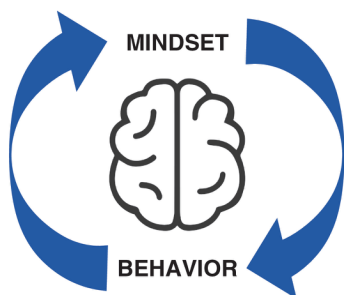


# Toyota Kata and Lean

The topic of "Lean" has progressed over the last 25 years. It is no longer mostly about methods. Today it is also very much about organizational culture – i.e., team members' attitudes ... how they think, act and feel.

But how do you get a Lean culture? This is where an understanding of how our brain works comes into play. You can't change the way people think – the culture – directly, it happens indirectly.

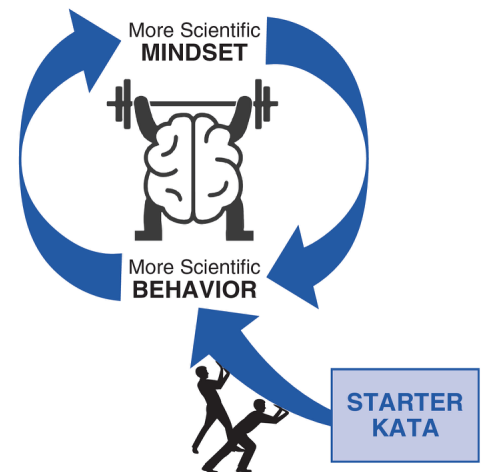


The way to modify a team's culture is not to first change how people think, but instead to start by changing how people behave - what they do. Our existing habits of mind are based on practiced, efficient neural pathways that tend to self-perpetuate and naturally prevail over attempts to change.

If you want to modify your team's culture, define the ways you want each other to behave and then start deliberately practicing and reinforcing those behavior patterns in daily work. Start weaving some new neural pathways. Over time the culture may shift as a result. This is what researcher Richard T. Pascale meant when he wrote:

*"It's easier to act your way to a new way of thinking than to think your way to a new way of acting."*

*Surfing on the Edge of Chaos, Three Rivers Press, 2001*



To traditional Lean thinkers the Toyota Kata Starter Kata may at first glance seem like another Lean method. But they're actually a way to begin the process of deliberate practice for mindset change in any team that wants to develop a more scientific-thinking culture like Toyota's. Think of practicing Starter Kata like playing scales when you learn a new musical instrument. What's important is not the practice routines you began with, but the ways of thinking, acting and feeling that practicing them leaves behind.

Best wishes for your practice!