THE MISTAKES THAT MAKE US

Cultivating a Culture of Learning and Innovation

MARK GRABAN

SHINGO INSTITUTE PUBLICATION AWARD

"... shows how to enlist our mistakes as engines of learning, growth, and progress."

Daniel H. Pink, author of #1 New York Times Bestsellers *DRIVE, WHEN,* and *The Power of Regret*

Praise for

THE MISTAKES THAT MAKE US

A full list of endorsements can be found at mistakesbook.com.

"Making mistakes is not a choice. Learning from them is. Whether we admit it or not, mistakes are the raw material of potential learning and the means by which we progress and move forward. Mark Graban's *The Mistakes That Make Us* is a brilliant treatment of this topic that helps us frame mistakes properly, detach them from fear, and see them as expectations, not exceptions. This book's ultimate contribution is helping us realize that creating a culture of productive mistake-making accelerates learning, confidence, and success."

—**Timothy R. Clark, PhD**, author of *The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety*, CEO of LeaderFactor

"At last! A book about errors, flubs, and screwups that pushes beyond platitudes and actually shows how to enlist our mistakes as engines of learning, growth, and progress. Dive into *The Mistakes That Make Us* and discover the secrets to nurturing a psychologically safe environment that encourages the small experiments that lead to big breakthroughs."

—**Daniel H. Pink**, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *DRIVE*, *WHEN*, and *THE POWER OF REGRET*

"Mark's exhibition of errors not only acknowledges a core human experience that is frequently concealed but also fosters a feeling of togetherness among his audience, inspiring us to persevere in their pursuit of education and personal development."

—**Jim McCann**, founder & chairman, 1-800-FLOWERS.COM, INC.

"In business, as in life, everyone makes mistakes. How we view and move on from mistakes can transform them from problems into opportunities for learning and growth. Mark's book delves into the ways we can use errors to help build and foster a culture of understanding and continuous improvement that embraces humanity as an integral part of work."

—**Eric Ries**, author of *The Lean Startup* and *The Startup Way*

"Another useful book from Mark Graban! Creating the conditions to surface and learn from mistakes not only drives continuous improvement and innovation, but also good jobs. *The Mistakes That Make Us* shows us how to get there. I found his lessons useful for business and life."

—**Zeynep Ton**, Professor of the Practice at MIT Sloan, President of Good Jobs Institute, and author of *The Case for Good Jobs: How Great Companies Bring Dignity, Pay & Meaning to Everyone's Work*

"At Menlo Innovations, one of our favorite phrases is 'Make Mistakes Faster!' It's not that we like making mistakes, we just prefer making small mistakes quickly rather than BIG mistakes slowly. The difference comes from creating a culture where we are safe to share our mistakes. Mark Graban teaches all of us how to do this and shares story after real story of the benefits. It would be a BIG mistake to ignore this wisdom!"

—**Richard Sheridan**, CEO & Chief Storyteller, Menlo Innovations, Author, *Joy, Inc.—How We Built a Workplace People Love* and *Chief Joy Officer—How Great Leaders Elevate Human Energy and Eliminate Fear*

"I can't recommend Mark Graban's book enough. Mark's candid storytelling and practical advice make this a must-read for anyone looking to navigate the ups and downs of their own journey. Whether

you're just starting out in your career or a seasoned veteran, the book will inspire you to see failure not as something to be feared but as an essential part of the path to success. This is a book I'll be recommending to colleagues and friends for years to come."

    —**Billy Ray Taylor**, CEO of LinkedXL and author of
      The Winning Link

"Finally, a book that goes beyond noting the importance of growth and improvement and shows how embracing mistakes can lead us there. Ths book provides practical insights and real-world examples on how to foster a psychologically safe environment that encourages experimentation and innovation. The path to continuous improvement is there; learn how to embrace the bumpy road."

    —**Ethan Burris**, **PhD**, Niessa Professor of Management and
      Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, McCombs School
      of Business at the University of Texas at Austin

"The path to success is paved with mistakes. And—as the Japanese proverb 'Fall down seven times, get up eight' represents—what matters is how we get up from the setbacks that knock us off course. We can all relate to—and learn from—the stories and insights in Mark's book, your guide for how to turn your mistakes into a pathway to success."

    —**Katie Anderson**, leadership consultant and author of *Learning*
      to Lead, Leading to Learn

"Dr. Deming told us to drive out fear. Toyota's model is respect for people and continuous improvement. They go hand in hand. Hiding mistakes is the death of continuous improvement. Mark uses stories to delve deeply into the disease and gives us powerful suggestions for creating an environment that breeds trust and high performance."

