AHEAD FAILCON: Preparing for your next mistake

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…

Access and Inclusion
and
Civility and Respect
…this week and in all aspects of our organization.
1. Why are you here?

2. Why have a conversation about failure?
What is ‘failure’?

• Who decides?
• When is it decided?
• Is failure final?
• What purpose does failure serve?
• What is the relationship between failure and success?
  Failure and resilience? Failure and innovation?
The benefit of failure

Failure is one important component of scholarship, and is necessary to help our thinking progress. But, as a scientific community writ large, we have done a poor job of communicating the frequency of failure, the benefits of failure, and the growth that is possible as a direct result of failure.

Failure and success

“Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.”

-- Winston Churchill

“Success is not a gleaming shiny mountain. It is a pile of mistakes that you are standing on instead of buried under.”

-- Dave Ramsey
Anatomy of failure

• What happened?
• At what point was ‘failure’ determined?
• Why type of failure occurred?  
• What are second-order and third-order reasons for the failure?
• How does this insight improve our process and operations?
Types of failure in complex systems

- Deviance (individual chooses to violate a practice or process)
- Inattention (individual inadvertently deviates from process)
- Lack of ability (individual doesn’t have the skills or training necessary)
- Process inadequacy (process is faulty or incomplete)
- Task challenge (task it too difficult to be reliably executed each time)
- Process complexity (process composed of many elements breaks down amidst novel interactions)
- Uncertainty (lack of clarity about future events leads to undesirable decisions)
- Hypothesis testing (experiment designed to prove success fails)
- Exploratory testing (experiment designed to expand knowledge has undesirable result)
Ways to encourage failure at work

• Stop playing the blame game
• Encourage idea sharing and early drafts
• Foster a culture of openness and communication
• Embrace failures (however small) and learn from them
Examples

• FailCon  http://thefailcon.com/
• Stanford I Screwed Up  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1LSS9Q3mnQ
Session Evaluation

Please point your phone at this QR code, or go to: tinyurl.com/AHEADeval

Your feedback helps shape future programming.
Thank you for attending!