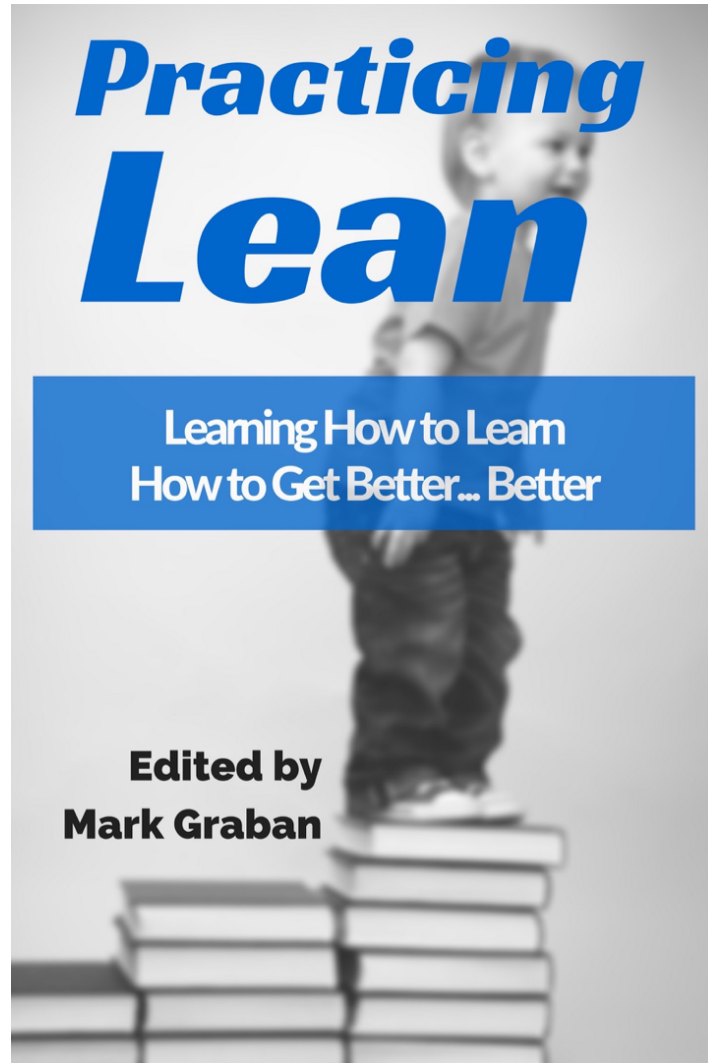


An excerpt from the book *Practicing Lean*



Chapter 6 by Jamie Parker

To Purchase the entire book, please visit www.PracticingLean.com

100% of proceeds are being donated to the non-profit
[Louise H. Batz Patient Safety Foundation](#)

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Welcome to the Book!

This book is a collaborative project that has been taking shape over time, with different authors contributing chapters and essays about the early days of their Lean journeys. That includes people with experiences in Lean manufacturing, Lean healthcare, Lean Startups, and other settings.

As the editor, I wrote Chapters 1 and 2 as a way to inspire others to share their stories and their honest reflections about their own personal Lean journeys. As the subtitle says, this is all about “Learning How to Learn How to get Better, Better.” How have we learned about Lean through our own practice? Have we gotten better at how we help others get better? This is a book of those stories and reflections.

I asked people to contribute chapters that are first-person stories, with the emphasis on mistakes and honest reflections, not a chapter about how great they are with Lean.

This book evolved over the course of a year, with submissions being added to the electronic book through the [LeanPub.com](http://www.leanpub.com)¹ platform. Those who bought the book early received updates as chapters were added over time.

Now, as of December 2016, the book has been released as a Kindle eBook and a paperback book.

I’m really excited that this book now contains chapters by 14 authors from different industries (healthcare, manufacturing, services, government, and consulting) and from different countries (the U.S., England, Canada, and Scotland). Some contributors are published authors of books and some are sharing reflections for the first time in this form.

