

Praise for **Coaching to Enhance Performance[®]**

Rey is the best coach of leaders and workers that I know. His intelligence and experience combined with his natural curiosity and approach to humble inquiry make his work impactful and long lasting. CTEP captures Rey at his best. — Mike Blevins, Retired Chief Operating Officer, Electric Utility Industry

“I had no idea!” or “How could this have happened?” Too often managers express such surprises after serious incidents. Unfortunately, managers only find out about longstanding problems and vulnerabilities after the fact—learning late. Most problems exist because managers are unaware of them. Do you want to know what’s really going on in the workplace? Watching work firsthand is an art, but not hard to master. Through the CTEP process, Rey provides insights into a management skill that is rarely done, if done at all. I strongly believe that the practical elements of the CTEP process will help line managers avoid such occasions. Buy it, read it, study it, and do it! — Tony Muschara, CPT, Author of Risk-Based Thinking and Critical Steps

I have used this process at our project with tremendous success. The book provides great insight to developing a high-performance accountable workforce through the observation and coaching process. I highly recommend this book as a top resource in your management and leadership arsenal. — Brian Ramdwar, Deputy Plant Manager, Pueblo Chemical Agent–Destruction Pilot Plant

Effective coaching is a vital part of improving the performance of workers in nuclear power plants. However, far too often leaders fall short of the tools and skills necessary to observe and provide meaningful coaching. I have found that Coaching to Enhance Performance (CTEP) is a simple and effective way of providing meaningful coaching and feedback to workers that gains their alignment and commitment to improved worker behaviors. — Jim Ross, Station Vice President, Bruce-A Nuclear Power Station

The one thing that comes to mind immediately is something that I have said over and over, ever since I first got turned loose by Rey in the CTEP process. I have seen many "programs" come and go to enforce and enhance safety. Many of them, if not all, were punitive and looked at counting events or what people were doing wrong. However, CTEP is the most powerful process I have ever experienced in behavior change for people in the workplace. CTEP focuses a lot on what people are doing right. I have practiced CTEP and seen fantastic results. — Erich Skelley, Energy Production Superintendent

As a client of Rey’s, I have learned many great concepts from his various human performance products, but none have had a more instantaneous impact than Coaching To Enhance Performance. This coaching method has an immediate, positive impact on behavior in the field. — James Vera, HPI Subject Matter Expert, Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plan

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Complementary chapter from the book, *Coaching To Enhance Performance:
How Successful Leaders Create Sustainability Differently.*

Coaching To Enhance Performance[®]: How Successful Leaders Create Sustainability Differently

Rey Gonzalez



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COACHING TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE®: HOW SUCCESSFUL LEADERS CREATE SUSTAINABILITY DIFFERENTLY

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Written by Rey Gonzalez

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Foreword

I met Rey at a Human Performance, Root Cause, and Trending Conference in Jackson, Wyoming, a few years before beginning to work with him, and I liked him immediately. A native Texan, Rey has an easygoing demeanor, a perpetual, inviting smile, and a way of talking that puts folks at ease. (Rey says it's a Texas thing.)

In July 2016, I began working as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Rey teaching Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) courses at a coal-fired power plant in Ohio. After teaching the Coaching To Enhance Performance course under Rey's mentoring, I started my field qualification. Rey insisted on personally evaluating all his SMEs. My first outing with Rey was humbling. I had thought I understood the process and was proficient, but I soon realized that there was a science to his CTEP 8-step process, and I needed to get better. Thanks to his instruction and feedback, I did just that. Rey often says we should hold to "high uncompromising standards every day." He not only holds others to this motto, but he also lives by it. Rey has spent over forty-two years working to improve organizational performance, focusing on shaping the behaviors desired for high reliability operations (HRO).

Initially exposed to the concept of human performance as an in-field and control room operator in the 1980s, Rey has continued his study of human behavior and organizational effectiveness, and as a result has created two proprietary courses unique to improving HRO: Coaching to Enhance Performance and Trigger Training[®], both of which have achieved tremendous results (and rave reviews for their effectiveness) within the US commercial nuclear and other high-reliability operation industries. Additionally, Rey also provides effective executive-level mentoring to enhance leader behaviors around coaching that creates a sustainable desired culture within an organization.

Of all the great leaders that I have had the pleasure to work alongside or for, Rey stands out as a true mentor. We have spent countless hours discussing numerous topics of mutual interest, and he has always left me with a deeper understanding of the subject at hand. Rey is a perpetual learner. He constantly seeks to broaden his knowledge and gain experience in new areas to better serve those seeking to improve reliability, resilience, sustainability, performance, quality, and safety.

Three components enable someone to effectively transfer their knowledge to another person: profound knowledge of the subject, extensive experience, and empathy. Rey possesses all three. His wisdom shines through, especially when it comes to observation and coaching, and this book is a direct reflection of that wisdom. Rey has organized this book with the intent to pass on his knowledge and experience with the upmost empathy for those performing the work and being observed. Rey begins each chapter with a relevant, powerful story that highlights the chapter subject. He then takes a deep dive using plain language and easy-to-comprehend illustrations. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points (compendium), a series of questions to

check for understanding, and a list of useful suggestions the reader can do tomorrow to enhance their understanding.

Consider the following questions. Have you ever struggled to provide good feedback after observing work? Are you willing to consider a systematic approach to observations that produces consistent outcomes, improves employee relationships, and creates a greater understanding of the organizational challenges your workers daily face? Does your organization struggle with sustaining new or current initiatives? CTEP does all these things, providing a proven method that balances both positive and negative feedback and creates immediate positive behavior changes. CTEP is a repeatable method that yields consistent results when the method is used as prescribed. The process improves workforce relationships by implementing a collaborative process that allows the observed person(s) to be part of the solution. It also helps management identify organizational issues that inhibit the workers' ability to achieve success within the confines of the organization's standards and expectations. Lastly, CTEP enables any organization to create sustainability for *any* initiative by providing its leadership with a real-time understanding of the current state of the initiative and needed course corrections.

Together, Rey and I converted HOPE's live course into a ten-module video-based training CTEP course. This process, combined with Rey's many years of experience and deep understanding of successful observation and coaching, created the foundation for this body of knowledge. This book embodies all that Rey has taught me about being a great observer. This journey will transform your leadership as you improve your observation skills and enhance your engagement through the quality feedback you provide.

—*Ron Farris*

Introduction

Coaching To Enhance Performance®: *How Successful Leaders Create Sustainability Differently* is a proactive observation and coaching book and sustainable process designed by HOPE Consulting, LLC, to develop an engaged, thinking workforce using a collaborative learning environment to shape desired behaviors. Sustainability comes from proper application of the process, as described, and through the consistent reinforcement of its use. (For more on sustainability, see the section in Chapter 2, "It's All About Sustainability.") Throughout this book, *Coaching To Enhance Performance*® is referred to as CTEP.

Although this book addresses the impact of behavior change on organizational performance, its principles also easily apply to personal situations. For example, many CTEP-trained users have applied their knowledge when coaching youth sports and have witnessed great results. The author saw benefits while raising his young children.

