DISCOVERING THE NEW VIEW OF SAFETY

USING LEARNING TEAMS

Moni Hogg

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Haere taka mua, taka muri; kaua e whai.
Be a leader, not a follower.
(Māori proverb)

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DISCOVERING THE NEW VIEW OF SAFETY

Bruce McDonald, Patrick Seaman, and John Robertson were wonderful mentors in my formative years. Each died far too young (in their 60s), but I've never forgotten their wise guidance.

There's a phenomenal team collaborating across New Zealand to handhold Safety Differently through. Over recent years, our safety profession has become an awesome tribe – connecting, sharing ideas and making things happen. It's enormous fun and very exciting to see so much change in such a short space of time. My special thanks go to Francois Barton, Jon Harper-Slade and Selena Armstrong for their kindness and encouragement in recent years.

I also want to acknowledge those New View Safety thinkers who have influenced and informed my work. As the adage goes, no ideas are new; however, the creativity, passion and time to lead and support a new movement require more determination, grit and courage than others might see.

Daniel Hummerdal is a great inspiration, and his leadership in the New Zealand safety sector has brought immeasurable change. He has deftly created a space for improved ethics to emerge to full maturity.

Sidney Dekker's leadership from a place of ethics and values is changing the world, and I salute his example.

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Introduction

Welcome to the exciting world of New View Safety, which radically redefines how we create safety and wellbeing in our organisations. Traversing this territory is often confusing and paradoxical, yet it is enlightening and requires courage and bravery.

The purpose of this book is to set you and your organisation on the journey to New View Safety. If you're already on your way, use this book as a refresher and an opportunity to refine what you're doing. I hope the ideas and practical suggestions will inspire you to go further.

This book, *Discovering the New View of Safety,* maps the move from current safety systems to new philosophies and methodologies, crossing the landscape of Learning Teams.

My next book, *Evolving the New View of Safety*, is already in draft. From the foundation of Learning Teams, it moves safety practices towards the principles found in self-directed teams.

Together, these two books present wisdom from the emerging field of safety science based on my personal practical implementation and the experiences of others. Translating theory into practice is the current challenge.

A couple of quick notes.

New View Safety is an umbrella term for contemporary safety science that is gaining ground internationally. In the interests of variety, I'll circle through synonymous terms, including Safety Differently and Safety II. More definitions later.

In a world where technology is at our fingertips, I've been asked whether I employed AI tools in writing this book. While those tools have value in some settings, I have not used them here. For better or worse, these words are my own.

Why this book?

Our current societies have been built over millennia. Whatever your political bent, it's not hard to see that we have created structures and systems that attempt to institutionalise morality.

Where religion was once the predominant mechanism for keeping basic social ethics intact, we now have dedicated laws, governments and agencies. The safety science profession has arisen from the increasing demand for ethics in business following the industrial revolution.

Society, however, is going through extraordinary new shifts. These are, in part, driven by the exponential growth in technology, which has democratised knowledge and is increasingly democratising power.

Technology has created a new form of global connectedness. Yet our institutions, structures and systems are creaking and groaning. In all walks of life, we seek new solutions to the age-old question of ethical leadership.

Our organisations desperately need changing. They are rife with parental attitudes towards employees, politics, infighting, bureaucracy, bullying, poor wellbeing, and overall discontent. All of which are ultimately driven by fear. This negativity affects large parts of our population.

While we often struggle to see a more harmonious way of working and living together, there is a growing call for a shift in consciousness. From blame to trust. From control to transparency. From protection to connection. From centralised power to self-determination.

Regardless of personal opinions, how can the safety world contribute to the wider worries facing us today? How can our little corner of the world make a difference in the bigger scheme of things?

Every organisation is on its own journey of evolution; yours will be no different. Your amazing teams and leadership, and the customers, communities and nations you serve are vital parts of our planet's complex web of life.

We are not alone

Safety thinking is currently undergoing a major shift, although, at its core, it's largely a shift in focus. Similar transitions are happening globally in other fields, so we're not alone in a fundamental change in methodology.

Figure 1: A massive shift in worldview

By the fifth century BC, it was generally accepted that the earth was round rather than flat. This was a game-changer and had a major influence on the prevailing paradigms.

Equally significant changes are occurring in science now.

Corporates, who arguably run much of the world, currently focus on avoiding error, driven by the scientific management approach of the twentieth century. This has resulted in the rules, procedures, bureaucracy and control that have become

synonymous with organisational safety. It has created a behemoth that is out of control.

