

## Transition from Doing to Coaching | 101

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.

Thank you for celebrating 100 episodes with me, and I'm so glad you were able to meet the awesome team supporting our clients. Now, if you think back to the episodes before the 100 episode celebration and before the, how it started, how it's going theme, what we were talking about was how to be more effective in telling, you know, when we're teaching, uh, when people are learning something.

Remember my escape room story with the lock? I didn't know how to use that particular lock. It was different. I had never seen it before, and all of these clue hints weren't helpful because that wasn't the problem. The problem was I didn't understand how the lock worked, and what I needed was for someone to teach me or to tell me how to use the lock.

That's really what I needed. I could, I did not have the answer within me right now. Sometimes coaching isn't enough because coaching, right? This idea of, you know, letting folks figure out for themselves, find the answer within themselves. Having that something, that self discovery, sometimes that's not the right path.

Sometimes they're learning something new. Sometimes we need to help them along. Sometimes they're struggling with the habits or with the behaviors. Sometimes we need to give them feedback or we need to lift them up by walking along their side and helping them build the habits. That's what we were talking about in those episodes.

Telling is not all bad. There are times when telling is completely appropriate, but we do tend to do too much telling. Many operation leaders need to bring in more coaching into their team interactions. But what's the difference you see? Sometimes telling likes to disguise itself as asking. So today I'm sharing with you a webinar replay that I did that covers this exact.

Listen, it's short. It's right at 30 minutes. It's fast paced and it's one of my programs that gets rave reviews. Remember that you can find more detail on it as well as a link to watch the webinar replay if you're a visual person at our show notes, [processplusresults.com/podcast](http://processplusresults.com/podcast). Okay, let's dive in.

**Dwayne:** Hello and welcome to today's webinar. My name is Dwayne Butcher of Lean Frontiers, and I'll serve as your host today. You can see on the screen our presenter, Jamie Parker, who I'll introduce

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momentarily. Today's webinar is part of the Energize Your Journey webinar series that we've been doing in conjunction with.

The Association for Manufacturing Excellence, uh, and this series has highlighted several of the presenters who are taking part in the annual AME conference, or I guess I should say, the uh, AME virtual conference, which is now scheduled from October 27th through the 29th. The AME conference and really the AME community has always, uh, meant a great deal to not only lean frontiers, but to me personally, uh, as just a great time of networking and learning.

So I'm certainly looking forward to participating in this, this virtual AME conference is coming up. You can learn more about the conference by visiting [www.ame.org](http://www.ame.org). And since Jamie is actually touching on the topic of coaching, I just wanted to mention quickly that Lean Frontiers will be hosting a, a virtual Lean coaching Summit coming up here in a couple of weeks.

Uh, you can learn more about that by visiting [leancoachingsummit.com](http://leancoachingsummit.com). So with that said, let me introduce our presenter. Jamie Parker has over 17 years of management experience in manufacturing, retail, and service environments. She helps leaders and organizations master the people side of lean and has developed an affinity in coaching mid-level managers.

So, it is a real pleasure. This is the first time I've met you. It's a pleasure to meet you this way, and I'll go ahead and turn things over to you.

**Jamie:** Yeah. Thank you. I am, uh, so excited to be here and I am facilitating a virtual workshop at the AME virtual Toronto, if you will, conference this year. This is gonna be my sixth consecutive year teaching and facilitating at the conference, so I'm super excited to do that, and I'm really glad to be here to talk about how we transition from doing problem-solving.

To coaching, problem solving. And to start off, the one thing you should know right now is that when it comes to coaching, it is time that we stop playing. Doctor. You see, every day in your organizations, there are decisions to make, issues to troubleshoot and complex problems or opportunities or challenges to work toward and overcome and problem.

And I don't know where you are in your organization right now and in your work right now, maybe you're like this guy and you feel like, Oh my goodness, everybody keeps coming to me. How should we handle this? What should we do here? Can you facilitate that? Can you facilitate this? And I just am so swamped and I just can't do it all.

