

# Learning through blameless reviews

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**Most of us are very lucky**

**We will make mistakes**




**We have made  
mistakes**

by Will Deutsch

How do we react to  
mistakes?





A close-up photograph of a man in a military uniform, wearing a dark cap, shouting with his mouth wide open. He is looking towards the left. In the background, the profile of another man's face is visible. The image is split diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The upper-left portion shows the original photograph, while the lower-right portion is a solid blue background with white text.

Find out who was  
responsible  
and tell  
them  
off



# Fundamental attribution error

You view your own mistakes  
as a result of circumstance  
and other people's mistakes  
as a result of incompetence

**What does our team learn?**

To avoid getting caught  
making a mistake

**Stop taking risks**



**Hide their actions**

To avoid responsibility for  
mistakes



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A photograph of a person wearing blue jeans and a light blue t-shirt, crawling on their hands and knees on a sandy beach. The person is facing away from the camera, moving towards the ocean. The beach is sandy with some small rocks and debris. The ocean is a light blue-green color, and the sky is blue with some white clouds. A diagonal blue line runs from the top left corner to the bottom right corner, separating the photograph from a solid blue background on the right side.

Pretend we haven't  
made any  
mistakes

**What does our team learn?**





**A better way?**

# Blameless review

**Prime directive  
of retrospectives**

**"Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand."**

**~ Norm Kerth, Project Retrospectives: A Handbook  
for Team Review**



# STEP 1

**Involve everyone**

## STEP 2

Understand what happened

**Be curious**

# STEP 3

Decide on changes for  
the future

**Choose actions your  
team can control**



**Keep the list short**

**What does our team learn?**

**How to improve and  
trust one another**

"There are two parts to any failure:

There is the event itself, with all its attendant disappointment, confusion, and shame, and then there is our reaction to it. It is this second part that we control.

Do we become introspective, or do we bury our heads in the sand?

Do we make it safe for others to acknowledge and learn from problems, or do we shut down discussion by looking for people to blame?"

~ Ed Catmull, Creativity, Inc.

How will your team  
react the next time a  
mistake is made?

**Thank you**

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