¹<http://www.leanpub.com>

All author royalty proceeds are being donated to the [Louise H. Batz Patient Safety Foundation](#)², a Texas-based non-profit that does excellent work in educating patients and hospitals about patient safety improvement. Their publications, like the [Batz Guide for Bedside Advocacy](#)³ are really making a difference in the lives of patients and staff. Over \$1000 has been donated, as of December 2016.

If you'd like to donate, please [visit their website](#)⁴.



Thank you for reading! If you reflections you'd like to share, please email Mark@MarkGraban.com

[Mark Graban](#)⁵

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²<http://www.louisebatz.org/Home.aspx>

³<http://www.louisebatz.org/patient-education/the-batz-guide.aspx>

⁴<http://www.louisebatz.org/>

⁵<http://www.MarkGraban.com>

Chapter Six - Jamie Parker

Bio: Jamie Parker practices Lean and is passionate about learning and sharing Lean leadership. She has 15 years' experience in operations management / leadership across retail, service, and manufacturing environments.

Jamie serves as an internal coach to her organization's operations managers across the country while supervising P&L and operations management responsibilities for six commercial print plants. Jamie expresses passion for helping leaders break the habits of traditional management approaches to create environments primed for team member fulfillment.

[Connect with Jamie on LinkedIn⁴⁶](#).

Bike Ramps: Crashing and Burning

Growing up, I lived on a cul-de-sac and most of the neighbor kids were boys. Fittingly, I liked climbing trees, playing football, and riding bikes Ñ this tomboy was just one of the guys! My buddies and I built bike ramps using any random thing lying around the neighborhood, which meant each one was often more elaborate and risky than the next. We would launch our bikes from the driveway of a house atop a wicked hill to get as much speed as possible before hitting our daredevil creation. Our goal, of course, was to log the most time spent airborne without ending in a bike-bending, bone-breaking crash.

One memorable ramp emphasized extra thrills over stability as we gathered all sorts of odd-sized items in an effort to outdo ourselves with the biggest, baddest ramp yet.

⁴⁶<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jamievparker>

A courageous pal went first and promptly crashed and burned. Badly.

I was up next. Inwardly nervous and outwardly bold, I started my downward approach, but had to come to a screeching halt when the ramp began tumbling over. The boys put the ramp back together while I climbed up the hill to give it another shot.

You can guess what happened, but I didn't see it coming. I absolutely could not understand how I ended up with the same outcome as the first kid: I was bruised, had a serious case of road rash, and a big dose of wounded pride. I was in tears and did not see one bit of humor in the situation.

That was then. Thankfully now, knowing my body and my pride fully recovered eventually, I can look back and laugh whenever I tell this story. What on earth were we thinking? The ramp was literally wobbling from the get go, and the first kid demonstrated what we could expect as our results. Then, on my turn, I couldn't complete the first try because the ramp fell apart without any weight on it. Yet, somehow I thought my magical powers of awesomeness would prevent the ramp's collapse. Now, I look back and can see that we were doomed to fail. But in the moment, I couldn't see it. None of us could. We were too engrossed in seeking thrills and neighborhood fame to see all the evidence of pending doom right in front of us.

That's how I feel about my first few years of practicing Lean. In the moment, we had some pretty brilliant ideas. Even when we didn't think they were brilliant, we still thought they were darn good given our circumstances or constraints. In the moment, our mistakes were painful, figurative road rash all around. There were warning signs telling us the idea was going to collapse like that old ramp did, but we were often too engrossed in the Lean-seeking moment to heed those warnings. I had to go through the experience and come out the other side to truly learn and appreciate the failure and be better as a result.

When I visit for the holidays, my brother and I like to tell stories

like the famed bike ramps and other ridiculous stuff we did as kids. Stuff that was challenging or scary or just plain painful at the time, but now we can laugh at and think of how we might have done it better (with an occasional probably-shouldn't-have-tried-it-to-begin-with). That's what I'm going to do here. I'm going to share my stories, and my hope is that my lessons learned, my skinned knees, may help you see the warning signs so you can adjust accordingly.