This book is comprised of ten chapters covering a range of topics from the importance of real-time coaching to measuring outcomes of coaching. This book, along with the successful completion of our CTEP exam, can be used as the knowledge-acquisition portion; however, full CTEP user training certification is obtained only upon completion of two practical training sessions in real time where work is being conducted within the user's organization. HOPE has found that without the skills demonstration, during the practical training sessions in real time, success cannot be assured. HOPE also offers CTEP Train-the-Trainer certification, which requires completion of the course material and four full days of practical application training in the work environment. The practical portion follows the knowledge-acquisition portion and is scheduled with your organization. If interested, please contact us at: rey@hopeconsultingllc.com or call 817-716-9727 or fax 817-755-0928.

Chapter 1

The Importance of Real-Time Coaching

Incident Averted

The importance of observation and coaching in real-time cannot be overstated. During an observation as part of the CTEP practical coaching sessions, two operators working in a power plant were pulling fuses in a large 6.9-kilovolt breaker. One experienced operator was mentoring a new operator who had recently joined the company. Two CTEP students and I observed the successful pull of large fuses from the front of a locked-out and tagged-out breaker. Upon completion of this, the operators proceeded to the back of this breaker, which was housed in a larger bank of breakers, to remove bolts and latches to open the back panel of the designated breaker. The CTEP students were silent to this point. I returned to the front of the bank of breakers and determined that the entire bank or bus was still energized. Upon this confirmation, I asked the CTEP students, “Does this seem right to you?” and they did not respond. The operators had only removed a couple of latches and were working to remove more when I stopped the job and asked everyone to huddle for a discussion. I asked the experienced operator, “What would be at your feet had you stepped inside that breaker?” The experienced operator immediately had a look of shock on his face and turned to the new operator and said, “I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry. I didn’t realize. . .” The operators and CTEP students then realized that at the operator’s feet would be a fully energized bus bar containing 6900 volts of electricity; and yet they were about to enter the back of the breaker without the proper protective equipment (PPE) or gear. A potential incident was averted. This type of task requires full electrical personal protective gear during work near energized equipment.

This is just one example of many incident preventions and learning lessons that can come from an effective observation and coaching process, as well as the practical training sessions in real time where work is being conducted during full CTEP qualification. In this case, there was a need for intervention, and yet the CTEP students could not see it for themselves. Many times, for many different reasons, people within an organization do not catch obvious errors because of certain conditioning they have been exposed to. The “fresh set of eyes” I was able to provide, based on my experience and intuition, allowed me to recognize the visible cues outlined in Trigger Training®, a course I developed, and these cues led me to discern that the equipment was energized, posing high risk without proper PPE. This prevented a potential incident and demonstrated the proper questioning and intervention that were needed where the risk to personnel or assets was imminent.



For more information on the visible cues we call *triggers*, please consider our course on Trigger Training®.

Later in this book I will cover the techniques of asking questions to properly engage others as well as instill internalization from learning opportunities. I will also review various techniques for intervention when things are wrong or risky.

Using an Observation and Coaching Process

Why use a strong observation and coaching process like CTEP? As the story demonstrates, observations and the associated leadership presence in the work environment are needed to ensure high, uncompromising standards are being maintained every day. Regular observations provide management with insights into the current work culture (behaviors) while also identifying areas that may need improvement. Those who conduct observations must be ready and comfortable with intervening when things are wrong or risky. Therefore, the CTEP sessions of practical training in real time and in real-work environments are a requirement of the overall CTEP certification process. In my experience, intervention is the weakest skill exhibited by most observers and thus is a focus during CTEP practical training sessions.

When it comes to coaching, many organizations do not realize and leverage the power behind effective employee engagement. Without engagement, improvement for individual and organizational performance is at considerable risk of failure. Many leaders responsible for managing the organization do not place enough effort on observation and coaching; these are simply not priorities and, therefore, time is not dedicated to them. Others do not know how to provide effective feedback and typically only provide critical or negative feedback to the workforce, which can lead to unintended consequences such as decreased morale, high turnover, avoidance, and a lack of ownership for work performed.

Still, fewer than half of workers receive any feedback on how to improve their performance on the job.¹ Workers want to know how well they are doing; a feeling of useful contribution is a basic human need. Not only do they want to feel they are contributing, they also want to know if they are doing their jobs correctly. This opens the door for positive reinforcement as well as discussions on what can be done better or safer. Within most high reliability operations, the workforce is doing a million more things correctly than incorrectly, so there is an opportunity to provide a significant contributor to improved morale: positive reinforcement, which we will discuss in detail later.

CTEP is a powerful process that, if conducted properly, results in immediate behavior changes that align with your organization's expectations for safety in personnel, patients, assets, processes, and environment, as well as high-quality work, improved morale, enhanced ownership, and greater productivity.

The CTEP process is extremely effective in shaping behaviors; however, the benefits extend beyond effective coaching. CTEP promotes an engaged workforce that informs leaders of the issues or barriers to successful individual and organizational performance, as well as potential weaknesses in the systems that provide protection to all people and other assets. With the CTEP process, workers, supervisors, and leaders take responsibility for enhancing organizational robustness for defenses, such as controls, barriers, and safeguards, that prevent or minimize the impact of undesirable events.

Coaching and High Reliability Organizations and Operations

Another reason to observe and coach work activities is continuing high reliability operations. Performing as a high reliability organization is a journey, not a process or project.

Let us look at an overview of high reliability organizations through its definition and principles. The only way to know if your organization is meeting the principles of a high reliability organization is through the following:

1. Observation of behaviors used to accomplish work. If work as imagined does not match work as performed, then the behaviors do not align with high reliability organization principles. However, providing feedback will shape the behaviors you desire.
2. Collaboration with the workforce to identify organizational weaknesses in order to understand how the system is impacting operations or desired services.

First, what is a high reliability organization (HRO)? An HRO is an organization that conducts relatively error-free operations over an extended period (thousands of evolutions) while making consistently good decisions that result in desired outcomes.

According to Tony Muschara, “A reliable system is one that can spot an action or function *going* wrong, not an action gone wrong.”²

How is an HRO different from safety? Safety is about protecting people within the organization from hazards, as well as protecting patients or other customers, assets, and the environment. This is basically protecting against individual accidents or individual errors that can lead to undesirable events.

HRO strategies are designed to protect your assets (people, reputation, equipment, facilities, and products) from the fallible human in the process of work execution. This is an approach to protect against systems accidents.

How are safety and HRO the same? Both seek to create a safe work environment where your workers are going home whole—the same way they came to work. Also, workers hone their skills at identifying weaknesses in organizational systems and using error-reduction tools and techniques, both of which produce a workforce that has a strong sense of ownership and satisfaction in its work, resulting in high reliability.

This is in direct contrast to *low-reliability organizations*, which tend to:

- focus more on their successes
- focus more on system or process efficiency than on safety and reliability

- have undeveloped lessons-learned programs
- have excessive filtering of information and communications
- reject or excuse weak signals and early warning signs of system degradation.

Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe, authors of *Managing the Unexpected*,³ outline five HRO principles for developing “mindfulness.” At HOPE Consulting LLC, we have added a sixth principle.