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Or maybe you've been, uh, practicing continuous improvement and you've had results, but you started to really hit a plateau. Say, Okay, we need to do something different. The way we've been doing this isn't gonna get us to the next level. Or maybe you've really had some great results, but you know that your industry is changing.

Or maybe because of covid things are changing and you need some innovative and creativity to, to enter, enter your organization, your teams, in order to tackle these next level problems wherever you are, where whatever describes you, there are decisions to make, issues to troubleshoot and complex problems, opportunities and challenges to work through.

And if. We just have ourselves. Maybe it's just our improvement professionals or just the management team, then there is a limit to how much we can do. And if we want to expand that, then we have to expand the ability to effectively make decisions and troubleshoot issues and problem solve work proactively on systematic problem solving throughout the organization.

In order to do that, you can't just be a doer. You can't just do the problem solving. You can't just come in as the facilitator, as the technical expert. You've also got to learn how to coach problem solving. And so that's what we're gonna talk about today. You ready to put on that coach's hat? Let's dive in.

We're gonna talk about three things that you can start doing right now today to begin your transition to coach. The number one thing ready? Set your intention to coach. And this is important because coaching is different than problem solving. You see, the goal and purpose of coaching is to develop the capabilities of others.

And since we're talking about problem solving, we're specifically talking about the problem solving capabilities of others or the decision making capabilities of others. And when we're coaching, the way we're really doing that is not really teaching, but we're allowing the learner to learn through doing mask the process.

Now notice what I didn't say. I didn't say that the goal and purpose of coaching is to find the best countermeasure. I didn't say that. The goal and purpose of coaching is to work through the problem solving methodology quickly. I didn't even say that the goal and purpose of coaching is to solve the problem at all because it's not.

When we're coaching, the learner's goal is to solve the problem, right? They have the problem, they're working through the methodology. What we wanna do is we wanna coach, and in order to do that, we're

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really transitioning the thinking. So instead of us being the primary thinker, thinking through all of that problem solving stuff, we actually wanna transition and allow the learner to do the thinking work.

So we want to make sure that we set an intention to coach, and you're gonna see how this comes into play as we go through the rest of this session. Number two thing. That you can do right now to start to transition to being a better coach. Stop giving the answers. And I know this sounds, you know, like, okay, yeah, we get it.

We know . The thing is, we actually learned pretty young that having the answers is the right thing. And because you are so skilled at problem solving, right? I mean, you're practiced, you've been doing it, you can see things. It's almost like there's some repetition in the process of problem solving for you, and so you just can't help yourself.

But here's the thing to know is that when we give the answer, we're not usually like this girl raising our hand and saying, Hey, here's the answer. The answer is you need to do this. The answer is, your root cause is this. That's not usually the way we give the answer. We usually give the answer by leading, by saying, Oh yeah, maybe you should try this, Huh?

I wonder what would happen if you tried this next. Wow. Well, I wonder if you know, what should be your next step in problem solving? Where have you gotten the root cause? Have you gotten to the root cause yet? Right? And we do these leading questions and these leading statements. And it's because we can't help yourself because we are skilled.

So all of that work that you've done to become a better problem solver, now it's getting in your way when it comes to transitioning to coach. So your action number two is to stop giving the answers. And this is a little bit harder than it sounds. Okay. Finally, let's talk about action number three. So we're gonna set an intention to coach.

We're gonna stop giving the answers, but that doesn't mean we're just gonna be silent. We don't just stop giving the answers and just sit there. Instead, we take action number three, which is to ask good coaching questions. You see, all questions, are not created equal. So what is a good question? I am so glad you asked.

So here's what I'm talking about when I talk about a good coaching question, talking about questions that are open ended, talking about questions that are non-leading. I'm talking about questions that are nonjudgmental. So let's take a look at this and see what this can sound like. Sometimes we say something like this, Isn't it happening because of this typing a chat?

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What do you hear when I say, Well, isn't it happening because of this? Do you hear a question or do you hear something different? Here's what somebody may hear. They may hear, Oh, it is happening because of. Because we're not just asking a real, true open ended question. We're actually leading and saying, Isn't it happening because of this?