> In the early twentieth century, scientists made radical discoveries known as quantum physics. We now recognise that focus (the influence of the observer) impacts behaviour and outcomes. Neuroscience shows that our brains develop according to what we pay attention to.

These scientific understandings are filtering into applied science and business methodology. For example, the four-day workweek movement focuses on output rather than time. In animal welfare agencies, the shift is from preventing harm to improving positive experiences for animals.

In New View Safety, the move is from avoiding error to building team capacity and resilience. As with motorsport, we are focused on getting into the gap. Our sector's journey over the coming decade and beyond is to fully understand what that gap is. We've got a lot to discover.

New View Safety detractors seem to think that tried-and-true wisdom is being thrown out with this shift. It's not. All the good safety practice we've developed over time is needed now as much as ever. What we're doing is evolving – nudging our systems forward based on new thinking and a new focus. We're taking the good and aiming to make it great.

So, what do we want to focus on then? We know that rules, procedures and punishment have only gotten us so far. What, then will get us to the next stage of evolution? We need a radical new way of looking at how we work together.

There's a lot to this picture of a brighter future; however, three keys involve building trust, transparency and honesty throughout our social structures. Only then can we reduce the excessive need for regulation, control and bureaucracy. It's a new landscape to discover. And innovation is the vehicle.

A call to action

Supporting the New View Safety movement and being a change agent in your corner means observing better ethics and humanising your systems. That leads to improved performance, ways of working together, and (hopefully) better structures. You become part of the vision of a society with a better future.

I've written this book (and the next) because, over my twenty or so years as a safety professional, I've consistently seen great safety leadership expressed by individuals and teams that hierarchical organisations don't fully harness.

No wonder others are frustrated with our profession. The primary reason is that most organisations are overly focused on the wrong things. They are blind to the true potential of teams

to create the solutions they seek. Their systems and structures are holding them back.

Our people across industries, nations and around the globe are truly remarkable. I want to encourage my colleagues everywhere to engage in experiments and pilots to redesign how safety leadership is structured.

I'm not talking about slicker, fancier initiatives based on the benefits of caring about each other (although these have their place). I'm talking about changing systems and structures to harness our full potential.

This call to action is in the context of current wider social change. The Millennial and Gen Z generations appear to embrace a progressive culture with a new set of values. They intrinsically understand that everyone has value and that mutual support is essential to achieving potential.

> The competitive hierarchical structures that new generations have inherited don't fit their ethos and will crumble once they lead and govern our organisations. Therefore, those of us with the power to make change now must prepare the way.

While New View Safety is backed by recent advancements in safety and social science, my attempt with this book is to give a practitioner-based interpretation of the ideas.

I share this material on the basis of 'take what you like and leave the rest'. At the same time, I encourage every safety professional to boldly and courageously further the collective innovation journey from your corner.

Take the ideas in this book that resonate with you, and experiment with them. Share and publish the results. Be part of the change and enjoy it.

My request

Please pop me a note on LinkedIn once you've read the book – I love making connections around the world. Enjoy.

Why Shift from Current Safety Approaches

Current safety methods have gotten us so far – it's time to evolve

Key points

- The Industrial Revolution massively improved productivity but dumbed down workers.

- Management thinking has created a false construct that workers are less capable and need to be controlled.

- Contemporary safety thinking creates transparency over system vulnerabilities and sees that capable teams are successful despite imperfect conditions. The approaches meet the intended requirements of directors in our safety legislation.

'Our HR manager has taken some of the recommendations out of the Learning Team report,' he said with a resigned sigh. My client, the safety lead for the small Company Z, had been facilitating Learning Teams – an enquiry-based workshop with frontline workers – for a couple of years. He supported the workers voicing their concern about the culture around housekeeping and cleanliness in their processing plant.

The work teams had noted that leadership were either turning a blind eye or were unaware of the issue because they weren't resourcing the teams particularly well to handle it themselves. Production output was paramount. Rodents were starting to appear in the facility, alongside the prevalence of dust which made surfaces slippery.

The workers had made several suggestions for how to improve the situation. Their preferred solution was support from leadership via walkarounds and generally taking an interest in the situation. The HR manager removed this recommendation from the report.

We will assume the HR manager (a good person who cared a lot for the team) had best intentions. They would have thought they were doing the right thing. Almost all individuals strive to be ethical in their dealings; so we must look to the systems and structures when seeking change.