Diving in Head First... in the Shallow End

After 10 years in operations management in one area of our organization, I transferred to a different department while staying in an operations management role. My new department was a fairly independent group within the company. There wasn't much structured support from the corporate office, but that also meant there wasn't much corporate oversight either. We had 18 plants across the country, and I was one of three regional managers. We often had to figure things out and do things ourselves, learning from our mistakes along the way.

Shortly before I joined this network, they had begun practicing Lean. The plants rearranged equipment to be in what we called "cells" and had started doing what we referred to as "one piece flow." As the new girl, I jumped right in and began talking with authority about such things. As instructed, I read *The Gold Mine*⁴⁷ by Freddy and Michael Balle, so I understood some of the concepts of flow and takt time.

Unfortunately, my new region wasn't stable, which meant I didn't have enough time to truly immerse myself in the Continuous Improvement and Respect for People foundations of Lean. I was in firefighting mode, with my efforts focused on trying to stop the bleeding from jobs done wrong or late. So instead of getting my

⁴⁷<http://amzn.to/1m0NI9y>

bearings and taking the time to truly understand the core principles of Lean, I just dove in head first. Unfortunately, with my Lean knowledge being shallow, it wasn't the best of moves.

Now I know that the things I was saying weren't always accurate. We didn't produce using one piece flow, and we didn't have cells or cellular workflow. Now I can see that the meaning of other Lean terms just weren't what I was trying to make them be.

On the other hand, there were things that I got right. The analogy of the lake and the rocks, for example, has stuck with me since that first reading of *The Gold Mine* years ago. Certainly, we did get better through the process. But it would have been less confusing and less painful for our team members if I had taken time to be more knowledgeable about Lean. Of course, I didn't need to be an expert on any tools, but the study of Respect for People early on would have enabled me to better serve my team.

The Hammer or the Screw Driver

In Chapter Two of this book, Mark Graban mentions how much he dislikes the concept of Lean being presented as a toolkit that practitioners pick and choose from. While we didn't formally present it as such, this is absolutely how my practice of Lean began. It was part-time. When we ran across a problem that we thought a Lean tool would be helpful for, we tried to apply that tool and then went back to business as usual.

Actually, in the interest of full disclosure, it was more often the case that we found a tool we thought was cool and then tried to use it without even understanding "what problem are we trying to solve" or how it fit into an overall system or culture. Who am I kidding? An overall system or culture wasn't on our minds yet.

It is painfully clear today that what we were doing wasn't good. In the moment, though, we thought we were "Doing Lean". I mean,

we had corners and labels in our plants and an elementary Kanban system and andon lights and some plants even had Huddle Boards. We were making progress on this journey!

What made our toolkit approach even worse was that sometimes we really misapplied the tools. Nails and screws are used for different purposes. Using a hammer to beat in a screw can cause some serious damage because it's a misapplication of the tool. So, too, does this happen with Lean.

Mark Graban created an Office 5S Gone Wrong parody video you can [watch here](#).⁴⁸ This video generally elicits chuckles or even out loud laughter. While it is an extreme parody, the chuckles and laughs occur because there is an element of truth that many of us have experienced in our misapplication of Lean tools.

One part of this parody video goes like this:

Employee: "Why would I have to put tape around my monitor?"

Supervisor: "So it does not get lost. We will always know where the monitor is. You will not waste time looking for it. Now our office will be more efficient."

Employee: "Has anyone in our office ever had a monitor go missing?"

And so went our first attempt at 5S. Our areas were all shared work spaces, so there were real problems with things going missing or with motion waste as team members looked for supplies or tools. However, we didn't keep our eye on the problem; we only used the artifact part of the tool. Let me explain.

On conference calls, a few of our plant managers discussed what supplies and tools each plant needed. They made labels and outline

⁴⁸<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8IfQp4A4ZI>

stickers for the tabletops, floors, and shadow boards and then shipped a “5S Kit” to every plant. In addition to many other outline labels, these kits included rectangle outline labels for the phones and keyboards. Has anyone in our office ever had a phone or keyboard go missing? (The answer is “No” if you’re unsure).

