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The Project Reformer's e-Tip of the Week

007: Create A Habit of Self-Directed Improvement

Keith Ray reminds us that an intention and routine of improvement matters more than any specific improvement methods. Too often a bureaucratic intent to adopt a standard approach runs head-on into individuals' and teams' intentions to improve.

This may seem contrary to what we've read about either the Japanese firms' programmatic approaches or western firms' *lean/six sigma black belts*. While training and methodology can contribute to results, getting in a habit of improving seems to make more of a difference.

There are three aspects to creating the improving habit:

1. Establish and re-establish clear connections to the purpose of getting on and staying on an improving path.
2. Provide coherent actions from supervision and company leaders that value and expect the improving habit.
3. Engage with others who share the same intention for learning and support.

Still, this may not be enough. The leading impediment to adopting this or any other change is a *conflicting intention*. (More on this later.) For now, set a good example by getting yourself on an improving path and invite others to join you.

Submitted by C. Keith Ray while reading the book *Lean Software Development* by Mary and Tom Poppendieck.

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