poor to pause and be purposeful. How do I figure out what that underlying thought is?

So this really to me went a little bit beyond where the crucial confrontations went, kind of took it to the next level.

It's not just stories. It's also there's automatic or subconscious thoughts as well.

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

[00:07:53] Now, a couple things I want you to keep in mind first is that leading others starts with self awareness. Let's think about this model CTFAR. Think about that. Circumstances, thoughts, feelings, actions, result.

What are we most aware of? I imagine it's kind of the highest from the bottom up, right. So we're most aware of our results. We talk about results. We have charts of our results, results, results, results.

We are a little less aware of our actions. I mean, we still typically know, like the big stuff on our actions. But have you ever given feedback to a manager about, let's say, something they do or say in meetings and they're completely unaware they even do it right? This comes up quite a bit when managers are improving their people skills.

When I'm working with clients and the leaders are working on improving their people skills. It's how they tell, how they ask and how they listen. It turns out because they've usually built up some habits, maybe they have a condescending tone that they kind of default to, or maybe they interrupt people or maybe there's certain nonverbal cues that get perceived as them shutting down.

And it is not uncommon for that manager to actually ask their peers or ask the people on their team to call them out in the moment when it's happening because they're actually unaware of it. Really, I didn't even know I did that or, you know, like, I know I do it, but I don't I can't ever catch myself in the moment. It's not until after.

So I would say, like, overall, we're pretty aware of our actions, but typically less than results.

All right, what about feelings? Oh, now we're getting into uncomfortable territory, we might know we're mad or sad or happy, but we don't really know on any deeper level than that. And, you know, when you think about the big umbrella of being mad, there's lots of actually different emotions under that big umbrella. And so, you know, this is something where it's like, oh, now we're getting into space. We're we're even less aware this is kind of taboo, a little bit more. And so we have less awareness of our feelings.

And then what about our thoughts? Well, this is probably what we're least aware of, right. So many of those thoughts are in the subconscious or they're there in the automatic thoughts space. And I can't even get to them unless I pause, unless I take five minutes to sit down and say what's really going on in my head. I don't actually even recognize it.

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

[00:10:22] And, you know, it wouldn't be a big deal. I'd be like, OK, cool.

Except those thoughts that we're unaware of are causing feelings which are causing actions.

And sometimes the actions and the results aren't what we want.

So in order to effectively lead others, we have to build self awareness. And I don't just mean a 360 feedback report on what others say about you. I mean like your own self awareness of catching yourself, really exploring your thoughts, of understanding your thoughts, your feelings, your actions, because it's really hard to manage and improve your thoughts and your feelings and your actions when you don't really understand what they are.

[00:11:04] And that takes us to this next section, which is self-management really is at the core of effective human leadership. When you think about self self awareness. OK, well, we don't want to just be aware. We've got to self manage.

You know, one of the biggest lessons I learned through the CTFAR model and working one on one with a coach is that I get to choose my thoughts.

And guess what? You get to choose your thoughts too.

I used to come from a reactionary space a lot of the time, right. Like, I'm pissed off at so-and-so at the corporate office. Can you believe she did that or. I can't believe it, man, he said that email. Look at all those typos out. I hate the way it makes us look unprofessional. I'm hurt. Somebody's making comments and I'm hurt. My feelings are hurt.

Right. And I would come from this reactionary space almost like a victim, a reaction like I didn't have that control.

And the reality is I get to choose my thoughts, which means I need to be intentional.

How do I want to show up as a leader? How do I want to be perceived? How do I want to treat this person in this conversation? And I get to choose that.

The thing is, we don't want to just set an intention and say, this is how I want to act.

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

We can make that intention so much more powerful when we add: this is the thought I have, this is the belief I have. I believe this. And that thought produces the feeling state that drives the action, that matches our intention.

[00:12:36] All right, so it's not just self awareness and self management team, so executives, how is all this relevant for you and your operations team? Well, so often when folks call me and say, hey, I'm really frustrated with how much time my operations managers are spending on stuff.

Drama, emotions, disagreements, hurt feelings or the aftermath of it.

It might present itself as unhelpful behavior, but it's kind of stemming from the stuff.

The thing is that leadership is a relationship and relationships happen through the interactions leaders have with people.

Those interactions are highly influenced by the leaders ability to know and to manage themselves.

Both self-awareness and self-management of our thoughts, of our feelings and of our actions.

[00:13:30] Now, I'm going to have several episodes coming up soon about productive conflict because it's a topic I get asked about a lot like the skill I want to build my managers up on is their ability to have direct feedback, to have hard conversations, to get performance feedback, to engage more productively in conflict.

Here is that the productive conflict starts with exactly what we talked about today, self-awareness, self management. It's catching yourself. It's recognizing what prompts you, what triggers you.

[00:14:05] All right.

What's your one next step?

Last week, you focused on finding the stories you were telling yourself in your head, right?

Coaching Techniques for Self Leadership | 042

What were those stories?

Now I want you to focus on uncovering the thoughts, specifically those subconscious and automatic thoughts. Can you figure them out?

Here's a thing I want you to pay particular attention to those times when you kind of like, roll your eyes a little or you sigh heavily or you think complaints are not nice things in your head.

Even if you don't do those things, if you have the urge to do those things in those moments in particular, that's where I want you to see if you can uncover what those thoughts are.

What were those thoughts that were just automatic?

You weren't even aware of them. See if you can pause and figure them out.

Until next time.