1. Preoccupation with Failure
2. Reluctance to Simplify Operations
3. Sensitivity to Operations
4. Commitment to Resilience
5. Deference to Expertise
- *6. Focus on “What Must Go Absolutely Right”

Weick and Sutcliffe also provide the following thoughts on mindfulness:

Mindfulness is a mental orientation that continually evaluates the environment as opposed to mindlessness where a simple assessment leads to choosing a plan that is continued until the plan runs its course. Mindfulness tracks small failures, resists oversimplification, remains sensitive to the operations in practice, maintains the capability for resilience, and takes advantage of changes in who has expertise.⁴

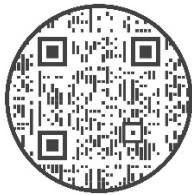
When it comes to observation and coaching, all HRO principles apply. This book focuses on the following HRO principles.

Principle #3, Sensitivity to Operations, consists of four parts. The first is paying serious attention to minute-by-minute operations and being aware of imperfections in these activities. Through observations, these imperfections can be addressed. Second is utilizing observations to make ongoing assessments and continual updates on overall performance. Third is enlisting everyone’s help in fine-tuning the workings of the organization. Observations help identify areas for improvement in process-related activities as well as organizational weaknesses in controls or standards. Fourth is a sensitivity to operations focusing on frontline employees who are closer to the work and are well positioned to recognize failure and identify opportunities for improvement. Observations and feedback processes, such as CTEP, allow for collaborative identification of organizational weaknesses and can enhance and sustain your employee-suggested improvement processes.

Principle #4, Commitment to Resilience, is also made up of four parts. The first is being mindful of errors that have already occurred and correcting them before they worsen and cause more serious harm. Observations and feedback processes provide a medium for reinforcing lessons learned and adjusting associated behaviors. Second is bouncing back from errors and improvising so that you can be ready for the next unexpected event. Observations and feedback processes provide an opportunity to evaluate workforce readiness and determine if additional training is needed to enhance workers’ abilities to improvise when facing an unexpected event. Third is having the ability to anticipate trouble spots. Observations and feedback processes allow for the

collaborative identification of process and system weaknesses. Finally, fourth is being able to identify errors for correction while innovating solutions within a dynamic environment (with a focus on the robustness of organizational controls or defenses). Observations and feedback processes provide collaborative thinking with the people who are closest to the work and are most familiar with the controls or defenses built into the work and their ability to function as designed on a daily basis.

The third of the six HRO principles most closely associated with any observation and coaching process is our added **Principle #6, Focus on “What Must Go Absolutely Right.”** This is defined as creating a clear understanding of critical steps and risk-important actions in order to clarify not only “what must go right” but also how to achieve error-free actions at critical steps through precision execution.



For more information on precision execution, see High Reliability Training’s (HRT) course, “Precision Execution.”

Observations of prework discussions—tailboards, huddles, or prejob briefings—are critical to the success of the organization. At this stage, feedback for improvement can be provided in real time, offering the appropriate focus on roles and responsibilities for work specific to critical steps and risk-important actions. This focus ensures that what is intended to happen is all that happens. Once again, the observation and coaching process provides an opportunity to reinforce expectations for doing the right thing the right way every time for critical steps and risk-important actions.

As you can see, any observation and coaching process plays a critical role for achieving high reliability operations as described in these three specific principles. However, not all observation and coaching processes work well. In fact, many can be a detriment to your goals for high reliability operations. The biggest issue with most observation and coaching processes is a lack of collaborative engagement, most often seen in a feedback “tell” session. In his book *Humble Inquiry*, Edgar Schein says, “*Telling* puts the other person down. It implies that the other person does not already know what I am telling, and that the other person ought to know it.”⁵ If observers are not properly trained, “tell” can lead to the unintended consequence of a lack of trust between the workers and observers. Tell sessions are easily identified by a lack of questions from the observer. Dialogue in these cases is mostly one-way, from observer to observee. We will look at a truly engaging and collaborative observation and coaching process when we review the CTEP 8-step method later in this book.

CHAPTER COMPENDIUM

1. Many incident preventions and learned lessons come from an effective observation and coaching process. Leadership presence in the work environment is needed to ensure high, uncompromising standards are being maintained every day.
2. Many organizations do not realize and leverage the power behind effective employee engagement. Without engagement, all desires for improved individual and organizational performance are at considerable risk of failure. Many leaders responsible for managing the organization do not prioritize observation and coaching and, therefore, do not dedicate time to them.
3. Workers want to know how well they are doing. Meaningful contribution is a basic human need. Not only do workers want to feel they are contributing, but they also want to know if they are doing it correctly.
4. The CTEP process is extremely effective in shaping behaviors; however, the benefits extend beyond effective coaching. CTEP promotes an engaged workforce that informs leaders of the issues or barriers to successful individual and organizational performance and potential weaknesses in the systems that provide protection to all people and other assets.
5. The only way to know if your organization is meeting the principles of a high-reliability organization is through the following:
 - Observation of behaviors used to accomplish work. If work as imagined does not match work as performed, then the behaviors do not align with high-reliability organization principles. However, providing feedback will shape the behaviors you desire.
 - Collaboration with the workforce to understand how the system is impacting operations or desired services through the identification of organizational weaknesses.
6. When it comes to observation and coaching, all HRO principles (plus our additional sixth principle) apply.
 - Preoccupation with Failure
 - Reluctance to Simplify Operations
 - Sensitivity to Operations
 - Commitment to Resilience
 - Deference to Expertise
 - *Focus on “What Must Go Absolutely Right”

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. CTEP is a powerful process that provides many benefits. From the list of benefits and other items below, identify each benefit and place it in the associated column. Place all others in the “other” column.

- ✓ Additional work for management
- ✓ Immediate behavior change
- ✓ Allow for “industrial tourism”
- ✓ Improvements in worker safety
- ✓ An opportunity to conduct a housekeeping tour
- ✓ Improvements in patient or personnel safety
- ✓ Identification of barriers to successful individual and organizational performance

BENEFIT	OTHER
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓

2. CTEP sessions of practical training in real time and real-work environments are a requirement of the overall course.

- A. True
- B. False

3. For the HRO principle of focus on “what must go absolutely right,” prework discussions must create a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities regarding execution of critical steps and risk-important actions.
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. Under the HRO principle, Commitment to Resilience, resilience is described as having the ability to anticipate trouble spots.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. Feedback that involves “tell” sessions is easily identified by:
 - A. starting with negative feedback
 - B. a lack of questions
 - C. telling stories that are related to the job observed
 - D. all the above

WHAT YOU CAN DO TOMORROW

1. Review your calendar to determine opportunities for conducting observations and providing feedback.
2. Share with others the importance of intervention when something is observed that is wrong or risky.
3. Start a dialogue with those whose work you are responsible for observing, and ask them what type of feedback they would desire from your observations.
4. Consider learning more about high-reliability organizations and operations from various authors such as Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe or from *High Reliability Operations, A Practical Guide to Avoid the System Accident*.⁶

¹ Mark Murphy, “Fewer Than Half of Employees Know If They’re Doing A Good Job,” *Forbes*, September 4, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markmurphy/2016/09/04/fewer-than-half-of-employees-know-if-theyre-doing-a-good-job/?sh=3d99f9011b32>.

