

Building an Improvement Culture through Deliberate Practice

Learning to Think with Toyota Kata

My Journey



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Traditional CI



改善 KAIZEN









WHAT **PROBLEM** ARE
YOU TRYING TO **SOLVE?**



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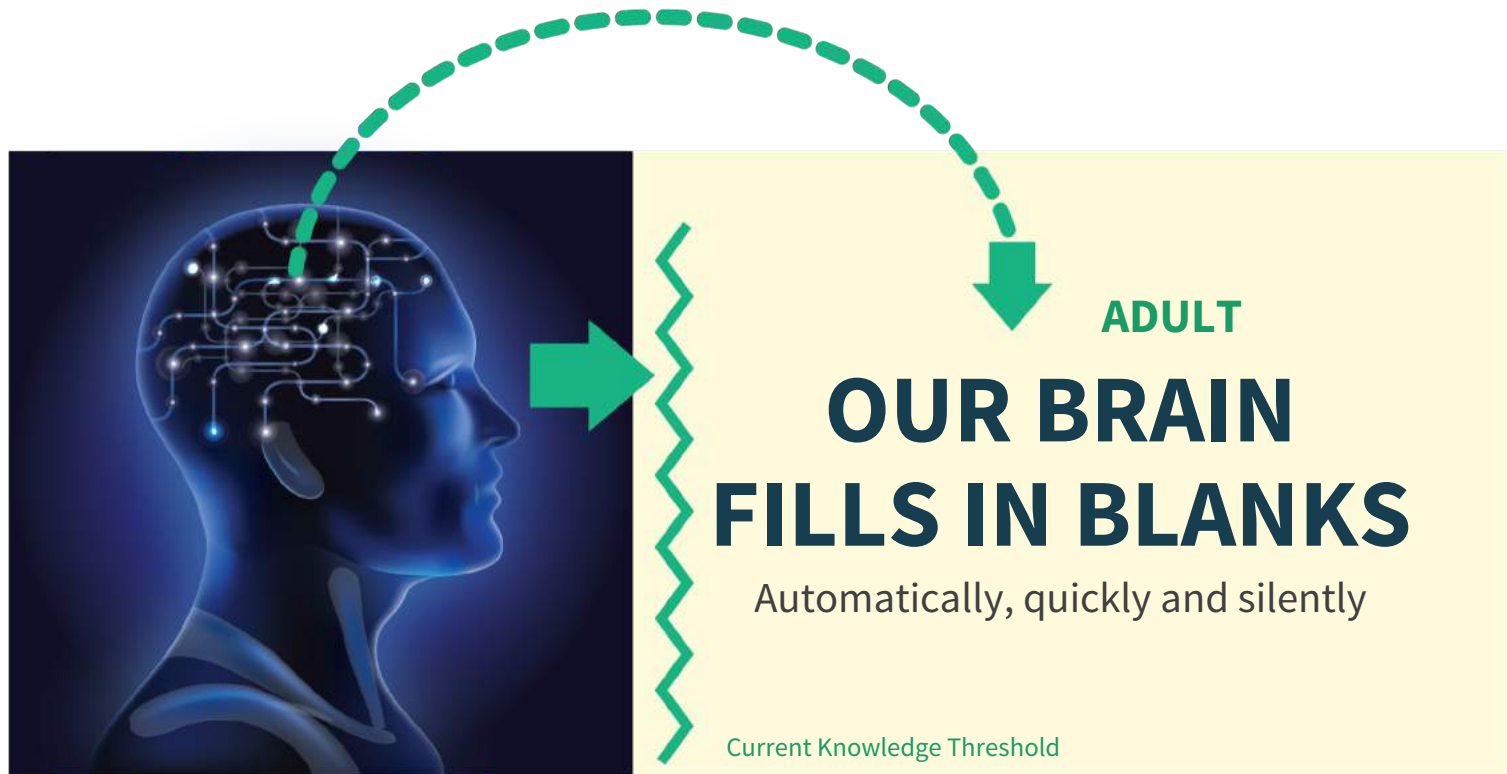
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The Basic Conflict:

Adult brains are optimized
for **performance**

Sometimes
survival
depends on
snap judgments





This is very fast, energy efficient, and works with an abundance of caution.

