

# BLUE-COLLAR KAIZEN

**LEADING LEAN & LEAN TEAMS**



**MACK STORY**  
**Blue-Collar Leadership® Series**

# Blue-Collar Kaizen: Leading Lean & Lean Teams

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Mack Story

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## DEDICATION

To those who truly have *respect for the people*.

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I would like to thank Jim Noreault for believing in me and allowing me to accelerate my Lean journey in his plant.

Jim revealed to me that high impact leadership is more caught than taught.





# 1

## CREATING A KAIZEN CULTURE

### DEVELOP THE FRONT LINE TO IMPROVE THE BOTTOM LINE

*“A truly Lean company develops all the people because they are people with potential, not because they are people with positions.” ~ Mack Story*

When you are leading Lean, you are responsible for creating the kaizen culture in your organization, regardless of your position.

Anyone with a desire and a passion for Lean can lead Lean. Whether it's the CEO or the front line supervisor, someone must lead the way. Why shouldn't it be you? You're investing time in developing yourself because you want to be successful as a Lean leader and make a high impact. I want to help you.

I'm going to help you increase your influence throughout the organization starting with those on the kaizen teams you lead. Leading kaizen teams effectively is the perfect way to position yourself as the leader of the people. When you invest in and develop the people, your influence will spread far and wide among those people.

You don't have to be their boss to lead them. They simply must choose to follow you. I've led thousands of people who never reported to me, but they chose to follow me. When people choose to follow you because of who you are and what you represent, you are creating a kaizen culture. You will develop tremendous influence.

Those who brought me into their organizations always hired a consultant to lead a team, but they always got a high impact Lean leader who transformed the culture. I didn't need a position of authority to make things happen. I only needed a team.

In a kaizen culture, the people are engaged. They identify problems. They offer solutions. They take action. They respect their leaders and are respected by their leaders. They don't blame. They don't point fingers. They don't whine. They shine.

In a kaizen culture, people are growing because they want to. They are improving processes because they want to. They are participating on kaizen teams because they want to. They are making small changes because they want to. They are following the leader because they want to.

Accept responsibility for creating a kaizen culture and you will attract followers one kaizen team at a time. It is possible. I did it many times in many places always with great success.

Are you up for the challenge? It will be hard. You won't be successful without engaging, empowering, and encouraging the people.

I've heard numerous leaders in "*Lean*" organizations say, "*Lean is all about people.*" They read it or heard it somewhere and thought it sounded good. So, they repeat it every chance they get, especially to customers. I think they believe saying it will make it so. For most of the leaders I've met, if they were being completely truthful, they would say, "*Lean is all about the people improving the processes, reducing the costs, and increasing the profits.*"

What they don't realize is Lean is about leadership of the people. Leadership is the key to creating a true kaizen culture.

I know very few Lean leaders who study leadership. A few do, but most do not. If they read anything at all, it's usually books about the Lean tools. I focused on reading books about Lean tools too, until I realized respect for the people meant developing the people. To develop the people, you must be influencing and leading them. So, I put down the books about the Lean tools and picked up the books about leadership and influence.

I haven't looked back.

To create a kaizen culture, you must move beyond the tools and begin to focus intentionally on the people. Unfortunately, many organizations focus only on the tools and include the people because they need them to execute the Lean mission. It's not really about the people.

You are about to learn how to create a kaizen culture by making your kaizen events about the people. It will not only be fun, it will be rewarding. But, it won't be easy. Everything throughout this book will help you become the type of Lean leader who will naturally help create a kaizen culture.

I want to encourage you to begin to see each kaizen event as a mini-culture within a culture. A kaizen culture is not only good for the people, but it is also created by the people.

*“Leaders who don’t appreciate Lean make the error of casting great visions and getting people excited but then falling back into command-and-control management. Lean traditionalists make the error of implementing Lean without a compelling vision, so that improvements are made but ultimately undermine the culture rather than galvanizing it.”*  
~ Bob Chapman

# 2

## LIVING KAIZEN

### LIVE IT TO LEAD IT

*“The one thing that separates high impact leaders from low impact leaders is CHARACTER. That one thing is made up of many things.” ~ Mack Story*

You will not learn about Lean tools in this book. You will learn about leading teams in a Lean environment while using values and principles to achieve amazing results.