We sent pictures of what the plants were supposed to look like and set a date for all plants to be in compliance. We gave a verbal overview of the steps in 5S, but we didn’t teach those steps or actually do those steps in our plants. We gave a lot of top-down direction and rules about what was allowed and what wasn’t allowed.

So not only was this a tool-focused approach, but it was a misapplication of the tool altogether. The teams didn’t actually perform the steps of 5S. They didn’t make decisions to make abnormalities visible. They didn’t develop their capabilities in any area. Why? Because we didn’t let them. We treated this as a top-down push of a compliance activity.

This was the very first time our team members heard the word “Lean”. As you can imagine, it didn’t go well. And the damage to trust was felt for a long time.

After making this type of mistake a few times, we changed our approach and continued to learn over time. A few years later we were finally ready to develop our team members’ capabilities to use 5S to make abnormalities visible and to reduce process waste. This time, we had weekly 45 minute group sessions with all team members. In each week’s time, we taught 5S, one step at a time. We showed them video content explaining the concept of the step and facilitated discussions for better comprehension. We led experiential activities such as the [5S Numbers Game](#)⁴⁹ or the [Pen Building Activity](#)⁵⁰ to better appeal to adult learning styles. Also, team members worked in groups to apply what they learned and

⁴⁹<http://www.lean.org/FuseTalk/Forum/Attachments/5SGAME.PPT>

⁵⁰<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILlqVxN8WyI>

practice the steps in small areas of the plant, one step at a time. At the end of the time period, each group stood up in front of the rest of their peers in the plant and delivered a report-out on what they did in their area of the plant. We had them walk through the decisions they made in each step of the process and share before and after photos.

As you can imagine, this was a much more successful approach. Our team members actually learned how to use 5S to make their jobs easier. Their results were much better than what we pushed to them years before and sustainability was viable for the first time. Most importantly, though, they developed their capabilities as communicators, presenters, collaborators, and problem solvers. A team member swelling with pride as she presents to her peers how she helped make their workplace a little bit better gets to go home with greater confidence and fulfillment and carry that forward to her family and community. That is the real prize!

Standards for Standards' Sake

Our department has 18 plants across the United States, and many of our customers have employees spread across the country as well. So, one of the value drivers we provide our customers is to use our distributed network to create product for the customer near the end user, greatly reducing speed to market and shipping costs for the customer. This means that we have to deliver consistent products, services, and lead times across all 18 plants. Our customers define this as valuable to them. In order to accomplish this, we have to execute on consistent production standards across all plants. We didn't start here initially, and we've worked many years at incrementally getting there.

However, our desire for standardization crossed the lines of what was truly necessary. Remember how we first tried 5S - sending pictures of what every plant needed to look like and sending a list

of rules to follow? We used that approach for quite a few things. At one point, we made our first attempt at a Leader Standard Work program across all plants. There was a project team of several managers who collaborated remotely to develop this program, and there were checklists for every leadership level and a visual control board to try to make the results of those checklists visible.

It was a complete flop.

We couldn't get any level of execution. Even after we solicited feedback and made adjustments to the program based on that feedback, we still visited plant after plant and saw that they just weren't doing it. There were several reasons for this. First, we didn't have a culture of discipline in our plants yet. Second, we had inconsistent execution of our shift huddles to engage team members in closing the loop and solving the process problems we were observing. And third, we didn't have buy in or even understanding of the purpose of the program from the people that had to execute it day after day.

We were working on standardizing our shift huddles around the same time of this flop and were about to launch a program to address the second problem listed above. We had approached it the same way: a project team of several managers collaborated remotely to develop the shift huddle program. The program dictated the timeframe in which huddles had to occur, who would lead them, who would participate in them, the agenda minute by minute, and a standardized huddle board to use during the huddles.

I'm thankful we didn't launch this program. A colleague and I attended a Lean conference that caused us to rethink this approach. In learning from other practitioners, we realized that releasing these programs that required strict adherence to every detail wasn't respecting our people. All we were doing was teaching (not very effectively) our team members to execute a program or follow a checklist. We weren't engaging their brains and respecting how they could effectively run their business. We were making standards

for standards' sake.

