



# THE MISTAKE-SMART LEADER'S CHECKLIST



Inspired by the Shingo-Award Winning  
*The Mistakes That Make Us* by Mark Graban

## 1. Lead with Vulnerability

- Share your own small mistakes openly
- Model learning, not perfection
- Normalize “I don’t know” and “I was wrong”

## 2. React Kindly to Mistakes

- Respond with curiosity, not blame
- Ask: “What did we learn?”
- Thank people for speaking up

## 3. Prevent, Don't Punish

- Focus on systems, not individuals
- Replace shame with improvement
- Use checklists and mistake-proofing to reduce repeat issues

## 4. Ask Better Questions

- “What problems are you solving?”
- “What’s one thing we could improve?”
- “What did you learn from a recent challenge?”

## 5. Help People Feel Safe Speaking Up

- Reward candor—publicly and privately
- Address toxic behaviors that shut people down
- Track psychological safety in team check-ins or surveys

## Bonus: Self-Check as a Leader

- Do people bring you bad news early?
- Are small mistakes visible—or hidden until they’re big?
- When’s the last time someone disagreed with you?

👉 **Start the conversation.**

Share this with other leaders.

📖 Learn more at [mistakesbook.com](https://mistakesbook.com)

✉ Invite Mark to speak, train, or collaborate:

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