² Tony Muschara, Ron Farris, and Jim Marinus, *Critical Steps: Managing What Must Go Right in High-Risk Operations*, (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2022), 36.

³ Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe, *Managing the Unexpected, Resilient Performance in an Age of Uncertainty*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007).

⁴ Daved van Stralen, “Weick and Sutcliffe/Social Psychology: Managing the Unexpected through Mindfulness,” *High Reliability Organizing*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://www.high-reliability.org/Weick-Sutcliffe>.

⁵ Edgar H. Schein, *Humble Inquiry—The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2013), 8.

⁶ B&W Pantex, *High Reliability Operations, A Practical Guide to Avoid the System Accident*, (Amarillo: B&W Pantex, 2008).

Chapter 2

So Why Coach?

The Reluctant Supervisor—“My guys are professional! Why should I observe them?”

To achieve CTEP training qualification, a course participant completes the course material portion, followed by practical training sessions in the work environment conducted alongside a CTEP instructor. On one occasion, I was the CTEP instructor, and the time had come for an established supervisor (we'll call him Jack), who supervised a group of journeymen electricians, to conduct his field practical training.

On the scheduled morning, I arrived early before any prework discussions (or prejob briefings) had begun between Jack and the electricians. Jack did not greet me warmly. He said, “Why do we have to observe my guys? They are professional journeymen, qualified to work independently.” I said, “As we mentioned in class, this is the practical training portion of the CTEP training and is a requirement for training qualification.” I continued, “I have found that we can learn many things from these observations, and I know it will be beneficial for you. Besides, we are already scheduled, so let's make the best of it.” Jack conceded reluctantly.

Jack continued with his normal routine, which included a review of work orders to determine which of the four crews would be assigned the work. He then conducted prejob briefings with each crew, which I observed. After each was concluded, the crew of electricians, in groups of two to four, gathered their equipment and headed out to the workspaces.

I provided feedback to Jack using the CTEP 8-step process, based on the four prejob briefings, as a refresher to what was taught in class. Then we held our own prejob briefing regarding the task of conducting the observations before heading to all four crews at their work locations. When Jack and I headed out, I could see that Jack was not yet convinced of the need for this practical training.

When we arrived at the first work location, we observed two electricians assigned to work inside a cabinet. The specific work was in the top section of the cabinet, and they were using a small step stool. The height of the step stool was too low, causing them to reach awkwardly high, and they could barely see what they were reaching for. Jack felt compelled to intervene and did so. He asked the two electricians why they didn't use a nonconductive ladder. “I bought some just for work like this,” he added. The two electricians said they didn't realize one was available, so Jack asked them to wait a few minutes before continuing their work. He left the area and returned in a few moments with the ladder. Although the electricians were grateful, they also seemed embarrassed. We continued our observation and debriefed our observation with them before continuing to the next work area. When Jack and I left, I asked about the ladder and if others were available, to which he said, with some embarrassment, “We have plenty. I don't know why they just didn't get one.” I pointed out that Jack's retrieval of the ladder showed the workers the expectation for a safer, more ergonomically friendly work situation, and I reinforced

that during our debriefing session, our associated feedback was appropriate and that the electricians agreed with our assessment.

The next two workspace observations resulted in similar findings. The electricians were working around small challenges, rather than informing their supervisor or asking for help. In both cases, Jack was able to provide the appropriate support and reinforce his expectation for involving him when challenges arose. He wondered, as he later explained to me, why they seemed to be hesitant to reach out to him.

During the last observation, Jack was no longer reluctant to conduct observations and provide feedback. When we arrived at the work location, no one was there. This surprised Jack, as it was not break time nor had he been contacted about any issue. After Jack and I walked around the entire work area to assess the situation, one of the electricians walked around the corner and was shocked to see Jack, evident by the surprised look on his face. When Jack inquired about the others, the electrician said they had left to retrieve some additional materials and tools. About that same time, the other three electricians showed up. The crew's lead electrician appeared sheepish and barely made eye contact as Jack approached him. "What's going on?" Jack asked, and the lead electrician reluctantly laid out a large diagram on a nearby table. The lead had changed the plan from what was discussed in the prejob briefing and had planned to proceed until, at this point, Jack stopped the job. Jack asked the crew to take a break and join him afterward in the office to regroup. The crew reluctantly complied.

As Jack and I discussed what had just happened, he was embarrassed. He realized that the crew was going to take initiative to proceed with a different plan than what had been discussed in the prejob briefing. This is not what is expected of any work team. In fact, any time the plan described in the briefing is changed, the expectation is to contact the supervisor. Why is this so important? Any change in plan can be an error precursor and result in an undesirable event. In this case, it was not going to happen. The crew would have proceeded had Jack not been present in the workspace. Jack began to wonder if the crews had somehow lost trust in him and whether that was why they were not following his expectations.

Jack had a specific discussion with this crew about his expectation to be notified when any deviations are made to a plan discussed in the prejob briefing. He also reviewed the work, conducted a revised prejob briefing, and obtained an agreement for this important expectation for future work.

The next morning Jack had another discussion with his entire group about changing plans and set expectations for notifications and involvement of their supervisor.

Jack later conceded to me that observations are important, even for the most experienced workers, and that he learned a lot about how work was accomplished by his crews.

It's All About Sustainability

There are many ideas on coaching and how to accomplish it. In the human resources (HR) space, coaching is a periodic performance evaluation between two or more people sitting across a desk from one another. This evaluation can include a review of annual goals or anything else, such as

personal hygiene, relationships with other coworkers, or punctuality. This is not the type of coaching discussed here.

CTEP is a process that observes work in real time and in real-work environments and provides feedback in a collaborative forum with those who are observed. It covers the various observed tasks and engages the observees in a manner that enhances overall performance.

Consider that any time an organization strives to improve performance, it must ask people to change their behavior. Desired behavior is the only way a business can accomplish and sustain any new initiative.

Sounds pretty simple, right? You communicate what changes you would like to see, and people comply—and we all live happily ever after. Of course, you know it is not that easy. You must constantly reinforce desired behaviors through observation and feedback, otherwise sustainability is lost. Conducting observation and feedback must be a priority for the organization if it expects any performance-enhancing initiative to result in sustainable, positive outcomes.

One of the most effective implementations of the CTEP process was conducted at a large, coal-powered electric generation plant. When the plant manager attended the training, he asked a lot of questions and challenged the methodologies of CTEP until he understood the benefits and application. His enlightenment came after two four-hour field practical training sessions. During this time, he discovered the power behind the CTEP process and its immediate behavior-shaping results.

Immediately after his successful completion of CTEP training, he set up a “coach-the-coach” process in which he scheduled those who directly reported to him and their subordinates to conduct a CTEP observation with him. During these sessions, he reinforced proper CTEP observation feedback application and provided coaching to his staff.