The question, though, is why this would happen when the leaders and directors should (and have a legal duty to know) about such a situation. We'll return to Company Z later in the chapter; for now, we need to understand how an HR manager

can have such authority over team insights and what that means for our organisations.

History of labour relations and management philosophy

For much of our history, humans lived in nomadic tribes and bands. It wasn't until the Agricultural Revolution and the notion of land ownership came about that organisational structures developed based on competition.

Before the Industrial Revolution, most work was done through the craftsmanship of butchers, bakers, builders and others. Women were cooks, made clothing and bought up children. Work was specialised based on trades, and the responsibility for workmanship rested squarely with the individuals carrying out the work.

The Industrial Revolution of the twentieth century changed all that. Taylorism (aptly coined scientific management) and the associated specialisation of labour, stripped workers of opportunities to participate in planning, evaluating and improving work processes. The responsibility for the quality of the work now rested with a new class – the managers.

In today's organisations, we see top-down decision-making, prescribed tasks and narrow job descriptions. Industrial relations, work rules and personnel policies prevail. Bosses control a system designed to limit employees' room for error.

This obsession with hunting out and controlling error has created the quality and proliferation of products and services we enjoy today in an increasingly technology-driven world. No wonder we are resistant to change. Who doesn't love the relative comfort of our lives compared to a hundred years ago?

However, there is growing discontent with the dehumanising ways of organisations. Science shows that the focus of mainstream organisations on 'predict and control' (a desire to predict the future and control all or most outcomes) needs an upgrade. More on this soon.

Rob Long discusses this dehumanising effect in his article, *The Ethics of Safety*.[1] He says:

> 'The key to the effectiveness in safety is the humanisation of others and the building of relationships. It is strange that the vice of intolerance is advocated in the workplace, but we would never want such a vice in our home relationships. The challenge for the safety community is to understand the impact of negative ethics and seek positive ethics in the promotion of care, safety and the management of risk.'

Sidney Dekker and the Safety Differently community have declared that safety should be framed as an ethical responsibility rather than a constant bureaucratic focus. An international safety science community posited a new framing of safety to humanise workers and answer the question of ensuring moral outcomes in society.

Off the back of this, the New View Safety movement has burgeoned. The great news is that these approaches simultaneously improve ethics and performance. Just ask any of the organisations who are early adopters and have made sincere attempts to apply the new theory. They will attest to what I'm saying. The win-win outcomes are good for the business, which we'll see throughout this book.

The vision of the movement is, over time, to reduce reliance on regulation while driving the desired social outcomes. Less regulation and bureaucracy is good for business. If business takes full responsibility for ethical outcomes, compliance, which is inefficient, can be reduced. It becomes an upward spiral. Who's going to argue with that?

Before we start on how to do all this amazing stuff, let's look closer at the problems created by how we currently work together.

Workers have become dependent on managers and systems

While we rarely question the hierarchical nature of most of our organisations and institutions, hierarchy creates the need to please managers, which drives conformity.

This management system (not the only available option despite its prevalence) creates employees driven by management rather than customers and conformity rather than creativity. Managers are rewarded with status and power, which can conflict with good leadership.

This system essentially dumbs down most people who must conduct work based on predefined role descriptions designed around predict and control thinking. It performs poorly at harnessing the true potential of those tasked with bringing forth the purpose of an organisation.

Ironically, we spend much time and money trying to reverse these effects with leadership training, innovation training, staff development and more. Yet, we don't ask whether the structures serve the purpose for which they are designed.

Organisations are stifled with endless meetings, politics, infighting and bureaucracy. Blame, finger-pointing, low trust and poor relationships prevail. Performance management is seen as the answer, and discipline deals with accountability. A parent-child construct for directing work and solving problems emerges.

A common symptom of this is teams bitching and moaning about problems in the organisation, constantly frustrated that their feedback and ideas go unheard. Overly busy managers try to have a handle on too many things and are frustrated when workers don't take more responsibility for resolving issues.

Organisations become limited by the capacity of their leadership.

We need, instead, to build structures that activate the 'sense and respond' process (more on this soon), which enables workers who are close to the work and understand what's needed, to do something about it.

Our current ways of working often shut this down, reducing creativity and agility and creating situations where staff pay attention to what keeps their boss happy rather than the client. You've likely seen this: staff with no authority to make decisions end up following dumb processes to avoid getting into trouble, instead of doing what would be in everyone's best interests.

