

CONVERSATION PRIMERS AND IDEAS

-from-

10 IDEAS TO MAKE SAFETY SUCK LESS



Human & Organizational Performance

Consulting | Support | Fundamentals | Learning Teams | Culture | Safety

1 START FROM A PLACE OF TRUST

PRIMER QUESTIONS

Are your organizational systems built on an assumption of trusting employees or distrusting employees?

How regularly does your company seek out blame when things do not go according to plan?

What types of questions are asked after an injury or event?

IDEAS

Our current work worlds are built upon the bedrock of distrust

We really favor blame, especially in the space of employee safety

The application of blame and punishment within our work worlds does quite a bit, it just does not do what we think it does

Trust must become the organizations 'neutral' position

We must embrace and lean into trusting our fellow human beings if we desire learning and betterment



2 DO THINGS WITH PEOPLE

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How do you currently seek to bring about change within your organization?

What part do your employees play in helping to steer the direction of the organization?

Do you involve employees in the creation of the organizations processes, procedures, and programs?

IDEAS

Stop trying to tell people what to do – focus on asking them what they need

We must reframe the experience of “safety” within our work worlds – moving it from something we ‘do to others,’ to something we ‘do with others’

Doing things with people is a deliberate act

Lean into employee involvement and micro-experimenting



3 LEARN DELIBERATELY AND OFTEN FROM THOSE THAT GSD

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How does your organization currently approach learning?

How often do you seek out an understanding of 'normal work?'

What is your organizations typical approach to learning from unexpected events?

IDEAS

Use learning teams or learning explorations for anything you would like to learn more about

Pay close attention to learning about normal work – seek to tap into lived reality

Be cautious to not create too much structure or rigidity around the process

Do not be afraid to get started – start small and experiment, then go big



4 PAIN POINTS ARE STARTING POINTS

PRIMER QUESTIONS

Does your company currently invest time into discovering and learning about organizational 'pain points?'

If yes, how so?

What is the organizations' normal reaction to employees bringing up 'pain points' or issues?

IDEAS

Pain is a signal that something is wrong, something is not working, and that there is a high likelihood of greater trouble on the horizon

Pain points are often organizationally induced sources of annoyance and frustration for those trying to do the work

Pain points are starting points for deeper exploration and learning

Learning explorations and learning teams are a great way to learn about the existence of, or more about, the pain points employees face in everyday normal work



5 BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE THINGS THAT (ACTUALLY) MATTER

PRIMER QUESTIONS

What is your organization currently obsessed with relating to safety, quality, or environmental?

Do you currently prioritize or sort these efforts?

If so, how do you determine the meaningful from the meaningless?

IDEAS

We have become fixated on the appearance of safety in our work worlds

We have constructed a belief that we get better at safety by doing more “safety things”

You will not stop killing and maiming workers by focusing on the things that do not kill or maim workers

Focus must be placed back on areas of critical risk, and nothing guards against critical risks quite like robust and error tolerant controls

Rather than a focus on everything, we must become obsessed with the things that matter, the things that actually kill or maim workers



6 MORE TOOLS LESS RULES

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How does your organization view the use of rules?

Do you currently use 'zero tolerance' policies within your company?

How do you determine what tools are needed by employees – how do you examine for usefulness of tools?

IDEAS

Rules do not create safety, they create the illusion of safety and control. Workers create safety in real-time by actively adapting through the world that surrounds them

Strict rule adherence is likely detrimental to safety and efficiency

Move away from 'rules that seek to control,' and move towards 'tools that seek to help'

Tools must be needed, useful, and created with the people that need them

Ask people what they need and support them with tools and resources that are based on their needs



7 STOP TRYING TO COMPLY YOUR WAY TO EXCELLENCE (OR PUNISH)

PRIMER QUESTIONS

What level of significance does your company place on being in compliance?

How does your organization react to 'poor' audit findings?

When audits reveal areas of non-compliance, how likely is your company to seek out blame?

IDEAS

"Safety focused" organizations have maxed out compliance – complying harder does not create safer organizations

Catastrophic events still occur in compliant organizations

An overfocus on compliance results in safety becoming a bureaucratic activity to be demonstrated "up"

View audit findings as a gift, rather than a curse

Stop trying to comply your way into operational excellence – that has never worked, and it never will.



8 REDEFINE "SAFE"

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How does your organization currently define "safe?"

How much time does your company invest into the prevention or minimization of low outcome events?

If a significant amount, why?