This type of reinforcement proved to be one very effective way to ensure the sustainability of the CTEP process. Another option to promote sustainability is to require and schedule those trained in CTEP to conduct paired observations and report their findings the next day at the morning management meeting.

Consider times when your organization has promoted a new initiative or change. If the needed or desired change did not include elements of sustainability, then most likely the initiative failed and was seen as another “flavor of the month.” All organizational changes require a change in behavior for the desired result. However, because we are human, desired behaviors change over time and can evolve to “the way we always do things around here.” We will examine this form of drift in more detail later.

In the words of Roger Connors and Tom Smith in *Change the Culture, Change the Game*, “a shift in the way people act requires a clear understanding of what you need to stop doing, what you need to start doing, and what you need to keep doing.”¹ How do you shape the actions or behaviors you desire in your organization in order to create sustainable change? The answer: you must provide effective feedback to all organizational players. This is the type of coaching that CTEP accomplishes.

Connors and Smith have shown us what has been missing in our understanding of simple psychology, which shows that how a person thinks (or believes) drives their actions (or behaviors). Some have tried “management by walking around,” and although this is a powerful tool to determine organizational weaknesses through their identification by the workforce, the feedback on individual performance is missing. However, not all feedback is effective. Effective feedback includes self-evaluation and is a powerful process that results in positive transformation of employee behavior, enhanced morale, empowerment, and ownership of individual performance. It is not enough to tell a worker that what they are doing is right or wrong; there must be a collaborative approach in determining and understanding what is going well and what can be done better or safer.

So, what does CTEP offer you? The answer is found in three parts:

1. A fast, simple, and easy way to positively influence or shape the behaviors of the people in your organization to enhance overall performance,
2. Powerful tools, such as positive reinforcement and a collaborative approach to feedback, to reinforce the desired behaviors for your performance-enhancing initiatives, and
3. A process that will ultimately make your job easier and make you more effective, trusted, and respected as a leader.

Addressing Drift and Accumulation

Other than what we have mentioned—specifically, coaching to accomplish a desired outcome from a new initiative—organizational drift, often referred to as *drift*, is the most significant reason we must be diligent in our efforts to observe and provide feedback or coach.

Drift can be described as the lowering of standards or management expectations over time. (See Figure 2.1.) It is commonly described as “work as performed” versus “work as imagined.” *Work as imagined* includes the standards and expectations initially established by management in any organization. These are standards that management believes will be needed to accomplish production goals in a safe and reliable manner.

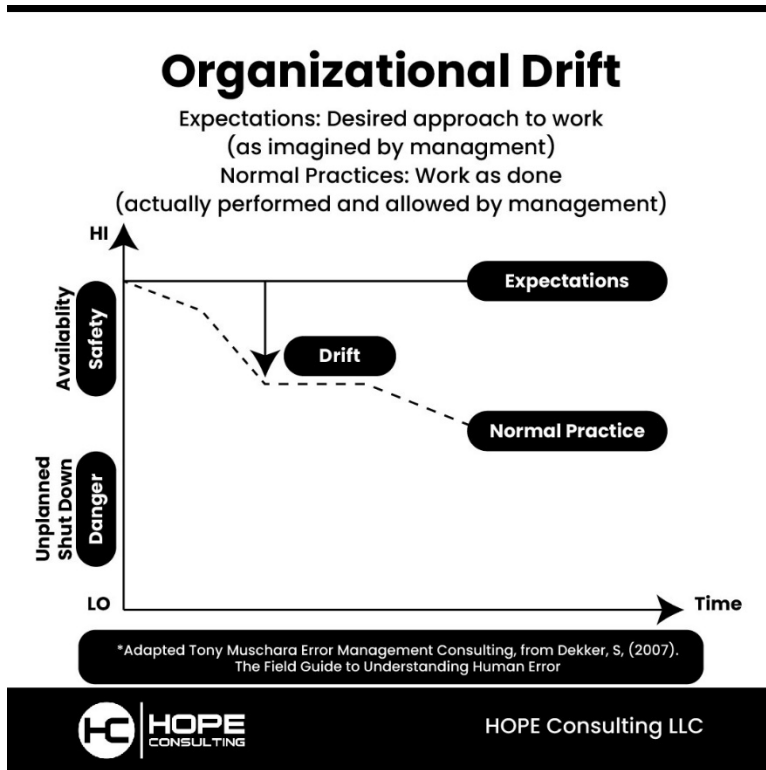


Figure 2.1: "Work as imagined" (expectations) versus "work as done" (normal practice).

How does drift begin? We are creatures of habit and have natural tendencies to act or behave in certain ways—it is called *human nature*. One tendency is to take the path of least resistance, and another is to optimize our work. This is done without malice; in fact, it is most often done with good intentions for perceived, better outcomes. When we optimize our work or tasks, we do so based on our current perception of the risk involved in doing those tasks. We usually believe we are staying within the bounds of rules, policies, and procedures but believe we can optimize our time and efficiency by shortcutting a thing or two. This shortcutting or drift is often in the direction of increased risk because, in that moment, we are unaware of hidden weaknesses and hazards that exist in any work environment within any organization. As seen in Figure 2.2, weaknesses and hazards within any work environment occurring over time are called *accumulation*. Accumulation happens when unusual conditions, hazards, and system weaknesses, which seem inconspicuous and seemingly harmless, build up without warning.

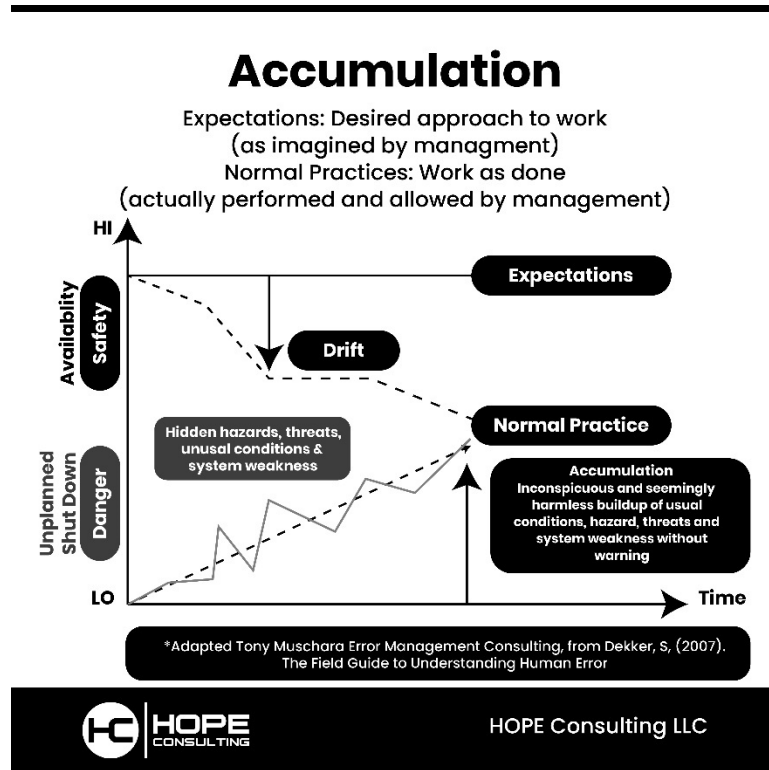


Figure 2.2: Increased accumulation is a buildup of unusual conditions, hazards, and system weaknesses without warning.

