



## Why Focus on Near-Misses as a Risk Management Strategy?

If all we pay attention to are the most serious, major incidents (the rare times when we get close to catastrophic failure as shown below), then we are actually receiving and making decisions based on very *limited* information. This can give a false sense of security and limit our visibility into the actual risks that are routinely taking place.

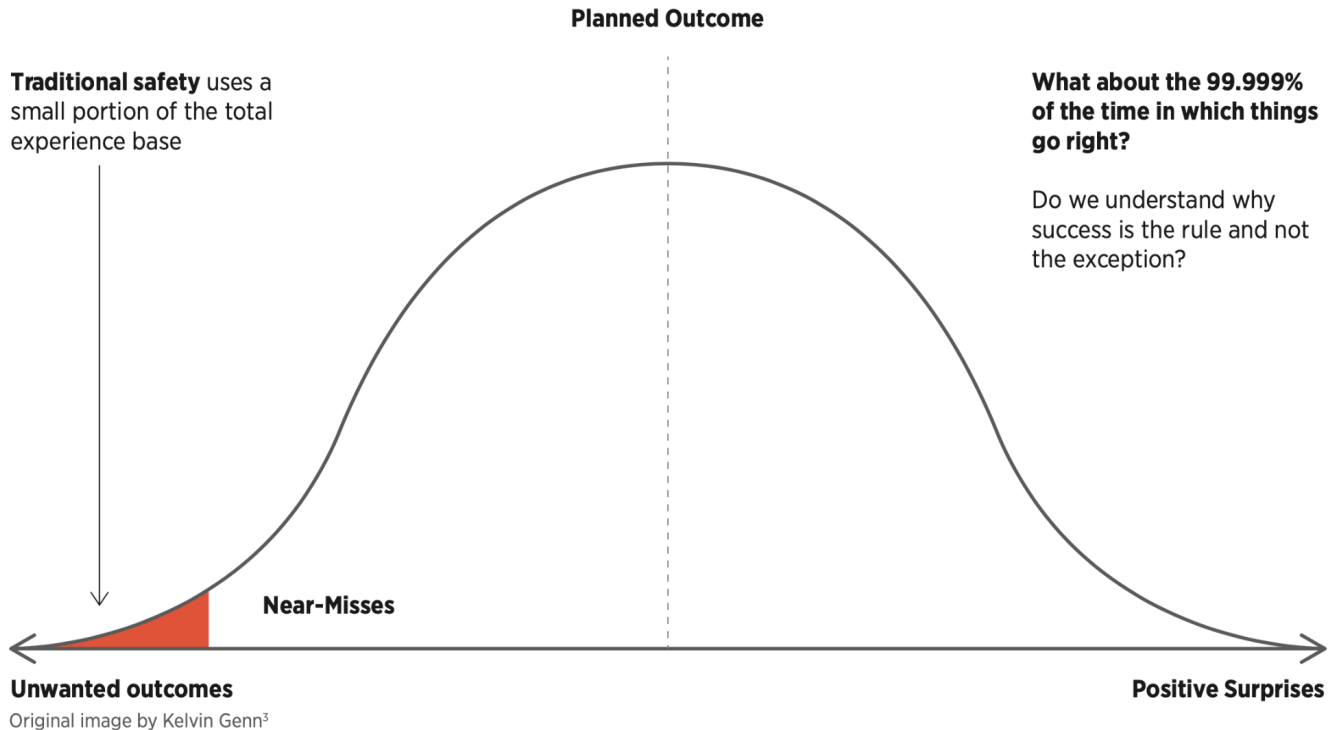


By focusing on near-misses and seemingly minor incidents, we can learn so much more about where the green line is in the image above, identify trends, and better understand everyday work and where we may have gaps in our management.



Near-misses are like “lottery tickets” we have already purchased. It’s up to us to cash them in by identifying the *learning* from those experiences.

Creating a culture of learning from incidents and near-misses is essential, and this will be influenced by how leadership responds when incidents and near-misses are reported. No one should ever be punished for simply reporting a near-miss, as this suppresses the likelihood of others doing the same in the future. It creates a learning disability in your organization.



## Action Steps:

1. DEFINE and TRAIN STAFF in the difference between an incident, a near-miss, and “normal”
2. POSITIVELY REINFORCE when near-misses and minor incidents are submitted
3. SHOW staff how their near-miss reports may be used to improve workplace safety for others
4. Seek to LEARN, not BLAME, when incidents occur
5. DISCUSS models of incident causation and understand what assumptions you already have built into your systems and culture

## Learn more about near-misses as a risk management metric:

**Sharp End Podcast:** [Episode 62 - Institutional Near-Misses](#) ([Link](#))

**Sidney Dekker:** [The Field Guide to Human Error](http://sidneydekker.com/). (<http://sidneydekker.com/>)

**Todd Conklin:** [Pre-Accident Investigations](#) (plus [podcast](#) of same name)

**Steve Smith:** [Beneficial Risks: The Evolution of Risk Management for Outdoor & Experiential Education Programs](https://www.outdoorrisk.com/beneficial-risks) (<https://www.outdoorrisk.com/beneficial-risks> - promo “Trails10” for discount)