With a traditional boss/worker relationship, the locus of innovation is always top down. Teams don't offer their creative ideas anywhere near the extent to which the organisation could benefit. Or, when they do, follow-up and implementation are poor, and the teams decide it's a waste of time.

We need a shift towards redesigning structures to build the capacity of teams to solve these problems. This approach is *far* more powerful as it generates capacity to handle the variability of demands that are a natural part of our work. (The safety science community terms this ability 'resilience', and it is the backbone of the school of thought called resilience engineering.) Pioneers have shown the way, and we will draw from these throughout this book to understand how we can adapt and evolve our safety programmes.

With organisations intent on building agile and creative teams, including improving safety outcomes, the foundation is unleashing potential. As mentioned earlier, the most often reported challenge is the transition needed in managerial thinking. New skills, perspectives and strategies are essential, although some may perceive them as threatening their power and status.

In addition, workers are used to their dependence on bosses and may need support to participate further. They often need to develop the confidence that they will be heard and supported to make mistakes as they learn and grow. Participative management accepts that teams can build the capacity to manage and lead themselves. They can furnish the initiative, sense of responsibility, creativity and problem-solving from within. In short, teams are capable of being self-reliant.

From 'predict and control' to 'sense and respond'

Given the problems organisations face, the challenge is understanding the evolution stage required to address these needs. If that seems like a task beyond your organisation's ability, the missing epiphany is that you must design iterative steps to build team capacity and resilience.

Before we unpack the steps and stages of the journey, we need to understand what we're trying to achieve. We need to enable teams to 'sense and respond'. This term is referred to in complexity theory, which underpins New View Safety. First, however, let's talk about it in practical terms.

As they go about their work days, teams sense when work isn't flowing right. They connect to issues that arise and see better ways of doing things. Each team member has a unique perspective and a window into how things could be improved. Teams and departments have their own perspectives as well.

The hierarchical, controlled, top-down nature of work means these individuals and teams often can't respond (i.e., change and make improvements) without getting busy managers on board or dealing with politics and bureaucracy. Organisational design is usually very frustrating in this regard. We all have war stories.

Organisations are complex adaptive systems, meaning they adapt and change organically rather than according to some prescribed plan. Approaches that harness the intelligence of their people massively improve creativity and innovation and achieve the purpose of the organisation.

Teams are amazing and can successfully handle the difficulties surrounding hierarchical organisations. They make do with overly prescribed procedures, imperfect resourcing, challenges in resolving goal conflicts and a raft of other issues. In Safety II language, they are highly adaptable actors who create success in almost all conditions and despite the constraints, day in and day out.

Improving ethics by humanising people supports better performance in our businesses. It unleashes creativity, efficient problem-solving and the ability of the teams to make effective decisions that they own and take responsibility for. This is the promise of Safety II and it's truly a win-win.

Using the principles of self-organisation to build capacity and resilience

I've had the privilege of setting up (almost from scratch) a framework based on Safety Differently principles for a high-tech organisation in a high-risk environment with critical safety needs. The CEO wanted safety management that was responsive to a fast-paced, rapidly changing environment with a team of capable and engaged staff.

A traditional command and control style of safety didn't suit the needs of the organisation or the people. Creating bureaucracy would only hamper the organisation's need to remain as agile as possible.

A safety department could provide well-meaning advice on the systems required to enable safety in a reasonably stable environment; however, the design engineers and technicians were by far the most qualified to make on-the-ground decisions.

At that time, with fresh ideas coming from academics and international leaders such as Sidney Dekker, the organisation decided to try a bottom-up approach where teams had full autonomy to manage their own safety, create rules and procedures according to their needs, and take full responsibility for identifying all risks and finding the solutions and controls for them.

The result was shared safety leadership amongst teams with high levels of participation, collaboration and conversations

about safety. Unnecessary bureaucracy was reduced to a bare minimum to meet only specifically prescribed regulations. Teams had the flexibility to be responsive to the agile, innovative and rapidly changing working environment. This was enabled via a high trust, blame-free culture, an authentic open-door policy with senior leadership and radical transparency with regulators.

Teams were empowered to implement controls and change rules about their safety according to current conditions. Clear backing by the CEO and leadership team meant adequate resources were available for the teams. Engagement was extremely high, with working groups formed around key risks, safety training and procurement.