Each chapter is about high impact Lean leadership. You *must* manage things and processes because they don't think or feel. But, you *should* lead people because they do.

Lean tools are related to improving the processes. High impact Lean leadership is related to respecting the people. The most important person you will ever lead is yourself. The degree to which you develop yourself determines the degree to which you will influence others.

You can't give what you don't have. You can't teach what you don't know. You can't model what you don't live. You won't have high impact influence without high impact character.

Everything I'm about to share with you will help you increase your influence with all people in all situations. High impact Lean leaders have a lot of influence. Low impact Lean leaders have very little influence.

Lean leadership is not about your title, your position, or your authority. Actually, those who struggle to lead

Lean the most are those who attempt to leverage their authority to get results. They are doomed from the start. Napoleon Hill said, “*One of the greatest leaders who ever lived stated the secret of his leadership in six words, as follows: Kindness is more powerful than compulsion.*”

High impact Lean leadership is based on moral authority, not formal authority. It’s about who you are: your character. It’s not about what you are: your position or title.

Regardless of your position or title, to be a high impact Lean leader, you must truly have *respect for the people*. All of the people, at all times, at all levels, and in all departments.

Low impact Lean leaders *facilitate* kaizen events and *blame others* for their lack of results. High impact Lean leaders *lead* kaizen events and *accept responsibility* for achieving results.

After more than 11,000 hours of leading leaders and their cross-functional teams through all types of kaizen events and training many others to do so between 2005-2012, I know one thing for certain. To effectively lead Lean teams through change, you must authentically value people and have a hunger for initiating change for the better, not only in their lives at work and at home, but also in your own life.

I call this *living kaizen*: the endless, continuous pursuit of personal improvement. If we teach it, we should live it.

I began my manufacturing career in 1988 on the front lines of a manufacturing plant as an entry-level machine operator. In 1995, I started to climb my way up from the bottom. I grew through many positions including Process Engineer, Lean Manager, Lean Consultant, and now, Author and Motivational Leadership Speaker. More on my journey can be found in my first book, *Defining*

*Influence: Increasing Your Influence Increases Your Options.*

In 2005, I was working as a Process Engineer when the plant manager stopped by and asked me if I would be willing to accept responsibility for leading a plant wide 5S initiative as we started our Lean journey. I agreed without truly knowing what I was agreeing to.

He gave me 12 weeks. I started by creating eight teams that met several hours every week. During that 12 week period, I led 96 5S kaizen events. That's how my Lean journey began.

I define kaizen simply as continuous improvement or making many small changes for the better. There seem to be many varying definitions that basically mean the same thing: constantly strive to be better tomorrow than you are today. In two simple words, kaizen means *get better*.

You can get better personally and professionally. You can get better at home and at work. You can get better in the area of character: who you are. You can get better in the area of competence: what you know.

Mark Graban said, *“Training people and making lists of waste might create awareness, but we need the courage to take action and lead efforts to improve the system.”* It starts with you. Do you have the courage to lead yourself better? Do you have the courage to lead others better?

When it comes to leading yourself and others, your character will launch you or limit you. Your character will determine if you're a low impact leader struggling to create positive change or if you're a high impact leader influencing many to embrace, support, leverage, and lead change throughout the organization.

Will you live kaizen? Will you achieve greater success?

***“Your best chance for success is reading.  
Learn to earn. Read to succeed.” ~ Jeffrey Gitomer***

# 3

## OVERCOMING THE RESISTANCE

### THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

*“Managers, especially senior managers, overestimate their effectiveness, particularly as they seek to improve their organizations through formal initiatives. And, they underestimate the impact, often negative, of their daily personal actions on employees.” ~ Jim Womack*

For me, living kaizen took on a new meaning when I accepted responsibility for leading the 5S initiative in my plant in 2005. Nobody reported to me. Yet, I was responsible for leading (influencing) everybody down the Lean 5S path, including all of those with a formal position of authority. Lean leadership is about influence.

