

LS Principles: Must Dos and Must Not Dos

Ten LS principles generate new habits and close the gap between what we say is important (values or principles) and what we do (everyday routines).

LSs come alive through active engagement in practice. In the table below the middle column contains statements about what is valued but not often practiced because conventional structures make it too difficult. We call those statements *Must Dos* to emphasize that they can guide action and behavior. We say the values are *espoused* because in our fieldwork we frequently find a clear gap between what is said and what is done.

In the right column are statements describing common behaviors and practices. We call the statements *Must Not Dos* to emphasize that they stifle inclusion, trust, and innovation. We characterize them as unnoticed or *on autopilot* because they are often unexamined habits, such as the Big 5 conventional practices—so familiar that they are easily overlooked. If they are noticed at all, it is by people who are excluded by the practice. Using LSs makes it relatively easy and practical to stop these unwitting behaviors.

Principle When LSs are part of everyday interactions, it is possible to:	Must Dos Often valued and espoused but not often practiced. LSs make it possible to START or AMPLIFY these practices.	Must NOT Dos Often unnoticed behaviors done "on autopilot." LSs make it possible to STOP or REDUCE these practices.
1. Include and Unleash Everyone	Invite everyone touched by a challenge to share possible solutions or invent new approaches together. Actively reach across levels or barriers, beyond the usual suspects.	Appoint a few to design an "elegant solution" and then tell all others to implement it after the fact. Confront resistance with hours of PowerPoint presentations. Force buy-in. Separate deciders from doers.
2. Practice Deep Respect for People and Local Solutions	Engage people <i>doing the work</i> and familiar with the local context. Trust and unleash their collective expertise and inventiveness to solve complex challenges. Let go of the compulsion to control.	Import <i>best practices</i> , drive <i>buy-in</i> , or assume people need more training. Favor experts and computer systems over local people and know-how.
3. Build Trust As You Go	Cultivate a trusting group climate where speaking the truth is valued and shared ownership is the goal. Sift ideas and make decisions using input from everyone. Practice "nothing about me without me." Be a leader and a follower.	Over-help or over-control the work or activities of others. Praise and pretend to follow the ideas of others. Indirectly, respond to ideas from others with cynicism, ridicule, criticism, or punishment.
4. Learn by Failing Forward	Debrief every step. Make it safe to speak up. Discover positive variation. Include and unleash more people as you innovate. Take small risks quickly, reducing time between iterations.	Focus on doing and deciding. Avoid difficult conversations and gloss over failures. Punish risk-takers when unknowable surprises pop up. Don't start anything without predetermined outcomes.

<p>5. Practice Self-Discovery Within a Group</p>	<p>Engage groups to the maximum degree in discovering solutions on their own. Increase diversity to spur creativity and broaden potential solutions. Enrich peer-to-peer support, deeper reflection, and coaching. Encourage experiments on multiple tracks.</p>	<p>Impose solutions from the top. Let experts "educate" and tell people what to do. Assume that people resist change no matter what. Substitute laminated signs for conversation. Exclude people closest to the work or challenge from innovating.</p>
<p>6. Amplify Freedom AND Responsibility</p>	<p>Specify minimum constraints and let go of over-control. Use the power of invitation. Privilege fast experiments over playing it safe. Track progress rigorously and feedback results to all. Invite people doing the work to create local performance metrics. Celebrate mistakes as sources of progress.</p>	<p>Unleash people without structure such as a clear purpose or minimum specifications. Let rules and procedures stifle initiative. Ignore the value of people understanding how their work affects one another. Keep people doing the work or close to the challenges in the dark about performance data.</p>
<p>7. Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See</p>	<p>Expose what is working well. Focus on what can be accomplished now with the imagination, ambition, and materials at hand. Take the next steps that lead to the edge of creativity and renewal.</p>	<p>Focus on what's wrong. Wait for all the barriers to come down or ideal conditions to emerge. Work on changing <i>the whole system</i> all at once.</p>
<p>8. Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation</p>	<p>Convene conversations about what is keeping people from focusing on the essence of their work. Remove the barriers even when it feels like heresy. Make it easy for people to deal with their fears.</p>	<p>Avoid or delay stopping the behaviors, practices, and policies that are revealed as barriers. Assume obstacles don't matter or can't be removed.</p>
<p>9. Engage in Seriously-Playful Curiosity</p>	<p>Stir things up—with levity, paradoxical questions, and improv—to spark a deep exploration of current practices and latent innovations. Make working together both demanding and inviting.</p>	<p>Keep it simple by deciding in advance what the solutions should be. Control all conversations. Ask only closed yes-or-no questions. Make working together feel like drudgery.</p>
<p>10. Never Start Without Clear Purpose(s)</p>	<p>Dig deep for what is important and meaningful to you and to others. Use 9 Whys routinely. Take time to include everyone in crafting an unambiguous statement of the deepest need for your work.</p>	<p>Maintain ambiguity by using jargon. Substitute a safe short-term goal or means to an end for a bold reason to exist or a deep need. Impose your vision of the future on others.</p>