

Expanding Your Team to Align with the Organization's Vision | 100

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.

[00:00:28] Welcome to episode number 100. That's right. It is episode 100. Well, actually, if we're going to be technical and since I'm like a facts based person who likes to have all the details right, and I don't want any detail to be wrong and everything needs to be perfect, it's actually like, I don't know, episode 104, 105 or 106 or something like that, because we have bonus episodes that we've done over the last two years that didn't actually get a number. So technically we're more than a hundred.

But for our numbered episodes, this is episode number 100. That's right, episode number 100. And we are celebrating today by inviting you in to meet the rest of the process plus results team.

So you get to meet the team. Today. You're going to hear from Leah, who is our podcast manager, and also does a lot of work behind the scenes for the curriculum that we do for clients. You're going to get to hear from Stephanie, who is a consultant really on the lean side and the people side of Lean and how do we help people problem solve so that they can make their work better and make their lives better. And then you're also going to hear from Crystal, who really has a focus on operations and leadership development and particularly the mindset work.

And so when you kind of start putting these together, you've got Leah doing a lot of operations, work, operational work, make stuff happen. You got Stephanie with this lean work, this improvement work, and then you've got Crystal with the people leadership and self leadership self-management site.

And that's really what this business is really all about because what's special about the work that we do is it's an in the intersection, right? It's where the three things combine where you have a combination of operations management getting work done, get delivering results, making it happen, right.

Jamie: [00:02:20] That operations management with improvement and continuous improvement through systematic and structured problem solving and improvement with people leadership, both how I self lead and how I lead others, particularly the human side and the people side of that and how we have people

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interactions. And it's that special intersection there between all three of those. That's where this team really shines and comes together.

And so I'm so proud of the work that everyone on the team is doing and I'm very excited to get to share with you the people who are serving our clients. And I'm sure you're going to get to hear them more on future podcasts. So I want to make sure we get to introduce you to them here as we celebrate episode number 100.

Jamie: [00:03:12] Well, hello, Hello and welcome to episode 100. So, So, so exciting. That's right. And we are here with the process plus results team. So you get to not just listen to me today, but get to meet the team and hear a little bit more. I know we've been talking a little bit about the, you know, from where we started and or how it started and how it's going. Remember that meme that I talked about? Well, now we're going to talk about how it's going and specifically how it's going with the team. So to get us kicked off today, we're going to deal with short round of introductions and then you'll get to hear a little bit more from each member of the process plus results team. And we're going to close out with some episode recommendations. So let's jump in with some intros. Leah, how about you kick us off with your introduction?

Leah: [00:04:01] Yes, hello. I am Leah Hutchcraft and I am the podcast manager. And then I also help Jamie with some of the behind the scenes stuff that she does with training as well.

Jamie: [00:04:12] Yes. You have heard Leah's name before. You have read her emails. You have seen her social media posts. You have seen a lot of Leah's work. And we're so excited for you to be here today. And Stephanie.

Stephanie: [00:04:25] Hello. Happy 100th. So I'm Stephanie Hill. I'm a consultant with the team and I also have my own business light bulb moment consulting. I've been working in continuous improvement for 21 years now, and I've had the opportunity to work in Lean In a variety of industries. So manufacturing, legal, nonprofit, health care, retail, several others. So I'm happy to be here.

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Jamie: [00:04:50] Well, we are happy you're here, too. And then we are going to go over to Crystal. Let's meet you as well.

Crystal: [00:04:58] Hi, I'm Crystal Adams. I'm new to the team here. Kind of. I am a consultant with Jamie. I have a background in operations, leadership, development, training and development, mostly from the fashion and retail sector, but I'm also an ACC, HHC, lifestyle wellness coach, so I have a background in bringing healthy habits to my clients and Jamie's now as well.

Jamie: [00:05:24] Yes, and we are all working together to serve clients and it's so much fun to do it with a team, you know, kind of that process of moving from serving independently to bring Leah on board and helping with some of the podcast production and back and work and then expanding to, you know, the team for the consulting work.