Soon after the plant manager asked me to lead the 5S initiative and to begin reporting directly to him, he resigned. We continued the 5S mission successfully without him. A few months later, we had a new plant manager, Jim Noreault. I soon found out he was not only a plant manager. Jim was also a high impact Lean leader. He knew how to unleash our Lean potential.

When I volunteered to lead the 5S initiative, I didn't realize I would also be leading our complete Lean transformation. We all thought 5S was all we were going to do. We were a typical traditional batch & queue operation. Three short years into our Lean transformation, we had converted the plant into a cellular,

single-piece flow operation. We also improved from -3% gross profit margin to +35%. We achieved success!

That was impressive when you consider I had never led Lean, and there was always a lot of resistance at all levels. Very few of our 200 associates had ever heard of Lean. Very few of our formal authority leaders at any level knew much about Lean or wanted to learn about it.

I had never read a leadership book. Like most blue-collar organizations, we didn't conduct leadership development at any level within the plant. But, we did have a high impact leader in Jim Noreault.

Jim was a leader of leaders. He was the type of plant manager every Lean leader wants to report to. He was the type of top leader the Lean books say you must have in order to be successful, but the kind you seldom encounter in the real world.

Jim knew Lean started with him, but he also knew it wasn't about him. He let me find my way and own our Lean journey. He let me self-educate on the job as I read Lean books and experimented endlessly with our team.

I also read endlessly at home. Lean wasn't a job for me. It was my passion. I was leading and living kaizen.

Jim was always available to any of us. He cared. He was our biggest cheerleader. He gave me and everyone in the plant credit for all of our successes and for making it all happen. Jim mentored, coached, removed roadblocks, got involved, got dirty, laughed with us, and helped us battle the never-ending resistance to change.

There was A LOT of resistance as there usually is. With Jim's support, those of us who were bought-in to him and his vision went over it, around it, underneath it, through it, and sometimes, Jim removed it. We first tried to change the people (get them onboard). But, eventually if that didn't work, Jim changed the people (removed



them and brought in someone who was a better fit).

Without Jim's leadership, our Lean transformation would have failed, as it always does without a high impact leader at the top.

In 2008, I resigned from my position and launched a process improvement consulting company. I also started studying leadership. From then on, I incorporated leadership development into all of the kaizen events I led.

I often told my teams, *"There's two ways to lead a Lean transformation: from the top down or the bottom up. Since I'm not the CEO, when we're on a team together, we're leading Lean with the people from the bottom up. Our mission is to get results and increase our influence."* As far as I was concerned, I was always leading Lean from the bottom up.

As a consultant, top leaders often brought me in to improve the process and increase the profits, not to grow and develop the people. I knew there would be resistance to change. Why? Because change is hard when you aren't growing and developing the people in an effort to prepare and engage the people.

You can overcome this resistance by increasing your influence with as many people in as many directions as you can from right where you are. You start by leading each team effectively and respecting the people. Lean leadership rises and falls on authentic influence.

If there are challenges you can't overcome, the root cause is inside you, not outside you.

*"Leadership is complicated. It has many facets: respect, experience, emotional strength, people skills, discipline, vision, momentum, timing- the list goes on.*

*As you can see, many factors that come into play in leadership are intangible. That's why leaders require so much seasoning to be effective." ~ John C. Maxwell*

# 4

## DEFINING INFLUENCE

### INFLUENCE TRUMPS AUTHORITY

*“Lean managers seek responsibility to address important issues by leading as if they have no authority. Leading without the benefit of authority is actually critical in any organization because even in authority-based organizations managers rarely have control over everything touching a process.”*

*~ Jim Womack*

Womack was stating what I’ll be teaching you throughout this book, *“You don’t need authority to lead Lean. Influence will always trump authority.”* High impact Lean leadership requires influence, but it doesn’t require authority.

Phrases like, *“My hands are tied,”* or *“They don’t report to me,”* or *“Those people won’t do what I tell them,”* really mean, *“I don’t have any influence, and I can’t accomplish anything without it.”*

You’re holding in your hands a resource filled with tips and principles that will help you increase your influence (leadership) far beyond the influence that comes with a title or position.

Most often, I had more authentic influence in the plants I was supporting than most of the leaders with formal positions of authority. Because I invested in developing the people while leading kaizen teams, I built meaningful relationships throughout the entire facility.