While all this may seem impossible for your organisation, you are already using some of the principles of self-organisation. At its core, self-management means knowing exactly what you are responsible for and having the freedom to meet those expectations however you think is best. Self-organisation is being able to make changes to improve things – beyond what is required of you. Essentially, all that is needed is commitment from everyone to make it work!

The best way to enable teams to 'sense and respond' is to set them up for successful self-organisation to whatever extent is possible. That means those doing the work have the best understanding of the risk involved and are, therefore, better placed to make the best decisions on handling that risk. Obviously they'll need some support, but less than our organisations fearfully think.

To self-organise, teams need the following:

- authority to make decisions
- resourcing to ensure the necessary capacity and capability
- transparency of information to support decision-making
- a means to support peer-to-peer accountability.

As the New View concepts have been accepted and trialled in recent years, we have seen aspects of these principles used with new tools and methodologies, including the Human Organisational Performance (HOP) principles, Learning Teams, and tools based on resilience mapping.

However, the aim over time is to build these add-on approaches into the main fabric of your organisation so that managing safety is not separate from how the rest of the organisation functions. While all this may seem too big a step change right now, you need to consider how your roadmap could look over the next decade and beyond.

As the adage goes, don't overestimate what you can achieve in one year and don't underestimate what you can achieve in ten. For now, see this as a line of sight to where you are heading and aim to break down the steps to get there. With the level of risk and the regulatory frameworks they must adhere to, increasing trust in front-line teams is a challenge for some organisations.

They worry about legal defensibility. They worry about the capability of the teams to step up. They worry about the robustness of controls and whether they can still be adequately

verified. There are answers to all these concerns, as we'll see. Plenty of new methodologies and tools are available to nudge us in the right direction.

Over time, you'll need to tackle these issues using innovation techniques and new methods to progressively build capability in your organisation. This has to be done intentionally and requires forethought, commitment and courage to lead the necessary change. We'll unpack all this across successive chapters plus the next book.

For now, I can confidently share that five years on from implementing Safety Differently, the high-tech organisation just mentioned has gone from strength to strength in performance with minimal, if any, injuries to the team. A contemporary safety programme has been one factor in their overall success.

The roadmap from here

The Safety Differently journey is about building trust and ownership to strengthen the adaptability and resilience of your teams. When you start with easy initiatives, this gains momentum and more becomes possible. It means growing the capability of teams that have become dependent on the systems they work within.

The other challenge is shifting management to a different way of working with their teams. Once you get going, you'll see the potential of this approach and only want more. Naturally, you will need to maintain appropriate levels of control while testing ideas, adapting and evolving.

Some leaders choose not to put time and resources into New View Safety initiatives because they have other priorities, but this is a mistake. The very problems they are tied up solving will be readily answered and resolved by these new approaches.

If you take small steps, it's not hard to nudge your system with well-designed experiments and small initiatives and use them powerfully to demonstrate new ideas to your organisation.

It is then up to everyone to adopt the ideas and drive them organically through the system. Your job is to catalyse, support and facilitate this process. Operate as a change agent. We'll explore this in detail soon.

You'll have plenty of teething problems along the way. The good news is that you can go slow, steady and under the radar if necessary. Creativity and commitment are the essential ingredients.

Stages of empowerment

Most safety programmes still lean on committees, surveys and other accepted instruments to deliver worker participation and engagement. They are accepted means of discharging legal duty and are written deeply into our auditing and assurance programmes. These mechanisms have driven improvement in recent decades and prevail despite better alternatives. But the results are plateauing and, as Figure 2 shows, they are at the lower end of the continuum of empowerment.

CONTINUUM OF EMPOWERMENT

| Commitees, surveys, etc. | Learning Teams | Co-design with teams | Self-directed work teams |

Low   **High**
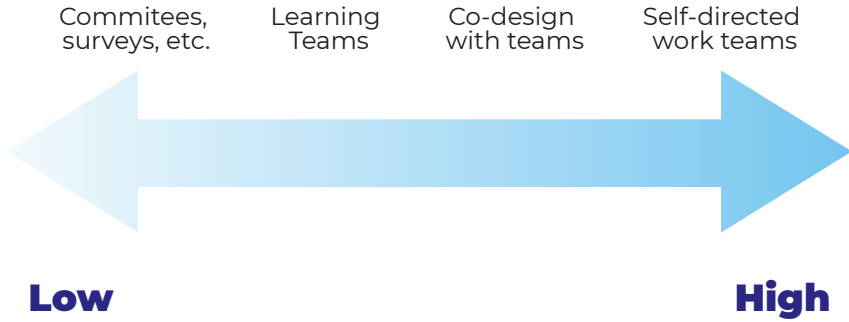
Figure 2: Continuum of empowerment

Learning Teams are a structured process designed to facilitate team-based enquiry about everyday work from the perspective of the team members. We empower them by asking what improvements would make it easier to adapt successfully to challenging day-to-day work conditions.

