

Members Quarterly

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President's Message

Mistakes: I've Made a Few

Acknowledge and move on



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President

Though I don't like to admit it and try not to whenever I can, I have made a few mistakes in my life and my working career. Okay, maybe more than a few. But I have always believed that mistakes are just part of the growing process. As much as I'd like to think I know how to do everything as a manager or supervisor, the truth is that I often fall short on the first, second or even third attempts at getting it right.

The other thing I believe is that there's no sin in getting knocked down- the crime is when we don't get up and try again. Getting knocked down only proves that we are human. As long as we get up and get right back into the ring, things will be alright. I can remember very early in my working life, I worked for a cantankerous old bugger who reamed me out for every minor error. But he also encouraged me to try again until I got it right.

I don't know if it was my will to succeed or just to prove him wrong, but I learned a lot from that master. It was George Bernard Shaw who once said "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." I guess that means I will probably be remembered as being more honourable than some others.

The other thing I learned earlier from my old buddy was to move on quickly from a mistake so you can concentrate on making the next one. Great hockey goalies don't allow one bad goal to ruin their confidence or ability to stop the next puck. They fish the puck out of the back of the net as quickly as possible and get back in the crease. You can't stay focused on mistakes at work either. If you are like me, you just don't have the time or energy.

The real challenge with mistakes is to try and learn from every single one. The quote from Henry Ford "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently" is a motto that I try to live by. I've also tried to teach my employees over the years to feel the same. It's not easy at stressful times, but it certainly opens doors for personal growth and development for the future. We don't have to fret about spilled milk, but we do have to learn to be more careful carrying it from place to place. If we learn from our mistakes, we can continue to improve and grow, especially at work. After all, isn't that the whole point?