I could make things happen when the leaders wouldn't even attempt to make them happen. I had influence up, down, left, and right from wherever I was. That wasn't always the case for the formal leaders.

One memorable example is the time I was on the plant floor leading a kaizen team when the area supervisor brought an issue to my attention. The kaizen team was working in his area of responsibility to help improve the department's processes. He was the process owner, and therefore involved, although he wasn't formally on the team as some of his associates were.

This supervisor wasn't really bought-in. Like anyone who wasn't bought-in would be, he was resistant to the changes we were making.

He approached me complaining about how some parts were being stacked on the pallets and wanted me to fix it. He blamed the department who handled the parts just before they came to his area for stacking the parts the wrong way and slowing down the work in his area.

He proceeded to tell me if the team in the other department would simply flip them over when they loaded the pallets, it would make things much easier. He said they could just as easily stack them either way. I asked which department was supplying the parts. He turned and pointed to a department less than 50 yards away. I thought to myself, *"You've got to be kidding!"*

I asked him why he hadn't already asked them to make the change. He replied, *"They won't do what I tell them. They don't report to me."* I've seen and heard the same story countless times. No relationship. No influence. No leadership. No ownership. No culture of kaizen.

I said, *"Walk with me. Let's see if we can make it happen right now."* I already knew the supervisor and the team in the other department because I had been leading kaizen

events in their area too. I had a relationship with them. I walked up to the supervisor, called him by name, shook his hand with a smile, and gave him a pat on the back.

I said, *“Did you know if your team will flip the parts over when stacking it will help the next operation unload them?”* He said, *“No I didn’t, but we’ll make the change immediately.”* And, he did. Mission accomplished in less than one minute.

Why did I have to make that happen? Why couldn’t the supervisor with the issue make it happen? Why wouldn’t he talk to his peer? Because they didn’t have a relationship. They were focused on doing their job (competency), not on building relationships (character).

Authentic influence, *moral authority*, trumps artificial influence, *formal authority*, every time.

Character and competency create authentic influence. Research has shown that 87% of our influence comes from our character (who we are) and only 13% of our influence comes from our competency (what we know).

To create a kaizen culture, you must focus on developing your own character and then helping others develop theirs. At a minimum, intentionally grow and develop the character of those on the teams you lead.

Leadership development is character development. Leadership is influence. Everyone has influence. Therefore, everyone can lead (influence) others positively or negatively. High impact Lean leaders intentionally model and teach character-based leadership principles.

*“Character isn’t something you were born with and can’t change, like your fingerprints. It’s something you weren’t born with and must take responsibility for forming.” ~ Jim Rohn*

# 5

## MAKE IT HAPPEN!

### MANAGERS MAKE A PLAN; HIGH IMPACT LEADERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

*“In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.”*

*~ Theodore Roosevelt*

I had been leading Lean/kaizen events for three years before I started studying and reading leadership. In the beginning, I didn't realize how important it was to learn and apply leadership principles to get better results. All I had heard about were the Lean tools.

Nothing I read discussed having respect for the people in a way that really taught me *how* to respect the people. That's because most Lean experts are not leadership experts. They may be naturally good leaders, but most haven't actually studied, applied, and taught leadership development formally for many years.

I've read hundreds of leadership development books and written 11 of my own, including two others in the *Blue-Collar Leadership*<sup>®</sup> *Series*. I learned to effectively apply leadership principles while leading Lean transformations and kaizen events. As a result, I'm uniquely qualified to provide you with insight that few Lean experts can.

As a high impact Lean leader, you're responsible for making things happen. I'm packing this little book full of stories and principles in an effort to motivate and inspire

you to intentionally embrace personal growth and leadership development on an entirely new level.

Consider the statistics I mentioned. 87% of your influence (results) comes from character, and 13% from competency. In Lean language, that means 87% of your influence is based on Respect for the People, and 13% is based on Continuous Improvement. Character multiplies competency. You can leverage the Lean tools and multiply their effectiveness by Respecting the People.

In the last chapter, I shared an example of how my relationships with kaizen team members helped me make things happen. Now, I'm going to share a story of how developing my character allowed me to make things happen. The key for me was developing self-control.

