Mark Graban Keynote speaker and author

KEYNOTE

The Mistakes That Make Us... Better

Turning mistakes into learning instead of blame



> When mistakes get punished, they get **hidden**.
> When they get hidden, they get **repeated**.

Every organization says it values learning. The real test is what happens right after a mistake is discovered.

Drawing on 300+ *My Favorite Mistake* podcast conversations, Toyota stories, and work across healthcare, manufacturing, and technology, Mark shows how leaders can respond in ways that are kind, constructive, and focused on improvement.

What the keynote covers

Four moments that decide whether an organization learns

A
Admit

Leaders go first, so admitting a mistake becomes normal instead of risky.

R
Respond

Kind and constructive, not punitive. Being kind is different from being nice.

R
Reflect

Look at what happened and why, focusing on the system instead of blame.

P
Prevent

Mistake-proof the process instead of posting another warning sign.

WHAT LEADERS LEAVE WITH

- An understanding of how their first response to a mistake shapes whether the next one gets reported.
- The difference between being nice and being kind when someone has made a mistake.
- Practical ways to prevent recurrence by improving systems, including mistake-proofing.

FORMATS

Keynote (45 to 90 minutes), half-day workshop, facilitated leadership conversation, or virtual session, shaped around your audience and goals.

In person or virtual, in the United States and internationally, including events that use interpretation.

Watch the 3-minute speaker reel

OTHER KEYNOTES

The Silence Tax. Why people stay quiet, and how leaders reduce fear and futility.

When Being Right Is the Wrong Strategy for Change. How questions and conversation help people work through change.

React Less and Improve More. Distinguishing signal from noise in performance metrics.

WHO THIS TALK IS FOR

Two ways into the same conversation

IF YOU ARE FOCUSED ON SAFETY, QUALITY, OR OPERATIONS

Surface mistakes while they are small

Mistakes that get hidden get repeated. This angle connects how leaders respond to mistakes with problem reporting, root cause, and mistake-proofing.

IF YOU ARE FOCUSED ON CULTURE, INNOVATION, OR CHANGE

Make it safe to learn and try again

Innovation requires experiments, and some experiments fail. This angle focuses on how leaders make it safe to admit what went wrong, learn, and keep improving.

Examples are drawn from healthcare, manufacturing, technology, startups, and other settings, and selected for your audience.

ABOUT MARK

Mark Graban is an author, speaker, and consultant who helps leaders build cultures where people speak up, learn from mistakes, and improve. He started his career as an industrial engineer at a General Motors engine plant and has since worked across manufacturing, healthcare, and technology.

His book *The Mistakes That Make Us* received the 2025 Shingo Research and Professional Publication Award, his third Shingo award. He hosts the podcasts *My Favorite Mistake* and *Lean Blog Interviews*, is a faculty member at the Lean Enterprise Institute, and holds degrees from Northwestern University and MIT.

BOOKS

The Mistakes That Make Us 2025 Shingo award

The Silence Tax launches February 9, 2027. **Pre-order now**

Measures of Success

Lean Hospitals

Healthcare Kaizen with Joe Swartz

SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS AND EVENTS

COMPANIES

Honda
Eli Lilly
Genentech
Cardinal Health
Liberty Mutual Insurance

HEALTHCARE

Cleveland Clinic
Duke Health
NYU Langone Medical Center
Alberta Health Services
American Medical Association

CONFERENCES

Shingo Institute Conference
AME Conference
Lean Startup Week
HIMSS Conference
Lean Transformation Summit

INTERNATIONAL, ACADEMIC

Lean Healthcare Summits in Brazil and Europe
Lean Healthcare Event, Helsinki
MIT Leaders for Global Operations
Wharton School

> *"The material you presented was exceptional. It is so relevant to what we are doing today, and how much of a struggle it is at times to get others on board. I got a lot of messages after your presentation about how fantastic you were and how the material gave people great ideas to springboard off of."*
>
> **Event organizer**, corporate virtual conference

> *"Mark brings a confidence to a discussion, all the while assuring the participants that there is still plenty left to know and discuss. Professional, and easy to work with — knowing Mark is on board for our conference makes our job so much easier."*
>
> **Joe Pesz**, Board of Directors, Michigan Lean Consortium

Start with your audience and goals

Share your event date, location or virtual format, audience, and budget. Mark will help you choose the topic and format that fits.

markgraban.com/speaking/book-mark

Speaking samples | Meeting planner resources