**Our brains are great at filling
in patterns we recognize**

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS



**Our brains are great at filling
in patterns we recognize**

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Even information that isn't there:

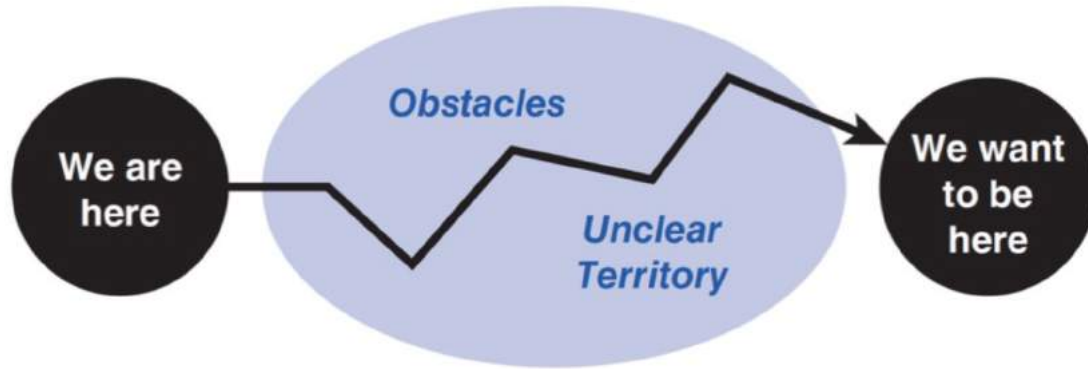
JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Enter Scientific Thinking

Scientific thinking is a process of **deliberately engaging reality** with the **intent of learning**. It's curiosity about a world we will never fully understand, but we want to take the next step to understand a little better.



It's a continuous comparison **between what we predict** will happen next, seeing **what actually happens**, and adjusting our understanding and actions based on **what we learn** from the difference.



Scientific thinking isn't natural... but anyone can learn to think this way by practicing the routines of the Improvement and Coaching Kata.



What's the next number in this series?

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, ?

Answer:

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 2



14

2



14

2

This point is our
Threshold of Knowledge

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, ?

The Improvement Kata

Modeling *The Scientific Thinking Pattern*



A Practice Routine to learn it.

The Improvement Kata. A model for scientific thinking.

Understand the
Direction or
Challenge



Grasp the
Current
Condition



Establish the
Next Target
Condition



Experiment against
Obstacles
Toward the Target Condition



The Improvement Kata. A model for scientific thinking.

Understand the
Direction or
Challenge



What problem am
I trying to solve?

What am I trying to
learn about?

Grasp the
Current
Condition



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Experiment against
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The Improvement Kata. A model for scientific thinking.

Understand the
Direction or
Challenge



What problem am
I trying to solve?

What am I trying to
learn about?

Grasp the
Current
Condition



What do I know?

What do I not know?

What is my threshold
of knowledge?

Establish the
Next Target
Condition



Experiment against
Obstacles
Toward the Target Condition



The Improvement Kata. A model for scientific thinking.

Understand the
Direction or
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What problem am I trying to solve?

What am I trying to learn about?

Grasp the
Current
Condition



What do I know?

What do I not know?

What is my threshold of knowledge?

Establish the
Next Target
Condition



Where am I striving to go next?

What obstacles will I have to overcome to get there?

What will I need to learn?

Experiment against
Obstacles

Toward the Target Condition



The 5 Questions

The Improvement Kata. A model for scientific thinking.

Understand the
Direction or
Challenge



What problem am I trying to solve?

What am I trying to learn about?

Grasp the
Current
Condition



What do I know?

What do I not know?

What is my threshold of knowledge?

Establish the
Next Target
Condition



Where am I striving to go next?

What obstacles will I have to overcome to get there?


What will I need to learn?

Experiment against
Obstacles

Toward the Target Condition



Run experiments against obstacles in order to learn.



While they may learn about the subject, no one develops skills here.