And they say, Oh, I guess it is. Oh, I was gonna say that. Yep, that's what I thought. And now we just shut down their thinking. So when we talk about asking a good question, here's what we can st say. Instead we can say, What do you think's causing that? Do you see the difference? Can you tell the difference there?

Yeah. This is a different type of question. Let's take a look at one more example. Sometimes we say, Have you thought about trying this? Do a little look in the mirror. Have you ever said it? I catch myself saying this. You know, one of the things that I used to do my, my version of this is I would say, Huh, I wonder what would happen if you tried.

And I was really proud of myself cuz I was being all curious, right? Yes. I'm bringing curiosity into my humble inquiry. Except I wasn't, because what they were hearing is that, Oh, I should do this next. So even if my intent might have been, huh? I really am genuinely wondering that. When I say the question like that, it leads the learner to think that that's what they should do.

And again, we end up robbing the learner of the opportunity to do the thinking and to learn through the doing, because they're gonna learn through the failures. They're gonna learn through the missteps, they're gonna learn through the mistakes. So we don't wanna jump in and give that answer. And instead of asking these types of questions, we wanna ask a question like, What have you thought about trying?

See how that's open ended? See how that puts it back onto the learner? And by the way, I'm gonna give you a bonus. I wasn't even planning on sharing this. A great follow up question. What else? So what have you thought about trying and let them kind of think through it and then you a can ask a magic follow up question.

What else have you thought about trying? What other ideas do you. And you let them continue to go, continue to do the thinking, and you're just there with that little bit of a good coaching question that gives a little bit of a prompt without leading them down the path. Is this making sense? We got this.

All right. Awesome. So now it is your turn. Okay, here's what's gonna happen. I'm gonna read a question and you are going to either if, if chat's active, you can type in chat or you can scream it out loud. , you're gonna say, Good question or not good question. Now remember, here's how we're defining good questions.

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The good go coaching questions are open ended, non-leading, and non-judgmental. So you ready for the first one? All right. Why don't you eat out less if you wanna pay off your credit card debt? What do you think? Good question or not? Good question. Yeah, not good question. Right? . And why not? Well, first we're giving the answer.

We're saying the answer is that you should eat out less, and it might be a little judgemental. At least I might perceive it that way. So why don't you eat out less if you wanna pay off your credit card debt? Not a good question. Let's take a look at another example. Why is the cell phone bill twice as much as it usually is?

Good question or not? Good question. What do you think? It's okay. You can commit. You can commit. Good question or not. Good question. Why is the cell phone bill twice as much as it usually is? And there are a few not good questions, but for a lot of folks we say, Hey, this is a good question. And why is it a good question?

You say, Well, I'm not giving the answer. I'm not leading. I'm not saying why it is. All right, why else? It's fact based, right? It's just a factual, you know, discovery question. And we'll assume that it is in fact factual. And I'll say, Okay, I can get behind that. When we're doing problem solving, right? Five whys all for it?

I'll say, All right, so when I am the only person on my cell phone bill, it's just my phone, like, and I get the email and it has my bill and I open it up and I go, Whoa, why is the cell phone bill twice as much as it usually is? And I'm asking, Question to myself for my own problem solving. Great question, right?

It gets us started down the path, we defined the problem. But what happens when you take that cell phone bill and you walk into your teenager's room and you say, Why is a cell phone bill twice as much as it usually is? What are they here? Here's what they hear, they hear. Stop using so much data, it's your fault.

You think. We have to be really careful when we ask why questions when we're coaching. So as much as we get ingrained in five y analysis and asking why and success of why, and the success of why, when we're doing problem solving, when we transition from doing to coaching, we have to be really careful.

Because it's not your intent in the question, it's how they perceive it. And this could be perceived as judgmental. Now we don't know the situation. So your key takeaway here is that good questions, not good questions, all depend on context. So there's no universal list of good questions that I can give you that say, Hey, these are good questions every time.