While there were certainly key processes that had to be standardized to deliver the consistency our customers defined as valuable, the nuances of exactly how shift huddles were executed or exactly how leaders monitored processes didn't have to be standardized across locations.

So we actually abandoned the Leader Standard Work program. We just weren't ready for it yet. We did have feedback from our team members that they weren't receiving the level of communication necessary to effectively do their jobs and improve their jobs. So we moved forward with shift huddles, but in a different manner.

We set some basic parameters. Shift huddles had to happen every day. All team members had to attend shift huddles. Huddles had to cover our five pillars: Safety, Quality, Delivery, Cost, and Morale. And plants had to make their huddle content visual on some sort of display. Everything else was left to the local teams to decide. As a result, our team members were more engaged in shift huddles. We respected the value of our team members' brains and gave away decision making.

A year later, [Eric Kulikowski](http://www.daretobeamazing.com/MeetEric.en.html)⁵¹ from Dare to Be Amazing shared with me the phrase "Global Consistency with Local Implementation". This is a good description of the lesson we learned. Standards are very important. And each plant could absolutely create standard work for their huddles. But our need for standardization of everything across 18 plants was just taking it too far and suppressing the creativity and engagement of our team members.

A Five Letter Word

Trust. It's a pretty important five letter word. In the lessons I've already shared, you can probably imagine how the mistakes we

⁵¹<http://www.daretobeamazing.com/MeetEric.en.html>

were making early in our practice of Lean hurt the level of trust our team members had of the organization and of us as leaders. When we first started practicing Lean, we presented it as a way to increase efficiency and cut costs. Combine that with the connotations of the word “lean” itself and we had a problem. Then, add in our misapplication of tools and top-down push of Lean initiatives and the problem only got worse. We created a sense of fear and resentment with many of our team members.

To course correct, we actively worked on changing that by investing in our team members and giving them more opportunities to create change. At one point, we trained our team members on the basics of continuous improvement and focused that effort on what we called daily improvements. Paul Akers of FastCap, author of Chapter Five, calls these “2 Second Improvements.” Essentially, these are improvements that team members can make in their work environment and processes. We created “Improvement Walls of Fame” in each plant where team members could document and share their improvements. It was a great way for them to get recognition and to learn from each other.

However, we had to approach these daily improvements differently than we had started in our practice. We couldn’t focus on efficiency or cost cutting as the primary goals; we had already learned that many of our team members viewed that as a way for “the big man upstairs” to make more profit without sharing any of it with them, and some of them were even afraid they would improve themselves out of their jobs.

Shigeo Shingo is quoted as saying, “There are four purposes of improvement: easier, better, faster, and cheaper. These four appear in the order of priority.” This became our rallying cry.

We repeated over and over and over to our team members that we wanted their help in making their jobs easier and better. That’s it. Those are the first two priorities of improvement and the only thing we asked for. It wasn’t just a “flavor of the month” either. Two years

later, this remains our rallying cry.

This paradigm shift had a tremendous positive impact on rebuilding trust with our team members. It wasn't about efficiency or costs. It was about making their jobs easier and making their plants a better place to work. Of course, their improvements did make things faster and cheaper, too. In fact, team members regularly made improvements that lowered our costs. I think that's mostly because we didn't ask for it and instead trusted them to make the improvements they found value in. And they trusted us in return.

I only wish we had started this way and not put ourselves in a hole to climb out of to begin with. Skinned knees!

West is Best

Indulge me while I take a trip back to my first ten years in operations management, before I was ever introduced to Lean. Our organization conducted Voice of Customer (VOC) surveys to get direct feedback from customers on their experiences. Each location's VOC scores determined part of the incentive payouts for all team members in the location, including the manager, which was me for my location. Even more than that, first quartile performance or "number one" performance in a particular district or region was highly celebrated, and the culture included a high emphasis on stack rankings. So much so that throughout my tenure there were times when fourth quartile performances in some metric were punished - either by mandated formal disciplinary action or by having to attend horrific conference calls from your office weekly on Fridays at 5 pm.