A young boy with dark hair, wearing an orange and brown striped sweater, is seated at a dark wood piano. He is looking intently at the keys with his hands positioned on the keyboard. The background shows a cozy living room with a red sofa, a window with a view of trees at night, and framed pictures on the wall. A blue text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Developing
a skill
requires
deliberate
practice



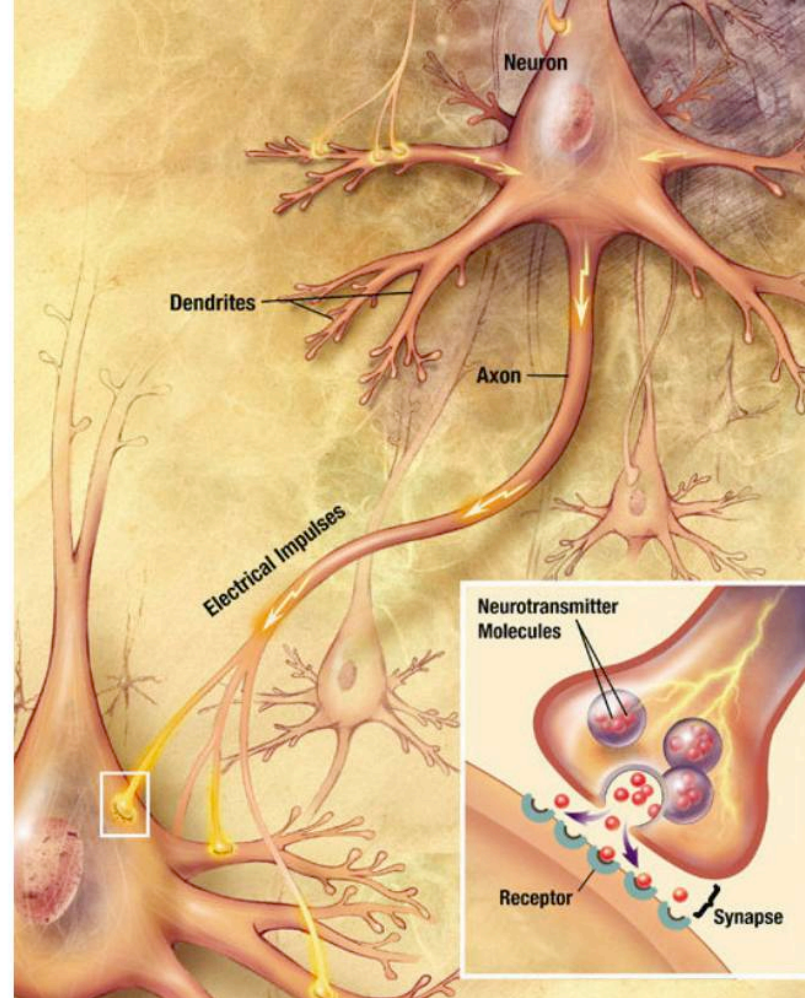
Neurons that fire together wire together

“Habits” are the result
of connections that have
been reinforced over time

Good News:

We can change that wiring if:

We want to.
We work at it.



Neurons that fire together wire together



Search YouTube for Backwards Brain Bicycle – Smarter Every Day

Practice Pattern 2: The Coaching Kata

A routine for learning to coach **the Improvement Kata**

The **coaching kata** gives leaders a standardized approach to develop coaching skill in the course of daily work – developing the improvement skill of those who work for them.



Together, the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata teach and develop
a system of management.

Learning **Any**
New Skill
Requires:

4

Enthusiasm

Growing self-efficacy:
“I’m getting better
at this.”

3

Coaching

Corrective feedback
to ensure the learner
practices the right
patterns.

1

Frequent Practice

A little every day.

2

Structured Routines

Structured routines for
beginners to practice
fundamentals

Photo: U.S. Navy

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Why is this hard to do alone?

Because it is human nature, and all too easy, to end up here:

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Instead of struggling to learn something new, we usually prefer to “practice” what we already know.

The Improvement Corridor = “Sound Scientific Thinking”

Working on:

- The Right Things.
- The Right Way.



Next Target Condition

1 week to 3 months out.
(typical)



12 – 36 months out.
(typical)




“The Ideal”
– strive toward perfection

The Improvement Corridor

= Good practicing.

THE FIVE QUESTIONS

- 1** What is the **Target Condition**?
- 2** What is the **Actual Condition** now?
(Turn Card Over) 
- 3** What **Obstacles** do you think are preventing you from reaching the target condition?
Which **one** are you addressing now?
- 4** What is your **Next Step**?
(Next experiment) What do you expect?
- 5** How quickly can we go and see what we **Have Learned** from taking that step?

Reflect on the Last Step Taken

Because you don't actually know
what the result of a step will be!