Through a structured, facilitated exercise, we enable teams to share what they 'sense' in conversations with their managers, who, hopefully, support their insights by making the necessary improvements (providing the 'response'). In this way, Learning Teams are a discrete, micro, self-directed exercise.

This process begins the shift to self-directed work teams as we teach management to listen to the reality of how the work is done and co-design improvements with the team.

Learning Teams build trust between workers and managers, which is the crucial ingredient for shifting to higher levels of empowerment. My next book will further explore the components that are necessary to embed trust further and give more authority to the teams.

Learning Teams and other work insight methods are becoming accepted across Australasia. In upcoming chapters, we'll detail how to do the Learning Teams process because they're important stepping stones as you build your New View Safety framework. They start the necessary journey of building transparency up and down the organisation – between frontline teams and the board directors who prioritise resourcing. The upward spiral of trust starts here.

I accept that there are challenges with Learning Teams. Common concerns expressed include the time-consuming nature of the sessions, inadequate follow up, and that it often takes champions to keep the methodology alive in the business. However, they are definitely worth the time because workers' insights can usually fix previously unsolved problems. Win-win outcomes mean managers realise the value immediately.

One high-risk company was the pioneer for Learning Teams in New Zealand. Champions, including operational leads with a passion for the new work and safety lens, drove change through the business. This led to a genuine shift from blaming workers when something went wrong, to learning along with them.

Ten years on, they are still as passionate about Learning Teams. Operational teams request the process and ask for more facilitators to be trained when some leave the business. Everyone understands and recognises the ethos. Known as a high-performing organisation, there's no doubt that the Learning Teams programme is part of their success. At the time of writing, they are currently looking at extending their programme to include more advanced ways of empowering teams by driving resource and budget prioritisation as close to the team level as possible.

Stages of the journey

This book takes you through the initial stages towards an entire system based on the Safety Differently principles, focusing on the first three stages of readiness, starting out and having a structured framework as shown in the following table.

My next book, *Evolving the New View of Safety*, will complete the journey, describing the remaining elements of co-designing systems, ethical leadership and self-directed work teams. All the elements required to evolve your entire system. While that may seem unrealistic right now, remember how fast society is changing. Buckle up; we're in for a ride.

For now, though, our focus is on the initial three stages, set out in Table 1.

	STAGE	PURPOSE	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
Discovering the New View of Safety	Readiness	Introducing concepts	Trials and experiments	Understanding
	Starting out	Demonstrating the change in focus	Human organisational performance (HOP) principles	Trust
	Structured framework	Embedding the philosophy	Learning Teams, worker insights capture and reporting	Listening
Evolving the New View of Safety	Co-design systems with your teams	Building team capability	Integrate safety management with work	Ownership
	Ethical leadership	Legitimately and safely reducing bureaucracy	Transparency with regulators, peer-to-peer accountability	Connection
	Self-directed work teams	Enable and resource teams to self-determine most of their safety needs	Team-based safety systems with the authority to adapt autonomously	Performance

Table 1: The roadmap to implementing Safety Differently

The HR manager at Company Z had good reasons for editing the report. In this case, they were trying to protect senior colleagues (who were busy resolving strategic matters for the business) from operational details. However, despite their good intent, the law says that directors and those responsible for carrying out their duties must understand what's going on at a team level and resource those needs accordingly. This team was alerting their seniors to a genuine issue that needed visibility to be resolved. Their insight should have been trusted and transparency enabled.

Directors have a legal and moral duty to know, understand and resource the risks. In practice, that means recognising the insights from the work teams who fully know what's going on and ensuring they can effectively resolve problems. Managers, the safety team and other experts have a limited picture created by the hierarchical nature of organisations. We need a New View of how to deal with this. In addition, work teams need to understand the director's strategy and decision-making, so they can adapt effectively, and know what intel needs to flow back upwards.