    —**Jeffrey Liker**, author of *The Toyota Way*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Graban has helped orga-nizations improve for more than twenty-five years, in settings including manufacturing, health-care, and software companies. He previously wrote or co-authored *Lean Hospitals, Healthcare Kaizen, Practicing Lean,* and, most recently, *Measures of Success*: *React Less, Lead Better, Improve More*. Working independently as a professional speaker and consultant, Mark is also a senior advisor to the technology company KaiNexus. He hosts multiple podcasts, including *Lean Blog Interviews* (started in 2006) and *My Favorite Mistake* (2020). Mark earned a BS in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University and both an MS in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA from the MIT Sloan Leaders for Global Operations program. He and his wife, Amy, live wherever her career takes her.

Learn more and contact Mark through his website: MarkGraban.com, or email: Mark@MarkGraban.com

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Also by Mark Graban

*Lean Hospitals: Improving Quality, Patient Safety,
and Employee Engagement (3rd Ed.)*

*Healthcare Kaizen: Engaging Front-Line Staff
in Sustainable Continuous Improvements*

*The Executive Guide to Healthcare Kaizen: Leadership
for a Continuously Learning and Improving Organization*

Practicing Lean: Learning How to Learn How to Get Better . . . Better

Measures of Success: React Less, Lead Better, Improve More

Podcasts by Mark Graban

My Favorite Mistake

Lean Blog Interviews

Lean Whiskey

Lean Blog Audio

KaiNexus Continuous Improvement Podcast

Habitual Excellence, Presented by Value Capture

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INTRODUCTION

"**W**hat's your favorite mistake?"
When I asked 200 successful people that question, I learned that my podcast guests possess an admirable combination of confidence and humility. They have shared stories, reflections, and lessons, including:

- The member of Congress who lost his first primary before learning from his mistake and winning in his second try

- The CEO whose savvy acquisition literally made a name for his company but saddled it with a surprising debt load that might have been a blessing in disguise

- The retired Japanese Toyota executive who wasn't fired for a mistake that messed up the paint on 100 cars, and the American leader who had the same experience decades later in Kentucky

- The aide whose loose lips led to a spicy quote in *USA Today* but who, thankfully, worked for a U.S. Representative who focused on learning over punishment

- The distiller who over-aged 100 barrels of expensive whiskey but worked for a founder who realized mistakes happen when you're innovating

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- The shark whose mistake almost put his company under-water for good . . .

Wait, a shark? That's not a typo. I'll explain it soon.

Why would people admit mistakes like these in a public forum? They understand how reacting kindly to mistakes can lead to growth and progress. They celebrate the progress and growth that results from mistakes when we react to them in constructive ways. My podcast and book are neither a pity party nor a shaming session. They are places to remember that we all make mistakes and to celebrate the learning and vulnerability that set a powerful example for others.

When people start a story with "I'm going to be vulnerable here," we often brace ourselves to hear something personal, if not embarrassing. Admitting a workplace mistake feels vulnerable because it exposes us to the risk of professional harm or loss—which could include being marginalized, demoted, or fired.

Guests on *My Favorite Mistake* admit and own their mistakes instead of blaming others for any misfortune. And they felt safe enough to do so. Sadly, many people feel pressured to protect themselves by keeping quiet about mistakes.

Speaking up isn't a matter of character or courage—it's driven by culture. People feel safe to share when their leaders and colleagues treat them with respect. Instead of asking people to be brave, leaders must create conditions where people can feel safe.

The most powerful question one can ask after a mistake is, "What did we learn?" People who know that their workplace

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reacts constructively to mistakes can reflect, learn, and improve—preventing mistakes from being repeated, learning how to prevent mistakes that haven't happened yet, and proactively improving every aspect of our work to drive better results.

POSITIVELY LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Many say we learn the most from our mistakes and failures, including a certain beloved green character from a famous series of sci-fi galactic-adventure films, who said, "The greatest teacher, failure is." A fellow author warned me against possibly running afoul of a litigious entertainment company by mentioning the series' name. It does rhyme with, um, *Car Chores*.

Discussing mistakes might seem negative, but doing so helps us grow, leading to greater success. I'm positive about that. Mistakes can be turned into something positive—if we react to them the right way (being kind) and make the right adjustments (being constructive).

