

MASTERING MANAGEMENT

with **Mark Taylor**



Don't Avoid Mistakes — Embrace Them!

Don't you hate it when you make a mistake? You feel stupid and embarrassed. We tend to avoid mistakes at all costs. What if you were to learn that the key to mastery in any field is *making* mistakes? In a new book, *The Talent Code: Greatness Isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How*, Daniel Coyle summarizes the latest brain research on human performance. His conclusion is that we learn through making mistakes, deep practice and having a coach.

Learning is uncomfortable; we make mistakes, and it's awkward. We don't want to admit to others that we are a beginner at management, for example. Our tendency is to pretend we know, and the consequence is that we don't produce the results that we desire.

We learn by declaring ourselves as beginners and finding someone to help us. This sounds very simple, yet still, most of us don't want to be beginners. But if we are to become proficient in any area, from managing a parcel operation to being a CEO, we need help. To be a beginner means that you are *will-ing* to be a beginner. You don't have any pretense that you can perform; you know that you don't know. You recognize that you are not competent and can make big mistakes.

Bob Beaudine, author of *The Power of Who: You Already Know Everyone You Need to Know* says, "There is a quality that all successful people have — they ask for help.

People serve as catalysts. By definition, a catalyst is an agent that speeds up a process, sometimes exponentially. Other people provide the power to help you achieve your goals a whole lot more quickly than you could ever do it on your own." This is what a coach or a mentor can do for you and what you can do for your employees.

The bottom line is this: If we are not satisfied with the results we are getting and want to move to the next level, we must be willing to get out of our comfort zones and find a teacher or a competent coach who can help us. What are you fumbling with as a manager? Who is coaching you? And what about your employees who are stumbling — are you coaching them? ■

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Real-Life Definition:

Competence is an assessment by a recognized authority that you take effective actions in some particular domain. That is why you need a license to drive a car, fly an airplane or pull someone's tooth. We tend to collapse domains. We think we are good managers or mediocre or bad managers. Managing has many different aspects or domains: **hiring** the right people, oral and written **communication skills, coaching and teaching** employees as well as **technical knowledge**, to name a few. We can be beginners at one thing and competent in another. A coach can help us see what we don't know and help us learn in order to move to the next level.