

## FOREWORD

*Lead with Respect* is the third volume in a remarkable series of books by Michael and Freddy Ballé. In their first volume, *The Gold Mine*, the authors provided an enormous amount of practical guidance about the application of lean tools, inside a story of business transformation. In the second volume, *The Lean Manager*, the authors described a complete system of lean management inside a second story of business transformation.

In this third volume, the authors turn to the topic of lean leadership and demonstrate the essential behaviors of a transformational lean leader. The key behavior is to *lead with respect* by developing the problem-solving skills of everyone at every level of the organization. This begins with Southcape Software CEO Jane Delaney, who transforms herself—with the coaching of Andrew Ward, the European VP of her company’s prime customer—by going to her company’s gemba to see the real issues, challenge the current situation, and teach everyone problem solving so the whole organization can learn. As Andrew says to Jane at the outset, “The problem is you,” and she responds with a journey of personal transformation told inside a third story of business transformation, at Southcape Software.

For readers encountering the Ballés (father Freddy and son Michael) for the first time, I welcome you to a world of struggle and great difficulties but, as always, with an eventual happy ending as the transformed Southcape not only survives but flourishes. For readers who started with *The Gold Mine* or *The Lean Manager*, I’m happy to report that Bob Woods, Phil Jenkinson, and Andrew Ward are alive and well, and still teaching core lean concepts and coaching leader behaviors, transmitted through rapid generations—from Bob’s original teachers from Toyota in Japan to Phil to Andrew and now to Jane

Delaney. This mirrors the cascaded teaching and coaching process many of us in the Lean Community have been involved in—as pupils first and then teachers—for more than 30 years as lean concepts and practices have diffused across the world and through every value-creating activity.

The great thing about the Ballé books is that you can read them as prequels or sequels in any order and still derive the same knowledge and inspiration. Plus they are fun!

Of course, you then need to turn this knowledge into sustainable, standard behaviors, beginning with your own as a leader who develops your people by leading with respect. This skill is only gained through practice and will unavoidably involve many struggles with difficult problems as you join the long march of lean practitioners through the generations. The Ballé books are a great way to get started or to speed up your pace of transformation, personal and organizational. So I wish you the best of luck—in the good company of Andrew and Jane—as you pursue your continuing lean journey.

– Jim Womack  
Barter’s Island, ME  
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