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What an Astronaut Taught Me About Safety

Article by Alan D Quilley CRSP

Originally Published in "Creating and Maintaining a Practical Based Safety Culture©"

The view from afar can add needed perspective

If you want to change the way that you think, try spending a day with an astronaut. Unfortunately, less than 500 people have ever had the space experience, so our chances of doing this are indeed rare. Let's face it, looking at our big blue marble of a planet through the window of a space vehicle is bound to change the way you think about a great number of human challenges.

Astronaut Mike Mullane shared that experience with me when I had a chance to co-present with him. The project was to help get a large group of construction supervisors to focus on the safe construction of a large gas plant with more than 4,000 construction workers. No small project for anyone. Mullane is a fascinating individual and his presentation on teamwork is incredibly inspiring. I highly recommend that you take the opportunity to listen, read and/ or watch him tell his stories about his rare experiences and his views of excellence in human effort. As Mullane tells us, when you are sitting on the top of a rocket on the launch pad, you want the team that built the rocket to be very good at working together.

Before this turns into a commercial for all things Mike Mullane I want to tell you how this rare individual changed the way I think about safety. The concepts of "normalized deviance" and "predictable surprises" belong to Mike's explanation of the two space shuttle disasters. These tragedies can help give new meaning to what we humans are trying to do with our safety efforts.

Normalized deviance

You might remember that it was the "O" rings on the space shuttle Challenger Rockets that caused a major malfunction which destroyed the shuttle and killed the crew. Most of us have seen the horrible

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video of the shuttle exploding. The story behind the disaster is unfortunately all too typical. It's about normalization of deviance from what was known to be a significantly important standard. You see, the "O" ring design and performance problems were well known to many at NASA. Just like many of our workplaces, taking chances against our best knowledge and judgment creates false feedback about these risky situations. Using the wrong tool for a job, using an underrated crane to lift a load, operating a vehicle in need of repairs or just simply not wearing our personal protective equipment are all examples of deviations from what we know is correct-and safe. .

Over time, if we take risks and get the false feedback that we can get away with the behaviour, we learn to believe that it's okay to deviate from a standard. To not wear our safety glasses is one example. Humans are wonderfully adaptable creatures and we are constantly learning from our experiences. Learning that we don't actually go blind when we use a grinder without our eye protection is re-enforcing the notion that taking this risk is a good idea. We learn that not wearing eye protection is normal. Our feedback for such a risk is usually that we may save time (not having to get those darn safety specs) and we can be more comfortable (no one likes ill fitting safety glasses do they?).

Then one day, when we're least expecting it, a metal shard hits our eye and we're off to the hospital with a serious injury to an important part of our body. Then we start to justify the learned behaviour by telling stories of "doing this for 30 years without injury" and asking ourselves "how could it have happened?" We've normalized the deviance from what we all know by now is the right way to behave.

Predictable Surprise

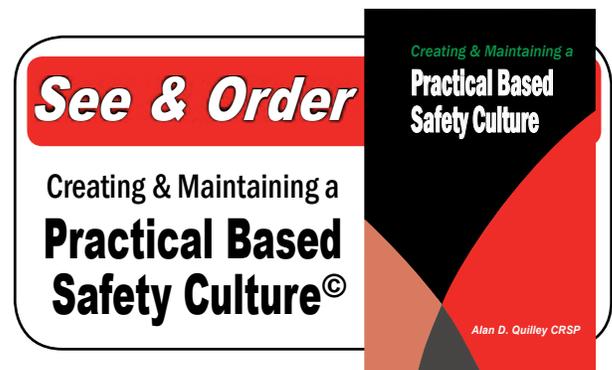
Those who knew about the "O" ring situation were not surprised by the disaster. In fact, some predicted the catastrophic failure not only on the fateful day but on several previous launches. Each time they predicted that the failure would cause total loss of the vehicle and it didn't happen then these very human folks did what

humans tend to do. They were happy they were wrong. Over time this normalization of deviance made the predictable surprise inevitable.

My experience managing safety and investigating incidents makes the shuttle Challenger set of circumstances all the more true as a story of predictable surprise. Most situations that result in a bad outcome had clear indicators beforehand that, had we paid attention, we could have predicted the outcome. In many cases, we have predicted the outcome.

Don't let the false feedback of "getting away from standards" lull you into a sense that it will be okay. Don't let deviance from the norm become the new and less than acceptable standard.

Stay true to your instincts If you believe we need to do certain activities to make our places of work safe, then do them. Don't become complacent to the rigor of doing the job right. The last situation we need to talk about is predictable surprises that we could have prevented by staying on the course that we knew was the right one.



On The Net

From our friends at OHS Online Canada:

[*Three Principles of Leveraging Predictive Analytics for Safety*](#)

From our friends at WHSC Ontario:

[*Many Canadian workers are overexposed to solar UVR, study finds*](#)

Compliments for our CRSP Examination Preparation Workshops

*“Good morning, Marie
I have a severe cold. I’m home sick. It’s not even 9 in the morning, and I’m drinking champagne. Enough said.*

There were 111 correct answers required to pass, and I landed on 114. Not much breathing room, but it’s done!

