



**covenant  
care**

## Somebody Call the Risk Manager

How to turn every unexpected event into an opportunity to shine

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## Objectives

- Discuss how to effectively manage human behaviors when things go wrong.
- Articulate how to overcome normal biases in order to conduct a fair investigation.
- Explain how the risk manager can perpetuate a culture of safety with every unexpected event.



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## Understanding Errors



Credit: The Pharmaceutical Journal (June, 2016).

*“The more one analyzes people, the more all reasons for analysis disappears. Sooner or later, one comes to that dreadful universal thing called human nature.”*

— Oscar Wilde

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## 3 Types of Human Behavior



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# Human Error

Behavior	Examples	Mitigation	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distinguishing feature of pure human error is that it is an unintentional action rather than a choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turning on the wrong stove burner</li> <li>Leaving your house to drive to the store but inadvertently driving towards your office</li> <li>Running a stop sign you did not see</li> <li>Leaving the house and forgetting to unplug the iron</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create processes and procedures that safeguard how actions are performed</li> <li>Use repetitive training to help the safe process become an automatic response</li> <li>Design a process that makes the error difficult or impossible to commit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An unintentional mistake requires understanding</li> <li>If the outcome is negative, the person may need consolation</li> </ul>

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# At-Risk Behavior

Behavior	Examples	Mitigation	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual is making a choice, but it is because they do not recognize the risk, or they believe the risk is justified.</li> <li>“Normalized deviance” is an example of this type of behavior where we rationalize not following the rule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Going 5 miles over the speed limit because you are late</li> <li>Going over the speed limit because there’s no traffic and it seems too slow a speed for that area of road</li> <li>Skipping or rushing the surgical “time out” because you are behind schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove any incentives for unhealthy deviations</li> <li>Create incentives for doing the right thing</li> <li>Establish <u>clear</u> lines of what constitutes risky behavior (think safety protocols)</li> <li>Determine what rules are RED and respond consistently to deviations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach the individual on the risks</li> <li>Teach individuals to better assess the risks in their work environment</li> <li>Set clear expectations</li> <li>Watch for repeat behaviors</li> </ul>

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# Reckless Behavior

Behavior	Examples	Mitigation	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The willful disregard of substantial and unjustifiable risk</li><li>• A conscious choice to proceed regardless of the known risk</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drunk driving</li><li>• Speeding through a school zone</li><li>• Driving more than 15 mph over the posted speed limit</li><li>• Performing surgery under the influence of drugs or alcohol</li><li>• Retaliatory breach in patient information</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear and widespread understanding of the rules and expectations</li><li>• Clear understanding of the consequences for failure to follow the rules</li><li>• Create a culture that calls out this type of behavior</li><li>• Establish strong safety protocols with clear understanding of the "why"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corrective or disciplinary action</li><li>• Zero tolerance</li><li>• Termination and/or culture fit consideration</li></ul>

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# Response to Errors



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## Normal Reactions to Failure



*How did this happen?*

*Why does this keep happening?*

*What were they thinking?*

*Why did no one see this coming?*

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## Elephant and Rider

*Elephant = Emotional Mind*

*Rider = Rational Mind*

*Path = Environmental Factors*



Credit: K.S. Torrey (Nov, 2017).

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**The Science of Bias**

*"I think unconscious bias is one of the hardest things to get at."*

*- Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

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## Polling Question

You are interviewing a contractor to remodel your kitchen. On paper this candidate is extremely qualified, and his detailed timeline and pricing estimate are impressive. A neighbor recommended him, and he answered all your questions very well. But something just doesn't feel right, and you cannot put your finger on it.

He needs a decision in the next few days before he moves on to take another project. He seems like a good choice, but you just get this sense that something is off. How do you decide whether to hire him?

- A. My intuition is usually right so I will keep looking for another contractor.
- B. Unless I have something concrete, I will ignore my gut instinct and go ahead and hire him.

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# Harvard Business Review

Most executives follow their intuition.

## System 1 Thinking

- Automatic Judgments
- Stem from associations in stored memory
- Critical to survival

## System 2 Thinking

- Logical reasoning
- Working through available information

Both types of thinking are subject to bias, but we can exercise far more control over biases in System 2 thinking.

