

Live from GE's Event: The Lean Mindset | 123

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.

[00:00:29] Hey, ops executives and leaders. Jamie V. Parker here and I am in New York for GE's Lean Mindset Executive Event. It is the afternoon before and I am getting ready to head out and meet up with my friends and Lean leadership enthusiasts and authors Katie Anderson and Mark Graban. We are going to head over to the event venue so that we can do a logistics walkthrough and prep for tomorrow's sessions.

Now, hopefully you have whitelisted my emails so that they go to your inbox and not your junk mail. If you haven't done it, you might want to do that because if you did that and if you're getting those emails, then you received an email from me with the details of how to watch the event live.

I'm talking about an event that hasn't happened yet as I'm recording, but by the time you listen to this episode, it's going to be an event in the past and the plan is for Bloomberg to stream the event and keep it up on their YouTube channel through all of September 6th for that one day. But then it comes down. So the good news is that most of the segments will be published to GE's YouTube channel later this year. The not so good news is that you might have to wait just a little bit longer to access those if you missed it.

So what I will commit to doing is making sure that I communicate with you through my emails as well as through the episodes.

[00:01:58] Once they are up. For now, let me share with you a little bit about this event agenda and then what's going to happen is I'm going to hit the stop button after the event concludes, so I'm going to go to the event tomorrow. After the event concludes, I'm going to be back here in this episode so you don't have to wait. But I will be back here to share some of my initial reflections, so keep looking for that. This is super exciting.

I don't even know what I'm going to be sharing since I haven't heard the speakers yet, so I can't even give you any teasers. But it's going to be good because listen to this lineup. We're actually starting out with

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Breakfast as kind of this one piece flow five demonstration with Wolfgang Puck's team led by chef Eric Klein. So it's going to be kind of some Lean in action in the real world.

Then in the first fireside chat, GE CEO Larry Culp engages with a Super Bowl winning NFL quarterback. It's under wraps for now. So I can't tell you more about it, but just know I'm pretty excited about it. I'm definitely excited about it. In fact, this quarterback might have played in for teams in both of the last two states that I've lived in.

[00:03:13] All right. So then after that, Larry Culp is going to talk with Carol Dweck, the author of Mindset Matters. I'm really stoked about this conversation because Carol's work is all about the growth mindset. In fact, it's the that book is the onboarding gift that my very first life coach sent to me when I started coaching with her to kind of learn the difference between the growth mindset versus the fixed mindset.

We're also going to hear about learning versus failure from NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Fireside chats are going to continue with the CEO of PGA, the CEO of Ford and the CEO of Uber. We're going to hear about getting comfortable with uncomfortable problems from executives at the Cleveland Clinic. Plus the art and science of Kaizen from Wolfgang Puck and film producer David Gelb, and more discussions on leaders roles in establishing culture and mindset with the CEO of Ingersoll-Rand and US Naval Admiral William Lescher.

So as you can hear, it is a packed agenda, some really great speakers, some really great conversation topics. And to top all of that off, there will be nearly 200 attendees. Most of them are C-suite executives from GE, customers and suppliers reacting and reflecting live and in person. So that is the event that's happening tomorrow. As I mentioned, right now, I'm in New York and getting ready to go see Katie and Mark so we can do a site walk through.

[00:04:45] But what's going to happen is I'm going to go ahead and hit that stop button. And after the event, I'm going to come back and share with you some initial reflections. So keep listening. It's coming right up. You don't have to hit the stop button and wait. It's just going to be in the same episode. And then there will be more episodes with content coming from this event here in the next couple of months as well.

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[00:05:12] Okay, I am back and it is the morning after the event. And the great news is the videos of all the sessions, except for one wasn't allowed to be recorded, but the video of all the rest of the sessions are up for the public for everyone to watch. We will give you the link to the YouTube channel that has all of those if you head to our show notes at [Processplusresults.com/podcast](https://ProcessPlusResults.com/podcast), you will be able to see those and just head over to this episode. You'll get a link to that.

