



THE KATA CODE

Changing thinking through practice

We support people in practicing the scientific pattern of the Improvement Kata, to help reshape our thinking and working habits in business, politics, education and daily life. The Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata incorporate simple practice routines that help anyone develop systematic, scientific skills for meeting challenging goals. These habits are acquired through deliberate, coached practice.

The 21st Century is increasingly demanding a way of working that is cognitively complex, interpersonal, iterative and even entrepreneurial. Practicing the Improvement Kata pattern is a way to obtain those skills and mindset, and help us adapt to the world around us. The Improvement Kata doesn't give you solutions, but a thought process for how to approach your own goals and obstacles.

We welcome all Improvement Kata / Coaching Kata upstarts. Together and in competition we create a dynamic that is international, experiential and seeks to help humans everywhere practice more scientific ways of thinking and acting, toward the best we can imagine... and beyond.

Common Ground, but Now with Structured Practice Routines

The four-step Improvement Kata pattern is similar to other models of the human iterative, creative, scientific process, such as *systems thinking, critical thinking, learning organization, design thinking, creative thinking, solution focused practice, preferred futuring, skills of inquiry, evidence-based learning*, and so on.

However, those existing models alone have generated little actual change in Western thinking. What's different in the Kata community is that we also have structured practice routines we call 'Kata.' We have a model of human endeavor - the Improvement Kata - that includes specific foundational routines to be individually practiced and mastered, for each step of the model.

The intended role of these Kata is to help beginner Learners acquire foundational scientific mindset and skills. This involves deliberate practice, like playing musical scales when learning a new instrument. The practice routines of scientific thinking are a foundation upon which any Learner's creativity and initiative can then proliferate.

Getting to Organization-Specific Practice Routines

The practice routines of the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata are a useful starting point for any team or organization that wants to develop and utilize a more scientific approach. Every organization

should ultimately have its own Kata for developing essential skills, to suit its circumstances and culture. But organizations should not develop their own Kata while they are still beginners. A more promising approach is to begin with established practice routines, like those of the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata. Once a critical mass of knowledge and skill is developed then the organization can evolve those routines.

So the goal is not to *implement* the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata. Over time each organization should be engaged in evolving the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata practice routines to suit the characteristics of their products, processes and culture. Beginners start by trying to follow the pattern of the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata exactly. As their proficiency increases and they start to understand the purpose behind the routines, they can start to iteratively develop their own style, as long as it continues to incorporate the common, underlying scientific pattern and purpose.

What remains constant? The "Kata Code" below define rules we think should not change when the time comes to evolve your own style.

Best wishes!

The Kata Code (v1.1)

- 1. Conditions are unpredictable.**
- 2. Enjoy the learning zone.**
- 3. Understand the direction, grasp the current condition, establish a target condition, iterate to the target condition.**
- 4. Beginners practice Kata exactly.**
- 5. Be a coach, have a coach.**