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# Science of Bias

## Explicit Bias

- Traditional conceptualization of bias
- Individuals are aware of their thoughts
- Positive or negative preferences are conscious

## Implicit Bias

- Involves subconscious feelings, perceptions, or stereotypes
- Have developed over time as a result of prior experience
- Influence may be subtle or profound
- Individual may not be aware

*Implicit biases can be reduced! ----->*

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# Hindsight Bias

- **Knowing the outcome** makes it easier to . . .
  - ✓ Find danger signals
  - ✓ Connect decisions or actions to the outcome
  - ✓ Determine alternate actions that would have changed the outcome
  - ✓ See what people missed

Once we know how the story ends, it then seems obvious it was going to happen all along.  
*Anyone could have seen this coming!*



Credit: Dakota Bus Learning

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# Confirmation Bias

We naturally favor ideas that confirm our existing belief

If we believe we know the answer, we will only see and elevate what supports our belief

We will ignore or downplay information that contradicts what we believe to be true

A confirmation bias can change the *entire* course of an investigation



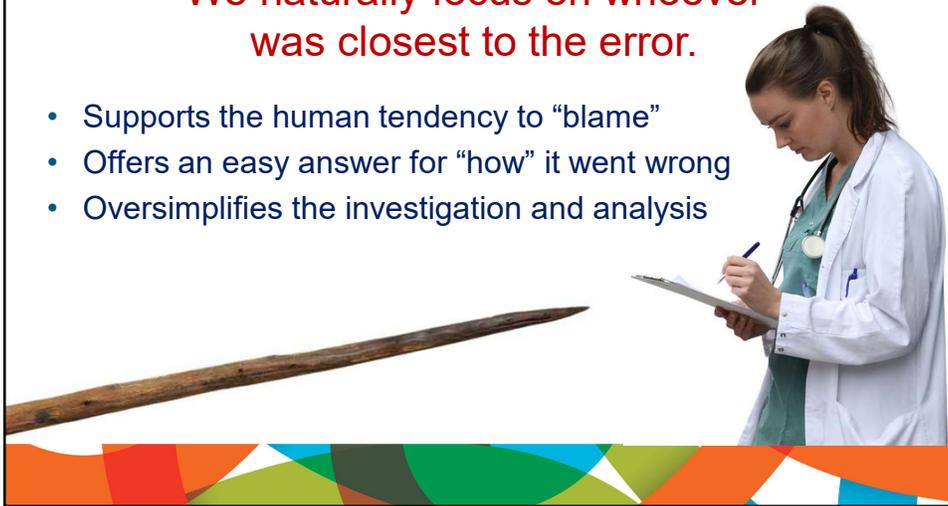
Credit: Simply Psychology

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## Sharp End of the Stick

We naturally focus on whoever was closest to the error.

- Supports the human tendency to “blame”
- Offers an easy answer for “how” it went wrong
- Oversimplifies the investigation and analysis



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## Anchoring Bias

- Humans tend to jump at the first available piece of information they receive and use it to anchor their decision-making process.
- It is a **subconscious process**.
- An automatic process of latching on to a focal point or baseline.
- Leads to poor decision making and skewed judgment.

### Anchoring Bias:

How We Cling to the First Piece of Information We Get



FallacyInLogic.com

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## Other Common Biases

Attribution Bias

Fundamental Attribution Error

Halo Effect

Negativity Bias

Optimism and Pessimism Bias

Sunk Cost Fallacy

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## Sully

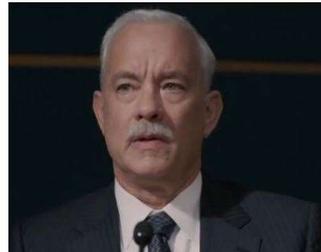


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## Science of Bias: Sully

The simulations are an example of **hindsight bias**.

- The pilots know the birds will strike.
- The pilots know to immediately return to LaGuardia.
- They never factored into their analysis the human decision time.



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## Science of Bias: Sully

The investigators believed it was pilot error.

- 17 practice attempts to simulate an emergency landing (confirmation bias).
- Initial computer data showed the engines still had thrust.
- When the engine was recovered, it was severely damaged.
- They listened to the computer instead of the pilot (anchoring).



