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notice, hoping you could fix the problem on your own, or counting on it not being an issue relevant enough to worry about? Put yourself in the shoes of the person most ...

**Gail Perry** • Oct. 19, 2017

Have you ever made a mistake and then tried to cover it up, hoping no one would notice, hoping you could fix the problem on your own, or counting on it not being an issue relevant enough to worry about? Put yourself in the shoes of the person most likely to want to know about this problem. That might be your boss who is ultimately responsible for your work and is relying on you to do it right, it might be a client who would want to know if there are problems with the work he or she is paying you to perform, it might be a co-worker who conceivably could get mistakenly blamed for the problem.

When that moment occurs, when you do something that didn't go the way it was supposed to or the way you hoped it would go, your first reaction might be to try to avoid getting into hot water. And maybe you'll be successful at dodging the proverbial bullet. But thinking about the bigger picture, what if the stigma were removed from making mistakes? The truth is, everyone makes mistakes here and there, we all wish there was a do-over clause in life. So let's embrace the fact that life, and work, isn't perfect, but we can actually all learn and benefit from errors.

I read an interesting article recently about a company that offers a monthly monetary reward for the biggest failure of the month. Members of the company are encouraged to report their mistakes with the lure of a cash prize. At first glance, this seems, not just strange, but outright dangerous – are we going to encourage a culture of failure? “Hey, I’ll bet I can screw this up worse than you can – I’ll be the one to win the award this month, just wait and see!” “No wait! I want to win the award! I’ll mess things up so bad NO ONE will be able to fix them!”

Luckily, encouraging failure is not the idea behind this contest. As part of the failure

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You don't have to go the route of a monetary reward. Maybe those who admit something went wrong or could have been done better get to have a small retreat or a long planning lunch at a nice restaurant where solutions are brainstormed. By finding a way to create the atmosphere where failure represents an opportunity for improvement, your firm is likely to be a better place and the quality of work can only improve.

Firm Management

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