



## The Checklist Manifesto – How to Get Things Right by Atul Gawande

At first glance, what a simple concept. Of course checklists are helpful! Atul argues that they are much more than helpful; they are essential tools and should be used by all professionals. He gives many examples in his own profession, surgery, where lives have been saved. For example, he shows how applying his idea to the immensely various and complex world of surgery produced a ninety-second checklist that reduced deaths and complications by more than one-third in eight hospitals around the world - at virtually no cost and for almost any kind of operation.

He also describes how both engineers building sky scrapers and pilots flying commercial airliners have used checklists to ensure safety. A main premise of the book is that as we become more specialized and our knowledge and skills increase that doesn't always translate to more competence. And what trips up a great outcome can be a basic misstep. For instance a patient can have an expertly trained cardiac surgeon educated at the finest medical school and still suffer a near death infection because proper sanitary care was not taken. This can be mitigated by utilizing a check list of basic tasks prior, during and post-surgery.

Atul's book is a fascinating read and might just make you think differently about how you do your job. Perhaps you will invest in a red sharpie!

*Reviewed by Lee Strongwater, 02/25/2011*