*Have the learner state the **obstacle** being worked on*

- 1 What did you plan as your **Last Step**?
- 2 What did you **Expect**?
- 3 What **Actually Happened**?
- 4 What did you **Learn**?

Return to question 3



Coaching questions derived from *Improvement Kata Handbook*
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Let's Practice



Challenge: Sell the house for a profit of \$20,000

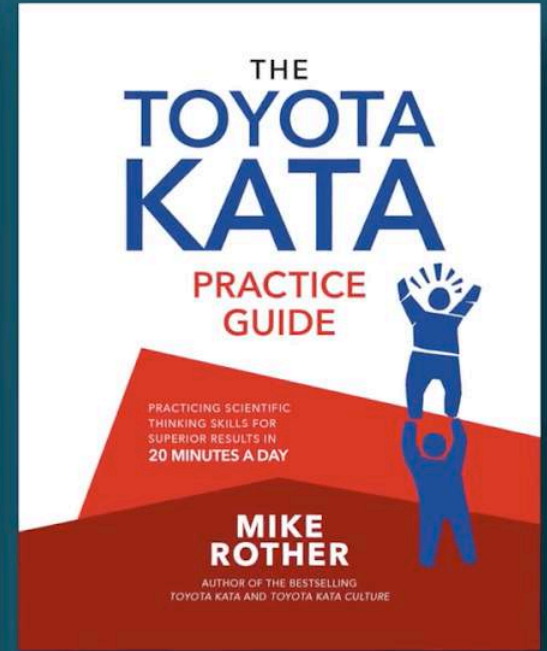
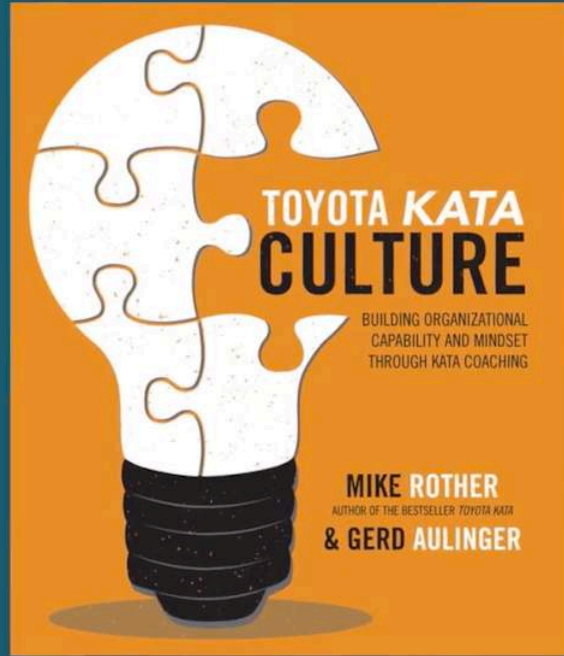
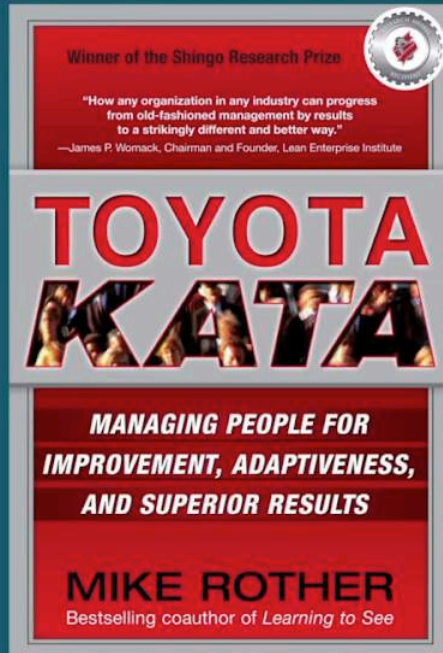
Current Target Condition: Stage the living room