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**Biases create a natural tendency to...**

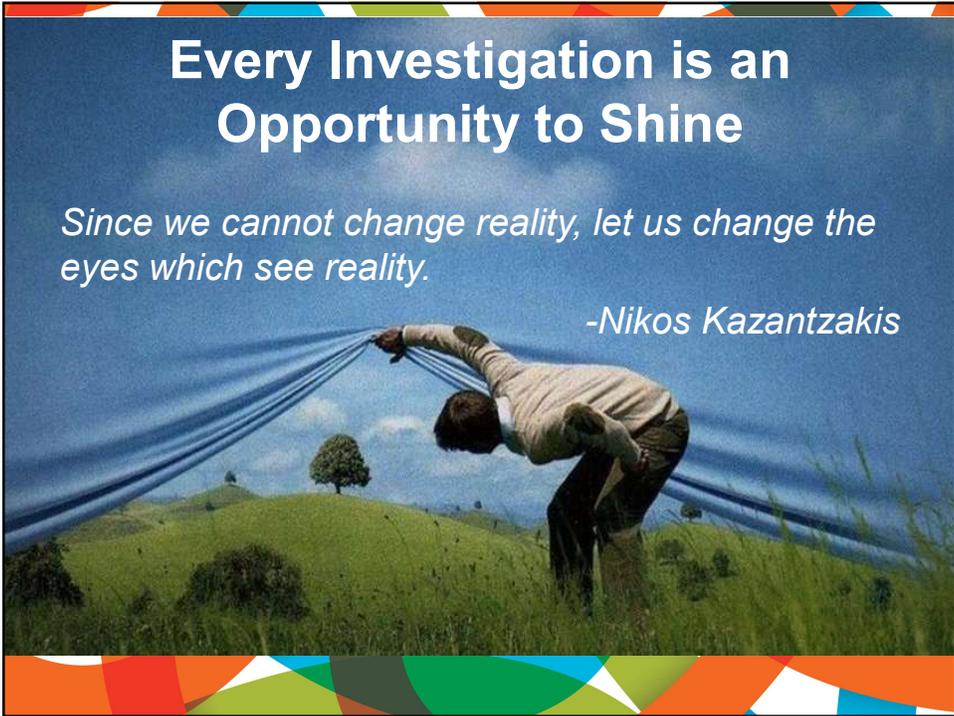
- ✓ Judge what *should* have been done
- ✓ Determine what a *person* failed to do
- ✓ Explain the situation by using our own perceptions
- ✓ Analyze information to support our own beliefs
- ✓ Ignore what challenges our own thinking

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# Investigations



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# Every Investigation is an Opportunity to Shine

*Since we cannot change reality, let us change the eyes which see reality.*

*-Nikos Kazantzakis*

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# Every Person, Including You

Suffers from decision fatigue

Prone to mental shortcuts

Mentally exhausted

Juggles time pressures

Craves simple answers

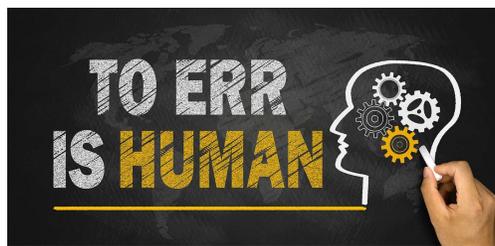
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## Research Shows Us Most People



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## Research and Experience Show Us



- Human error is inevitable
- Systems are often poorly designed
- Humans create work-arounds
- Complex systems = complex errors

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## Human Factors

**The Appropriate Response to Behavior**

Based on the individual's intention and choices; and **Not** based on the outcome of the error

**The Elephant Often Rules**

Gently guide other leaders to slow down

**Never Say Never, Never Say Always**

Careful investigation requires extensive questioning and keep your options open

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## Human Factors

Critical Analysis

What was going on in the mind of the person(s) involved

Understand the context for error

Know how your business should work

Know how your business *actually* works

Observe for normalized deviance

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## Embrace the Opportunity

Open-mindedness encourages transparency

Impartiality demonstrates objectivity

Discernment promotes trustworthiness

Careful deliberation reinforces credibility

When others allow their implicit biases to drive their thinking, the prudent investigator becomes the leader.

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## We Are Not Born Good Investigators



- **Keys to success**
  - Understand human behavior
  - Recognize your own biases
  - Master the elephant

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Thank  
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