Now, there were so many great nuggets throughout this event and I really want to dive deeper into some of the topics over the next few months or over the next year as we explore leadership and operations. But there are some initial reactions on themes and key messages. You know, I think that at the core, when we when I reflect on some of the things I was hearing, not just at the surface level, but when I go really deeper, we think about mindset being the foundation on which Lean thinking and then Lean tools are built.

[00:06:13] Now, up until now, we've had a lot of conversation about lean thinking versus lean tools, and most of us get that distinction. And you've seen a shift from just this tools focus to a thinking focus. So we're with Lean is it's helping people to think differently, to think through problem solving in a structured way, to blame the process, not the person and how they think when an issue arises to think of red or problems as opportunities instead of something that needs to be downplayed or covered up.

Now, underneath that lean thinking, though, is a mindset that based on kind of what I was hearing yesterday, I would characterize into really kind of two spots or two areas. The first is that everything can be improved, I can improve, we can improve, we can make things better. And it doesn't matter how much we've achieved or accomplished or improved already. But it's not just this like thinking that things can be improved as much as it's like deep down belief. It's this deep down desire to improve. Like there's this, like this burning thing inside of us that we want to improve, that I would kind of put in that lean mindset space.

[00:07:23] And the second part of this is leaning more into the growth mindset Now. Carol Dweck, author of Mindset, spoke yesterday and I read her book previously. So we'll dive into an episode on that topic specifically. But what I thought was phenomenal is that Giannis Antetokounmpo really kind of demonstrated for us. He showed us sitting on stage exactly what the growth mindset sounds like, right?

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Like the way he talked about how he views challenges or struggles or mistakes or failures or missing goals, missing targets. You know, it wasn't just this academic conceptual idea of, you know, oh, it's not failure. It's learning, right?

It was this deep down conviction. I do not doubt one minute that what he was saying up there on stage is exactly what he believes is. And so when you have both of these this, like deep down desire to improve and this deep down conviction of learning both of these, in order for these to be true in this mindset, you really have to have humility.

And Giannis talked about being hungry and humble in the way that manifests for him really sparking from a conversation with his brother is that he shows up every day like he's trying to make the team. So obviously he's proud of his, you know, team accomplishments and championships and MVP's, you know, it's not like downplaying those things.

[00:08:48] Right? Humility doesn't diminish achievements. But by coming in with this mindset of he's working to make the team every year, he's working to make the team. And when you combine that with a deep down conviction that he can continue to improve, he has this humble hunger that drives him. And it's really kind of infectious. It's this positive kind of I don't know what you would call it exactly, but there's this aura around him where it's like it's positive and he wants to improve and he wants to drive and this this humble hunger.

And so I think that it was just really interesting to see it not from an academic standpoint, but just from like kind of this individual human standpoint. So it was a great, great thing to see. And again, you can watch his interview with the GE team. You can actually watch that with Larry. You can watch that on the YouTube videos.

I will give you the link to that so you can see it directly now. So here you have this Lean mindset, which again, is not just thinking, it's deeper. And when we build lean thinking on top of this mindset, this deep down belief and desire, when we build lean thinking on top of that, we can have this transformation and sustainability, you know? After the event, Jim Womack, Mark Grayburn, Katie Anderson and I recorded a quick reflection discussion and once it publishes, I'll share that link with you also.

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[00:10:09] And then we went for drinks and just having some conversation. And part of that conversation discussed some of what you could maybe call failures of Lean or particularly how often it is dependent on the champion. So we've seen company after company that's had tremendous success.

But when the executive leader leaves over time, there's atrophy and it disappears and it just doesn't stick. And so I think, you know, from my perspective, this is what I think part of what Larry Culp is trying to address as he leads GE and as he uses events like this to engage suppliers and customers and the broader business community in what he knows is the power of Lean what he experienced firsthand leading Danaher.

Because I guess when I'm thinking about it, when beliefs are that fundamental to the core of who we are, the core of our identity, this Lean mindset being the core of our identity, then the thinking and the tools layered in those are accelerants. But the identity isn't tied to the tools, and identity isn't even tied just to the thinking. It's tied to that deep Lean mindset, which I think just is going to have more, I guess, stickiness for it. As you're thinking about building culture and creating organizations and creating teams that kind of last beyond our own influence and impact.

