

The power behind Lean is a management's commitment to continuously invest in its people and promote a culture of continuous improvement. The Toyota Way can be briefly summarized through the two pillars that support it: Continuous Improvement and Respect for People.

Here are ten ways you can respect people in your organization.

1. Listen harder. Obviously there are times when you're busy for extended discussions. But you need to set aside times when you can listen carefully to employee's problems, reactions, concerns, and suggestions.

2. Look at people when they talk. Good listening means being willing to stop working computer, close a door, stop reading your email, or only answer emergency calls. Give the speaker your full attention, and let them know they are getting your full attention.

3. Keep your promise. By keeping your word to someone, you not only establish yourself as a person of integrity, but make the other person feel as though you value them.

4. Be on time. Another way to demonstrate that you value someone, is by treating their time as though it is valuable. Nothing says this better than being punctual. Don't waste others time.

5. Encourage. Sometimes when we hear a silly idea, it's easy to shoot down someone's hopes and dreams, or otherwise make them feel unimportant. Genuinely encouraging someone could be very empowering and liberating.

6. Take care of your work environment. Your co-workers can see your work space, especially if you are in a cubicle paradise. If you keep your work space and the common areas clean, everyone will be calmer when they are around you.

7. Let the buck stop with you. This means take responsibility for your own faults and your successes. Don't claim other people's work as your own, and don't push your failures onto a co-worker.

8. Create a Learning environment. Developing your people shows respect for them. Building explicit (book) and tacit (hands on) knowledge and distributing it is equally important.

9. Allow mistakes. The real source of power of Lean lies in its ability to learn from mistakes, and to continuously improve. Mistakes are seen as opportunities to improve and not as something that needs to be monitored and punished.

10. Go to the Gemba. You can't genuinely listen if you aren't there. Go to where the action is happening and seek the facts. Lean implementation takes place on the floor, not in the office.

Respect for humanity is such an important principle in lean Enterprise because the biggest resource in any company is the people that work there. If you are going to implement lean, you need to get the cooperation and participation from everyone in the company. The respect for humanity principle goes so much deeper however, than just the people that work there. You must have respect for the workers at all levels, the customers and suppliers, as well as the

environment.