IDEAS

The application of 'zero' based safety strategies often causes more harm than good

'zero' based approaches to safety are wildly ineffective in the prevention of larger and more catastrophic events

The current definition of "safe" drives a primary focus on numbers and targets

Rather than viewing safety as the absence of events, safety is better defined as the presence of defenses

Defining "safe" as the presence of defenses propels us towards a focus on what is meaningful, and it moves us away from viewing safety as an outcome to manage



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GIVE UP ON SAFETY "FORTUNETELLING"

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How much focus does your company place on the predicting of events?

If a significant amount, what types of data do you use for these efforts? How accurate are you?

What part does prevention play in your current approaches to the safety of work?

IDEAS

Safety fortunetelling efforts are undertaken in an attempt to predict and prevent events

We are not good at predicting events – we simply cannot see into the future

Prevention is a good thing, but a sole or overfocus on prevention is harmful

Increased focus and effort on predicting and preventing will not yield a better result

Rather than wasting our time on safety fortunetelling, our time is far better invested in designing systems that will not result in catastrophic outcomes when they fail



10 EMBRACE HUMANITY

PRIMER QUESTIONS

How does your organization typically view workers?

What does the term 'human error' mean to your company?

Do you view error as a choice?

IDEAS

Traditional safety management views of workers dehumanize them

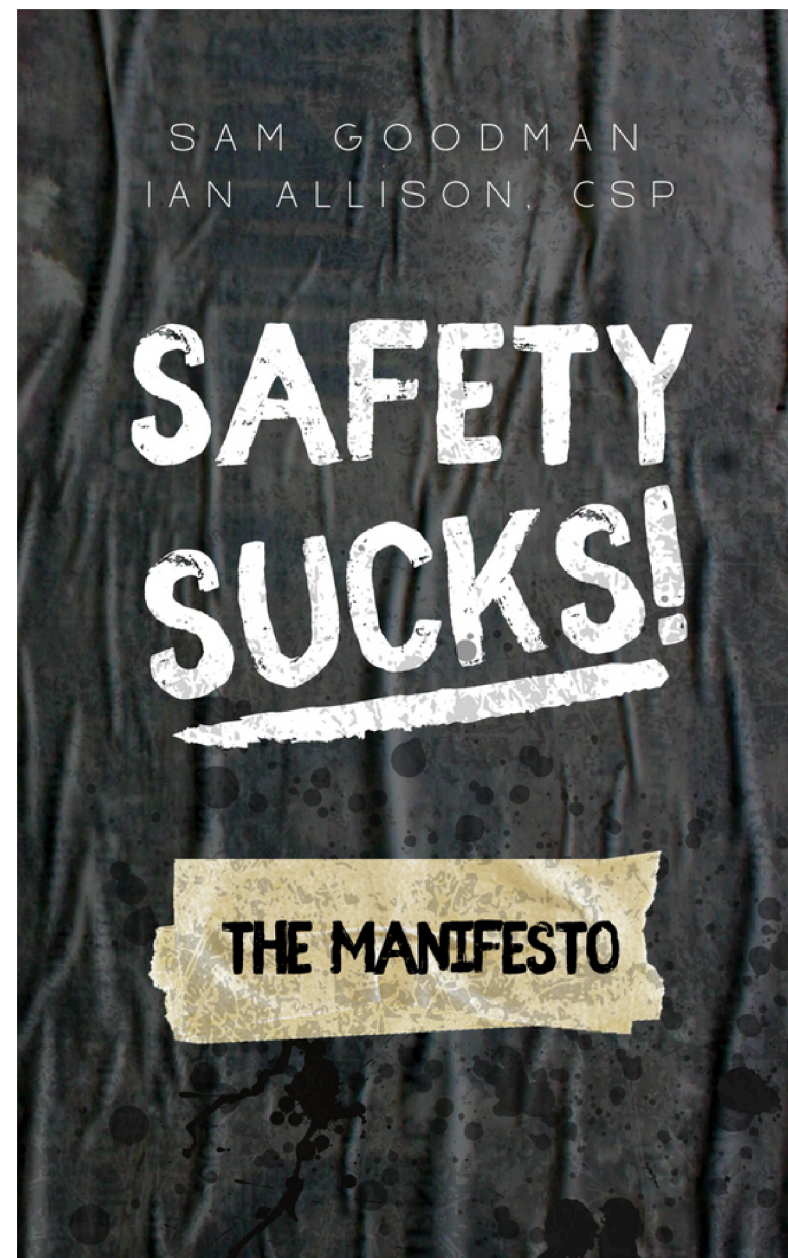
'Human error' becomes the boogieman, and the elimination of this boogieman becomes the futile quest of the organization.

Error is not a choice

If our desire is to learn deep and contextual information, we must let go of this notion that 'human error' is the cause of events

Deep and purposeful learning leads to overall system betterment, and will help maintain and improve upon lifesaving controls and safeguards





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