And I want to jump in and let everyone get to meet you a little bit more and learn more about the work that you're doing. And so kind of just chat a little bit about the type of work you're doing, the things that you're passionate about, and what you're seeing is how it relates to our listeners, those ops executives and ops managers who are out there listening to this podcast week in and week out.

So, Leah, I want to chat with you first. You know, you've got probably a tough job because right now it involves chasing me down for content, but you're kind of that podcast management and doing a lot of podcast management, which is really a lot of that operations side of the business. So I'd love to learn a little bit more about what does that mean, what does that entail? What are you, what are the things that you're doing with the work that that would do as an organization?

Leah: [00:06:28] Yeah. So I assist with all of the post-production of the podcast. So after you record Jamie, you'll send me the audio and I will edit that and make it sound nice and pretty and then write the show notes, create the transcript, which I know you've talked about before in some of your episodes, but I also create the cover art and then the social media posts and just all the things that go into producing the podcast and making it able to be listened to by everyone else.

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Jamie: [00:06:58] Yes, it doesn't. There's a lot to it. I will tell you guys, I when I first started my podcast, I was doing a lot of that. And it is it's it's hard work, right? You know, to try and figure out how do you come up with the messaging where it all flows and it feels cohesive, particularly as, you know, you're getting little bits and pieces kind of coming together.

So tell us a little bit about maybe something that from doing that work, either something that kind of helps you manage the operations or something that you've learned or or kind of discovered through that that you think might kind of be relevant or, you know, hit home for some of our listeners.

Leah: [00:07:38] One thing I've learned from listening to you, Jamie, talk to several operations leaders is knowing when to ask for help and when to find someone to support you. And that's really what I do love about the work that I do with you is helping take things off of your plate, which allows you to be able to focus more on what you love to do. And I think it's so easy for leaders to keep doing the work that could be easily done by another person, which ultimately keeps them from growing and keeps another person from learning more and growing as well.

Jamie: [00:08:07] Yeah. Does anybody, Stephanie or Crystal. Kind of been there before?

Stephanie: [00:08:12] Yeah, definitely.

Jamie: [00:08:13] Yeah, I think too, sometimes I. You know, I hesitate sometimes because I think like, oh, I'm, you know, asking someone to do the work that I don't want to do, which means they don't want to do it either. So it's the drudgery work. And it turns out that, like, people like to do different things. Right.

And so something that I may think that I don't want to give someone drudgery work is something that they actually want to do or they want to learn more about or they want to discover more about. And so kind of checking my assumptions, what are my assumptions about it can be really helpful.

Stephanie: [00:08:46] Yeah, I'm in a lot of groups with women business owners and. And I don't know, this might be any business owner, to be honest, but I know that there's this sort of assumption that you have to be the jack of all trades or Jill of all trades maybe, but that, you know, every, every bit of time that

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you're spending, there's there's like a dollar value to that. And even though we're not necessarily thinking about, like how we're being paid for that, there's sort of this, you know, opportunity cost of what we could be doing versus what we are doing. And so I think that's a good area where we forget to. You know, use other people's help with it.

Jamie: [00:09:21] So, yeah, absolutely. When I think about operations managers out there too, is that, you know, sometimes it can be hard to to give stuff away because of either like we we think it takes too long to teach someone, right? It's like it's just it's just faster. If I just do it myself, I get I don't have time to teach someone or we're a little hesitant like, well, they won't do it as good as I can or well, I like it a certain way and being willing to give up that control. But it's so critical as you're developing teams that you're developing people's capabilities and to do other things, to learn, to think, to grow, to make decisions.

And it's okay that they may do it differently. It's okay if they you know, it doesn't look exactly the way you did it. You want to kind of really help with the outcomes. What are the outcomes you're looking for and letting them figure out how they can get that done and grow through that process. But the whole team becomes stronger and I know it can be super painful. I'm with you, it can be super painful sometimes at the beginning when it's like something that you've been doing and you're like, Oh, but I'm just going to go in and do that real quick. I'll just take care of it. It takes too long, but it is definitely worth it as we grow our teams.

