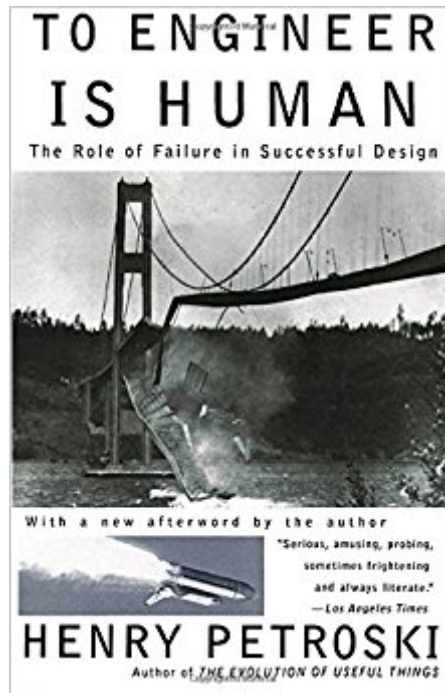




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To Engineer Is Human: The Role Of Failure In Successful Design



Synopsis

How did a simple design error cause one of the great disasters of the 1980s - the collapse of the walkways at the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel? What made the graceful and innovative Tacoma Narrows Bridge twist apart in a mild wind in 1940? How did an oversized waterlily inspire the magnificent Crystal Palace, the crowning achievement of Victorian architecture and engineering? These are some of the failures and successes that Henry Petroski, author of the acclaimed "The Pencil," examines in this engaging, wonderfully literate book. More than a series of fascinating case studies, "To Engineer is Human" is a work that looks at our deepest notions of progress and perfection, tracing the fine connection between the quantifiable realm of science and the chaotic realities of everyday life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The moral of this book is that behind every great engineering success is a trail of often ignored (but frequently spectacular) engineering failures. Petroski covers many of the best known examples of well-intentioned but ultimately failed design in action -- the galloping Tacoma Narrows Bridge (which you've probably seen tossing cars willy-nilly in the famous black-and-white footage), the collapse of the Kansas City Hyatt Regency Hotel walkways -- and many lesser known but equally informative examples. The line of reasoning Petroski develops in this book were later formalized into his quasi-Darwinian model of technological evolution in *The Evolution of Useful Things*, but this book is

arguably the more illuminating -- and definitely the more enjoyable -- of these two titles. Highly recommended.

"Reading Petroski's fine book is not only a delight, it is a necessity." --Houston Chronicle
"Serious, amusing, probing, sometimes frightening, and always literate." --Los Angeles Times

This is an excellent study of how seemingly excellent designs can result in catastrophic failures. The explanations are clear and not so long as to be overwhelmingly. For any professional in the human factors and/or human engineering profession who deals in root cause and accident analyses, it should be a must. It does require some slow and careful reading by a non-engineer (like me) but still provides a clear picture of "how the heck could that have happened?" Actually, this is my second time to purchase this book; the second copy was a gift to a friend.

As a high school mathematics teacher (50 years) with an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering and a master's degree in mathematics I have applied engineering principles to the art of teaching students. Petroski's book is most readable and enlightening. My wife, an artist and former English teacher, also enjoyed the book. I have given copies to students (including our granddaughter) considering engineering as a career, and to fellow teachers.

Excellent

Very entertaining book.

love this book. every engineer should read

We can learn so much from failure. Reading this book will enable anyone who aspires to take responsibility for an engineered system that making educated decisions is part of life, whether they be right or wrong. This book is a compilation of engineered projects that went wrong. I gave copies of this book to all sales engineers in our company to help them think and learn from the mistakes of others. It should be required reading for all college freshmen in the many different types of schools of engineering.

Shipping was fast, the book came in excellent condition. So far I am on chapter 3 and let me say

that this book is written very well and the explanations are thorough and easy to understand. I would recommend this to those that are thinking about civil engineering, as I am. The author goes through many analogies in the first couple chapters that I have read and are clearly comprehensible.

The content is great. The copy that I received had two holes in the cover. One hole extended through the pages all the way into page 4 of the first chapter.

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