Al is a pioneer of health and safety in Alberta. His experience, knowledge, and charisma make every minute of Safety Results CRSP Exam Preparation Workshop interesting and valuable, not only for preparing you for the exam, but for expanding your view moving forward in a safety career. Make no mistake, this course is not a magic bullet. You have to put in the work and use these resources as part of a larger compliment of study materials; however, this course is like a power-up for all your other efforts. It is well worth your investment. To top it off, Marie takes care of all the details to make the learning experience a delight. The exam will challenge you, but with hard work and this course, the exam will not defeat you”.

*“Hi Marie
I took the CRSP Prep course with you last year. I recently wrote my CRSPEX this past October and was just notified that I passed. Not bad for a first try.
I wish to thank you and Alan more making the process of studying and preparing for certification so much easier. Specifically:
- my study time was much more focused and effective (study guide and flash cards were great focus fodder),
- my studies have left me with a more balanced knowledge base (I was over 50% in each exam category,
- walked into the exam with confidence, and
- the “unknown” of the certification process became less so ... contributing to less stress.
I highly recommend your course to anyone pursuing CRSP certification and anyone else who would ask.
Again, a sincere thank you”.*

CSSE Members!

Don’t forget that we offer a 10% discount on our CRSP and CRST Workshops as well as study material to current members in good standing of the CSSE! Please contact [Marie](#) for more details.

CRST Examination Preparation Study Material and Workshops

We offer a Study Manual and Workbook specifically for those preparing for the CRSTEX. We’ve heard from candidates that were “advised” to simply study from CRSP materials. Why would anyone do that? Using study material for the wrong exam is a **bad** idea and a waste of **your** valuable study time. The CRSPEX and CRSTEX are two different exams! Ensure you are using **our** study material for the **RIGHT** exam!

Our next CRST Examination Preparation Workshop is taking place November 15 - 17, 2019, and we’ve just added another set of dates. Our first CRST Workshop in 2020 is scheduled for January 10 - 12, 2020.

For more information, please visit this [page](#).

“It was extra challenging without (the) BCRSP study guides... (Note: the BCRSP has not created Study Guides for this designation)

I am grateful to Safety Results for creating the CRST study materials, manual and practice exams alike. The manual guided my studying and the practice exams helped me to find my knowledge gaps and where I needed to study more. I focused my studying on what was in the manual, and it paid off as I have received confirmation that I successfully passed the exam. I am very pleased and proud. Thanks!”

“Thank you Alan for the amazing prep class! Feel so much more confident about going to write the exam in August!”

CRSP EXAMINATION PREPARATION WORKSHOPS

Sherwood Park	September 20 - 22, 2019	8 seats left
Sherwood Park	November 1 - 3, 2019	

Our intense 3 day CRSP Examination Preparation Workshop fee is \$999.00 + GST. Here's why we know we can help and why you should thoroughly investigate before choosing your CRSP Examination Preparation Workshop and product provider.

Our Workshop price includes the following:

- Study material continuously updated to the current 2015 BCRSP Exam Blueprint
- Our Manual, Workbook, Series 1 & 2 Multiple Choice and Long Answer FlashCards (\$910.00 value)
- Our Handbook that contains more practice questions and answers (Handbook is available *only* to participants at the workshop)
- Material is enclosed in a coveted Safety Results canvas attaché bag which includes pen, highlighter, calculator, notebook for notes and Post-its.
- Lunches and refreshment breaks
- Special offer – We were the first workshop provider with a special offer for participants of our Workshop: If you challenge the CRSP exam and are unsuccessful, you may attend another sponsored Safety Results Ltd. CRSP Examination Preparation Workshop for a nominal fee. (Workshop must be based on the 2015 BCRSP Blueprint - further conditions apply - please inquire for details).

When broken down, the value-added features, the quality of our material and our instructor cannot be beat. We've been doing this for a long time and we're extremely proud of what we offer.

What makes us different?

- If you learn better by sifting through mountains of paper presented in a random and an illogical manner, this is not the Workshop for you.
- If you learn better by sitting and answering hundreds of practice exam questions without quality direction, this is not the Workshop for you.
- If you learn better by reviewing regurgitated copies of the BCRSP's Study Guides (that you've already paid for!), this is not the Workshop for you.

How do we know all this? Students who have taken other providers' Workshops have told us. Ours always wins, hands down, every time.

"It's really important to know who is trying to teach you something". - Alan D Quilley CRSP

Learn from Alan Quilley CRSP, our engaging, dynamic instructor and who teaches you how to study, truly demonstrating that you can enjoy learning. He's a **proven industry leader in safety**, a working CRSP who not only consults, but trains within North America and internationally. He actively works with companies, helping them create their Health and Safety programs. He doesn't just teach it, he lives it. With his decades of practical experience in OH&S, highly qualified in adult education and the techniques to help you focus your studies, why look elsewhere?

Our course format is often imitated but never surpassed. Don't get taken in by cheap imitations of our process, format and content.

For more details and to register, please visit our [CRSP Workshops](#) page.

And remember that if you are unable to attend one of our Workshops, you can purchase the very same Manual, Workbook, Multiple Choice/Quick Answer and Long Answer FlashCards that our students receive in our Workshops. Visit our [CRSP Exam Prep Materials](#) page for more details!