Self-control is always the right thing. As Theodore Roosevelt said, *"The best thing you can do is the right thing..."*

In 2009, I toured a facility with a new client to identify a pilot area for their first kaizen event. Walking through the plant, the plant manager and I discussed the possibilities of the pilot area. I reminded him these were only possibilities and asked him not to discuss them, as we couldn't be sure what the team would decide to do.

I returned a few weeks later for the event. We had only five days to make things happen. On Monday, the team members met me for the first time. I was glad one of the team members was the operator from the area we were going to focus on. Having him involved would be critical to the success of the event.

I asked the operator, as I always do, *"Last week, what were you thinking about this week?"*

He angrily replied, *"I couldn't wait until you got here, so I could cut your damn throat!"*

I was shocked. I didn't know this man. This man didn't know me.

However, I knew *nothing* was going to happen until we got past his intense anger toward me. The right response was critical. I tried to ease the tension in the room with, “*Why don’t you tell us how you really feel sir?*”

My reply didn’t soften his anger, but it did let him know I didn’t take it personally, and we could talk about it. He was angry. I knew losing my self-control wasn’t going to increase my influence with him or anyone else, and it wouldn’t solve the issue. You won’t be a high impact Lean leader if you can’t control yourself when others don’t.

After a few questions, I discovered the root cause of his anger was hearing a rumor that his work platform, among other things, would be removed as part of the changes the team would be making.

Avoiding rumors like this was the reason I had asked the plant manager not to share the possibilities we discussed. He hadn’t listened.

I assured the operator he was the most important part of our team, and while the team would recommend changes, he had the final say. I also told him if he wanted the platform to stay and it was removed anyway, I would leave and not return. I won’t work with leaders who don’t respect their people. I built trust with him. By Wednesday, the operator was on a fork lift tossing his platform in the scrap bin out back.

I didn’t always have that level of self-control. I gained it by learning how to lead myself well through studying and applying leadership principles. High impact Lean leaders make it happen because of their character.

*“Some men have thousands of reasons why they cannot do what they want to, when all they need is one reason why they can.” ~ Willis R. Whitney*

# 6

## LEADING UP

### RESULTS INCREASE INFLUENCE ABOVE

*“Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline.” ~ Jim Collins*

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**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“You can’t build a reputation on what you are going to do.” ~ Henry Ford*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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We spoke at Yale University’s School of Management on the topic of *Blue-Collar Leadership®: Innovation in Talent Development*. [Watch our entire 1 hour presentation here.](#)

Listen/subscribe to my [Blue-Collar Leadership® Podcast](#).



# 7

## DEVELOP YOURSELF

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU,  
BUT IT BEGINS WITH YOU

*“You can never become a leader without doing more than you are paid for, and you cannot become successful without developing leadership in your chosen occupation.” ~ Napoleon Hill*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Nothing is given to man on earth except a potential and the material on which to actualize it. The potential is a superlative machine: his consciousness; but it is a machine without a spark plug, a machine of which his own will has to be the spark plug, the self-starter and the driver; he has to discover how to use it and he has to keep it in constant action. The material is the whole of the universe, with no limits set to the knowledge he can acquire and to the enjoyment of life he can achieve. But everything he needs or desires has to be learned, discovered and produced by him — by his own choice, by his own effort, by his own mind.”*  
~ Ayn Rand

# 8

## DEVELOP OTHERS

### THE BEST LEADERS GO SLOW TO GO FAST

*“Lean managers go slow to go fast, by taking the time at the outset to fully understand the process and its purpose, through dialogue with everyone involved...and by fully understanding the root cause of problems and the most promising counter-measure before taking action.” ~ Jim Womack*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Standards of excellence are not chiseled in stone. They are constantly being redefined. It’s important to recognize that what was graded as excellent last year may not be so this year. That is why we must keep mastering new skills.” ~ Bobb Beihl*

# 9

## **RIGHTING THE WRONG**

LEAN IS NOT ABOUT TWO PILLARS;  
IT'S ABOUT TWO FOUNDATIONAL LAYERS

*“Being intentional about discovering the hidden ways  
in which we sabotage ourselves empowers us to  
expose and eliminate these invisible culprits.”*

