

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

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.

Jamie: [00:00:29] Hey, ops executives and leaders, Jamie Parker here. And I got to ask you, are you a fan of TV shows that have different series with different casts, like, you know, NCIS in D.C. versus L.A. Or CSI or Criminal Minds. You know the deal. Well, then what happens is those shows will do crossover episodes where they have a storyline that weaves through different series.

And I got to tell you, I love those because then the casts interact across different series and you see different places and the things that you know. So I get to see my favorite people from one cast engaging with my favorite people from another cast, all in the same storyline. And that's what we're doing today. My friend Katie Anderson joins me to talk about Lean mindset from a leader or individual standpoint.

We are digging into the growth mindset versus fixed mindset as well as self leadership and how we show up as individual people. And I get pretty transparent in this conversation sharing a bit about my struggles with fixed mindset and comparisons and how that shows up for me in real life scenarios.

Now we're going to pick this episode back up on November 1st on the launch of Katie Anderson's podcast, The Chain of Learning. So I hope that you will see this through not just through today, but also picking this up on November 1st. Now, I have to tell you, I'm actually on site with a client, so I don't have my normal audio set up. So hopefully both with the interview with Katie in this conversation here or what I'm sharing with you now, hopefully the audio still is okay for you.

Jamie: [00:02:04] Now, when Katie and Mark Graban and I were in New York, we were talking and I told Katie, I don't even remember how we met. And she reminded me that it was through a shared client. So back in 2018, my first long term retainer client. So I was a few months into my consulting practice. I had done several training workshops, but this was my first client who was on this year or multi year consulting engagement where it was kind of this monthly retainer and I was engaging with them on a consistent basis.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

And that client was also a member of the San Francisco Bay Area's Aom consortium with which Katie leads. And so they knew they had been working with her through the Aim consortium, and they brought me on and they were also friends with my friends at Gemba Academy. So they were also friends with Ron Perera and Steve Kane and the group over at Gemba Academy. So Gemba Academy was hosting a training workshop at my this new client and my new client location. And Michael Bremer from AMA a m, Michael Bremer was coming in to teach how to lead Gemba Walks and Gemba Academy was going to be there to record parts of it to integrate that into some of their training. And so my client also invited Katie from the Aim consortium to attend. So I was there. She was there, Michael Bremer was there, Gemba Academy was there.

Jamie: [00:03:20] And that was actually the day in the event that kicked off my friendship with Katie. Now, funny note, actually, Gemba Academy also invited Michael Lombard to join, and at the time, I think he was at Kaiser, but he was living in the Bay Area. And I first met Michael Lombard through Mark Grayburn a few years prior to that, Mark and I were actually meeting up in Dallas, Texas for Happy Hour, and he invited Michael to join us.

And so years before Mark Grayburn and Michael Lombard and I were all at this happy hour kind of meeting, and I was meeting both of them for the first time in person. And so, you know, you just kind of have this full circle and our worlds keep intersecting. So kind of a funny thing. I couldn't even remember. I was like, I don't even know. We've I know we've known each other for years, but I didn't even know. And she reminded me of that. And I thought that was kind of a fun thing to think about how we all get to experience life in community together.

All right, enough of a personal history lesson. Let's dive into this conversation and remember that you can head to [process plus results.com/podcast](https://www.ProcessPlusResults.com/podcast). To get the show notes. You can also get the link to the Lean mindset videos that we're going to reference. And you can get the link to Katie's podcast, which is going to launch November 1st with the continuation of this episode. It's going to be called the Chain of Learning Podcast.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

Katie: [00:04:44] All right, Katie Anderson here. And I'm with Jamie Parker. And we are going to talk about the Lean mindset, our reflections and what we are continuing to learn and process. A few weeks after the Lean Mindset event hosted by GE in New York on September 6th, 2023.

Jamie: [00:05:02] Hi Katie. So glad to be here with you today. Talking and and even to go through this experience together. You know, you and I, we were we were talking at the event and then afterwards through our different conversations because it took me a minute to really process through a lot of what we heard. There were some you know, there was just a lot shared. And then even the collective experience talking with attendees there, and I'm a processor, I'm an internal processor, so I needed a minute to just kind of sit with some of this to really to really gather my thoughts around it.

Katie: [00:05:29] Absolutely. Me too. You know, I'm an internal processor and an external processor, so I've already done a little internal processing and gone through my notes. And then even just now, as we were having a pre-recording conversation session, just talking out loud with you about some of my reflections and your thoughts to even help enrich, enrich us further or my thinking further.