Crystal: [00:10:31] But how great is it when you hand something off and you're hesitant and that person finds a new and better way of doing it and you're like, Oh my gosh, where were you like two years ago?

Jamie: [00:10:39] Absolutely. Absolutely. We were so grateful for the work that you do. And, you know, I know we just had, you know, emails from listeners this week saying, hey, you know, I listen to your show all the time, really look forward to it. This is one of three podcasts I listen to, and that's not possible without the work that you do. And so we really appreciate that not only the podcast, but you know that work that you're doing with our clients on creating some of that curriculum for their learning libraries and for their group learning experiences, being able to help support that and bring that to life from an idea or a conversation into a product that they can use over and over again.

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Leah: [00:11:21] And I love it, too. I love the work that I do with you, and I love being able to support you in your clients.

Jamie: [00:11:25] Oh, well, thank you. All right, Stephanie, I want to head over to you. I know you've been practicing kind of this lean thinking and lean way of working for a while now, more than more than two decades. I think I heard you say once. It's hard for me to believe, but I wanted to ask you because that's you know, I think that sometimes lean thinking kind of we think about it and it's like the shiny object and it doesn't necessarily kind of have that long lasting appeal, but you're still you're this believer two decades later. And so I just want to kind of get your thoughts about what you think keeps you focused on that. What is it that you're seeing as value that keeps you there year after year after year?

Stephanie: [00:12:09] Yeah. And so I think for me, Lean inspires me and it's really around the fact that there is alignment between those who do the work and those who lead the work. And even when I was a kid, I remember wanting to be a social worker because I wanted to represent those who didn't really have the opportunity to use their voice in order to stand up for what they need and what they want.

And ultimately I ended up becoming a chemist. But that that passion for having everyone's voice being heard really stuck with me through all these years. And so I became involved with Lean Six Sigma in 2001 when I was working at Maytag. I was a materials development chemist, and as soon as I got started with it, I was hooked. Like I knew it was what I wanted to do. And, you know, part of the reason for that is because in lean, those who do the work, those are the ones that we're talking to. Those are the ones who are telling us what gets in the way of them performing great things. And then we also talk with their leaders and we teach them and we coach them about not only being great listeners, but also being enablers of positive change by those people who do the work.

And so my personal mission, I don't know if everybody has a personal mission, I do, but it is to enable people's natural tendency to see and solve problems in order to make the world a better place. And I believe that Lean really aligns perfectly with what I value.

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Jamie: [00:13:38] So and I think that you're one of your kind of strengths here, is this approach of that human element, right, of, you know, kind of lean with people, for people not lean as a tool or as like this way of working, and you need to follow it that way.

What would you say has maybe been some either tips or things that you've learned along the way of how do you really engage people? How do you make lean kind of a people centric way of working and leading and solving problems and making things better versus getting kind of too caught up in the technical?

Stephanie: [00:14:10] Yeah. And one of the one of the things that I've seen really be stumbling blocks, I would say at least three organizations have experienced this that I've been in, and I was probably part of that problem, honestly. But the idea of asking for ideas, the idea of asking for ideas, because we, you know, we think that's the right thing to do and it honestly is the right thing to do. But unless we have the support that goes along with it, to act on the ideas to, you know, really engage with people to learn more about the ideas, we're falling short.

And so I think it's really important that once before we even start asking questions of others to have, you know, this infrastructure in place of how we're going to respond to them and how we're going to make sure we're communicating with people and bringing them along the entire way. So I think that's a big one. There's lots, but it's just the one that comes to mind right off the top.

Jamie: [00:15:02] Yeah. I'm like immediately thinking back to a plant visit where, you know, the team is just like, so the leadership team was so excited they were going to do this idea board because, you know, suggestion boxes are bad and we're going to have a visual idea board and all of that.

But you go in and you look at it and there are plenty of ideas, but they're all stuck in some sort of review waiting for management review or waiting for, you know, whoever it is, a review. And it's like these ideas are months old and now are stuck really waiting for leadership. And so it was like, whoa, we they didn't have the infrastructure, they didn't have the plan. They weren't ready to respond to what they were getting and to figure out how they were going to lead through that.