OFTEN, IT'S THE MISTAKES THAT MAKE US WHO WE ARE

The Mistakes That Make Us—that's a good title for a book. But I could be wrong. Have I made a mistake? Only time will tell.

- The mistakes that make us learn are ones to cherish.

- The mistakes that make us upset are opportunities to reflect on being more kind.

- The mistakes that make us examine our actions then help us improve.

- The mistakes that make us frustrated, because we've made them before, can inspire us to finally take action and improve.

- The mistakes that make us notice a small problem early on help us avoid big mistakes and possibly catastrophic failures.

- The mistakes that make us embarrassed are, hopefully, made in a workplace that chooses kindness and learning instead of blame and punishment.

- The mistakes that make us laugh brighten our day.

We can be thankful for mistakes.

HOW IT STARTED

How did this book come to be? In May 2020, a public-relations person sent an email that said, "I'm writing to introduce one of the original 'sharks' on the hit TV show *Shark Tank*, the creator of the infomercial, and pioneer of the "As Seen on TV" industry, Kevin Harrington, and his mentee, serial entrepreneur Mark Timm.

The email concluded, "I hope you'll consider an interview with Kevin and Mark on your show." Wow! Yes! I wanted to. But Kevin and Mark, and their book about mentoring, didn't tightly fit the theme of the podcast I have hosted since 2006 called *Lean Blog Interviews*.

I've been a student of "Lean Management," based on the famed Toyota Production System, applying those methods and mindsets

in settings including manufacturing, healthcare, and software organizations. Toyota has long cultivated a culture of preventing mistakes and learning from them. You'll read stories in the book from Toyota people who have kept that culture alive and growing. Toyota's not perfect, but they offer us much to love and learn.

In one of my earlier books, *Practicing Lean*, fifteen authors and I shared mistakes we made early in our careers. I also wanted to change my habit of writing occasional snarky blog posts that criticized mistake-makers, implying they should have known better. As book contributors, we aimed to reassure others (and remind ourselves) that we all make mistakes when learning and doing new things. I like to think I've mended my ways. I could be wrong.

FINDING A WAY TO SAY "YES"

Thankfully, a voice in my head said, "Find a way to say *Yes*." So, I asked the PR professionals what they thought about possible themes and titles for a new business podcast. These included "My Favorite Mistake," where I proposed that guests tell a story about a mistake that turned out to be a great learning opportunity, one they wouldn't have expected at the time.

Proposing this wasn't risky. If I didn't try, I would likely regret that more. I managed to turn a potentially lost opportunity into a big one—and was delighted when Kevin and Mark said they were happy to talk about mistakes! The podcast was born!

But one episode does not a podcast make. I assumed I could find other successful people willing to open up publicly to some random guy and his podcast listeners. I assumed guests would have compelling stories to tell. If guests wanted to share only

humble-brag mistakes like "I've worked too hard and been too successful," I would have chosen to scrub the podcast's launch.

Thankfully, my assumptions turned out to be true. I found guests willing not only to share vulnerable stories but also to reveal what they learned and how they adjusted—and how the pain caused by their mistake subsided with reflection over time. That allowed us to talk about making something positive out of our mistakes—and how others have done the same.

I've released more than 200 episodes to date, with more to come. I haven't tired of asking about favorite mistakes or hearing how people answer.

WHAT MAKES A MISTAKE A FAVORITE?

What's a mistake? We'll discuss that in Chapter One. What makes somebody decide that a mistake is a favorite? My question to guests is intentionally open-ended, and the answer is completely subjective. A favorite mistake is not necessarily the same as one's "biggest." Asking about people's *worst* mistakes might trigger regret and sadness.

Through these conversations, I better understood what "favorite mistake" means to a wide range of people. A favorite might be one or more of the following:

- A mistake that's important enough to stick with you

- A mistake that created a fortuitous opportunity or new direction

- A mistake we hope others can avoid

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- A mistake that led to learning, including the actions required to prevent repeating the mistake

WHO PLANTED THE SEED FOR THIS BOOK?

After we finished recording their episode, one of my first guests asked me, "Did you start this podcast because you're writing a book about mistakes?" My answer was a sincere "no." I was motivated at that point by curiosity, learning, and the opportunity to meet some fantastic people.

After about a hundred episodes, as patterns emerged, I realized these interviews served as "field research." These seeds started germinating as I considered writing a book about mistakes, but I don't remember which guest did the planting! Back then, it didn't seem important to remember exactly who asked. Please let me know if you're reading this and remember asking me the question. I'm very grateful, whoever you are.