Many of these are latent conditions, meaning that they are hidden from the obvious work in our tasks. The intensity of organizational hazards tends to cycle based on the strengths and weaknesses in our organizational defenses (e.g., controls, barriers, and safeguards). Hazards from accumulation impact more than personal safety hazards; accumulation grows in equipment, processes, and organization culture over time.

Drift must be constantly addressed through observation and proper coaching in which standards and expectations of work as imagined are reinforced and pushed back up to original expectations. (See Figure 2.3.)

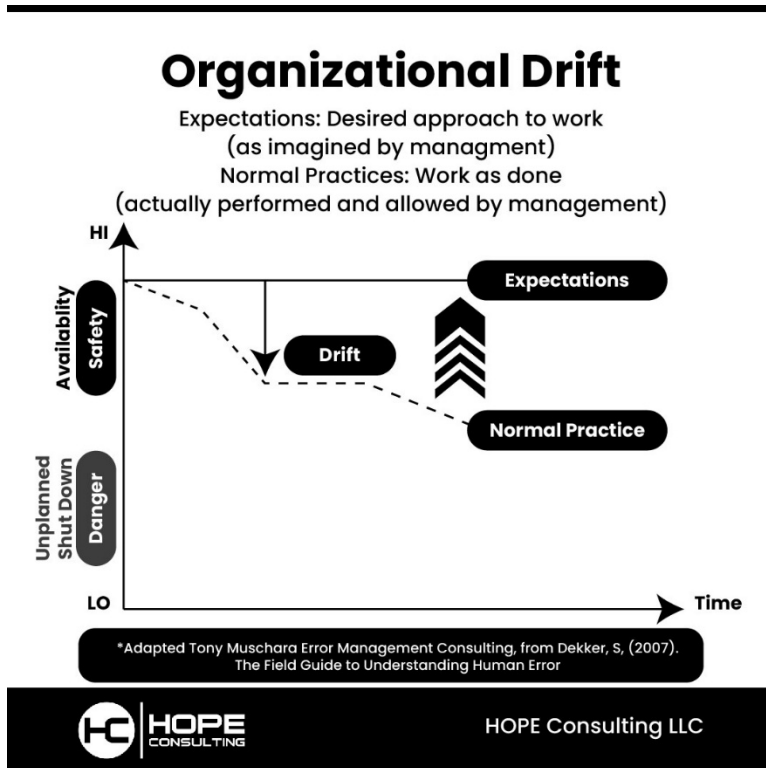


Figure 2.3: Continuously pushing drift upward to meet expectations is important. Each HRO should strive for high, uncompromising standards each day.

Addressing drift in this manner reduces the frequency of undesirable human performance–initiated events.

Illustrated in Figure 2.4, accumulation can also be addressed when conducting observation and coaching through the collaborative exchange of information during the CTEP 8-step feedback process. Here, the workforce can provide those weaknesses that they daily encounter within the organization for management’s consideration of the risk against safe and reliable operations. No one understands the challenges better than those who are dealing with them daily and who somehow still manage to safely provide products and conduct services or operations. If we listen and address weaknesses, we can lower the amount of accumulation and minimize—and possibly reduce the severity of—undesirable events.

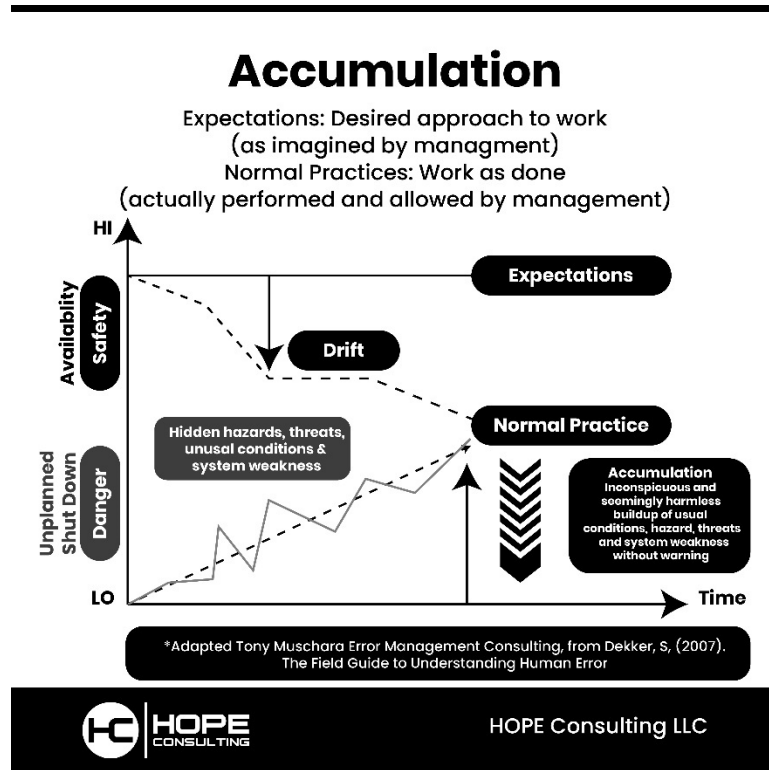


Figure 2.4: Lowering accumulation can minimize and reduce the severity of undesirable events.

Coaching, Culture, and Conditioning

To best understand a fundamental goal and output of CTEP, we need to understand culture. The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines *culture* as “the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and other products of human work and thought considered as a unit, especially with regard to a particular time or social group.”²

In this definition, the term *behavior patterns* refers to how we act, or “the manner in which one acts or behaves or, the actions or reactions of a person or animal in response to external or internal stimuli.”³ The actions or behaviors within an organization define or describe its culture; ergo, behavior equals culture.

Culture exists in any organization because of human beliefs and thoughts. It is greatly influenced by the social environment in which the organization exists. On a large scale, the social environment derives from the country in which we live and differs depending on which part of the country we live in. On a smaller scale, cultures differ within groups, such as engineering versus maintenance versus operations. Nursing and physical therapy have cultural differences between them, and both differ from laboratory technicians within a hospital setting.

Think of it this way: leaders set standards and expectations; how they enforce and reinforce standards and expectations creates a culture of performance, which in turn produces the behaviors and outcomes of the organization.

To assess the current culture, observe the work. Within a short time, you will know the culture by the behaviors you see. Generally speaking, if you see people using the handrails each time

they ascend and descend stairs, then they have a focus on a safe culture; if you see people using procedures or other written instructions and place-keeping techniques, they have a culture that values procedural compliance. If you do not see the things you expect for high reliability operations or services, then you have an opportunity to provide feedback to shape the behaviors you want and thereby shape the culture you desire for high reliability operations, services, and outcomes.