*~ Amir Ghannad*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“The business of business is people.  
Yesterday, today, and forever.” ~ Herb Kelleher*

# 10

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### LEADING YOURSELF AND OTHERS THROUGH CHANGE

*“The great thing about business is that despite all the history, all the deeply embedded traditional dysfunctional management practices, and all the baggage of unhealthy relationships and corrosive cultures, it is possible at any moment in time to push the reset button, to embrace a different way of being, and experience dramatic change.” ~ Bob Chapman*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“It’s wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing!” ~ Thomas Jefferson*

# 11

## RESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE

### LEADERS WHO RESPECT THE PEOPLE DEVELOP THE PEOPLE

*“Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be.” ~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“We make some of the best industrial machinery in the world. But, I will not go to my grave being proud of all the machines we have built. Instead, I will be deeply grateful for all the lives that we touched and uplifted in our journey. The machinery we build is just the economic engine that enables us to touch lives. The flourishing of those lives is our paramount concern.”  
~ Bob Chapman*

# 12

## THE EMOTIONAL TRUST ACCOUNT

YOU ARE EITHER MAKING  
DEPOSITS OR WITHDRAWALS

*“If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other - while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity or insincerity - then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust, and everything I do - even using so-called good human relations techniques - will be perceived as manipulative.” ~ Stephen R. Covey*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Trust is the one thing that changes everything.”  
~ Stephen M. R. Covey*

# 13

## DECLARE YOUR INTENT

### HELP THE TEAM SEE AND FEEL THE RIGHT THINGS

*“Followers choose to follow a leader with a compelling purpose, vision, cause, or goal, the unifying purpose. It is the leader’s unifying purpose that attracts the interest and loyalty of followers. The leader is someone who is able to communicate unifying purpose in a manner that is inspiring, persuasive, or motivating. The unifying purpose joins the followers to the leader.” ~ Jimmy Collins*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Leaders do not have to be the greatest visionaries themselves. The vision may come from anyone. The leaders do have to state the vision, however. Leaders also have to keep the vision before the people and remind them of the progress that is being made to achieve the vision. Otherwise, the people might assume that they are failing and give up.”  
~ Ezra Earl Jones*

# 14

## CONNECT FIRST

COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT INFORMATION;  
CONNECTION IS ABOUT INSPIRATION

*“A great man is always willing to be little.”*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Taking the conversation away from another person is a common form of lack of self-control which is not only discourteous, but it deprives those who do it of many valuable opportunities to learn from others.”*

*~ Napoleon Hill*



# 15

## WASTE DOESN'T MOTIVATE

### ELIMINATING FRUSTRATIONS GETS EVERYONE MOTIVATED

*“Lean is not really about waste elimination, it’s about frustration elimination, removing obstacles that stand in the way of people being their best, that prevent us from having a joyful and meaningful experience. It’s not about telling, it’s about listening. It’s about blending unique knowledge with collective wisdom. When we allow people and their teams to own the process, they can create better outcomes than any senior executive or group of consultants.”*

*~ Bob Chapman*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Vision without execution is hallucination.”*

*~ Thomas Edison*

# 16

## LISTEN TO THE VOICES

TAKE THE TIME IT TAKES,  
SO IT TAKES LESS TIME

*“Listening is the greatest communication tool to use when you want to connect with someone.” ~ Ria Story*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“We changed the name from ‘Lean’ to ‘Living Legacy of Leadership’ because in the early stages of embracing these powerful leadership ideas, it became clear to us that Lean as widely practiced was mostly about numbers and not about people. If the Toyota production processes had been studied and named properly, it would have been called Listen.”*

*~ Bob Chapman*

# 17

## THE KEY TO BUY-IN

### LEARN TO LEVERAGE THE MEETINGS BEFORE THE MEETING

*“No man can persuade people to do what he wants them to do, unless he genuinely likes people, and believes that what he wants them to do is to their own advantage.” ~ Bruce Barton*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“The individual in your organization who communicates the clearest vision will often be perceived as the leader. Clarity is perceived as leadership.” ~ Andy Stanley*

