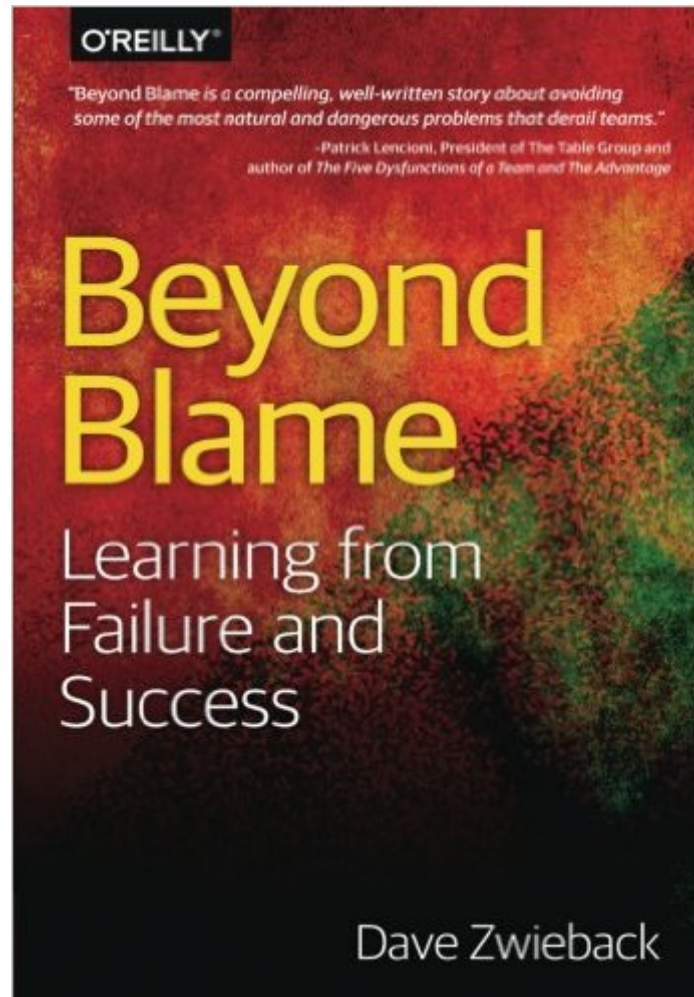# Beyond Blame: Learning From Failure And Success

## Synopsis

Failure is inevitable. Our increasingly complex world demands that we continuously learn from failures (and successes) in order to survive and thrive. And yet, our learning is too often undermined. We construct biased but comfortable stories, which often feature a simple, single "root cause"--a villain, someone to take the blame. Having done that, we short-circuit the possibility of developing any deeper understanding of the complex systems we work with. With this common approach, our systems will become more fragile and drift into failure. In this concise and entertaining book, I.T. veteran Dave Zwieback describes an incident that threatens the very existence of a large financial institution, and the counterintuitive steps its leadership took to stop the downward spiral. Their novel approach is grounded in proven concepts from complexity science, resilience engineering, human factors, cognitive science, and organizational psychology. It allows us to identify the underlying conditions for failure, and make our systems (and organizations) safer and more resilient.Get a clear understanding of the downside of blameLearn how to identify (and counteract) cognitive biases in groupsSee how organizations can determine the real root cause of problemsEstablish real accountability with your organizationUse the Learning Review Framework to fully learn from failures of complex systemsFind practical insights and tips for moving beyond blame in your own organization

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Beyond Blame is a revolutionary book about problem solving and identifying the true ways to improve systems. The story that provides the basis for this book is one involving a Financial Services company and a failure of their core network. But the truth is, the approach and methodologies described here can apply to any number of situations. Anybody who has worked in a corporate environment or any kind of technical field will find the events and people described here extremely familiar.Rather than ascribing blame and seeking a sacrificial lamb, this book shows that true accountability is about reaching the most complete understanding of how failures happened and, thus, how systems can be improved for the future.There is a lot of rather in depth research that is casually blended into this story. This is a thin volume. But the author cites many other books and research papers. If one were to study all the sources of material used in this book, it might make the basis for a rather useful Masters Degree program.The treatment of cognitive biases is an area where the author chose clarity over completeness. Clearly, important and relevant biases like "hindsight bias" and "outcome bias" are discussed because they apply to the story but also because they apply to so many situations that readers can relate to. By many other biases are not covered.The author points out the large number of biases that have been identified in current research. Most notably he mentions Kahneman's "Thinking Fast and Slow." I plan on seeking out some of that research. The bottom line is that there are many biases that hinder our ability to correctly analyze a problem or event and make objective conclusions.

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