I had been promoted to manage a location that was ranked last in the company. I was using my traditional management style (I didn't know any better yet) to dramatically improve that ranking. One month, our VOC scores were so high they were second in the region

to only one other location. I was thrilled, but apparently this just wasn't good enough for me.

During the last days of the month, I constantly checked Voice of Customer scores to monitor results. I clearly remember thinking, "I hope the #1 location gets a bad survey so we can take over the number one spot."

What?!!??

Yes, I genuinely wanted a customer of my company to have a bad experience or get a job late or wrong so that I could move up in the rankings. The recognition given to achieving "number one" status was so high that I went there. I guess I could have argued that I didn't want a customer to have a new bad experience, but just one that had already had a bad experience to take the survey. I'm not sure that makes it better.

Fast forward to moving to this new department that had just started practicing Lean. Stack rankings were very important here as well. In fact, your stack ranking was almost how you justified your value to the organization. As I studied Lean and, more importantly, as I learned from a new director hired from outside our company how dangerous it was for our plants to aggressively compete against each other, I devalued stack rankings. Eventually, we were able to remove stack rankings from all of our scorecards and metrics reporting so that our managers could focus on improving their own performance against their history. The problem was that this culture was so engrained in my belief system and the belief system of our plant managers that it was difficult to change.

In fact, right after we removed stack rankings, I noticed that my plants were rerouting a lot of their volume to other plants. What really irritated me about this was that that work was being rerouted to plants in a different Region. I vividly remember getting on a conference call with my plant managers and in no uncertain terms dictating that they would, collectively, figure out how they would keep that volume in our own West region. Why would I say such a

thing? Not because it increased shipping costs for the company or had some negative impact on our customers. It was because losing that volume decreased my region's metrics while improving the metrics of my peers' regions. Remember, my boss was the new director who didn't value stack rankings, so this being a big deal was all a figment of my imagination, or more accurately of my experience.

As I was learning Lean, I was beginning to question this methodology even more. In a one-week period, I had two great mentoring experiences. The first was a lengthy email exchange with [Kevin Meyer](http://kevinmeyer.com/bio)⁵² of [Gemba Academy](http://www.gembaacademy.com/)⁵³ and the second was a lengthy phone call discussion with [Steve Kane](https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-kane-6250b56)⁵⁴ of Gemba Academy. During these interactions, I found myself sharing the culture I was in and repeating back some of these types of stories. As the words were literally being typed by my fingers or uttered out of my mouth, I had mental, physical, and emotional reactions to what I was sharing.

What in the world is wrong with me? I'm part of the problem. Of course I can't change this when I'm still leading this way.

That marked a major changing point in my belief system and leadership style.

I immediately began changing my dialogue with my managers and team members, and I started by apologizing for the way I had led them in the past. After two months of changing the dialogue, we were on a team conference call (my team was geographically dispersed, so conference calls were our reality). At the end of the call, one of my plant managers yelled out "West is Best" (we were the West Region). Before, it would have been music to my ears. But this time, it was like a knife through my heart. After two months, I clearly had not done enough to change this.

Over time, we continued to make headway in changing the culture.

⁵²<http://kevinmeyer.com/bio>

⁵³<http://www.gembaacademy.com/>

⁵⁴<https://www.linkedin.com/in/steven-kane-6250b56>

I knew we weren't there, but we were making progress. After nine months of this heavy dialogue and changing my behavior, we were leading an activity with all of the plant managers and department managers in each of the three regions. In the activity, the groups were split into teams with the task of building a contraption out of packing materials to protect an egg that was kicked across the parking lot. One team's egg survived and their contraption had the lowest cost. During the ten-minute time when they were assessing and building another contraption for a second round, one of the members of this team approached another team and asked "Do you want to know what we did?"