# 18

## BE A LEADER

PROCESSES AND THINGS DON'T  
THINK AND FEEL, BUT PEOPLE DO

*“Managers change behavior. Leaders change the way you think without you realizing it.” ~ Daniel Burrus*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“When we are in the presence of good leadership, we usually are not even aware of it. Everything goes so well that leadership seems unnecessary; it creates the illusion that everything is seamless and smooth.”*

*~ Jimmy Collins*

# 19

## PRIME THE PUMP

### PREPARE THE TEAM FOR THE DREAM

*“Vision does not ignite growth, passion does. Passion fuels vision, and vision is the focus of the power of passion. Leaders who are passionate about their call create vision.” ~ Ken Hemphill*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Leaders who navigate do even more than control the direction in which they and their people travel. They see the whole trip in their minds before they leave the dock. They have a vision for their destination, they understand what it will take to get there, they know who they’ll need on the team to be successful, and they recognize the obstacles long before they appear on the horizon.” ~ John C. Maxwell*

# 20

## QUESTIONS TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITY

### LEAD WITH QUESTIONS NOT DIRECTIONS

*“When you initiate change, you take responsibility. Initiating change requires a proactive approach and only proactive people will do it. Initiating change requires you to say ‘I will’ instead of ‘I wish.’”*

*~ Ria Story*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“It really is amazing what happens when you recognize the importance of the opportunities ahead of you, accept responsibility for your future, and take positive action.” ~ Michael F. Sciortino, Sr.*

# 21

## **AVOID ANSWERING QUESTIONS**

**DON'T MAKE DECISIONS;  
FACILITATE DECISION MAKING**

*“Some people assume we stumble  
onto our success, but the path of discovery  
is paved with interesting questions.” ~ Bryan Cioffi*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“A humble ask can prompt an amazing feat.”  
~ Liz Wiseman*

# 22

## HIGH IMPACT DELEGATION

### DELEGATE RESULTS NOT METHODS

*“The more decisions a leader makes, the further he or she is away from leading a high performance team. Make too many command decisions and you’ll doom yourself and your team to mediocrity.” ~ Mark Miller*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“In a culture of discipline, people do not have jobs; they have responsibilities.” ~ Jim Collins*



# 23

## WHERE'S THE PROBLEM?

GO SEE, DEMONSTRATE RESPECT,  
AND ASK QUESTIONS

*“Lean managers pose questions to their problem owners about the nature of the problem and the best available counter-measures. Doing this automatically transfers responsibility for the problem...closer to the problem.” ~ Jim Womack*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Solving complex problems requires an inquiring mind and the willingness to experiment one’s way to a fresh solution.” ~ Daniel Pink*

# 24

## THE POWER OF HOW

### THE BEST LEADERS ASK THE BEST QUESTIONS

*“Certainty is one of the weakest positions in life.  
Curiosity is one of the most powerful.  
Certainty prohibits learning; curiosity fuels change.”  
~ Henry Cloud*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“When you want to persuade, you’ll always get further  
by asking a question than by making a statement.”  
~ Dorothy Leeds*

# 25

## LEAD THE TEAM

### UNLEASH THE TEAM'S POTENTIAL

*“All leaders know there’s a huge gap between what the team has to do and what the team is capable of doing.*

*High impact leaders close the gap.  
Low impact leaders widen the gap.”*

*~ Mack Story*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.*

*Working together is success.”*

*~ Henry Ford*

# 26

## LEVERAGE THE TEAM

### FOCUS ON STRENGTHS; DEVELOP WEAKNESSES

*“Instead of focusing on weaknesses, give your attention to people’s strengths. Focus on sharpening skills that already exist. Compliment positive qualities. Bring out the gifts inherent in them. Weaknesses can wait unless they are character flaws. Only after you have developed a strong rapport with the person and they have begun to grow and gain confidence should you address areas of weakness...and then those should be handled gently and one at a time.”*

*~ John C. Maxwell*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“Humility means knowing and using your strength for the benefit of others, on behalf of a higher purpose. The humble leader is not weak, but strong...is not pre-occupied with self, but with how best to use his or her strengths for the good of others. A humble leader does not think less of himself, but chooses to consider the needs of others in fulfilling a worthy cause. We love to be in the presence of a humble leader because they bring out the very best in us. Their focus is on our purpose, our contribution, and our ability to accomplish all we set out to accomplish.” ~ Alan Ross*

