Safety: Playing for “Keeps” – A Reflection of Yesterdays

Air Charter Safety Foundation
March 7-8, 2017
~Al Gorthy
Safety
Human Error
Effort
Excellence
Can’t slay it
Can’t stop it
Can’t escape it
Never gives up
It’s real
Casualties of Error

• Victims (fatalities)
• Traumatized (real)
• Invincible (abstract)
‘Safety’

‘The condition of being protected from danger, RISK, or injury.’
Risk is real. It’s neither abstract nor arbitrary.

Tucson, AZ
January 23, 2017 – 2 Fatalities
There is no pilot/aircraft system, while in motion, that can be absolutely free from risk.
Being “Safe” is not simple

Vague, Nebulous, Abstract
It can’t defend itself.

It’s not a banner on a wall.

Nor a ‘safety symposium’.

It’s not a catchy slogan.
“Safety is a dynamic non-event.”

~James Reason

Never obtained, but always pursued!
“To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary.

To one without faith, no explanation is possible.”

~Saint Thomas Aquinas
It’s rarely a lack of exposure to information, but rather:

Belief (faith)
Acceptance
Execution
Analysis
Leading Causes of Death (Males)

- Smoking
- Obesity
- Diabetes
Risk-
‘Real’
Traumatized

Risk-
‘Abstract’
Invincible
‘Safety’ is hamstrung by history, tradition, political correctness, financial and social pressures.

- Reactive
- Hostage to convenience
- Reluctant to hold to account
- Hesitant to take responsibility
Crippled by the illusion of comfort and captive to indecision.
An organization’s safety culture is ‘healthy’ when the collective and cooperative mindfulness of all individuals establish overriding priorities for safety against other competing concerns.
What’s competing for ‘safety’ in your organization?

Does ‘compliance’ receive the attention warranted by its significance?
At what point are the red flags of non-compliance so profound that they cannot be ignored?

We have the data
#1 Causal Factor
Runway Incursion

Distractions
#1 Causal Factor
Landing Excursion

Go Around –
Not Conducted
from unstable app
95% of unstabilized approaches are continued to landing.
Most hazardous outcomes

- Landing Long
- Landing Fast
- Improper Braking
A Cessna Citation CJ4 experienced a runway excursion on landing. An eyewitness reported that the aircraft travelled 1300 ft. past the end of the 5000 ft runway. The wings were torn off and the fuselage came to rest inverted. The pilot survived the accident with serious injuries.
Ignoring the information does not change the information.
Beachheads of indifference

We deserve what we

• Ignore
• Tolerate
There is a natural human propensity for ignorance and indifference to compliance.

Effort
The Uncomfortable Truth

• technically competent
• underperforming
• non-compliance
• don’t understand risks
June 10, 1990 – British Airways Flight 5390
Risk Real or Abstract?
‘Safety’ requires internal organizational enforcement.

• Coach up

• Coach out
‘Safety’ needs leadership!
Safety needs a ‘Doer’

If we sit back and wait for ‘it’ to happen, ‘it’ will!
Expectations for ‘safety’ must be high...

they’ll stay there!
Hostile Environment

• No Normal

• No Routine
We’re Professionally Blind

• Can’t hear

• Can’t see

• Can’t suspect
USS Constellation - March 1979
• Highly Reliable

• ‘Safe’

• Efficient
Accidents *were expected*; focus on failure

Operations complex, *risks real*

*Vigilance* for quality and degradation

*Embedded safety culture*

*High expectation for ‘safety’*

*Standardization*, order and predictability

*Ownership* with freedom
We had responsibilities.

Held to account.
Arabian Sea - March 1979
With ‘change’ comes both danger and opportunity.
A Predictable Surprise
Risk Assessment?

SOP was changed!
"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards."

-Steve Jobs
Predictability - “It’s not how things will go, but how they can go.”

~Raheel Farooq
What does the stereotypical mistake maker look like?

History is littered...
June 2, 2016

Smyrna, TN

Colorado Springs, CO
Human error strikes on its own terms
Take Heed

• Opportunist
• Credible Threat
• Doesn’t Care
• Doesn’t Discriminate
• Not Fair
A Reflection
'Effort'

'A vigorous or determined attempt.'
10 THINGS THAT REQUIRE ZERO TALENT

1. BEING ON TIME
2. WORK ETHIC
3. EFFORT
4. BODY LANGUAGE
5. ENERGY
6. ATTITUDE
7. PASSION
8. BEING COACHABLE
9. DOING EXTRA
10. BEING PREPARED
Talent – Gift, aptitude, skill, knack

Effort – Vigorous, determined attempt
Half Time – ATL 28, NE 3
End of Regulation – ATL 28, NE 28
Final/OT – ATL 28, NE 34
NE coach Bill Belichick on Super Bowl win: “Tonight is really about what our team accomplished. They deserve to be champions. They earned it tonight.”
Monday, February 13, 2017
Kansas - #3
West Virginia - #9
2:58 - WV 64, KU 50
End of regulation - WV 71, KU 71
Final/OT – WV 80, KU 84
Kansas coach Bill Self on beating West Virginia: ‘I still don't know how we did it’.
Talent

Effort
“Hard work wins. You can’t control the outcome, but you are 100% in control of the **EFFORT** you put in. Don’t blame others, but ask yourself what could I have done to change the outcome?”

