

10 Leadership Lessons from Isao Yoshino

The following are 10 leadership insights that Mr. Yoshino shared with Katie Anderson in 2015 and 2016 that initially inspired the book "Learning to Lead Leading to Learn."

1. Ask questions to find out where someone's skills and knowledge are. Don't criticize the answers. Find the good in their thinking and ask "why" questions to learn more.
2. If you believe you are perfect, you won't find the answer. If you don't believe you are perfect, then you are open to finding the answer. Once you are ready to accept that mistakes can happen, then you are okay because you will learn.
3. The master will ask the deshi (apprentice), "What have you tried?", in order to understand how much the deshi has really learned. The master will tell the deshi only enough for him to get to the next level and to start the process again.
4. The target should be a little higher than you actually think you can attain. The reason for this is that it is good to have failures and mistakes, as it is what you learn from the lessons of not reaching your targets that make you smarter.
5. A coaching relationship is a two-way street. You are helping me and I am helping you.
6. Practical tools (such as kaizen) and conceptual elements (such as respect) are two wheels of a cart. If one wheel is missing, a cart cannot move forward.
7. You have to let the person you are helping to explore ideas and fail. Telling them the "answer" is shortsighted and does not develop people's critical thinking capability. It is only by understanding what the process was to get to the wrong answer, before you might actually land on the right one.
8. If I am asked what made Toyota one of the top-ranking auto-makers in the world, I would say, "We make people while we make cars. It's our people who make cars, not machines. That's respect."
9. Create trust. Be consistent. Celebrate the attempt, not the outcome. Failure is the source of so much learning.
10. Make a small effort to give a little bit extra every day.

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