So that's why we decided to hit record. And we really want to have a multi-part conversation here that continues or starts on your podcast and continues on mine. And just that, that cycle of learning that happens and continuing the conversation. So I'm excited to be diving in and now having some external processing time together.

Jamie: [00:06:11] Yeah, absolutely. And I think it would be great. You know, as I think about, you know, the folks who are listening to Lean leadership for ops managers right now is, you know, looking at the personal improvement side of the Lean mindset because we'll talk, of course, organizationally as well. And we definitely heard from individuals who were talking about their own journeys and their own paths and learnings through these through their their roles and their responsibilities.

And this definitely hit me, right, is that we talk about continuous improvement a lot and we talk about all the ways we can make work better for folks. And there's definitely a side of it that is my personal and professional journey and responsibility as a leader, as a change agent, you know, as an individual

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

contributor in our organizations. And so why don't we start start there with kind of the individual lens looking at this from the individual lens first.

Katie: [00:07:10] Absolutely. And I think a great anchoring quote is one that Larry Culp made. I think this was towards the end of the session and he spoke several different times and he said, you can't just talk about it. You have to change the way you work. And by this, Larry, the CEO of GE didn't mean to change the way you all these other people have to work, which of course, it means that, too.

But he really was talking about change the way you individual leader has to work and the continuous improvement it takes in ourselves and the humility and the self-awareness to make those changes so we can create this culture focused on continuous improvement.

Jamie: [00:07:47] Yeah, that really resonates for me is I think about being back in organization and I can remember really struggling with engaging folks to kind of join this journey of improvement. And I was so confused. I'm like, I don't get it. This is like, so this makes your work better. It makes your work easier. What's the deal? Because it just felt like we were dragging people along. And one of the things that happened is we went and really listened to folks and kind of observed what was happening is we noticed that we were spending a lot of time working on how other people needed to improve their work. Right? The people on the floor, the people making the product. This is how you need to do your job better. This is how you can improve your process.

And what we didn't do is we didn't take an internal look. We didn't hold the mirror up and look at ourselves as leaders and say, okay, as leaders, how do we need to change the way we work? And so we would say things like, you know, blame the blame the process, not the person, but then we would have this high profile failure and we would say, oh, who ran that job? Right? Or we would say, you know, you do the work.

Jamie: [00:08:51] We value your opinions. We want to want to know how you think we can improve. And then people would give suggestions and we would explain why that wouldn't work, right? And so we just kept seeing that. We kept interacting with people and leading people and showing up the same way that we were before.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

We were saying different words, but our actions weren't matching those words. And so we didn't. We talked the talk, as Larry would have said, right? We talk the talk, we said the things, but we didn't change the way we worked. And so there was this disconnect.

And of course, people didn't believe us, right? Like, I don't really believe you because you're saying one thing, but you're doing something else. And so just really struck me as you're saying this kind of quote and talking about how he shared that is there's so much that we need to look internally about the way that we work. And to your point, the Lean mindset of like, how do we think, too?

Katie: [00:09:37] Yes, absolutely. One of the the best executives that I. Had the privilege of working with this is my last internal role was the COO, and he came from a Lean thinking and practicing organization and was helping create this transformation with me by his side. And he had a very strong perspective that if he didn't get his executive team really practicing these behaviors, it was never going to work.

So we of course we need to do the process improvement work and train like train and develop people who are closer to the front line. And he also wanted us at the executive level to be using that same lean thinking on the problems that the executives had scope of responsibility for.

So like, how do we do better problem solving for strategic initiatives? How are we asking better questions and how are we starting to like create that like connected system? And that's when it was like applied to the executives work. That's where they also are. We I was on the team to had to really think about, Wow, this is hard for ourselves too, because we have to lead in a different way.

And I was just talking with an executive team who's in this sort of struggle where they recognize that they've been successful up to this point and they know they need to make a shift, but they're not totally sure what that looks like for them at their level. So, you know, that self-awareness is that is that first place and then that stepping into something new can be scary as well.

Jamie: [00:11:03] Yeah, absolutely. And I definitely want to talk about that stepping into something new. But first, I just wanted to share, you know, it's one of the things that I like to say is that, you know, the

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

change, the improvement doesn't happen just because, like, time passes, right? Just because of the passing of time. And so, you know, this is where I think that if we're going to improve ourselves, if we're going to change the way we work, it means that we have to invest the time and the energy and the effort to do that.

