

(Ebook pdf) Better By Mistake: The Unexpected Benefits of Being Wrong

## Better By Mistake: The Unexpected Benefits of Being Wrong

*Alina Tugend*

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**Alina Tugend : Better By Mistake: The Unexpected Benefits of Being Wrong** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Better By Mistake: The Unexpected Benefits of Being Wrong:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wisdom for everyone!By sunny winslowBETTER BY MISTAKE is a wise, compassionate, and thoroughly enlightening guide to human imperfection. With empathy and brilliance Tugend explores the many ways that mistakes can serve as opportunities for, rather than obstructions to, growth and success. Tugend never simply laments mistake-making. Instead she provides insightful analysis of how mistakes

happens, how they might have been avoided, and how to learn from them. For instance, she offers alternate approaches to the damaging tendency of large corporations to value profit and outward "success" above the truly valuable, if sometimes, inevitably, flawed contributions of employees. She examines catastrophic mistakes (aviation disasters, the Iraq War, Bhopal, Chernobyl, recent financial meltdowns) and small everyday mistakes (a spouse's misplacement of his keys or a child's of his cell phone) with equal depth and insightfulness. One of the things that makes this book such a delight is Tugend's refreshing emotional honesty about her own mistakes. And she sheds light both on great historical forces and internal psychological ones -- a poignant example being her Jewish grandfather's reluctance to leave Germany in the Thirties, a feeling shared by many Jews. **BETTER BY MISTAKE** is sweeping in its scope yet thoroughly accessible. It is enlightening and eminently useful to any parent, teacher, business person, medical professional, and imperfect human being (who isn't?) Thank you, Alina Tugend, for this gift of a book. (Oh, and it also made me laugh many times, no mean feat given the subject matter!) 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Review by J. Colannino By Joseph Colannino "Better by Mistake" is a book about being wrong and learning from it. The premise is simple. If we learn by mistake, why are we so afraid of being wrong? Tugend explores this fascinating subject in an introduction, eight chapters, and a conclusion: 1) (Mis)Understanding and (Re)Defining Mistakes: What is a mistake? 2) It Starts Early: How our children learn from blunders. 3) "Fail Often, Fast, and Cheap": Mistakes in the workplace. 4) It's Not Brain Surgery. But what if it is?: Learning from medicine. 5) Lessons From the Cockpit: Aviation's approach to errors. 6) Blaming You, Blaming Me: Men, women, and mistakes. 7) You Say Mistake, I Say Lesson: Different cultures, different approaches. 8) I Want to Apologize: Saying "I'm sorry". The book also has acknowledgements, notes, a bibliography, and an index. This is a unique book and Tugend surveys a panoply of subject matter looking at mistakes from various perspectives including aviation, medicine, and gender. However, despite its rich content, I cannot recommend the book. My disinclination is due primarily to form rather than substance. The book is, well... boring; I had to force myself through nearly every chapter. (By way of full disclosure I should inform the reader that I have written a book on combustion modeling, so this is perhaps the pot calling the kettle black.) The tough slog was a bit surprising because Tugend is a former newspaper reporter, and one would expect snappy or even Hemingway-esque prose from such an author; alas, that is not the case. It is also possible that I suffer from some of the gender bias in processing information that Tugend describes; shopping is not a journey for me, it is a destination. That is also the way I read factual books, and probably the reason I have never written a murder mystery -- the executive summary would read: "the butler did it; see Figure 1" followed by 500 pages of notes. The reason I am being so self-descriptive here is because I want the reader to understand the psychology of my aversion to this book. If you have a different way of processing information then you may enjoy the ride. Certainly there is something to be learned from reading *Better by Mistake*, but for me it just wasn't worth 300 pages of effort. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. learning from mistakes By science writer I was amazed to discover that even at age 85, "*Better by Mistake*" presented insights and advice I had never considered before

New York Times columnist Alina Tugend delivers an eye-opening big idea: Embracing mistakes can make us smarter, healthier, and happier in every facet of our lives. In this persuasive book, journalist Alina Tugend examines the delicate tension between what we must make mistakes in order to learn and the reality that we often get punished for them. She shows us that mistakes are everywhere, and when we acknowledge and identify them correctly, we can improve not only ourselves, but our families, our work, and the world around us as well. Bold and dynamic, insightful and provocative, *Better by Mistake* turns our cultural wisdom on its head to illustrate the downside of striving for perfection and the rewards of acknowledging and accepting mistakes and embracing the imperfection in all of us.

Alina Tugend on *Better by Mistake* I wrote *Better by Mistake* to explore an ongoing tension: We're taught when we're young that we learn from mistakes, but the reality is that most of us hate and dread them. A friend of mine loves to tell the anecdote of driving her son home from kindergarten and asking what he learned. "Nothing," he said. "Nothing?" she asked. "You didn't learn a single thing?" "No," he replied. "My teacher said you learn by making mistakes, and I didn't make any today." Imagine if that attitude survived throughout our lives. If, when we thought about how our day went, we didn't regret our mistakes, but proudly thought about those we had made and what we had drawn from them. It takes work; but we can try to recapture that philosophy. Through research and interviews, I found that there are ways all of us can shift our thinking about mistakes. And in doing so, we'll learn how to leave behind the defensiveness and accusations that too often accompany errors and experiences of failure. We can be more willing to embrace risks and work creatively. We can feel good about the process, not just about the result. It begins young. Research shows that children praised for being smart are often far less willing to take on a challenging task than those who are praised for trying hard. The lesson? We need to emphasize effort and deemphasize results. We can appreciate that we can't be perfect, nor is it a goal we should aim for. And we should be careful of sending the contradictory message that it's all right to make mistakes but not where it counts. We

learned that mistakes aren't usually the fault of one bad apple, but far more often are caused by latent problems that a blatant error can bring to light. If we focus on the superficial error without doing the harder work of examining what led to the blunder, we don't learn the lessons mistakes can teach us. In writing this book, I've discovered that everything hinges on communication. Giving and receiving criticism and negative feedback, as well as apologizing and accepting apologies, are difficult to do in a way that encourages rather than shuts down the conversation. I've tried to convey to readers just how they can approach this tough but ultimately fruitful process. Research has shown us that there are tools we can use, all of us, from parents to teachers to doctors to pilots to CEOs, to help us communicate far more successfully. Improved communication can lead to mistakes being a source of education, not of shame. And it can ultimately improve our work and our relationships with our bosses, spouses, and children. If we can forgive ours and others' errors if we can put in our best effort, but at the same time acknowledge that perfection is a myth, then we're on the right track.