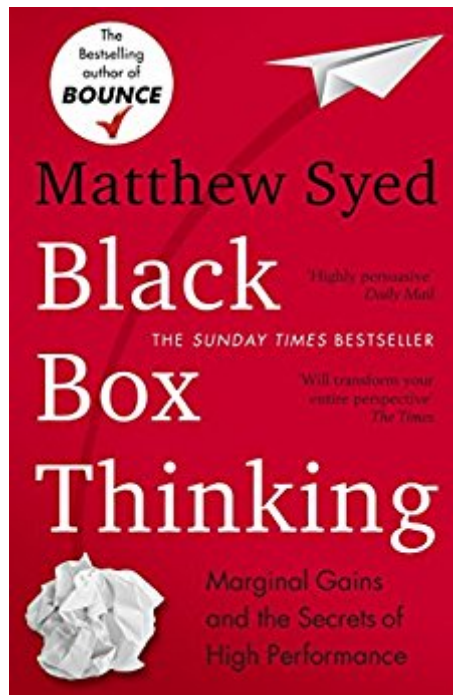


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# Black Box Thinking: The Surprising Truth About Success



## Synopsis

The Sunday Times No.1 Bestseller From the Bestselling Author of Bounce What links the Mercedes Formula One team with Google? What links Team Sky and the aviation industry? What connects James Dyson and David Beckham? They are all Black Box Thinkers. Black Box Thinking is a new approach to high performance, a means of finding an edge in a complex and fast-changing world. It is not just about sport, but has powerful implications for business and politics, as well as for parents and students. In other words, all of us. Drawing on a dizzying array of case studies and real-world examples, together with cutting-edge research on marginal gains, creativity and grit, Matthew Syed tells the inside story of how success really happens - and how we cannot grow unless we are prepared to learn from our mistakes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A colleague of mine sent me a link to a BBC article regarding this book several weeks ago. As an patented inventor and product designer I was very intrigued by the title. This is the first book I have read by this author. As I read through its pages, I found Matthew Syed's writing style to be captivating enough to keep my attention while describing events and facts which could otherwise be

very dry. For that reason, I am compelled to read his other works, but merely based on the content, I have already recommended this book to dozens of people. The concept of learning from mistakes is as old as recorded history. However, if you think that is what this book is about, think again. There are many nuances to the subject matter disclosed which can be very thought provoking and enlightening. On several occasions I actually put the book down, feeling compelled to rethink dozens of situations in my own life where I have made mistakes, not learned from them and ended up repeating them, stuck in closed loop logic. My key takeaway from reading this book is that Mr. Syed identifies a well-known flaw in humanity to which some critics at first blush might yawn and say "so what, nothing new here" • Failure analysis has been around for centuries. Not exactly | this book covers a lot of ground. The Black Box failure analysis model has only been in use for a very limited amount of time in human history, yielding incredible results in aviation safety used for the benefit of all humanity. Yes, individuals throughout history have used versions of failure analysis to solve issues, either for themselves or for small scale issues. But this recent model transcends others in that it truly eliminates the need or benefit of lying, omitting information or tampering with evidence.

Having listened to this book twice through, then read the reviews posted thus far, it's difficult to imagine adding to what has already been written by way of summary. So rather than a review, this is more a reflection of personal experience which I hope proves insightful. My goal in downloading this book was the hope of drilling down into the concept of "failing better;" an idea borne of Samuel Beckett's oft cited quotation. And though my initial intention was not to validate my own opinion about the efficacy of introducing my students (I'm an educator) to the idea of iterative progress, I wanted to know whether "success through failure" was more than an empty promise. I was not disappointed. Matthew Syed is a compelling storyteller. His keen eye for our cultural biases toward kneejerk blaming and scapegoating, overvaluing perfection and underestimating the transformative power of "learning from your mistakes" illustrates how reasoned evaluation can be hijacked by expediency and need for tidy (but misguided) explanations when things go badly wrong. In my view, the most valuable takeaways from Black Box Thinking include, but are likely not limited to, the following:

- Understanding the complexity of a situation requires decelerating the evaluation process if for no other reason than for the sake of making time to take a broader view.
- Ignoring variables doesn't make them go away, but does make for an incomplete formula that begs for inaccurate conclusions.
- Intuition-based assumptions are generally self-serving and, for the most part, accurate by pure chance alone.
- Data is a four letter word that needs to be part of

decision-making.

â œIn this book we will examine how we respond to failure, as individuals, as businesses, as societies. How do we deal with it, and learn from it? How do we react when something has gone wrong, whether because of a slip, a lapse, an error of commission or omission, or a collective failureâ |? â |The purpose of this book is to offer a radically different perspective. It will argue that we need to redefine our relationship with failure, as individuals, as organizations, and as societies. This is the most important step on the road to a high-performance revolution: increasing the speed of development in human activity and transforming those areas that have been left behind. Only by redefining failure will we unleash progress, creativity, and resilience.â ~ Matthew Syed from Black Box Thinking Failure. Some of us lean into it and learn as much as we can from it, and some of us prefer to avoid thinking about it and/or pretend it never happened. As you may guess, one approach leads to dramatically better performance over the long run. (Hint: Seeing failure as feedback + learning opportunities is a very wise idea.) This book is all about, as the sub-title suggests, â œWhy Most People Never Learn from Their Mistakesâ ”But Some Do.â •Itâ™s a fascinating read. Matthew is a brilliant, award-winning writer who brings the wisdom to life via great story telling. (To put it in perspective, I read this and his other book Bounce in < 72 hoursâ ”Black Box on a Friday + a little bit of Saturday and Bounce on Sunday.) The book is geared more toward high-level concepts and organizational applications than individual self-help per se, but itâ™s packed with Big Ideas: 1. Black Box Thinking - What is it? 2. 50 lbs for an A vs.

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