

## There is Nothing more Imaginative We can Do in Safety

Imagination is the bedrock of any risk assessment yet the risk industry is so silent about it. When it comes to risk assessment it's not likely that the things we already know are going to hurt anyone. It is always the unseen risks, the things that we can't imagine that tend to hurt people. Indeed, the writing off of possibilities is a mindset that plagues orthodox safety. This mindset is cultivated by 'checklist thinking' that sets out all the known risks designed by orthodox thinking (complete with behaviourist assumptions). Then we run through that checklist as if that somehow it helps envision the perception of unseen risks and possibilities.

So, we can flare up and carry on about fatalities in the workplace (<http://worksafenews.com.au/news/item/734-more-care-needed-to-prevent-workplace-deaths.html>) but the message is always the same 'take more care'. Ah yes, that's what we need 'more care' because people die because they are not careful! There some vision for you.

How amazing that Safety ventures forward only considering processes within its own paradigm. It couldn't possibly be that any new insights could come outside of the risk Body of Knowledge (SRMBoK and SIA BoK)? It couldn't possibly be that anything in the transdisciplinary space or social psychological space might offer new hope to an industry bankrupt of vision? All the bodies of knowledge do is set in concrete the assumptions of the body of knowledge. The body of knowledge can also act as a constraint imagination and serve as a paradigm for conformity and compliance. We see this in how safety censors the industry (<https://safetyrisk.net/censorship-in-safety/>).

Just do a little Google search for these words together 'risk', 'safety' and 'imagination', what turns up? The top 5 references are on this site! Try and see if anyone from the orthodox safety sector, including Safety Differently, discusses the importance of imagination in risk management. Hmmm, you won't find anything. When you are bogged down in materialist-scientist assumptions and consumed with measurement why would imagination be of any interest? Why would Safety think it has anything to learn from novelists, poets, artists, musicians, composers and dreamers about risk assessment? Engineering thinking that's what we need. Hard science, forget this aesthetic-poetics stuff.

Those who can imagine see what others don't see. Those with vision see the world prophetically, not in the sense of seeing the future but rather in understanding and joining the dots of human being, doing and becoming.

It's highly unlikely that one can develop imagination from checklist thinking. Checklist thinking simply replicates the philosophy and methodological ideology of the checklist designer. Checklists designed by engineers and 'safety science' people are limited by the assumptions of the design discipline. One is unlikely to learn to think 'outside the box thinking' if the ideology of an industry is fixated on compliance and zero. You aren't going to find the critical thinkers and mavericks within the fold of compliance/zero orthodoxy.

One of the things about imagination is that it tends to be squashed the moment children enter the school system. The moment children hit school, all the subjects associated with imagination and creativity are devalued by the school system and are timetabled accordingly. When I worked in schools the ratio was 8:1 in favour of STEM subjects. Similarly, the nature of learning through play is suppressed by schools just as it is suppressed in the safety industry. Even the nonsense idea of 'structured play' is not play but people fall for it thinking it is creative.

## **Famous Safety Quotes**

- Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. ~William Shakespeare
- For safety is not a gadget but a state of mind. ~Eleanor Everet
- Safety doesn't happen by accident. ~Author Unknown
- "Safety First" is "Safety Always." ~Charles M. Hayes
- Better a thousand times careful than once dead. ~Proverb
- Precaution is better than cure. ~Edward Coke
- Safety is a cheap and effective insurance policy. ~Author Unknown
- Who can hope to be safe? who sufficiently cautious?
- Guard himself as he may, every moment's an ambush. ~Horace
- Safety means first aid to the uninjured. ~Author Unknown
- Accidents, and particularly street and highway accidents, do not happen – they are caused. ~Ernest Greenwood
- Prepare and prevent, don't repair and repent. ~Author Unknown
- Chance takers are accident makers. ~Author Unknown
- Hug your kids at home, but belt them in the car. ~Author Unknown
- It's better to crash into a nap than to nap into a crash. ~Author Unknown
- Luck runs out but safety is good for life. ~Author Unknown
- There is no safety in numbers, or in anything else. ~James Thurber

- Accidents hurt – safety doesn't. ~Author Unknown
- Working safely may get old, but so do those who practice it. ~Author Unknown
- The door to safety swings on the hinges of common sense. ~Author Unknown
- Working without safety is a dead-end job. ~Author Unknown
- Know safety, no injury. No safety, know injury. ~Author Unknown
- We now have unshakable conviction that accident causes are man-made and that a man made problem can be solved by men and women. ~W.H. Cameron
- Carelessness doesn't bounce; it shatters. ~Hartman Jule
- Safety never takes a holiday. ~Author Unknown
- When you gamble with safety, you bet your life. ~Author Unknown
- While on a ladder, never step back to admire your work. ~Author Unknown
- Hearing protection is a sound investment. ~Author Unknown
- To learn about eye protection, ask someone who has one. ~Author Unknown
- Your safety gears are between your ears. ~Author Unknown
- Personal protective equipment is self-defense. ~Author Unknown
- Tomorrow – your reward for working safely today. ~Author Unknown
- Unsafe acts will keep you in stitches. ~Author Unknown
- Don't learn safety by accident. ~Author Unknown
- Road sense is the offspring of courtesy and the parent of safety. ~Australian Traffic Rule, quoted in *Quotations for Special Occasions* by Maud van Buren, 1938
- Safety is as simple as ABC – Always Be Careful. ~Author Unknown
- Safety isn't expensive, its priceless. ~Author Unknown
- Be alert! Accidents hurt. ~Author Unknown
- Better dead sure than sure dead. ~Author Unknown
- When safety is a factor, call in a contractor. ~Author Unknown
- Wishing won't keep you safe – safety will. ~Author Unknown
- Working safely is like breathing – if you don't, you die. ~Author Unknown
- The safest risk is the one you didn't take. ~Author Unknown
- Safety isn't just a slogan, it's a way of life. ~Author Unknown

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