The other team shrugged him off and turned around to continue its own activities. My peers and I watched in disbelief. During this activity in each region we also heard comments like "they're cheating" or "don't try to steal our ideas." It was painfully clear that, despite the attempts for change over the last nine months, the drive of internal competition instead of collaboration was still very much alive with our teams.

Of course, there is value in understanding how comparable business units perform. It helps a manager identify someone who is performing better and collaborate to learn what is causing that gap. And some friendly competition can be fun.

But the culture of extreme internal competition - of winning by "beating" another business unit within the same company - is unhealthy. We need to redefine winning in these cases. We shouldn't be asking ourselves "what will make my individual business unit's numbers the best?" We should be asking "what is best for our team members? What is best for our customers? What is best for our company?"

In reality, it's not the fault of our managers or team members that they have this mindset. They are only emulating what they were taught and what the culture encouraged, just like I was when I was in the other department.

We continue to make progress in this area. But, I wish I had this realization sooner. And, I wish I had been more aggressive in helping our teams make this transition as well. That is my mistake. I have a responsibility to lead them differently. It remains a work in progress.

Beliefs Drives Behavior

As you have probably gathered, we started with a results-only culture that celebrated results, no matter the method. The partner to this is that when failure happened, people were blamed. In fact, it was not uncommon for the first question asked of a manager after a high-profile failure to be “who is at fault and how are you holding them accountable?”

The flip side to this type of culture was a celebration of people going “above and beyond.” Keep in mind that going above and beyond often meant deviating from the standard process. Productivity was valued, even when completely achieved by overburdening our team members.

That was our history and the culture we had when we first began practicing Lean. And realistically, probably through the first two years of our Lean practice as well. As we continued to learn about and practice Lean, we began to better understand Respect for People. We started talking this language because as senior leaders in the department, we genuinely believed it, and most of our leadership style with our plant managers emulated it.

But, we came to realize that what we were saying was not aligned with how our plant leaders were behaving, and it wasn’t their fault. They had years of managerial programming to behave a certain way, and we weren’t doing a very good job of giving them the development, coaching, and time necessary to behave any differently. In fact, while we believed and often practiced it, we

were still torn on delivering to company expectations while trying to change our collective leadership behaviors, especially because this often comes with a short-term dip in performance. Of course, you get all of it back in the long-term by engaging your people, but, in the short-term, the time and effort it takes to develop people and improve process may result in a dip in performance.

We did respond in one way that was extremely impactful. We led our managers through a Lean Leadership Series that was introspective and challenged their current beliefs on their roles and responsibilities as leaders. It used content from thought leaders and practitioners like Simon Sinek, Bob Chapman, and David Marquet to put our leaders in a different frame of mind.

Of course, we had some leaders who didn't respond. And, the reality is we had to spend some one-on-one time with those leaders to understand the gap and to figure out what to do. But, many of our leaders changed their beliefs based through this series.

One plant manager said, "Lean Leadership teaches us to be openly fallible, and to give our team members the respect of fulfilling their potential as human beings by becoming active members of the improvement process," which was a fundamental shift in this manager's belief system. A plant manager talking about his responsibility to engage team members to help them fulfill their potential as human beings? That's huge.

I attended a Lean conference and heard a talk by [Libby Gill](http://libbygill.com/about/)⁵⁵, author of *You Unstuck*⁵⁶ and other books. Gill declared "belief drives behavior." In that way, this Lean Leadership Series was a success because it changed the beliefs of our leaders. We wanted our leaders to behave a certain way, but their beliefs were counter to that. Changing their beliefs was a critical step to enabling them to change their behaviors.

⁵⁵<http://libbygill.com/about/>

⁵⁶<http://amzn.to/1m0RRdI>

Where we failed, though, was in not acting to help them change their behaviors. I understood the first part, the belief part, after hearing Simon Sinek's *Leaders Eat Last*⁵⁷ talk at a Lean conference and then doing my own research. What I didn't know, though, was how to help our leaders change their behaviors. In fact, I often found myself succumbing to task overload and not properly prioritizing, even after having a major change of heart in my beliefs. I jumped in helping our managers change their beliefs but wasn't prepared for the next requisite step in the process.