CULTIVATING THE CULTURE—WHAT'S AHEAD

In this book, you'll read about companies cultivating a culture of learning from mistakes, including global manufacturers like Toyota, software companies like KaiNexus, and, perhaps surprisingly, two small whiskey distillers. The ability to learn from mistakes isn't a technology only the largest companies can afford. It's something anybody can cultivate.

After a lot of consideration and debate, I chose the word "cultivating" to start the book's subtitle. That word was a gift from my old friend Don Coon, a professional artist who created the book's

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cover. I use the word throughout the book instead of alternatives like "building" or "creating." To me, "building a culture" sounds too mechanical. "Creating" one sounds like a one-time event.

I don't consider myself as having a green thumb, but we can draw parallels between a garden and our culture. The word "culture" has roots in Latin, *cultus* ("care") and French, *colere* ("to till the ground").

First, leaders need to declare the intent to start cultivating the culture. As we launch a startup, we can decide what to plant and where. Or sometimes, we discover that a healthy culture has sprouted up as a result of the way people act, so we then declare our intent to consciously keep the culture growing and thriving.

The second step is analyzing and preparing the soil that provides the foundation for our culture. What figurative rocks and weeds do we need to clear? Are any leaders making the soil too acidic for anything to grow? Are they willing and able to change, or do we need to change out certain leaders to ensure that our garden will survive?

Thirdly, leaders plant the seeds for a culture of learning from mistakes by modeling behaviors like admitting mistakes to themselves and then to others. As employees start feeling safe enough to follow their lead, others will plant more seeds by admitting their mistakes.

Finally, a garden requires continued food, water, fertilizer, and sunlight. Our culture is nurtured by what we do and how we act. Food and water are represented by leaders reacting kindly and constructively to mistakes. Effective problem-solving and process improvement are the fertilizer that accelerates growth. The sunlight of transparency means sharing of mistakes, lessons learned, and improvements—because it feels safe to do so.

Introduction

The first part of the book focuses on actions that start on an individual level: thinking positively about mistakes (Chapter One), admitting mistakes (Chapter Two), and being kind to yourself and others (Chapter Three). Next, we look at methods for proactively preventing mistakes (Chapter Four) while cultivating higher psychological safety levels required for employees to feel safe in speaking up (Chapter Five). The final part of the book discusses the need for leaders to react constructively to mistakes, shifting from punishment to improvement (Chapter Six), the opportunity to iterate our way to success (Chapter Seven), and some concluding examples and thoughts about starting or continuing our cultivation efforts (Chapter Eight).

Thanks for reading. I hope you don't decide that's a mistake.

Disclosures:

I have formal business relationships with some organizations that I write about in this book:

- **KaiNexus**: Since 2011, I have been a contractor, part-time employee, and investor, owning a small equity stake in the company today.

- **Value Capture**: I previously worked for them as a part-time subcontractor (as a client advisor and in a marketing role) from 2017 through 2023.

- **LeaderFactor**: They trained and certified me in their psychological-safety education, assessment, and improvement methodologies that I license for use with organizations.

CHAPTER ONE

THINK POSITIVELY

"Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes."

—OSCAR WILDE

Irish poet and playwright (1854–1900)

We all make mistakes—even sharks.

It can be hard to admit our mistakes. Sharks don't feel that burden.

But what if the shark is Kevin Harrington, who appeared on the first season of the hit TV show *Shark Tank*? He was my first guest on the *My Favorite Mistake* podcast.[1] Just as great white sharks need continual movement to breathe and live, entrepreneurs like Kevin need a continuous flow of cash to stay alive.

A serial entrepreneur, Kevin is the inventor of the modern television "As Seen on TV" infomercial, selling famous products like the George Foreman Grill and Jack LaLanne Juicers. He admits: "30 years ago, I made a big mistake. [I've] made plenty since then."

Kevin's company almost went under because of *his* mistake, one he was willing to admit and discuss. Some might think the Kevin Harringtons of the business world are successful because they *avoid* making mistakes. They'd be wrong. Successful people (and organizations) are better at *learning* from mistakes, and they avoid repeating them.

Thirty years ago, Kevin's business brought in $100 million a year in revenue from a dozen products. About $2 million in sales were deposited in the bank account each Monday, driven mainly by the weekend's sales.