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Just follow the. There's not a script to follow. It's a skill you have to develop and the context may matter, and that context can be your direct interaction with that team member. With the learner. What is that relationship? It could be your organizational culture that impacts the context. It could be who's involved in the problem solving if it's not just individual, but it's a team problem solving effort.

It could be something from four years ago. That is impacting the way that learner is seeing things. But you wanna keep that in mind. And my caution point is to be really careful in using why questions. When you're coaching, you're gonna do much better if you stick to what questions or how questions, Those are gonna be a little bit safer for you, and they're gonna help you think more deliberately through the question process.

Okay. Let's take a look at one more example. How long have you had these symptoms? [00:16:00] Good question or not? Good question. What do you think? How long have you had these symptoms? Okay, so we were just talking about context, so let's get context out of the way first. So if my mom asked me this question, it is not a good question.

Because she's Southern and she's gonna say it all nice and sweet, and she's gonna say, Oh, Jamie, bless your heart. How long have you had these symptoms? But what she's really saying is not that. What she's really saying is, Ugh, Jamie, bless your heart. You are still so bad at adulting. Why haven't you gone to the doctor yet?

Right? So, Not a good question if it's my mom, All right, But let's put that to the side because we're gonna assume that that's not the context. When you go to the doctor and the doctor asks you these ques this question, How long have you had these symptoms? Are you offended the same way that I am when my mom asks me, No.

Right? , Of course, you're not offended when your doctor asks you, How long have you had these symptoms? Why not? Why are you not offend? Because they're just doing their job. She's just doing her job and what is it? What is she doing? She's asking you this question. She's asking you this diagnostic question, this fact finding questions so she can do what?

She's asking you this question so that she can do her job, which is to diagnose the problem and write the prescription, or give you the lifestyle change, solve the. And that is great when we are going to the doctor and we want the doctor to be the expert and we want the doctor to take on the responsibility of diagnosing and solving the problem.

This works really where, Well then, but remember, it is time to stop playing Doctor when it comes to. Because when you ask this type of question, you're playing the doctor role, which means you are the

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expert. You're still doing the doing. You're still the one diagnosing, You're still the one doing all the fact finding.

And this is again, where that intention becomes so important because we have to set an intention and decide, Hey, am I gonna play the doctor? Am I gonna come in and diagnose and prescribe, or am I playing the coach? Am I gonna come in and allow the team member to do the thinking, the learner to do the thinking, and I'm gonna remain in coach role.

Which 1:00 AM I playing? Because remember that the goal and purpose of coaching is to develop the capabilities of the others. And the way we do that is to, we allow them to learn through dew. This is why it is so hard for you as someone who has experienced and practiced and trained in systematic problem solving to be able to stop giving the answers.

This is why it's so hard for you to do, because in your brain you see it. Your brain's been trained to think that way, and so we've gotta make a concerted effort to shift from not just doing, not just being in the default, but shifting into a role of coach. It starts with intention. Now some of. A types maybe are saying, Jamie, I'm gonna challenge you right now because that question was open-ended, non-leading, and non-judgmental.

And that's what you said is a good coaching question. And so that's why we're gonna add this little caveat that says, with an intention to coach. So we wanna ask good coaching questions that are open-ended, non-leading, non-judgmental, and have that intention of coaching, which says, I'm not gonna go and give the answers.

I'm not gonna be the doer, I'm not gonna be the thinker. I'm gonna ask questions that help transfer the thinking, that allow the learner to think. So that is your action number three, which is to start asking good coaching questions. Remember that the goal and purpose of coaching. Is different from the goal and purpose of problem solving.

The intention is not the only thing that is different because the skill is different. You see, the skill of problem solving is not the same skill as the skill of coaching, problem solving. Those are two different skills. So if we want to expand decision, And expand thinking and expand issue resolution, and expand systematic problem solving and expand working through our scientific method to work through our challenges, whatever that is.



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Podsa, a three thinking, uh, kata thinking, eight step problem solving, thinking. It's not necessarily the method, it's the thinking behind it. Then we have to expand that capability beyond just us. We can't hoard it. And that means we have to switch from just doing to also coaching. So these are three steps.