Throughout this book, we'll explore the early territory that is well underway, culminating in Chapter Twelve, which details how to turn the new methods into a measurement system (with a view to using AI to handle the data) that achieves transparency over what's happening with teams. To do that, we need to re-examine how hierarchical relationships affect how we work together and start iteratively making change.

The next book, *Evolving the New View of Safety*, will dive into relatively uncharted territory. We'll talk about how to iteratively build ownership and capability so teams can safely adapt to daily conditions in an agile manner with authority, resourcing and collective decision-making. This requires integrating safety systems with operational work (instead of a siloed system). It takes a fully decluttered system and a collaborative, transparent relationship with the regulator to achieve this, as legal defensibility creates roadblocks to full team ownership.

So, what does this mean for directors now?

Reframing due diligence requirements as we evolve to the 'new view' of safety

The director of one company I worked with shared that since doing Safety II and Learning Teams, he could now see how smart and capable his whole team are, where previously he'd seen them as a rough bunch he didn't entirely trust. In another company, after doing Learning Teams, the officers became aware they'd been blind to how much the workers could contribute to solving production problems.

Any transformational journey in an organisation requires understanding where we are heading with the company directors' focus. Change is in the wind for everyone.

In 2023, New Zealand's Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum published a report on *Better Governance* based on

New View Safety concepts.[2] To read the full report, go to https://www.forum.org.nz/resources/better-governance/. The report draws on legal requirements in Australia and New Zealand, but I'm sure the principles have relevance in other countries. Let's examine insights 1, 2 and 6, to frame where we're headed in this book.

8 KEY INSIGHTS

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Confusion about duties of PCBU vs Officer	Officers view H&S as a *complicated* rather than *complex*, problem	Continuing compliance and transactional focus	Scarcity of governance capable H&S Leaders

5	**6**	**7**	**8**
Reliance on lag data, driving reactive responses to harm	Director role makes vulnerability hard and limits curiosity	Unclear H&S governance capability requirements	Unclear regulatory expectations, capability and action

Figure 3: New Zealand's recent 'Better Governance' findings

Insight One concerns directors' understanding of where their personal liability begins and ends.

In New Zealand, the organisation is liable if someone gets harmed. Individual directors are only legally required to carry out due diligence duties, which is to conduct activities which support the organisation to avoid harm. They must know and understand what's happening in the organisation and resource the teams to keep themselves safe. In addition, all compliance

must be met, and monitoring and verification must be undertaken to keep checks and balances in place. We'll explore these more in Chapter Twelve, where we match the duties to the New View of data to collect.

In practice that means transparency over what's going on in the organisation. Directors can't fulfil their duty without this awareness, so part of our job as safety leads is to enable transparency. The only way we can do so is through building trust so people feel safe to tell the truth, despite the power distance created by hierarchy. Usually managers filter what is communicated up and down, partly so they can get the job done without undue interference. This needs to be cut through with new solutions.

What this means is, as safety practitioners, we need to find new ways to work within the hierarchy of our organisations so that the voices are heard, seen and transparent to all. We'll look in Chapter Six at how to do this with directors and leaders of our businesses. So, you become more of a coach and facilitator, and the role of expert giving advice becomes only one part of the picture.

In Company Z, the team shared what they were sensing and the company didn't respond regardless of the good intent. That means the team will be less likely to come forward in the future.

Insight Two builds on this. Safety I, as a term, speaks to viewing safety as a 'complicated' problem, which is where professional expertise has the solutions. If you build a rocket, someone with know-how (an appropriate engineer or technician) is required for the job.

Safety II, however, attempts to deal with the complex nature of our workplaces. In a rocket factory, how the teams work together to get things done is not always predictable (this is a core feature of my next book). Asking how teams adapt successfully to changing day-to-day conditions deals with this complexity. The associated risks are what reporting to directors should be about. These matters must be transparent in the business.

The Company Z teams struggled with resourcing to keep the facility clean. In law, it is clearly the responsibility of the organisation to resource the teams to enable their safety and wellbeing. In New View Safety language, we're talking about the visibility of system vulnerabilities. In this case, appropriate cleaning wasn't being undertaken for reasons beyond workers' control. And for this, we need input from the workers who know the situation.

The Sixth Insight raises the topic of vulnerability. Like all humans, directors are uncomfortable not having all the answers, so they need to develop curiosity. Systems can support this, and leaders will always have the right of veto. There's more on this in Chapter Three.