One week started with a shock as he arrived to find his extremely distraught chief financial officer in Kevin's office. The CFO informed Kevin that the bank had held back that week's revenue. "That $2 million represented my life," said Kevin. This situation jeopardized his ability to meet payroll and buy airtime for his infomercials. He feared this would quickly make them "As Formerly Seen on TV."

Why did the bank withhold the funds? One of Kevin's twelve infomercial products had an extremely high defect rate of 30%, which led to a flood of customer complaints and refunds. The bank held the $2 million to protect itself from the risk of potentially paying additional refunds.

At the time, Kevin's company ran the credit-card payments for all its products through a single credit-card processing account. He didn't realize this was risky until it became a huge concern. The problematic product represented just 3% of his sales, yet it put the whole company at risk.

He worked with the bank to release 80% of those funds, relieving the cash-flow pressure in the short term. Once the crisis

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passed, Kevin wondered if this would happen again. Would the bank be as cooperative the next time? "It's something we never wanted to go through again," he recalled.

They could stop selling the product until they could eliminate quality problems at the factory or find a new supplier. But what would they do if they had a quality problem with another product in the future? Kevin took actions to address the systemic cash-flow risk, explaining, "We set up separate accounts for every product. Separate businesses, separate profit-and-loss statements. And we ran our business completely in these little silos," which isolated the risk created by a single defective product. If complaints spiked for one product, the remaining cash flow would continue through separate accounts.

Kevin calls this his "favorite mistake" because he learned, adjusted, and prevented that mistake from happening again, describing this experience as "an amazing learning curve." He survived and grew the business to more than $500 million in annual revenue before selling the company and moving on to the new world of online advertising and sales.

Kevin also emphasizes the need to iterate when they tried launching new products, realizing "not everything was going to be a hit." The company usually tried up to three times before declaring a product dead, aiming to "fail cheap" by putting as little money as possible into the failures. Small tests of change and the benefits of iterating your way to success are discussed in Chapter Seven.

When people like Kevin publicly admit mistakes, their story could help somebody else avoid his mistake, but few of us will ever face that exact situation. However, his attitude about admitting and learning from mistakes can help us all. Creating

a public persona of perfection might be tempting, but what can other people learn from that? To be perfect? To try harder to be perfect? Nah, that's not going to happen. It's not that simple.

We're more likely to learn, improve, and grow when we admit our mistakes, even if just to ourselves. Some people might succeed despite never admitting a mistake, but it's unlikely they've avoided making them. I'm positive I make mistakes every day. But I work to turn those mistakes into something positive, helping me grow, learn, and improve.

WHAT ARE MISTAKES?

Mistakes are actions or judgments that turn out to be misguided or wrong. We believe we are making the right decision at the time but eventually discover it was wrong, whether seconds or years later. The word "mistake" is a noun. Mistakes exist, whether we recognize and admit them or not. After discovering a mistake, our choices determine if we turn it into something positive (learning and improving) or make things worse (dooming ourselves to repeating them).

Mistakes arise from decisions and actions that produce outcomes that don't match our intended results. Or we decided to maintain the status quo when we should have made a change— perhaps any change. We call this an "inaction mistake."

We use the term "planning mistakes" for decisions and actions that were intentional and end up being wrong. An example was when I emailed a new colleague and typed "Kayleigh" as part of the email address, an intentional spelling choice. I quickly discovered my mistake when the email bounced back because

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the address did not exist. I didn't know how to spell her name correctly and made a bad assumption.

The term "execution mistakes" applies when our intended actions *would* have been correct, but we failed to follow our plan for some reason. In reply to a later email from this new employee, my fingers still managed to type "Hi, Kayleigh," even though I had already learned that her name was spelled "Kaleigh." I slipped up. We sometimes call this "human error." I quickly learned and created the habit of using her spelling, although I might make that mistake again. Sorry, Kaleigh.

We can also define a mistake as "an error in action, calculation, opinion, or judgment caused by poor reasoning, carelessness, insufficient knowledge, assumptions, etc." That definition also includes common causes of mistakes.

When we lack knowledge, we tend to fill that gap with assumptions that could be incorrect—leading to mistakes. Ideally, we could delay our decision until we get better information. If the information doesn't exist, we might need to move forward without realizing that we should test and evaluate our assumptions, ready to be proven wrong. Stubbornly clinging to assumptions can cause many mistakes. When an assumption turns out to be untrue, we must detect it early to adjust accordingly—celebrating what we learned instead of beating ourselves up (and hopefully others will react kindly). Mistakes caused by what seems like "carelessness" are usually more complicated than that. It's not that people don't *care*—even the *most* careful of us get tripped up by a badly designed process. Many types of human error can be prevented by various mistake-proofing techniques, as we'll learn about in Chapter Four.

