|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cover Image | *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* Gawande, Atul  Metropolitan Books |

|  |
| --- |
| This document is overwritten when you make changes in Play Books.  You should make a copy of this document before you edit it. |

# *7 notes/highlights*

*Created by Tarang Shah*  – Last synced June 5, 2016

## *INTRODUCTION*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Know-how and sophistication have increased remarkably across almost all our realms of endeavor, and as a result so has our struggle to deliver on them. You see it in the frequent mistakes authorities make when hurricanes or tornadoes or other disasters hit. You see it in the 36 percent increase between 2004 and 2007 in lawsuits against attorneys for legal mistakes—the most common being simple administrative errors, like missed calendar dates and clerical screw ups, as well as errors in applying the law. You see it in flawed software design, in foreign intelligence failures, in our tottering banks—in fact, in almost any endeavor requiring mastery of complexity and of large amounts of knowledge. Such failures carry an emotional valence that seems to cloud how we think about them. Failures of ignorance we can forgive. If the knowledge of the best thing to do in a given situation does not exist, we are happy to have people simply make their best effort. But if the knowledge exists and is not applied correctly, it is difficult not to be infuriated. What do you mean half of heart attack patients don’t get their treatment on time? What do you mean that two-thirds of death penalty cases are overturned because of errors? It is not for nothing that the philosophers gave these failures so unmerciful a name— ineptitude . Those on the receiving end use other words, like negligence or even heartlessness . For those who do the work, however—for those who care for the patients, practice the law, respond when need calls—the judgment feels like it ignores how extremely difficult the job is. Every day there is more and more to manage and get right and learn. And defeat under conditions of complexity occurs far more often despite great effort rather than from a lack of it. That’s why the traditional solution in most professions has not been to punish failure but instead to encourage more experience and training*  May 30, 2016 | [19](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA19.w.0.0.0.1) | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *There can be no disputing the importance of experience. It is not enough for a surgeon to have the textbook knowledge of how to treat trauma victims—to understand the science of penetrating wounds, the damage they cause, the different approaches to diagnosis and treatment, the importance of acting quickly. One must also grasp the clinical reality, with its nuances of timing and sequence. One needs practice to achieve mastery, a body of experience before one achieves real success. And if what we are missing when we fail is individual skill, then what is needed is simply more training and practice. But what is striking about John’s cases is that he is among the best-trained surgeons I know, with more than a decade on the front lines. And this is the common pattern. The capability of individuals is not proving to be our primary difficulty, whether in medicine or elsewhere. Far from it. Training in most fields is longer and more intense than ever. People spend years of sixty-, seventy-, eighty-hour weeks building their base of knowledge and experience before going out into practice on their own—whether they are doctors or professors or lawyers or engineers. They have sought to perfect themselves. It is not clear how we could produce substantially more expertise than we already have. Yet our failures remain frequent. They persist despite remarkable individual ability.*  There are failures despite highly skilled, trained, experienced practitioners.  May 30, 2016 | [20](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA20.w.0.0.0.1) | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Here, then, is our situation at the start of the twenty-first century: We have accumulated stupendous know-how. We have put it in the hands of some of the most highly trained, highly skilled, and hardworking people in our society. And, with it, they have indeed accomplished extraordinary things. Nonetheless, that know-how is often unmanageable. Avoidable failures are common and persistent, not to mention demoralizing and frustrating, across many fields—from medicine to finance, business to government. And the reason is increasingly evident: the volume and complexity of what we know has exceeded our individual ability to deliver its benefits correctly, safely, or reliably. Knowledge has both saved us and burdened us. That means we need a different strategy for overcoming failure, one that builds on experience and takes advantage of the knowledge people have but somehow also makes up for our inevitable human inadequacies. And there is such a strategy—though it will seem almost ridiculous in its simplicity, maybe even crazy to those of us who have spent years carefully developing ever more advanced skills and technologies. It is a checklist*  May 30, 2016 | [20](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA20.w.0.0.0.4) | |

## *3. THE END OF THE MASTER BUILDER*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Four generations after the first aviation checklists went into use, a lesson is emerging: checklists seem able to defend anyone, even the experienced, against failure in many more tasks than we realized. They provide a kind of cognitive net. They catch mental flaws inherent in all of us—flaws of memory and attention and thoroughness. And because they do, they raise wide, unexpected possibilities.*  June 3, 2016 | [51](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA51.w.0.0.0.0.2) | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *three different kinds of problems in the world: the simple, the complicated, and the complex. Simple problems, they note, are ones like baking a cake from a mix. There is a recipe. Sometimes there are a few basic techniques to learn. But once these are mastered, following the recipe brings a high likelihood of success. Complicated problems are ones like sending a rocket to the moon. They can sometimes be broken down into a series of simple problems. But there is no straightforward recipe. Success frequently requires multiple people, often multiple teams, and specialized expertise. Unanticipated difficulties are frequent. Timing and coordination become serious concerns. Complex problems are ones like raising a child. Once you learn how to send a rocket to the moon, you can repeat the process with other rockets and perfect it. One rocket is like another rocket. But not so with raising a child, the professors point out. Every child is unique. Although raising one child may provide experience, it does not guarantee success with the next child. Expertise is valuable but most certainly not sufficient. Indeed, the next child may require an entirely different approach from the previous one. And this brings up another feature of complex problems: their outcomes remain highly uncertain. Yet we all know that it is possible to raise a child well. It’s complex, that’s all*  June 3, 2016 | [51](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA51.w.0.0.0.1) | |

## *5. THE FIRST TRY*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *No, the more familiar and widely dangerous issue is a kind of silent disengagement, the consequence of specialized technicians sticking narrowly to their domains. “That’s not my problem” is possibly the worst thing people can think*  June 5, 2016 | [98](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA98.w.0.0.0.4) | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *we need them to see their job not just as performing their isolated set of tasks well but also as helping the group get the best possible results. This requires finding a way to ensure that the group lets nothing fall between the cracks and also adapts as a team to what ever problems might arise.*  June 5, 2016 | [99](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=Si1OBgAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA99.w.0.0.0.2) | |