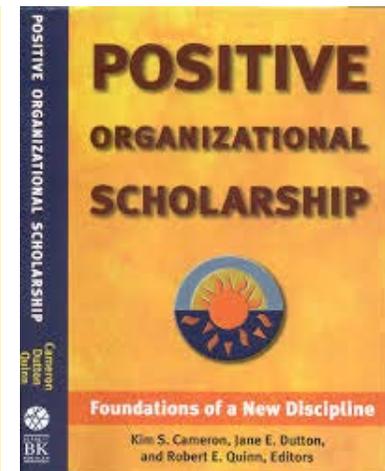
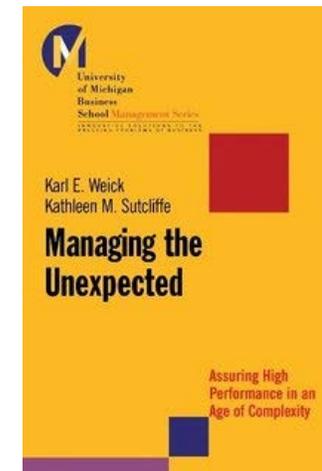
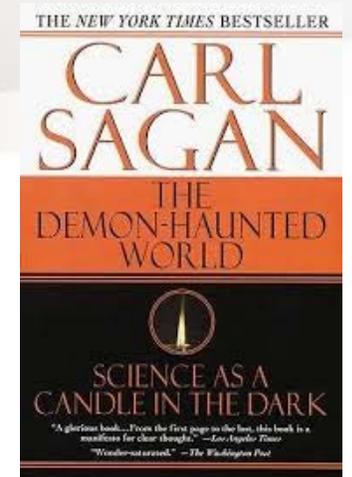
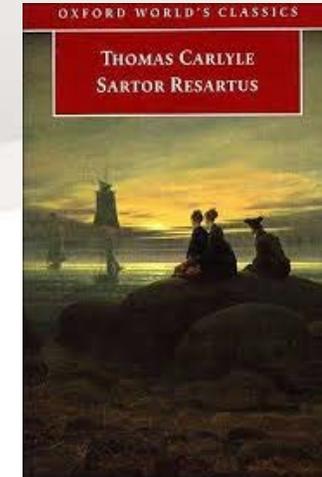


Silence is not golden!

A positive take on preoccupation with failure

- 'Silence is golden' (Thomas Carlyle, 1836)
- Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence
 - 'Your inability to invalidate my hypothesis is not at all the same thing as proving it true.' (Carl Sagan, 1997)
- Hypothesis: "no failure"
 - Falsify = 'show to be false' (Karl Popper)
 - What if attempts to falsify fail?
- Preoccupation with failure (Weick & Sutcliffe 2001, Sutcliffe & Vogus 2003)
 - In: Positive Organizational Scholarship (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003)
 - Positive Management



Listening to the sound of silence

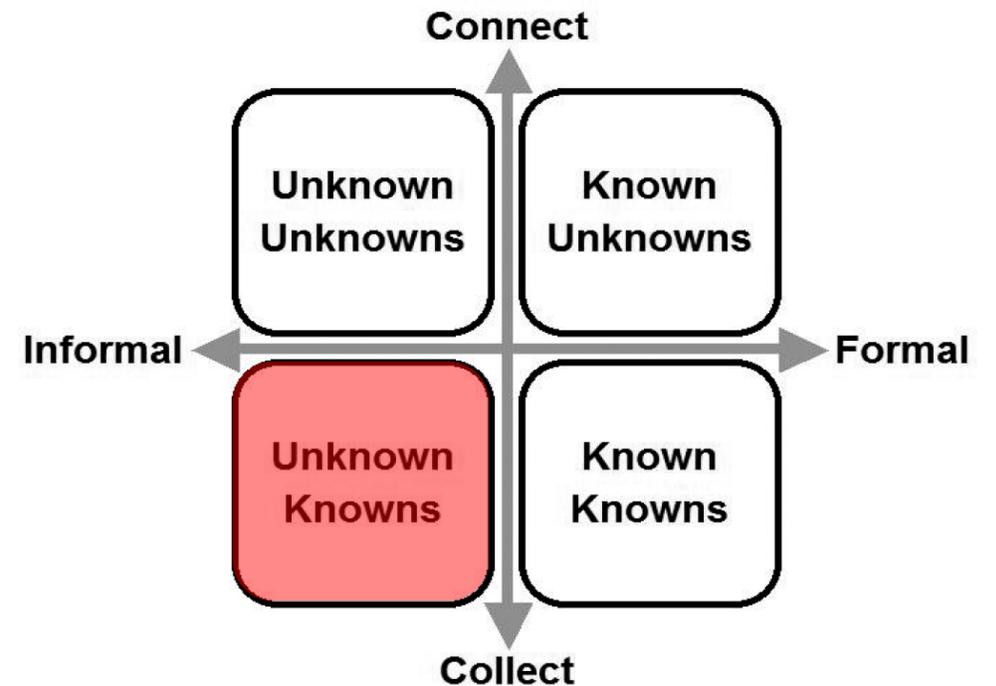
Places where we may benefit from preoccupation with failure

- High reliability organizations (Vogus, 2013)
 - An organization that operates in a nearly error-free manner despite facing high levels of social and technical complexity
 - e.g. Nuclear energy, Air traffic control, Medical operations
- Integrity (Cambridge definition)
 - The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change
 - e.g. Volkswagen, Russia doping scandal, Sepp Blatter
- It is difficult to hear the silence in all the noise
 - Dutch Education Inspection (2015) report on 2012/2013
 - 'Number of fraud cases reported ... remarkably low.'
 - 1 out of 4 exam committees did not report fraud cases

Breaking the code of silence

A framework to guide preoccupation with failure

- A framework from knowledge management (Milton, 2010)
- Formal vs. Informal
- Connect vs. Collect
- Unknown knowns = hidden facts



The silent treatment

A practical tool to steer preoccupation with failure

- Informal collection method
 - Choose the right source of information
 - Those involved in primary process
 - Act informal with open-ended non-leading questions
 - What work related things keep you up at night?
 - What do you think is slightly odd at this workplace?
 - Which things do you know, but management do not?
 - What would people be embarrassed about if made public?
 - Which pieces of information would you rather not have known?
 - Note: do not directly ask for information about a taboo subject
 - Note: record the findings immediately after chatting
 - Use interviewers from the same level of hierarchy or lower
 - Create a safe and relaxed environment

Silent witnesses

Stories of past failures

- 4 students, 297 chats, 5 minutes each, 152 cheat stories
- Lecturers seem to facilitate cheating
 - Announcing contents of exam
 - Ignoring plagiarism
 - Grading reports that have not been turned in
- Supervisors also seem to facilitate cheating
 - Sleeping during exam sessions
 - Helping to answer a question
 - Ignoring blatant cheating