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Stephanie: [00:15:41] Yeah, just also one thing in sort of a manufacturing environment, I've seen it where we solicited the ideas from everyone in the organization. We had like over 75% engagement right off the bat. We're thrilled about it. And then just like you're saying, it was sort of stuck. And when we went into it, we found that sort of at the middle management level, they were having goals that were taking them away from acting on people's ideas.

So, you know, the top level, they really had goals that made it work at the front line. They had the right goals, you know, but in the middle they were being their goals were really around their daily performance. And so if they weren't going to hit those numbers, they weren't going to act on anybody else's ideas. And so it's really also getting the alignment across the organization.

Jamie: [00:16:26] Yes. I mean, it's so important. It's one of the things that, you know, I think sometimes when we go in with organizations and they it's like, what do we do? What are we adding? And some of it is like, wait a minute, you know, you don't necessarily need to add anything yet.

First, we need to remove obstacles. And one of the things I like to look at is what are what are the systems and structures and ways of working and routines and the unspoken norms and all of that that may be working against you and having these unintended consequences like the. Okay. So yes, there was good intent around this goal because it was going to help us achieve, you know, for our customer delivery and all of that. And now you have these unintended consequences where managers aren't willing to, you know, have someone off the line to, you know, do a work on an idea or whatever it might be. And so, you know, before you try and go and add something, maybe we need to. To remove some of those obstacles first.

Stephanie: [00:17:12] Yep. Yep. Absolutely.

Jamie: [00:17:14] Awesome. Well, Crystal, I want to head over to you. I know you know, one of your passions we've talked about it a few times is, you know, the idea of a growth mindset. So why don't you tell us a little bit more about really what the growth mindset is to start off?

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Crystal: [00:17:28] Yeah, absolutely. So it's just I mean, everything I feel like we're about here, it's seeing things and seeing the challenges and identifying them, but not letting it hold you back from moving forward. So growth mindset is really about seeing the possibilities versus seeing the challenges and seeing the issues and running away and putting yourself in this box of, Oh, I have to stay right here. Like if I move outside of this box, then something bad is going to happen.

So it's all about challenging the status quo and challenging those policies. You know, there's that phrase that says we've always done it this way. We always we all know the business is going to die if you continue using that phrase. So a growth mindset is walking in and saying, why do we do it this way?

I think, you know, for basically my whole life I was my mom's rebel child because I was always challenging and questioning, Why are we doing this? Why are we eating the food? You know, the first vegetarian in the family, like no one thought it would last, but it was more of, you know, asking why we've done things. And then growing up in developing as an adult and into a career, I'm like, Oh, it has a name. There's a thing. It's not just me. Like other people are doing this.

So really taking that with me through my career and with clients, helping them open up and see the possibilities and question why you're doing this. Well, tell me why. Who does it impact? Who does it benefit? Add, at the end of the day, is it servicing your customer? Is it making your employees and your team members and your customers life easier? Or is it just holding you in this spot where there's no room to grow? Mm hmm.

Jamie: [00:18:57] Yeah. So let's talk about that in a little bit as we think about how in a growth mindset and adopting a more of a growth mindset as an operations leader might help operations leader as they lead, you know, their teams and their business units.

Crystal: [00:19:10] Yes. Well, I. I am so passionate about operations and we know that we have our process and we have our ways of doing things, our spreadsheets. But if we stay with that and we never grow with technology and change how we're doing it and have an innovative thought process to our actions, we'll be stuck and we'll be stuck in the past.

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So it's really about saying, okay, how am I doing this? How much time does it take me to do this? Do I even need to do some of these things? And figuring out new ways of doing it, just like we talked about with Leah? Like doing Are you doing the work because it's the work? Are you doing the work because you love it? Could you reach out to someone else on your team?

Is there someone on your team dying to improve this process? But they don't have their voice data or you've never asked them diving into that, talking to others and being open to the possibilities. We're really help grow the operations and the processes to be seamless and have that continuous growth.

