

The Key to Safety

by Chris Kreger



Risk

A coin flipped has a 50/50 chance of landing heads or tails. If heads represents the risk of success and tails the risk of catastrophe: how do we avoid a catastrophe? Don't flip the coin!

To succeed in business most people need to accept some risk: the risk of failure. Many "bright eyed and bushy tailed" enter the business world and ultimately succumb to that failure. Safety however, cannot accept that risk! If you fail in business, you pick yourself up and try again; or you get a job. If you fail at safety, you may not be able to do the same.

There is no acceptable risk of failure when it comes to safety. Please don't flip that coin.

Controlling Risk

What is the difference between probability and risk? Probability implies that there is a certainty of an outcome. In other words, when I go home tonight, there is a probability that I will be in a car accident leading to my death. There is little I can do to change my probability for the better, unless I quit using an automobile for transportation.

Risk however, is under our direct control. We can choose to take a risk or to avoid the risk. For example, I can increase the probability of dying in that auto accident by not wearing my seatbelt. That is a risk I do not want to take: it is under my control.

Identify Risk

The challenge for most people is to identify risky actions before they happen. Many of us have bad habits that are risky behaviors we could eliminate if we can identify them in time. Most of us have been in a situation where "the way we do it" lead to a poor outcome: which subsequently changed "the way we do it".

So, I challenge you to re-think everything you do: identify those risks and eliminate them. Think through your tasks, routine or otherwise, to identify the risks and remove them.

