

Part II: High Reliability Organizations

Fewer accidents
Mindful
Risky operations

High Reliability Organizing

Early attention to “weak signals”
before they erupt into errors



Mindfulness

- Preoccupation with failure
- Reluctance to simplify
- Sensitive to operations
- Resilience
- Defers to expertise

Mindlessness

- Early warning signs unnoticed
- Changes in context unnoticed
- Outdated diagnoses
- Uses old recipes for success
- Rigid problem formulation
- Autopilot
- Totally understands environment

Preoccupation with failure

- Large and small
- Encourage reporting
- Interested in “near-misses”

Reluctance to Simplify

- Encourage skepticism
- Break boundaries of thinking
- Fight reluctance to fear the worst

Sensitivity to Operations

Groundpounders

Relationships are good

Just culture

Resilience

- A work culture that can bounce back from errors
- Errors don't disable an HRO

Deference to Expertise

Pushes decision making down

Cultivates diversity

Decision making migrates

Managing the Unexpected Workshop

Santa Fe, New Mexico

May 2004

PART III: GROUP EXERCISES

Rules of the Road

Fight lethargy/complacency

Rigorous approach

Personal energy

Comfortable with ambiguity

Sense of adventure

Spotting Unforeseen Events Early

- Where are we vulnerable?
- Be careful of success.
- Having a “bad day.”
- Just culture.
- Close calls to near misses
- Different angles.
- Fantasy.
- Training to disagree.

Using an experience from a prescribed fire, visualize a near-miss becoming a serious accident/disaster.

Imagine the Accident/Disaster Scene

- What does the accident look and feel like?
- What were the weak signals that might have occurred before this accident/disaster?
- What were the difficulties in picking up on those signals?

Wildland Fire Use Event

- Where are we most vulnerable?

- Identify weak signals that might be a precursor of that vulnerability.

Reflected Best Practices

- What are individuals, groups and your organization doing particularly well with fire-use operations?

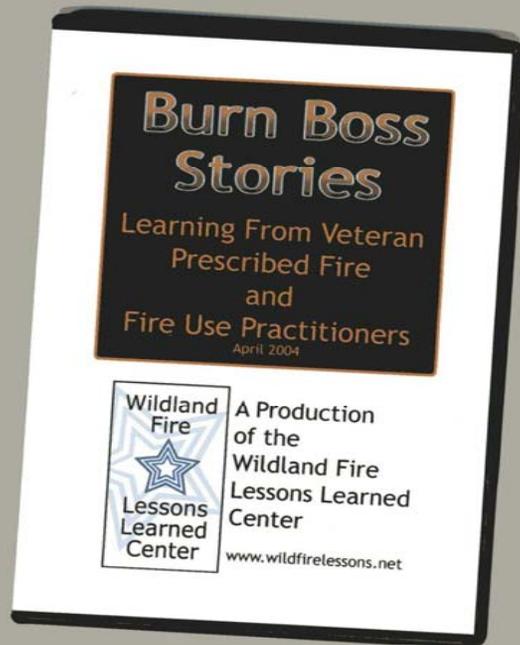
- Are these Reflected Best Practices being communicated throughout the organization?

Cheat Sheet of Ideas

- After Action Reviews
- Burn Boss Stories
- Vulnerability Assessments
- Learning Forums
- Staff Rides on Fire Use Events
- Books
- Case Studies of RBP

- Benchmarking
- Distinction: Reviews & Investigations
- Organizational Culture
- Resilience and Talking
- Facilitation Skills
- History