# 27

## EXPAND THE TEAM

HARNESS THE INFLUENCE OF THE TEAM  
TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THE TEAM

*“The most valuable player is the one that makes the most players valuable.” ~ Peyton Manning*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“Sometimes the more you know, the less you learn...Too often we play solo when we should be gathering the support of a broader team. Too often we drown out new voices with cynicism, blunt criticism, and explanations for why their ideas won't fly.”  
~ Liz Wiseman*

# 28

## LEVERAGE THE LEADERS

### MAXIMIZE THE INFLUENCE OF THE LEADERS WHO SUPPORT YOU

*“If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time.” ~ Patrick Lencioni*

#### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“It is a big step in your development when you come to realize that other people can help you do a better job than you could do alone.” ~ Andrew Carnegie*

# 29

## THE KEY TO SUCCESS

HIGH IMPACT LEADERS MUST KNOW THE WAY, SHOW THE WAY, AND GO THE WAY

*“Try not to become men of success.  
Rather, become men of value.” ~ Albert Einstein*

**CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO**

*“True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to.” ~ Jim Collins*

# 30

## SUSTAIN THE GAIN

WHEN YOU INVEST IN THE PEOPLE,  
THEY WILL INVEST IN THE PROCESS

*“Not investing in your people to save money is like cutting a leg off to save weight. Initially, it achieves your short term goal, but the long term effects are disastrous.” ~ Sid Joynson*

### CHAPTER CONTENT REMOVED FOR PROMO

*“If Lean is done wrong, and there is entirely a tools focus, and we’re beating up the people, and we need results, and it’s all about the numbers, it’s not going to sustain itself, which many companies have proved.”  
~ Jerry Solomon*

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Mack has also written [Blue-Collar Leadership®: Leading from the Front Lines](#), [Blue-Collar Leadership® & Supervision: Unleash Your Team’s Potential](#), [Blue-Collar Leadership® & Teamwork: 30 Traits of High Impact Players](#), and [Blue-Collar Kaizen: Leading Lean and Lean Teams](#). As of 2021, [Mack](#) and his wife, [Ria](#), have published [32 books on leadership development and personal growth](#).



We spoke at Yale University's School of Management on the topic of *Blue-Collar Leadership®: Innovation in Talent Development*. [Watch the entire 1 hour presentation here.](#)

**ENGAGE** Your  
**FRONT LINE**  
To **IMPROVE** the  
**BOTTOM LINE!**



If you're willing to invest in your  
Blue-Collar team, I am too!

~Mack Story

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*"My first words are, GET SIGNED UP! This training is not, and I stress, not your everyday leadership seminar!" Sam, VP & COO*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mack's story is an amazing journey of personal and professional growth. He began his career in manufacturing on the front lines of a machine shop. He grew himself into upper management and found his niche in lean manufacturing and along with it, developed a passion for leadership development.

Mack has logged over 11,000 hours leading cross-functional blue-collar leaders and their teams through various types of process improvement, organizational change, and cultural transformation.

Mack is also the author of *Defining Influence*, *10 Values of High Impact Leaders*, *Change Happens*, *10 Foundational Elements of Intentional Transformation*, *Maximize Your Potential*, *Maximize Your Leadership Potential*, and *Who's Buying You?*. He's an inspiration for people everywhere as an example of achievement, growth and personal development. His passion inspires people all over the world! [Listen to Audio Book samples here.](#)

A few highlights: In 2013, Mack participated in the Cultural Transformation of Guatemala with John C. Maxwell where more than 20,000 Guatemalan leaders were trained; In 2014, Les Brown invited Mack to speak at his event in Los Angeles, CA; In 2018, Mack was invited to speak at Yale University.

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### [TopStoryLeadership.com](http://TopStoryLeadership.com)

Mack's wife, [Ria](#), is also an author and speaker with [an amazing personal story of overcoming seven years of extreme sexual abuse](#) by her father and others from age 12-19.

### [RiaStory.com](http://RiaStory.com)