And that feels really hard sometimes, you know, particularly if you're in a functional role or really, I guess probably any role in an organization these days. There's the expectations are high and the stuff that we have to do, there's a lot of stuff to do. And so it feels like there isn't the time, right? Like already spread so thin. We already have high expectations about delivering results. If I take time away from investing in the people or working on process improvement in the floor, then that's going to fall apart while I try to improve myself.

And so I know that sometimes it just feels like there's, you know, how do we even do this? But it's still like we still have to prioritize it, right? And I, you know, I facing this right now, right, is that I it feels like there is not enough time in the day. And then how do I make sure that I'm still giving myself time and I don't always succeed? You know, sometimes I look back at the end of the week and say, whoa, that that didn't go well.

Katie: [00:12:17] Yeah. And and so much of this, too, is to have the patience with ourselves to know that we aren't perfect. And so there was so much talk and we could we could talk about this part forever, about learning from failures and these micro failures.

And so what's important is for you to take a step back or for any of us, if we didn't show up in the way that was the way we wanted to take some reflection like that first, be kind to ourselves, like, that's okay. Okay. What do we need to do different next time? Or to show up a little bit different? What was the challenge in the moment? And that's really that spirit of continuous improvement for ourselves is not to beat ourselves up either for having for for being imperfect, right?

Jamie: [00:12:55] Yeah. It kind of goes back, you know, when you think about just practicing Lean or continuous improvement, operational excellence, from a tactical standpoint, people always say like learning to see is like, oh, you know, you know, you're starting to understand it when you can see all the

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

things right and sometimes internalize like, Gosh, I can see all the things for myself. Cool, awesome. Awareness is great and I have this awareness. I don't have to try and tackle all of that at once. You know, you.

Katie: [00:13:20] And I have talked about our both of us have strong perfectionist tendencies and so I have to be really conscious about applying that to myself to say like, you know, planning for perfection and never taking action is not actually going to get me to that end, that end point. It's it's being directionally good enough and then be willing and have the courage to just get out there and try and practice and and share with people what's going on.

You know, one of the the best things is, you know, telling people I'm learning something new and that's okay. And that creates some of that that connection as well. I think we think we have this perception that as leaders we need to be perfect or we need to have already achieved everything and accomplished. But actually people want to see that you're just you're trying to improve as well.

Jamie: [00:14:05] Yeah, I love that. And I don't want you to us to skip over that statement you just said, which is to share I'm learning something new. And that's just a great kind of recommendation or tip or option for folks who are listening, you know, to share that, not just to keep it to ourselves, but to be outward and specifically say, I'm working on this. I'm trying to get better here because people actually give you a lot of grace and space when you do that.

Katie: [00:14:29] Absolutely. And there's a great phrase that Carol Dweck, the author of Mindset, who was at the Lean Mindset event, and I've had the pleasure of interviewing her for my podcast, Chain of Learning. She has this phrase that not yet so like wasn't a failure or didn't achieve the goal. It's just not yet. And that puts us in the mindset of, okay, so that wasn't perfect or that wasn't the way we want it to be or the outcome that we needed. Not yet.

So let's keep working on it. And I think that's a nice way to illustrate the difference of being a more fixed mindset and just looking at that endpoint versus a growth mindset or more of, you know, really what a continuous improvement Lean mindset is too, is like, we didn't get there yet, but we're going to keep trying and figuring out how to do it better. Yeah, yeah.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

Jamie: [00:15:15] Well, let's talk about that then. Let's talk about for our listeners, Can you share a little bit about the difference between the fixed mindset and the growth mindset and kind of what, what are the differences there that we should be aware of?

Katie: [00:15:26] Yeah. So the, the fixed mindset is really seeing that we're focused on the outcome and we kind of define ourselves as like, I'm good or not good, I'm a failure or I'm a success. Rather than focusing on the process and seeing challenges as something to learn our way forward and eventually achieve, achieve what we want through the trying. But the growth mindset requires us to be okay with the failure because we are going to have mistakes and challenges along the way.

And so, you know, Carol Dweck was talking about and we explored this on my podcast as well about how a growth mindset welcomes failures and and taking risks and stepping into something that maybe you're not fully confident of and not defining yourself as bad or poor if you don't get there, versus a fixed mindset like people are more likely to give up or not try something new.