To fully understand what's happening in the business, directors need frontline workers to have an amplified voice. Yet, as we've seen, these voices have been devalued in our industrial society. In addition, these workers need transparency over decisions made at board level, plus financial and budgetary information to support their ability to 'sense and respond' appropriately.

Starting on this journey can be iterative, from a micro-experiment basis.

In 2023, the winner of NZ's overall industry safety award engaged their work teams in supporting the organisation with capital expenditure prioritisation. Setting aside a sizable budget for improvements and using extensive workshops with the teams, the health and safety representatives were able to decide how the money was spent. The head of safety told me that it took a bit of persuasion to get the project through, but after the first year, the board agreed that it needed to continue.

Dianne Chadwick and her colleagues in the oil and gas industry showed that safe behaviour (and reduced illness and injury) was linked to trust between workers and managers.[3] Some of what must be heard is not always palatable. The truth can be inconvenient and hard to handle, so it requires a courageous culture. Yet trust emerges from this bravery. Increasingly, published academic papers are indicating that high trust in organisations correlates with reduced injuries. This is the way forward. Anecdotally, the front-runner organisations with New View Safety report significant and consistent reductions in worker compensation costs.

A final word: inclusiveness

The workers who are most often dumbed down come from marginalised ethnicities. In New Zealand, this is commonly Pasifika, Māori, Asian and immigrant workers from developing countries.

I worked with a CEO who employed workers from diverse cultures. In his words: 'When an organisation gets bigger, you take some things for granted. To truly understand people, you have to get to know them. You have to get to know their lives and their families, how they live and what ticks people's boxes.'

He went on, 'I think that in some ways we're hell-bent on turning things into a more corporate relationship. So, for me, the work to understand how people are and where they've come from really helps build that relationship. The whole safety side is about relationships.'

Throughout this book, we'll explore case studies where all workers are enabled to contribute to learning and making improvements in organisations. We'll show that humanising people works.

Where to from here

The good news is that every good thing requires patience. Heading into the New View Safety journey takes time. Consistently heading in the desired direction and taking everyone with you can take longer than you might imagine. Think three to five years to achieve what you're visualising now.

Start wherever works for you. There's no one-size-fits-all in this. Learn from others. Team up with like-minded colleagues and form organic innovation groups. There is much thought leadership available to help you develop your approach. Read widely, learn from those who've gone beyond, and join in by creating your own case studies to share with others.

Chapters Two, Three and Four set up the journey with the basic theory, including resilience engineering, how to get your organisation ready to get started, and an understanding of the foundations required for success.

Chapter Five unpacks the change management journey.

Chapter Six is the starting point for engaging your leaders and managers in a new set of human organisational performance principles (HOP) as they support your teams.

Chapters Seven through Eleven explore setting up a Learning Teams programme and framework with cultural competence for all your teams, including contractors.

Chapter Twelve concludes everything we've learnt by starting the conversation on a new way to measure safety and provide worker intelligence to your directors. The aim is to build trust and transparency based on the Learning Teams programme you've implemented.

Finally, once you've developed more trust in your business through these methods, the Epilogue offers a sketch of my second book (coming soon). That book details how to co-design the safety programme with your team and then stretch to supporting teams to self-direct the programme themselves.

Now that you know where we're heading, the first question to address is how safety science underpins our discussions.

In the midst of significant social change, there's a call for more harmonious ways of working and living together. A shift from blame to trust. From control to transparency. From protection to connection. From centralised power to self-determination.

That shift is the future of safety. New View Safety.

Rules, procedures and punishment can only get us so far. The next stage of safety evolution requires a radical rethink of how we work together, involving trust, transparency and honesty. Only then can we reduce the need for excessive regulation, control and bureaucracy.

What we're doing is nudging our systems forward based on new thinking and a new focus.

Discovering the New View of Safety is your guide to being part of the change. From a practitioner-based perspective, it maps the move from current safety systems to new philosophies and methodologies, crossing the landscape of **Learning Teams**.

An early adopter of Safety Differently, Moni Hogg has consulted, mentored and trained across aerospace, energy, construction, government, horticulture, forestry, and infrastructure organisations.

Moni is recognised in New Zealand as a pioneer in contemporary safety approaches and regularly teaches for the NZ Institute of Safety Management. She hosts a regular webinar series for Women in Safety Excellence and speaks internationally.

www.monihogg.com