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REPLACE PUNISHMENT WITH IMPROVEMENT

Leaders and organizations have a choice: cultivate a culture of fear and punishment or a culture of learning and innovation. That choice significantly affects happiness and performance at all levels within the organization. We're better off choosing to be positive about mistakes. We don't have to love that mistakes happen. But they're a fact. Taking the positive post-mistake path leads to better outcomes over time, even if it seems like the road less traveled. More than 200 podcast guests have made that clear.

A culture of fear and punishment drives mistakes underground. An organization with a culture of fear cannot learn from mistakes, because people don't feel safe admitting them. People who *do* admit mistakes to their manager aren't more virtuous or courageous; they likely are in circumstances where they are able to feel safe doing so. Instead of telling people to be brave, leaders must help people feel safer.

Those who fail to learn from mistakes are doomed to repeat them.

A culture of learning from mistakes is kind and constructive. It's more effective. It allows people to take an active role in preventing mistakes from being repeated. In doing so, they learn how to reduce the number made over time. They feel safer and more capable of driving improvement and innovation.

Most organizations today are closer to a culture of fear and punishment than a culture of learning—it's been the corporate-culture default for a long time. Choosing to be positive and constructive about mistakes can be a differentiating competitive

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advantage. It will help you attract and retain top talent, and more effectively serve customers. More learning leads to more innovation, growth, and better long-term business performance.

Punishment is a hard habit to break. But we must. Lucian Leape, MD, one of the leaders of the modern patient-safety movement, reinforced this notion in testimony to Congress, making a statement that applies to most workplaces: "The single greatest impediment to error prevention in the medical industry is that we punish people for making mistakes."

Donald Berwick, MD, MPP, is president emeritus and senior fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and a former Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services administrator. Berwick has long championed a positive view of problems. In a 1989 *New England Journal of Medicine* editorial, he cited an epigram: "Every defect is a treasure," adding, "In the discovery of imperfection lies the chance for processes to improve."[2]

Berwick said organizations could not eliminate quality problems by blaming people and removing so-called "bad apples," a lesson he learned from the best manufacturers, including Toyota. Most problems and mistakes have systemic causes, and we can discover that by asking, "How could that occur?" instead of "Whose fault is that?" The existence of a mistake does not mean that somebody messed up. Blame the process, not the people.

Many healthcare organizations use surveys, including one from Press Ganey, to ask staff members how much they agree with the following statement: "I can report patient-safety mistakes without fear of punishment."[3] In any workplace, everybody should have the ability to report mistakes of any kind without fear of punishment.

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The next statement in the Press Ganey survey emphasizes the need to combine a nonpunitive approach with effective problem-solving: "In my work unit/department, we discuss ways to prevent errors from happening again." Talking must lead to action as we test and evaluate the effectiveness of our prevention efforts.

Companies in a wide range of industries choose to think positively about mistakes. It might seem easier when the consequences aren't a matter of life or death. For example, Kevin Goldsmith, chief technology officer at DistroKid, the world's largest digital-music distributor, says: "Figuring out how to fail effectively is a superpower at organizations, versus others that . . . are still punishing failure. It really destroys all innovation."[4]

A culture of learning from mistakes brings many benefits, including higher employee engagement, lower turnover, more improvement, and greater innovation. It's about better results—as individuals, teams, and organizations.

FAIL OFTEN—OR LEARN TO SUCCEED?

In recent years, entrepreneurs have been increasingly keen to talk about failures. People in Silicon Valley and other innovation centers organize "failure nights," sometimes called "F-Up Nights" (more often by the vulgar version of that phrase). Others share "failure resumes" online.

The word "failure" is sometimes used interchangeably with the word "mistake." The words are related but different. Mistakes *might lead* to failures, but failures aren't always caused by a mistake.

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END OF PREVIEW

Thanks for your interest in the preview of my book!

To read the rest of Chapter 1 (and the rest of the book), learn more about buying the book here:

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MY FAVORITE MISTAKE PODCAST GUESTS IN THE BOOK

The web page for each referenced episode can be found at MarkGraban.com/Mistake000, with the episode number replacing 000 in the URL. The exception is Greg Cote's episode, which can be found at markgraban.com/LAF.

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