And she's talked about how if we want high performance cultures or actually high performance and outcomes, we have to develop a growth mindset not just for ourselves, but enable that in the culture. And so how is leaders? Do we create the space for it to be okay to try and to fail and to not blame, as you had talked about as well?

Jamie: [00:16:47] Yeah, and I love this distinction between the fixed and growth mindset because it gives you like some context in which to either understand it for ourselves or to talk about it, but recognizing that we all have some fixed mindset, right? Like it's not like as an individual you're either one or the other, right?

We all have kind of both of these, but they can be at different levels or there can be different, whether you want to call them triggers or things that that kind of get us into that mindset space. And for those, you know, for the listeners who have been listening to the podcast for a while, they've heard me talk before.

You know, like I've, I definitely grew up and had this heavy achievement kind of fixed mindset, and part of

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

it came from being kind of an adolescent and awkward and not fitting in. But I was really good in school. And so if you're like feeling like if I feel left out, like I don't fit in over here, but then I have achievement over here, I kind of just really went toward that achievement to start filling in some confidence gaps, right? And so some self-worth and confidence gaps. And then that carried through like, okay, cool, be valedictorian of your college class.

Jamie: [00:17:53] Okay, cool. Be the youngest person in your company to do X, Y, Z. Okay, cool. And so this achievement is where I just kept getting some of this self-worth. And so I work with life coaches and all the things right, But and so I'm better, but it's still like that pull is there.

So even as we sat at Katie at dinner the night before and it was with you and Mark and Amy and, you know, you're kind of talking about some of your accomplishments and all of these things. And I felt this comparison. Carol Dweck talked about the biggest place where it'll come up is when you compare to others. And I kind of started to feel this coming up and I had to do self talk that night.

I'm like, Oh, whoa, whoa, hold on. Let me work this side out. And I think that that can be for a lot of people that can show up. And so learning how to kind of work through that is definitely still a work in progress for me because it's something that is there for me, right? Like that is something I have to work.

Katie: [00:18:48] Through and thank you for sharing that. That's such a powerful, humble example too, about how we're always we have the things that trigger us and can set us back. And so if we can create like take that awareness and then take a different action, so be proactive, opposed to reactive.

So in that situation, you could have just been reactive and gone into that space, which is actually not where you want to be, or you're able to take a deep breath and say, Actually, this this is not how I want to be processing this emotion and I want to I want to do something different with it. And that's what the growth mindset is about, is like not getting caught into that, that this is how it has to be. But seeing that we do have a choice in how we react to situations, how we handle adversity, how we handle the challenges in front of us, and that self comparison with others too. It's about getting better for ourselves each and every day. And that was that was a key.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

For a lot of the professional athletes who were there as well, like, you know, like, you know, trying to make the team every year and getting better. You're either getting better or you're getting worse. One of the professional athletes said, So it's your choice. Do you want to get better or get worse? But you're not staying the same. So deep breath and like, it's okay.

Jamie: [00:20:01] Well, and I think that was part of what I loved, too, about this this event. And, you know, we, of course, give give the links to videos and show notes so you can watch it directly if you'd like. But, you know, we heard Carol Dweck talking about the growth mindset. And then later on that day, Giannis Antetokounmpo joined and he was really like this like living growth mindset. Oh my gosh.

Katie: [00:20:22] It was so inspirational. Be there in person and just his presence is so powerful. I highly recommend everyone go watch that that video of him talking.

Jamie: [00:20:33] Well, it was so interesting because I think there's a difference between understanding this growth mindset, fixed mindset from a conceptual basis, like academic. I can read the book and I can understand it versus embodying it in kind of your core and your soul, right?

And I felt like what he was putting out there was this embodiment of a growth mindset with this, whereas he was talking about like, I could not achieve anything without having gone through the adversity, without having the child that I had, without having the failures that I had. And so these aren't failures. This is just it's just a path. It's just a stop along the way. It was just really great to to watch and hear that firsthand. Absolutely.

Katie: [00:21:10] And, you know, he made this comment how, you know, one of the a TV announcer said you're a failure because you didn't achieve this goal. And he's like, wait, wait, wait. I'm not a failure. My team's not a failure. We failed in achieving our goal this year. But all the hard work along the way, we are not failures and we're still going to, you know, try our best and move on to next year.

And and that to me, that comment struck, you know, the the real difference of a fixed this guy was trying to label him as a failure and that's a fixed mindset like you are a failure versus no, I'm not a failure. I failed at achieving this outcome, this goal, this result. But I'm not a failure. I'm you know, and so that's a real

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

important distinction is not like that self labeling.