There's three steps you can start right now. In fact, when you leave this webinar, you can start it right away and you start with number one, set your intention to coach as you go into that experience. What are you trying to, to achieve? Is it really important to solve this problem right now? Or is it really important to develop the other person's problem solving capabilities?

There are times that you are still the doer. There are some times that you're still working in the problem solving role. So you need to decide, which role am I playing? What's appropriate for this scenario? And if you decide to coach, don't just set the intention at the beginning, but check yourself throughout.

Hold that little mirror up and say, Huh, am I doing or am I coaching? Was that question more about me problem solving, or was that question more about helping them to do the thinking through? Number two, you have to stop giving the answers, and we do this more often than we think we do. We give answers way more often than we ever realize.

So start paying attention when you go out and you're starting to have these conversations with folks. Pay attention, catch your. Catch yourself doing things like I did, huh? I wonder what would happen if we tried this. You'll be surprised how often you say, Gosh, well, have you thought about trying that?

What do you think it could be? This? Pay attention and then start to catch yourself and observe yourself so that you can stop giving the answers. And then finally ask good coaching questions. And here's what I want you to know. We spent a little bit of time on. If those good coaching questions, remember I said that they're based on context, They will change over time.

As you're coaching an individual who's learning how to do so, your, whatever your systematic problem solving thinking is as they're learning that you're gonna, uh, lead 'em through the process of problem solving a little bit more. So you're not gonna lead 'em to answers, but you might say, um, you know, Okay, so, uh, what, what ha what facts have you uncover?

What facts do you still think you need to uncover? Right? So instead of saying fact finding, fact finding, fact finding question, right? Instead of giving 'em a spitfire, we're gonna ask those open-end questions as they, as their skill develops, you're just gonna say, Okay, you know, So what factors would you consider to decide if you're ready to move to the next step in the problem solving process?

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And you're gonna let them come up with those factors. So it's gonna change as those skills develop. So we're gonna set your intention. You're gonna stop giving the answers, and you're gonna ask good coaching question. Now there's still just a little bit more, but first I'm gonna give you a few logistics.

Remember I said that problem solving is not the same skill as coaching problem solving. So if you are ready to try and work on this, I wanna offer you a free support download. So that first link up at the top, you go, it's a pdf. It's 100% free, and it would be really helpful for you in keeping everything we talked about today front of mind as you start going out one week from now, two weeks from now, three weeks from now, trying to implement this.

If you want more help than that and you're ready to really dive in and learn the skill, then you can go to How to Coach problem solving.com and learn about a virtual program. And finally, if you have questions, something I said today prompted a question and you wanna chat, then you can reach out to me directly.

So in closing, here's what I wanna say. We have a choice to make, right? We can continue business as usual. That is absolutely a choice that is on the. Everybody that is in your span of care has dreams and goals and aspirations. And the thing is, when we invest in ourselves so that we become better coaches so that we can help teach and coach our team members how to think through problems, we're not just giving them capabilities that they can apply at work and help us solve problems at work.

We're also giving them capabilities that they can apply to reaching their dreams, to achieving their goals, to leading the type of legacy that they wanna leave. But let's be real, because life isn't all puppies and rainbows and butterflies. Life is also full of adversity. And right now someone in your span of care is struggling to sleep at night because they don't know how they're gonna pay for their child's college education.

And right now, someone in your span of care feels like they're facing a choice that has no good answers because their parents are aging. They live three states away. They can't live independently anymore and no answer feels like a good answer. And right now someone in your span of care is secret, secretly hiding away tears cuz a child or a family member or loved one is battling drug addiction.

See, life is full of adversity and we invest to help develop team members to be better problem solvers. To think through challenge. We don't just help them apply that to achieving their dreams and aspirations. We also help them work through these challenges so that they can live better lives. Because here's the thing, coaching is a profession of love and you can't coach people unless you love 'em, and that is the real reason we do this work.

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