

TOYOTA KATA

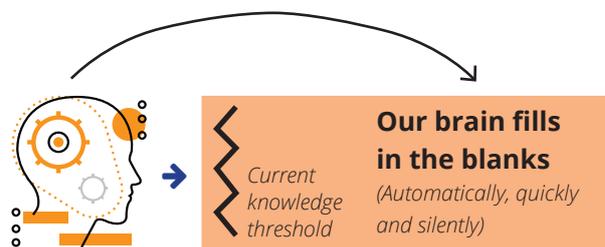
Developing the skills to adapt and thrive in today's dynamic marketplace

The need for change is inevitable these days. Competitors emerge, customers have new needs, and new technologies come along. How must your organisation think and behave in order to continue to be successful amidst unpredictability?

People have a tendency to jump to conclusions, that's our default way and it stood us in great stead for thousands of years. We immediately seek to solve problems because the brain rejects uncertainty.

The unconscious part of our brain takes bits of information and quickly extends to fill in the blanks. We end with a false sense of confidence in what we think.

Costly mistakes then follow.



Source: Toyota Kata Practice Guide, 2018, McGraw-Hill

Toyota Kata patterns help develop scientific thinking skills – the flexibility to try new things with a goal in mind alongside taking into account what's just been learnt.

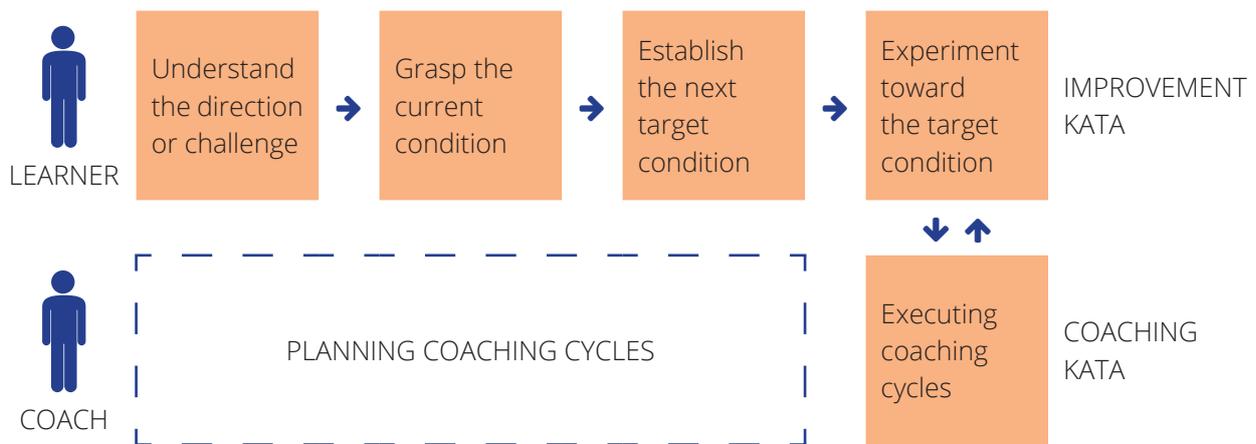
Employees can use these skills to keep improving their workplace. Their activities in their workplace are connected to the strategic direction of the business.

Toyota Kata is about:

- ▶ Developing new habits and allowing people to think differently about obstacles and goals.
- ▶ A way of working and of working together.
- ▶ Using scientific thinking as an ingredient to make teams and organisations more effective and successful.
- ▶ Developing a culture of continuous learning and improvement at all levels through deliberate practice.

Toyota Kata is not a problem solving method, nor is it a way of teaching problem solving. It is a mindset that helps people become more effective in reaching new levels of performance, places they've never been before. The two patterns are small routines that, through deliberate practice, help learners acquire new skills. The starter patterns increase the speed of skill development and form the basis of a common language for genuine continuous improvement. Everyone starts with practicing the same basics.

There are two main patterns within Toyota Kata: the Improvement Kata and the Coaching Kata.



Source: *Toyota Kata Practice Guide, 2018, McGraw-Hill*

The Improvement Kata parallels professional science thus helps the learner develop scientific thinking skills. The learner experiments or iterates towards a goal instead of taking random steps based on the perceived most important issue. It is the experimenting/iterating that permits successful navigation through uncertainty.

The Coaching Kata is a repeating pattern of questions through which the coach can identify if the learner is thinking and acting scientifically. It applies at all levels of the business and is used to develop all levels or leaderships scientific thinking. The coaching pattern provides procedural guidance, not answers, helping the learner to overcome

obstacles, develop confidence and move toward their goal. Many managers have not been effective coaches. The Coaching Kata pattern is a way of improving leadership effectiveness and at the same time developing scientific thinking in the learner.



The Toyota Kata patterns have radically improved the way our managers and supervisors interact with their reports and has helped drive our organisation to be a leader in its' field.

Andrew Francis, Director Infrastructure Parkes Shire Council