Current Obstacle: Lamp doesn't work

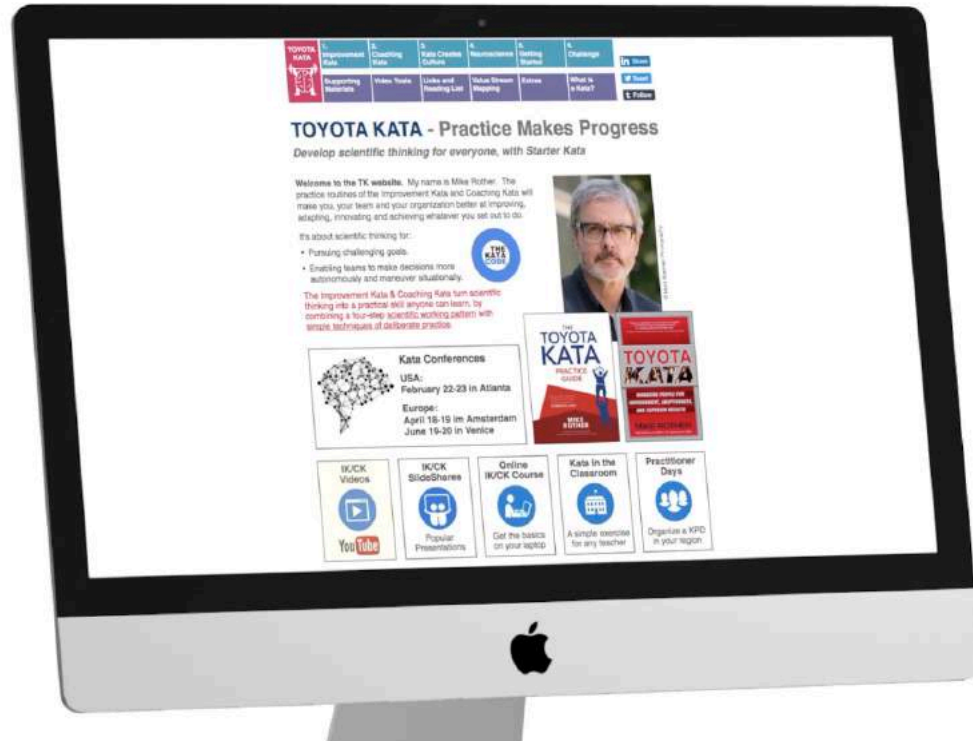
It's not about the lamp... or the dominos.



Toyota Kata Resources



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Please [contact us](#) directly if you have any questions or suggestions for how we can improve the show... especially if you'd like to be a future guest or know of someone that may be interested in coming on the show.

Past Episodes

- GA 201 | [How to Apply Lean to the Airline Industry with David Acklin](#)
- GA 200 | [What We've Learned from 200 Episodes with Ron Pereira and Past Guests](#)
- GA 199 | [How to Understand Your Current Condition with Drew Lecher](#)
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- GA 191 | [The Psychology of Fear and Love in Continuous Improvement vs. Operations with](#)

Latest Podcast

How to Apply Lean to the Airline Industry with David Acklin

GA 201 | How to Apply Lean to the Airline Industry with David Acklin

This week's guest is David Acklin from Hawaiian Airlines. David explained how they improved their interline baggage process, including how they got other airlines involved. An MP3 version of this episode is available for download here. In this episode you'll learn: David's background (2:05) Continuous improvement at Hawaiian Airlines (3:04)

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00:00 / 00:00

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KATACON

The logo for KATACON features the word "KATACON" in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a circular icon containing a white silhouette of a human brain with a barbell resting on top of it, symbolizing the intersection of physical fitness and cognitive function.

Toyota Kata - Practice Makes Progress

Do you know where and how to start making improvements to your organization? Our Kata course will show you where and how to begin solving problems you may be facing.

Toyota Kata Overview	05:23
The Marshmallow Challenge Icebreaker	04:04
Lean and Organizational Culture	12:45
Leaders Are Teachers	07:01
What Learning Looks Like	12:24
What Does a Continuous Improvement Culture Look Like?	04:28
The Improvement Kata: A Model for Scientific Thinking	07:54
How People Learn & Develop New Skills	01:42

Course Resources

- Launch Quiz
- Quiz PDF
- Quiz Answers

- Kata Facilitators Guide
- Kata Story Board Template
- Coaching Kata Cards

1.00 close

Steps of the Improvement Kata



Toyota Kata Overview

In this video Ron Pereira introduces the course with an explanation of what Toyota Kata is, its history, and how it can be used by anyone in any industry to change things for the better. Ron also introduces the course facilitator, Mark Rosenthal, before explaining how the course can be used.

Topic: [Toyota Kata](#)

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ANY
QUESTIONS