And as I'm a you know, as a parent, too, this is something I've been working really hard on and helping cultivate with my children more of a growth mindset as opposed to like saying, oh, you're you know, you're so smart. Like you worked really hard at that. And that's something we have to be working on as operations leaders and coaches as well of like not just praising the outcome and the result, which of course we want, but but appraising the effort and the failures along the way. But how do we look at that progress towards towards learning? And that's a real hard too, because we want we need those results, of course, right?

Jamie: [00:22:26] Yeah, absolutely. It's so important because there are absolutely unintended consequences when all we do is, you know, either celebrate or admonish the result, the outcome. Right. Because that doesn't it doesn't drive the behaviors that will give you the outcome over and over and over again. Right. It relies on individual knowledge, expertise, whatever it is, it does not create a culture. It doesn't create something that can be repeated.

It doesn't it doesn't drive the energy and the inspiration. And so this is so important that it's you know, it's really like I literally named my company process plus results, right? Because if we're just results only, it's not we're not going to have any sustainability. We won't have long term results. And it's so important and not just process, but the people side of that.

To your point, the the effort that is given, even if it didn't follow all of the process and all of the results, that is still so important both in how we recognize others and then how we look at ourselves. And when I think about I look at the end of the week and I'm like, Oh, that didn't go very well. Like, wait a minute, you know, I don't just look at the outcome. I need to look beyond just the outcome.

Katie: [00:23:37] Absolutely. And that that's that's the foundation of continuous improvement. And as Larry Culp said, continuous improvement is the goal, because if we're continuously improving, we're going to actually meet the other operational goals and outcomes we need or the personal development outcomes we need as well.

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

Jamie: [00:23:53] Yeah. And I think as you know, for operations leaders that are out there or or change agents or individual contributors, as you're thinking about, you know, as you work to develop yourself, you are inevitably going to step into places that are uncomfortable. You are going to be learning new things, right? You're going to you don't get to just live in this space that you already have expertise in. You know, it's you've got to step out further.

And in doing that, this is where being able to kind of lead yourself through a growth mindset and, you know, kind of getting when you see yourself getting into that fixed mindset mindset, being able to recognize it and kind of self manage, it's going to be really important. And once you learn to do that, it really is going to help you also then carry that over into the type of environment you create for your teams so that everyone can experience that kind of growth and that. That feeling.

Jamie: [00:24:44] Whew. You know, it is so fun because Katie and I work in similar spaces and we share a lot of viewpoints that we share together, but we also have diversity in our experiences, our personal and professional experiences and our personalities and our and our thought processes and styles and the way we work. And so it makes it just so much fun to engage and learn from each other. I know I always really appreciate having conversations with Katie and, you know, as we support folks, it's actually kind of fun too, because sometimes we'll even support the same folks but from different angles or different priorities, which can be really fun. And I think that creates a lot of synergy between the work that we're doing. So I just want to encourage you, please make sure you tune in November 1st to the Chain of Learning podcast to hear the rest of the conversation as we move from talking about the Lean mindset from an individual perspective to an organizational perspective.

Jamie: [00:25:35] So you can find that at the chain of learning.com or head to our show notes process plus results. Dot com forward slash podcast. We are going to send you the link to Katie's podcast and as well as to the GE Lean mindset videos and all the things that we referenced today. Now, I am honored that Katie has invited me to participate in the launching of her podcast on November 1st. You can hear the continuation of this conversation as well as more detail about the growth mindset versus the fixed mindset topic. As Katie interviews Carol Dweck, author of the book Mindset. Now I hope you will continue to tune in to the Lean leadership for Ops Managers podcast every other Wednesday, And now you can alternate our off weeks, the weeks that we don't publish with the Chain of Learning podcast. It's a show

Developing a Growth Mindset as a Leader | 125

that's going to help equip and empower continuous improvement leaders with actionable strategies and positive motivation so that they can shape people centered learning cultures and drive impactful change in the organization. So together, Katie and I hope to join you as part of your Wednesday morning routine as you alternate week to week every other week with chain of learning and every other week with the Lean leadership for ops managers. All right, you can catch your next Lean leadership or Ops manager's episode on October 25th and then every other week after that. Remember, you can always find our details, links, more information at our show notes, process plus results. Dot com forward slash podcast. Until next time.