Conditioning shapes the way people act and, therefore, the behavioral-driven culture within an organization. In psychology there is a concept known as classical conditioning. This is often referred to as Pavlovian or respondent conditioning, and it is described as learning through association. This concept was first discovered in the early 1900s by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov. In simple terms, two stimuli are linked together to produce a new learned response in a person or animal. This concept illustrates that conditioning shapes the way people act and, therefore, creates an organizational culture.⁴

Conditioning occurs through the repetition of a particular stimulus and through the words that are used (verbal conditioning). Regarding television marketing, Nigel Barber, PhD, observes, “On the surface, the television medium was a perfect vehicle for conditioning audiences. We can all recite the advertising jingles of our childhood and, from an early age, children get hooked on advertising gimmicks and mottos from alphabet soup to the tiger character on breakfast cereal.”⁵ This conditioning, due to repetition and selective words or mottos, is extremely powerful.

What type of verbal conditioning do you suppose some prisoners received during their childhood? Is it possible they were made to feel like failures or feel an overall sense of worthlessness when compared to others? Do you believe it is possible to impact children’s future behavior based on the words used to describe them or their actions? Could the same also apply to a newly hired employee within your organization?

Consider an April 2002 report from the American Academy of Pediatrics that sought to define psychological maltreatment of children. The definition is useful to keep in mind: “Psychological maltreatment of children occurs when a person conveys to a child that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another’s needs.”⁶

In an article in *Psychology Today*, author Peg Streep wrote,

Verbal aggression and abuse are internalized, I know. . .stalling the shaming, dismissive, or hypercritical maternal voice in your head is one of the most difficult parts of healing. Not surprisingly, science backs up the observation not just pointing to the association between parental verbal abuse and anxiety and depression over the lifespan, but with “self-criticism.” What is self-criticism? It’s the mental habit of attributing all bad things that happen to you to global, stable, internal factors, many of which may echo your mother or father’s words such as “I failed because I am stupid and incompetent” or “Nothing good will ever happen to me because I’m not good enough” or “I deserve bad things because there’s nothing good about me.”

So, if you’re still wondering whether verbal abuse is “real” or has “real” effects, it’s time to stop kidding yourself and pay attention to not just what you say but why you are saying it and

to whom. I am emphasizing the vulnerability of children for a reason but keep in mind that adults often have their own fragilities as well.⁷

If the words we use can influence people’s behaviors, then why not use strong, powerful, positive words to describe their efforts? If you use strong, powerful, positive words, you will get strong, powerful, positive behaviors and therefore strong, powerful, positive performance. Here are some of the everyday words you can use to state something positive you have seen: *great, nice, good, spot on, on target, fantastic, awesome, well done.*

Bottom line: We coach to shape the behaviors we want in our organization, and high-reliability organizations use repetition and strong, powerful, positive words to get the safest and best results. The next question is, what about those behaviors that are not meeting expectations or standards for the excellence we desire? How do we address these? We will be looking at how to address improvement areas later in the book.

Observing Behaviors and Different Styles of Observing

When it comes to observing behaviors, consider this analogy. When teaching a person to drive, you show them what to do; and after you explain what to do, do you then just turn them loose? No, you watch them drive; and in observing the driver, what behaviors would you want to see? The list can be exhaustive, but we will highlight a few. We would expect the person to secure their seatbelt, adjust the mirrors, become familiar with all controls, use two points of contact on the steering wheel, and so forth.

Now, imagine your organization where everyone is working with a high degree of engagement, safety consciousness, and productivity. What behaviors do you see? List at least six strong, powerful, positive behaviors you would expect.

Strong, powerful, positive behaviors you would expect:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

When you consider the list of behaviors you created above, would you agree that these are the types of behaviors you should be looking for in workspaces?

Can you do this every day? The answer is actually yes, because you do not have to be on a formal observation to document what you’ve seen and to provide feedback.

Do you need to schedule time to conduct observations, or can they happen within and among your daily routine? As implied by the last answer, observations can happen throughout your day and can be even more meaningful and productive than when planned and scheduled.

As a coach, you can shape an individual's mindset and perception and positively influence behaviors if you think differently about how to coach and provide feedback to the workforce within your organization. The following organizational and individual truisms can be leveraged in any organization.

1. Studies show that 84 to 94 percent of all human error can be directly attributed to process, programmatic, or organizational issues.^{8,9}
2. People come to work to do a good job.
3. Those who do the work have the answers.

If issues or weaknesses within processes, programs, and the organization drive workers to err, where does the responsibility for these errors lie? The answer is two-fold: since managers have signature authority and resources to correct these weaknesses, they are responsible; and because people come to work to do a good job, they must assume responsibility to identify these organizational weaknesses within their daily work so that any issues may be addressed. Workers must also use their training in the application of error mitigation tools and techniques to minimize error and, in doing so, reduce challenging organizational defenses.

Leveraging these truisms can produce great benefits from the coaching and feedback process. Success will occur only if we think differently and ensure there is a collaborative exchange, resulting in behavior change as well as the identification of organizational issues or weaknesses.

We must also think differently about performance and results. We must ask ourselves if we are getting the results we want from the performance of the organization. If we are not, we must think differently about how we conduct observations and provide coaching feedback.

An observation technique based on *catching people doing the wrong thing* is outdated and possibly based on Industrial Revolution-era ideas. We must think differently because "the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results."¹⁰ Consider the old ways of providing observations:

- Stealth or ninja observation—hiding in the background while observing and not engaging people, therefore not providing feedback in real time
- Drive-by observation—quickly making some notes after spending only a few minutes observing without providing feedback
- Bird-dogging—a highly intrusive, over-the-shoulder observation that borders on micromanaging
- Chatty Charlie or Chatty Cathy—an overly curious observer disrupting the actual work process with questions or comments during the observation
- Daniel Downer or Debbie Downer—observations that only provide negative feedback, limiting interactions to what needs to be improved without a collaborative exchange and a

self-evaluation of performance by the observed and without the sharing of positive behaviors that you should have captured.

How you communicate during and after your observation is crucial in getting buy-in for behavior changes that meet the expectations and standards you have within your organization. A coach shapes an individual's mindset and perception to positively influence behaviors. Utilizing these old methods of observation and coaching has not proven effective.

If your organization's workforce resists being observed while conducting work, it may be due to the unintended consequences of these antiquated methods. If we do not think differently about our approach to observations, how will it affect management's ability to know what is really happening in the places where work gets done? We must ask ourselves these very important questions:

- Will we know what types of behaviors are really going on?
- Will we know the status or condition of actual processes, equipment, or systems within our organization?

Approach is everything. Have you seen the Geico drill sergeant therapist video?¹¹ I am sure we can agree that a drill sergeant may not make a good therapist, and a gruff approach to feedback is not well received.

Any of the old ways of observing workers and giving feedback may not be as effective as a collaborative exchange of information between the observer and observees. HOPE Consulting's experience comes from the thousands of observation and feedback sessions over many years in many different industries. We will examine an effective collaborative feedback process later in this book.

Coaching and Communications

As mentioned previously, how you communicate during and after your observation is crucial in getting buy-in for behavior changes that meet the expectations and standards you have within your organization. Let us look at effective communications during your coaching and feedback sessions. We have already mentioned including strong, powerful, positive words in your feedback. However, there are three other things to consider during your observation and coaching sessions.