~Larry Elder
We’re not playing a game.

We’re not playing for a trophy.
We’re playing for keeps!

Losing is not an option.
What ‘effort’ is expected?
“There is a magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire.

Just as a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, so too can a small but precisely targeted push cause a fashion trend, the popularity of a new product, or a drop in the crime rate.”
But, so too can intentional non-compliance result in a *habit* that crosses the Red Line.
The first successful step across the ‘red line’ leads to an **ABUSIVE DRIFT** of habits.
If we condone or disregard undesirable behavior, we’ll get undesirable behavior.
This ‘abusive drift’ is a stealthy invasion that will cleverly and quickly undermine a safety culture. It often goes unnoticed.
Voluntary neglect or intentional non-compliance creates a MONSTER...
The ‘Unresolved Discrepancy’
Saturday, December 13, 1975
El Centro, CA
TA-4J ‘Skyhawk’
“I can’t eject”
Canopy/Ejection Seat Mis-rig

Ejection seat firing handles

Critical inspection item

Canopy jettison initiator

Seat Handles

Canopy
The Whys?

• That day, that time, that flight
• That aircrew
• That aircraft, engine, oil bearing, seat
• The explosion
• That altitude, that position
• The mechanic initial misrig
• The QA oversight
• The pilot(s) oversight
• Dots were all connected – in full view
• 42 years ago
Aspen, CO
Jan 6, 2014
1 Fatality
“Of 176 previous takeoffs, the pilots only ran a complete flight check two times, a data recorder showed.”
Medellin, Columbia
Nov 28, 2016
71 Fatalities
Chattanooga, TN
Nov 21, 2016

6 children killed
‘Ghost Ship’
Oakland, CA
Dec 2, 2016
36 Fatilities
Victim of Belton trench collapse was single father

BY RUSS PULLEY
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The man who died when a trench collapsed on him in Belton on Thursday was identified as Donald “D.J.” Meyer of Oak Grove.

Meyer, who was 33, was the sole parent of an 8-year-old boy, Ashten, according to a GoFundMe account set up for the boy.

Donald “D.J.” Meyer of Oak Grove was a single dad raising his 8-year-old son, Ashten.

tools to dig their way to the body, Larkey said.

“When I heard it was 12 feet deep, I knew from previous experience it was a body recovery,” Larkey said.

Larkey said that Belton police and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration have been investigating the accident. The Jackson County Medical Examiner’s Office will determine the cause of death under a service agreement with Cass County, Larkey said. A spokesman for the medical examiner had not returned a call for that information Friday afternoon.
Fort Lauderdale, FL
January 6, 2017

“Accused Fort Lauderdale airport shooter twice had guns confiscated.”
At what point are the red flags of non-compliance so profound that they cannot be ignored?
The ‘Broken Window’ Theory

It is argued that crime is the result of disorder. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge.
Take Ownership

- 100% - RESPONSIBLE
- 100% - ACCOUNTABLE
- 0% - BLAME
It’s easy to break windows.

It takes ‘effort’ to fix them.
What do your clients expect?
‘Excellence’

‘The quality of being outstanding or extremely good.’
"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

~Michael Jordan
Break the Norms

Exceed the Minimums
Achieve the Unthinkable – Focus on what needs to be accomplished today, tomorrow and the next day to defy the odds and ultimately reach the GOAL.

Confront the Brutal Facts – Maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail.

The 20 Mile March – Establish performance marks to hit with great consistency each day.

The Flywheel – Achieving your goal by relentlessly pushing a giant, heavy flywheel, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond.
1. Achieve the unthinkable (belief)
2. Confront the brutal facts (acceptance)
3. The 20 mile march (effort)
4. The flywheel (excellence)
Not abstract, but real.
Vigilance for quality.
Vigilance for degradation.
### Performance

**BLACK ACES "GREENIE" BOARD**

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- **Excellent**: Green
- **Average**: Yellow
- **Poor**: Red
- **Awful**: Orange
- **Dangerous**: Black
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Black Aces "Greenie" Board

Tipping Point

"Flywheel Effect"
Greatness requires **EFFORT**
We don’t get to pick and choose the time or date when Excellence is required.
In our business, if we don't have time to do it right, we may not have the time to do it over.
It’s Time

- To stop being *uncritically* satisfied
- Eliminate perpetual mediocrity
- To raise the ceiling of personal and organizational expectations
It's Time to Find The Keys

• Untapped potential
• Break the norms
• Exceed the minimums
• Normalize effort & excellence
It’s Time

to stop tiptoeing and LEAD

- Disciplined people
- Disciplined thought
- Disciplined action
It’s Time

• Be responsible

• Be accountable

• Be compliant
It’s Time

To stop pretending
• Actions
• Inactions
• Choices
• Decisions
• Inattention
• Distractions
• Interference
• Non-compliance
• Lack of Effort
Latent threats exist.

They’re present.
They’re in full view.
But we’re not seeing.
Human error is closer then we think

It’s time to stop pretending.
It’s Time
Deep dive
Bottom up
Clear eyed
Not Expected To Be Perfect...
Effort & Excellence
Takeaways

1. Believe – it’s real
2. Fix the broken windows
3. Take ownership
4. Keep pushin’
Thank You