Jamie: [00:20:08] Yeah, Yeah. And I think one of the things that has always stood out to me about kind of this growth mindset being being willing to kind of embrace change or embrace kind of that moving forward is how we look at failure. And and I'm, you know, the I'm a perfectionist and, you know, an all day student and all the things. Right.

So I have a very I have, like, you know, driven in me very defined ideas of what it means to be successful or not, what it means and what failure is. And, you know, all of the things. Right? Like I avoid it, all the things. But if you want to grow and if you want to change and if you want to be more innovative, then you can't keep looking at failure.

The way that I am naturally kind of wired to do it or through, you know, whether it's through nature or nurture or however that ends up happening. And so, you know, I think that's one of the things that stands out is, is to embrace it. You also have to be willing to try things. You have to be willing to do things that you don't know how to do yet, which means you're not going to be good at them yet. Right. And that doesn't mean that you're failing or you're bad, but that you're you're learning and growing. And it's just one of those things that just has to be there.

Crystal: [00:21:21] Yeah, I couldn't agree more. I have like this little sign above my computer here that says nothing great ever came from a comfort zone. So it's getting out of those comfort zones. It's making the uncomfortable, comfortable so that you're willing to try new things. And if you never fail, I mean, how do you learn? So just think when you're a child, just if you fell down that first time when you started walking, I mean, are your parents still carrying you around? Probably not. Like you got up and you tried

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again and you kept going. So to fail is to learn and to grow and to become a better, stronger, smarter person.

Jamie: [00:21:52] Yeah. Such a place of growth like still for me today, because I just kind of grew up in the idea of like, like if you're thinking about a sport or an activity, an extracurricular, like if you're if I'm not good at it, then why bother? Like, like, I don't want to like, I don't want to play if I can't win, like, it's not fun to lose. So why would I sign up for this sport or this extracurricular if I'm not going to be good at it? But like, how are you supposed to ever one?

I mean, you can have fun and not be good at something, right? Like you can just do it for fun. But then also, like, how would I ever know if I'm good at it or not, if I never willing to try it? Because I might not I might not be good. It's a really busy life, you all. You want to go to therapy with me? It's it's amazing.

Crystal: [00:22:36] What's and it goes back to how do you measure your success so there's so many factors that go into growth mindset but it's really individual on each person's needs and passions and the way that they are raised. But it's, you know, slowly punching holes in that box and getting out, letting the sun peek through and see, you know, maybe I don't get sunburned today, maybe it's fine. Okay. No, another whole, you.

Jamie: [00:22:55] Know, Yes, I love it. I'll tell you a funny story. I my mom was just visiting me and my niece is 11. And so I am a name of the perfectionist, all a student, you know, like all the things. But I'm also very into details. I make lists, I research. Like, I got to know all the things, right? Like, that's that's how I am. If you're, you know, a DiSC follower, I'm a high C, high D kind of mix.

And so my mom was talking to me about my niece and she said, Oh, my goodness, she's just like you. I'm like, What are you talking about? So she I was doing this thing the other day and she's making all the lists and she was doing all the research and she was planning everything, so it would be perfect. And I'm like, Oh, that is so interesting because neither of her parents are like that, right? Like, my brother's not like that. My sister in law is, like, not like that at all.

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I said, Huh? I wonder where she gets that from. My mom said, Yeah, I want. Oh, maybe it's me. Yes. Yes, it is you. We both got it from you. So while I think you were kind of making fun of me saying that she was just like me, look in the mirror for sure. All right.

Well, so great to meet, you know, each of you more. And for the listeners to learn about you more, I just want to do a little round robin and hear about your episode recommendations. If you were to recommend an episode for our listeners because we have 100 to pick from. What would you recommend I go back and listen to? So we'll go. Leah, what do you think?

Leah: [00:24:27] So the episode that I would recommend is number 62, and it is that's not coaching and I would recommend that one because I think that a lot of people don't have a clear idea of what coaching truly is. And I think that most people actually have this idea that mentoring and coaching are interchangeable. And so I think it's really important to understand the different interaction types and to be able to best communicate with others.