The first is effective listening during your observation. Here you want to observe and listen so as not to become an intrusion, unless things don't seem right, or you see something wrong or risky that can result in injury or damage to the assets within an organization. Most of the time, intervention is not necessary but very important. We will discuss intervention and how to intervene later in the book.

During your observation, minimize your communications so as not to become a distraction. Be patient with any questions, waiting until there is a break in the work or until it is completed.

And finally, when your observation concludes and it is time to provide feedback, open with positive reinforcement instead of only focusing on negative feedback. Keep in mind that there are a million more things people do correctly than incorrectly on any given day. Strengthen your

ability to identify these positive behaviors and use the power of positive reinforcement, which we will review later in the book.

CHAPTER COMPENDIUM

1. Any time an organization strives to improve performance, it must ask people to change their behavior. The behavior of people is the only way anything is accomplished in business, and the desired behavior allows any new initiative to be accomplished and sustained.
2. You must constantly reinforce desired behaviors through observation and feedback; otherwise sustainability is lost. Conducting observation and feedback must be a priority for the organization if it expects any performance-enhancing initiative to result in sustainable, positive outcomes.
3. All organizational changes require a change in behavior for the desired result or change. However, because we are human, desired behaviors change over time and can revert to “the way we always do things around here.”
4. Effective feedback that includes self-evaluation is a powerful process resulting in positive transformation of employee behavior, as well as enhanced morale, empowerment, and ownership of individual performance. It is not enough to tell a worker that what they are doing is right or wrong; there must be a collaborative approach to determining and understanding what is going well and what can be done better or safer.
5. As humans, we tend to behave like electricity, taking the path of least resistance. Human nature drives us to optimize our work, which means that we attempt, with good intentions, to make our work processes more efficient. However, these efficiencies may not meet your organization’s standards or expectations; more importantly, they may reduce the established safety margin.
6. Organizational drift is the primary reason we must be diligent in our efforts to observe and provide feedback. Drift can be described as the lowering of standards or management expectations over time. Drift must be constantly addressed through observation and proper coaching, reinforcing standards and expectations of work as imagined and elevating standards back to original expectations.
7. Weaknesses and hazards that exist in any work environment over time are referred to as *accumulation*. Accumulation can be defined as an inconspicuous and seemingly harmless buildup of unusual conditions, hazards, and system weaknesses without warning. Accumulation can be addressed while conducting observation and coaching through the collaborative exchange of information during the CTEP 8-step feedback process. Here, the workforce can identify those weaknesses within the organization for management’s consideration of the risk against safe and reliable operations.
8. The actions and behaviors within an organization define or describe the culture; behavior equals culture. Observing work is the quickest way to know the current culture. Within a short time, you will know the culture by the behaviors you see.

9. Conditioning shapes the way people act and, therefore, their behaviors or organizational culture. Conditioning occurs because of repetition to a particular stimulus and through the words that are used (verbal conditioning).
10. People's behaviors can be influenced by the words we use, so use strong, powerful, positive words to describe their efforts. If you use strong, powerful, positive words, you will get strong, powerful, positive behaviors and, therefore, strong, powerful, positive performance.
11. You can look for strong, powerful, positive behaviors each day when you are in workspaces. Because you do not have to be on a formal observation to document what you've seen and to provide feedback, you can do this every day. You do not need to schedule time to conduct observations; they can happen within and among your daily routine, throughout your day, and can be even more meaningful and productive than when planned and scheduled.
12. An observation program based on *catching people doing the wrong thing* is outdated. A coach shapes an individual's mindset and perception to positively influence behaviors. Using these old ways of influencing have not proven effective.
13. How you communicate during and after your observation is crucial in getting buy-in for behavior changes that meet the expectations and standards you have within your organization. It requires effective listening and patience while asking questions during observations.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Coaching To Enhance Performance is like "performance evaluations" used by Human Resources.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. Drift can be described as *work as performed versus work as imagined*.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Drift occurs because of:
 - A. Malicious intent by the workforce
 - B. Well-intended attempts to optimize work
4. The quickest way to know what the current culture is would be to observe work and identify:
 - A. Compliance
 - B. Repetition
 - C. Behaviors
 - D. None of the above

5. One reason it is very important for management to address a resistance to observations of work activities is:
 - A. Housekeeping will decline
 - B. Personnel protective equipment use will decline
 - C. The workforce will only focus on the least amount of work for the day
 - D. You will not know if the behaviors to accomplish work meet expectations for high quality and safety

WHAT YOU CAN DO TOMORROW

1. Initiate some discussions with peers to determine why some previous initiatives have failed. Questions that should be asked are: “What did we do to sustain the initiative?” and “How could we use observation and coaching to sustain any initiative?”
2. Consider additional studies to better understand how behaviors are influenced by reading Roger Conners and Tom Smith’s book, *Change the Culture, Change the Game*.
3. Because “accumulation” grows in equipment, processes, and organizational culture over time, brainstorm a list of equipment you know has degraded in performance over time to determine any immediate need for repair or replacement. (It may be best to review your list with the workforce supervisor to get their point of view.)
4. Pair up with a peer and conduct a simple observation by going to various worksites to document the behaviors you see. Once you have a list, review it together to determine the types of cultures you have seen.
5. Revisit your list of strong, powerful, positive words and add at least three more that you would feel comfortable using the next time you provide feedback on someone’s performance.
6. Review the list of the old ways of conducting observations to determine which, if any, you have been prone to using.

¹ Roger Conners and Tom Smith, *Change the Culture, Change the Game* (Portfolio/Penguin: New York and London, 2011), 58.

² *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. “culture (n.),” accessed December 9, 2022, <https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=culture&submit.x=36&submit.y=20>.

³ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. “behavior (n),” accessed October 28, 2022, <https://www.ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=behavior&submit.x=35&submit.y=25>.

⁴ S.A. McLeod, “Classical conditioning: How It Works with Examples,” *Simply Psychology*, August 21, 2018, www.simplypsychology.org/classical-conditioning.html.

⁵ Nigel Barber, PhD, "Are We at the Mercy of Advertising?," *Psychology Today*, May 16, 2018, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-human-beast/201805/are-we-the-mercy-advertising>.

⁶ Steven W. Kairys, MD, MPH, Charles F. Johnson, MD, "The Psychological Maltreatment of Children—Technical Report," *Pediatrics* 109, no.4 (April 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.109.4.e68>.

⁷ Peg Streep, "Five Things Everyone Must Understand about Verbal Abuse," *Psychology Today*, February 19, 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/tech-support/201602/5-things-everyone-must-understand-about-verbal-abuse>.

⁸ "Human Performance," Shermco, accessed January 12, 2023, <https://shermco.com/about-shermco/human-performance/>.

⁹ John Hunter, "Appreciation for a System," *The W. Edwards Deming Institute*, October 26, 2012, <https://deming.org/appreciation-for-a-system/>.

¹⁰ "Insanity Is Doing the Same Thing Over and Over Again and Expecting Different Results," *Quote Investigator*, accessed October 28, 2022, <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2017/03/23/same/>.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfmVBmDKLZI>.