This is a recent mistake of mine and one that I am currently working to correct. I'm not sure if I would have done anything differently, as I don't think delaying the change in beliefs would have been any better. I should have been better prepared for what's next. Instead, I allowed myself to get consumed with stuff and stalled the progress of our leadership development.

The Tortoise and the Hare

I love the idea of a road trip. Wind in my hair, music blasting, experiencing the sites and the people of different places. It's like a symbol of freedom. But there's a problem: I'm a planner. I like to have every detail mapped out: where we're going, our route, where we're staying, every detail of the trip. When I experience the inevitable gaps to my plan, I get frustrated. Whether it's traffic, road construction, advice for a different stop, or heaven forbid a wrong turn (keep in mind, most of my road trips were in my 20's, before the proliferation of GPS-enabled devices).

Any of these obstacles and bumps in the road caused me frustration and, in turn, frustration for my companions. So much so that at some point they just stopped inviting me on the road trips.

Our Lean road trip has been similar. Once I studied enough that I

⁵⁷<http://amzn.to/1I3V86j>

had some confidence in mapping out the trip, that's exactly what I did, but the actual road trip was taking much longer than what I had mapped out.

It turned out that what I thought would take one year to accomplish, actually is taking three years to accomplish. At first, I was frustrated by the slow pace because I just wanted to get there (I know there's not an end destination, but I at least wanted to get to my milestones by my original plan). Go. Go. Go. Go.

By slowing down, what actually happened is that we didn't slow down at all. Instead, we learned. For each concept we were studying, we understood and applied it more effectively than we would have had we kept to my schedule. We progressed at a pace that was right for our journey. There are countless Lean principles or tools that we don't practice... yet. We are by no means experts. In fact, you might classify us as beginners still.

Every time we slowed down, we learned something. When something I planned to accomplish in three weeks instead took eight weeks, we studied our culture, our leadership, our execution. We learned about where we were and what gaps existed. We adjusted accordingly. When we were deficient in an area, we took time and invested in that area before moving on to the next one.

Through that process, we learned to better see the yellow flags. We learned how to listen and recognize when there was misalignment between our team members and leadership. How to identify when we were being too controlling or too top-down. How to see when our plan was a plan for plan's sake and wasn't really aligned with our high level goals and values. How to heed and correct when our ramp was wobbly and probably wouldn't hold up when we rode the bike over it.

What I had to learn about road trips was that the value isn't in the destination. It isn't in seeing the sights and crossing them off the list. The value in a road trip is in the experience itself. It is in the hours upon hours of driving while sharing great laughs and delving

into the depths of my companions' personalities while also sharing things I never thought I would share with another human. The value is in unexpectedly stumbling across the 90-year old couple who had grown up in Anytown and shared the amazing history that most people in this world will never get to hear. The value is in the experience.

In order to find value in the experience, we have to go at the right pace. This is generally the slower, tortoise pace. So maybe it takes us longer, but when we travel at the right pace, we find the hidden gems along the way. We practice better. We learn better.

Thanks for Reading the Book!

I hope this book has been interesting, helping, or entertaining. Or maybe all of the above. Thanks for taking the time to make it this far.

Please consider [leaving a review on Amazon.com](#)¹⁶¹.

Again, all author royalty proceeds are being donated to the [Louise H. Batz Patient Safety Foundation](#)¹⁶², a Texas-based non-profit that does excellent work in educating patients and hospitals about patient safety improvement. Their publications, like the [Batz Guide for Bedside Advocacy](#)¹⁶³ are really making a difference in the lives of patients and staff.

Over \$1000 has been donated from sales of this book, as of December 2016.

If you would d like to donate, please [visit their website](#)¹⁶⁴.



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¹⁶¹<http://amzn.to/2i7w7iQ>

¹⁶²<http://www.louisebatz.org/Home.aspx>

¹⁶³<http://www.louisebatz.org/patient-education/the-batz-guide.aspx>

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