Stories



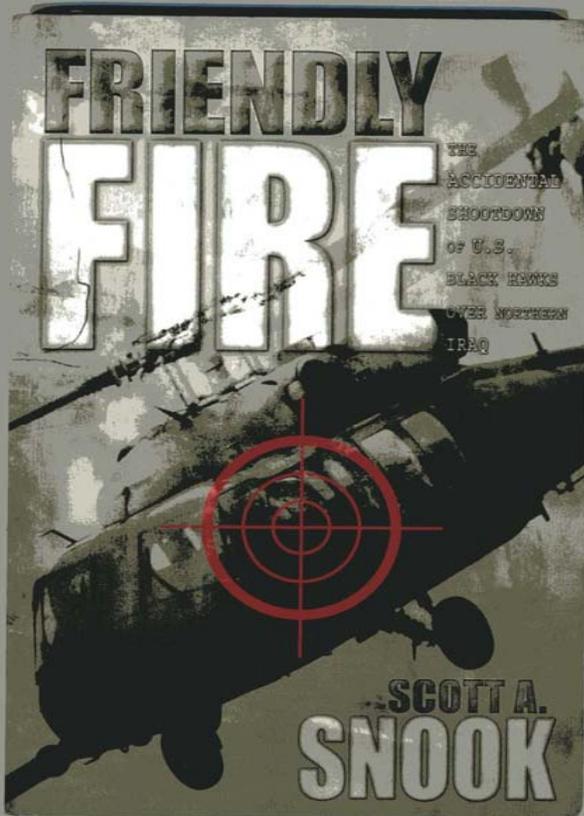
“Our species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories.”

Mary Catherine Bateson

Resilience and Talking About Your Escape

- Cascade II
- Sanford

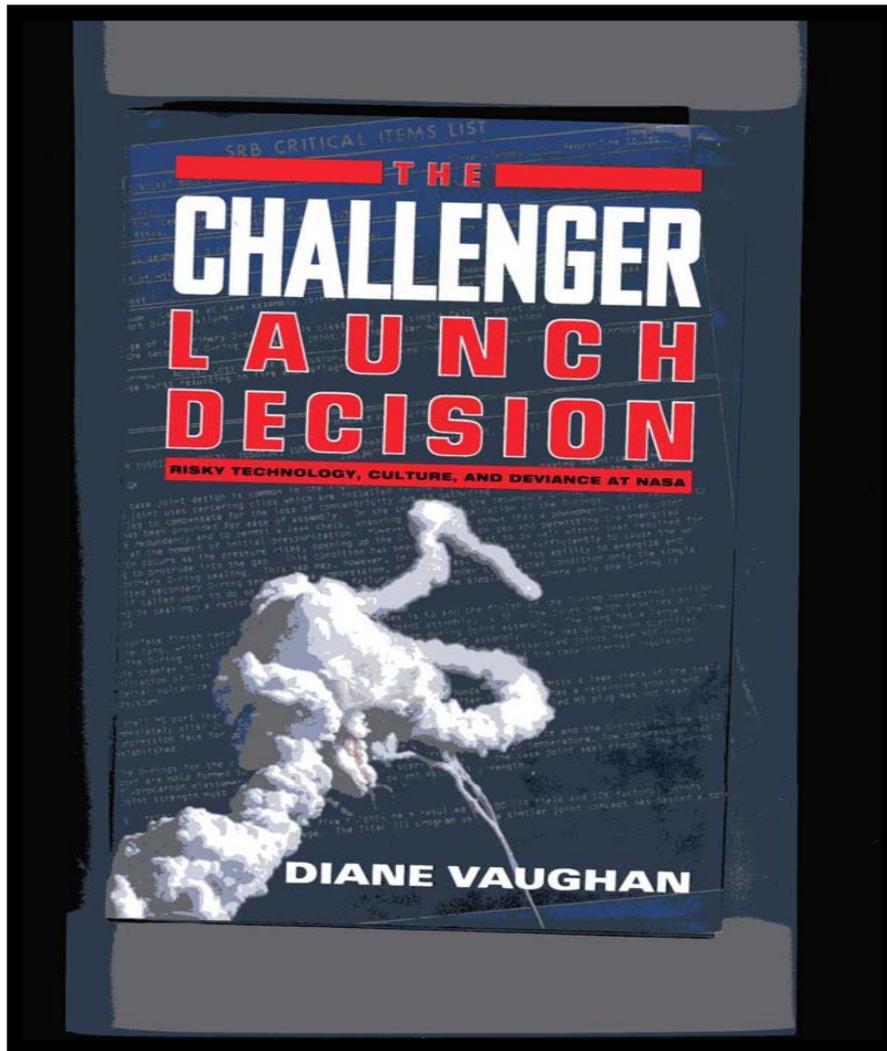
Books



Scott Snook

“How do you admit that accidents will happen while simultaneously struggling to eliminate them?”