[00:11:26] So when we leave organizations, what gets left behind? What is it like ten years later, 20 years later, and when we're not there, the one driving it. And so can we make some of this Lean mindset? Can we start to transform the organization and start to make it as part of our identity of who we are?

So beyond just this idea, the lean mindset, though, there were definite themes that we heard from different speakers, different roles, different industries. And this is just like me kind of spitballing it right after the event, which is, you know, building on the idea of Lean mindset, the humility and hunger. We heard a theme of focusing on others. So I'm here for my team. I'm here for customers. There was this teamwork theme that was more than just teamwork.

It was that deeper purpose also kind of tied to that identity. Also a focus on learning from yourself, from others, from mistakes through iteration, within this idea of learning the power of practice and reflection, as well as the importance of psychological safety or organizational culture to support learning. Another one

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was the importance of preparation, not just reacting. Peyton Manning called it dogged preparation.

Another theme was about the critical activity of going to Gemba and truly listening and understanding. So going to Gemba not being this like check mark thing, you know, I do because I check it off the list, but really truly listening and understanding and it's kind of a human experience of going to Gemba. On the tactical side, tactically, I heard most speakers share things they were doing organizationally, systematically to make Gemba listening focus easier for their leaders of kind of integrating it into how we do business.

[00:13:06] So it wasn't just burden on the leader's shoulders or trying to figure out how to do these things while, you know, the rest of the organization is just pushing pressure, pressure, pressure. So I think the systematic approach I heard that repeated and then also tactically, as it relates to Lean, more than once, I heard conversations or discussions about simplifying lean into an ethos or a playbook of not trying to do it, all of focusing on what's important. And I found it interesting and I'll share in future episodes some of the ways that was simplified.

So, for example, Patty Poppy talked about their five plays in their playbook, and so I'll share some of that in some future episodes as well. So if you know me, you know, I'm an internal processor and I definitely want to process and explore this further and work on how it translates in the real world. Because you also know that I'm not really an academic. I'm not even really a consultant, at least not in the traditional sense, like who I am.

[00:14:04] You know? I'm not tied to that. I love to read, I love to explore. I love to advise. I love, you know, when I have these trusted advisor clients and consultant clients, all of that. But in my at my heart, I'm an operator and I know that ops executives and ops leaders, you aren't sitting in your home office writing books and exploring models and concepts and frameworks and thinking about all of this in the conceptual right.

Like the conceptual is fine, that's great, but it's got to be so much more than that, right? Because you're in the middle of it. So nice ideas and inspirational stories can only go so far and you have to be able to process it and make it into something meaningful for you. So just stay tuned as I walk this journey and I

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hope that you walk this journey with me in exploring the Lean mindset and some of the key themes from this GE hosted event, I don't know what format it'll take.

You know, obviously you all can go watch the videos. I want you to watch the videos. I'm not trying to replace them, but I think that there's some value in having some discussion and dialog about translating what we heard about kind of connecting the dots. So connecting the dots, connecting these themes from different speakers and synthesizing it and simplifying it into something that is core.

[00:15:18] And then also the processing of it, the discussion and dialog and application of like, what does that mean? How does that translate to us as we are leading our operations teams? So that's where I want to dig in with you. I don't know if it'll be like the next few episodes or if it'll be just, you know, an occasional episode here or there.

We'll see how that kind of comes to fruition as we explore this further. Do you want to just say a big thank you to the GE team, to Larry Culp, for spearheading this kind of Lean revival of sorts? And then of course, for the teams at GE. I know Lean team was involved, communications team marketing events, public relations, just so many folks that made this possible and not just made it possible, but made it really a fantastic event.

It was a highly well-produced event and really showed some strong execution on the event production side of it. And then, of course, obviously, I appreciate the invitation to be there in person, and I hope that my experience I'm able to share with you all and bring some added value to this conversation. So that's it for now. Stay tuned for more discussions as well as links to Mark's Lean blog podcast episode. With me, Mark Djomo, Mac and Katie. And that's it for now. Until next time.