Jamie: [00:24:54] Yes, I love it. I like that episode, too. All right, Stephanie, what do you recommend?

Stephanie: [00:25:02] Again, mine's going to sound like a shameless plug because I'm one of the guests in it, but I like episode 15 improving daily meetings. Not only have I experienced like great improvements in organizations by using daily huddles, so like, not just in manufacturing, but all areas of the company. I also love hearing Meredith Fisher and her perspective on tier daily meetings, and then the content really just applies to any business. So I like that one.

Jamie: [00:25:31] Awesome. All right. And Crystal, how about for you?

Crystal: [00:25:36] Okay. I didn't pick just one, but there's good reason for it. It's science.

Jamie: [00:25:41] That is not the rule. Or that I am.

Crystal: [00:25:44] Giving you all of the possibilities here. But it's, you know, maybe speaking to our listeners that really like to binge watch series. So starting with episode 24 with Patrick Adams, assessing

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Lean culture through leadership activities is the base, and then you have to work your way up to go to 25, 26 and ending at 27. Give your leaders more time.

So it's a mini series and it really feels like to me, you've got to start with 24 and with 27 to get the full impact. It's like a mini training series because it's looking at the activities. Like, I loved what he said about going into people's calendars, asking them their purpose, then going to the calendar and there's zero alignment. So their number one priority is family, their purpose in working as family. And then there's nothing to do with family on their calendars.

I'll stop talking so everyone can go back and hear the full the full podcast. But it's really working through those episodes and then ending with 27 and figuring out how to make that time and giving your leaders more time as well. So binge the series. You all will love it, I promise.

Jamie: [00:26:48] Awesome. And then I almost like just going to share that our most popular episode still today is episode. I think it's number 19. I might have the number wrong, but we'll make sure we put the link. I say we, I say we all the time. Leah will put them in the show notes in case I have the number wrong. But it's Leader standard work with Mike Wroblewski is kind of that most popular episode, you know, even months, year, maybe a year later. And I think that it's so interesting.

I remember when I did that episode, I was like, Wow, that was really good. It was short. It was really short. But I had to slow him down because he would just say something so nonchalantly that was like, really impact. Like, No, no, no, wait, hold on. We got to like, we need to repeat this and say it again. So I thought that was a really good episode.

And then I'm also a really big fan of our executive series. We've had a lot of really great guests who are out there battling the same type of challenges and problems that you all are having, right? So if you think that you know, you're having issues about whether it's culture or engagement or recruiting in these kind of pandemic times with the changing landscape of the marketplace, you know, growing and, you know, how do you build leadership when you're have a lot of turnover? All of those things that we're talking about with executives who are out there trying to solve those problems alongside you.

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Jamie: [00:28:04] So I recommend those series or those series as well. And you can always find them there with our executive guests. All right. So with that, I want to thank everyone here for being here, for being a part of the team, for being a part of the podcast and for making episode 100 so special because this is like, to me, episode one, hundreds of big milestone, right? Like, that's a big deal.

I remember when I started the podcast, like seeing I don't remember what the stats are now, but I'm sure Google could tell us, but it's like a very, very small number, small percentage of podcasts that make it to 100 episodes. Like most of them don't make it past like seven, seven episodes or something, right? Something crazy. And so I know it takes a lot of work takes. It's really for our listeners who continue to to tune in and tell us what they want to hear and for this expanding team. Yay! Awesome. Yeah.

Stephanie: [00:28:54] Good job.

Jamie: [00:28:58] Thank you so much to every one of our listeners. We appreciate you tuning in. We appreciate you sharing the podcast. Hope that you go back and listen to some of the episodes that we shared today, or even just go back and find the ones that look appealing to you and also sharing those with your colleagues and your friends that you think can gain value from them, as well as a little shameless plug here for episode number 100.

We would love it if you would share your ratings and reviews for the podcast just so that we can help other people find the podcast when they go searching for what to listen to. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for making this podcast a success. Until next time.