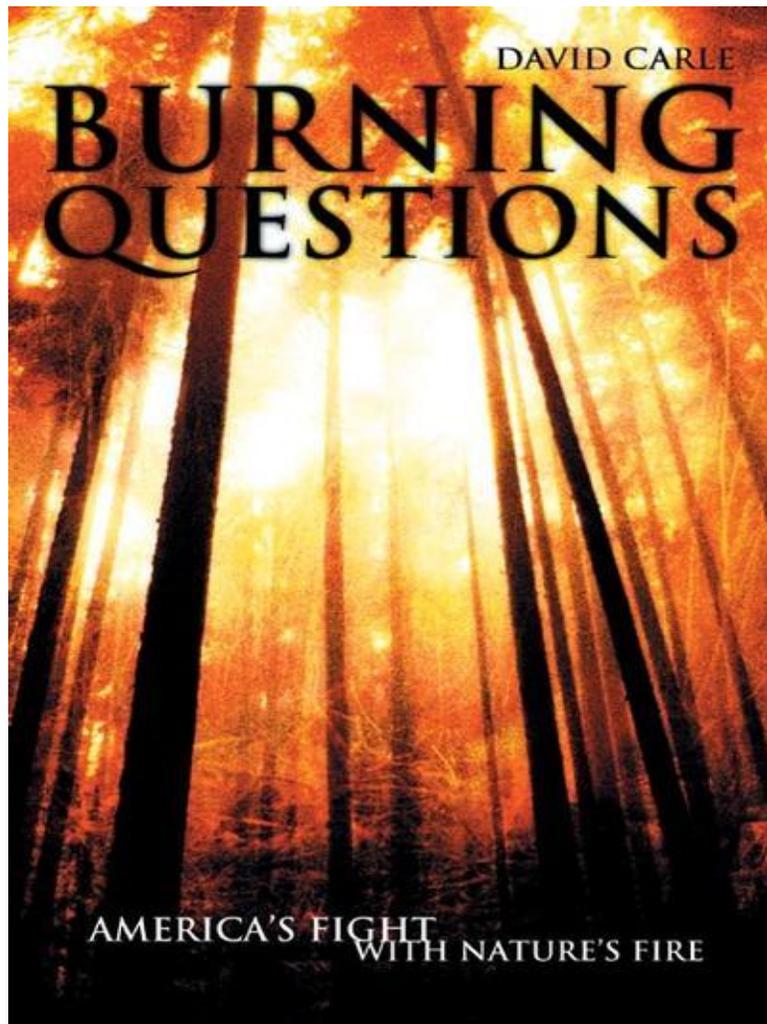
Books



Diane Vaughan

“No extraordinary actions by individuals explain what happened...The cause of disaster was a mistake embedded in the banality of organizational life....”

Books



“Harry the
Torch”

Salmon, Idaho



Salmon, Idaho



Summary





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“Control Burn,” Gary Snyder

What the Indians
here
used to do, was,
to burn out the brush every year.
in the woods, up the gorges,
keeping the oak and the pine stands
tall and clear
with grasses
and kitkitdizze under them,
never enough fuel there
that a fire could crown.
Now, manzanita,
(a fine brush in its right)
crowds up under the new trees
mixed up with logging slash
and a fire can wipe out all.

Fire is an old story.
I would like, with a sense of helpful order,
with respect for laws
of nature,
to help my land
with a burn, a hot clean
burn.
(manzanita seeds will only open
after a fire passes over or once passed
through a bear)

And then
it would be more
like,
when it belonged to the Indians

Before.