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## Summary

The article compares personal health to equipment maintenance, emphasizing the issue of neglecting corrective actions during preventive maintenance, leading to costly breakdowns and inefficiencies.

### Save them from themselves (written back in 2009)

I had a physical before the holidays, and my Doctor told me to lose weight. We have a great relationship. I trust him and admire his expertise, particularly regarding the risk factors for sickness. Oh, I also really want to live a healthy life.

I think about that when (now that the holidays are over) I tasted all the desserts at the Christmas party. I was brought up to be polite. I mean, isn't it polite to try everything? Isn't it a matter of good manners? Ok, so there were 11 desserts. Ok, so some of the tastes were somewhat larger than necessary.

Rewind the tape a few months. I was visiting a mine that operated haul trucks, shovels, and a variety of other heavy construction pieces.

They complained that despite significant PM efforts, they still suffered from breakdowns. How could this be so? The usual suspects are pencil whipping the inspection records, incompetent PM inspection, improper focus (not looking at the critical wear areas), too long between intervals, destructive operation, and cowboy operators. (I have nothing against cowboys or cowgirls, for that matter.

I found that the inspectors were doing their job and finding the deficiencies (as far as I could see). They were writing up the deficiencies properly as corrective repair orders. Each unit had a nice fat file of corrective repair orders. The operators were mainly professional long-timers and weren't abusing the equipment.

What was missing was a surprise. It was the commitment to do the corrective items before the breakdown. Systems reported as deficient in the corrective repair order file were not being addressed, and those systems were breaking down. Now, a breakdown is precisely what you would expect if you ignore damage, deterioration, or defects.



Maintenance had to make emergency repairs, air freight parts, have been forced overtime, and they feel generally stressed. The measure was how many hours the equipment “was in the dirt.” For some units, all that kept them “in the dirt” was the baling wire and welding rod.

So, in short, we would do an all-day PM on a haul truck and write up a bunch of problem areas. The truck would go back on the “go” line. It would break down a month later from an item on the corrective list. In fact, the trucks were slowly getting harder and harder to fix because band-aids were on top of the band-aids!

I asked the maintenance and operations (production) managers about that.

Maintenance manager: “Yeah, they won’t give me the trucks to fix them; they only need to do it for the PM and when they break down. I don’t know how long we can piece this equipment together and keep it in the dirt.”

Operations manager: “We have a certain tonnage to make, and the last time I gave maintenance a haul truck for repairs, they kept it for 3 weeks. I couldn’t make the tonnage without that truck.”

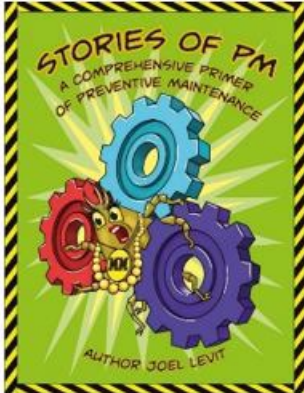
This behavior has many consequences (not all of them are bad). For one, you can have all the dessert you want (“trucks in the dirt”)! On the other hand, breakdowns that do occur tend to be large, expensive, and invasive.

So the Doctor told me to lose weight because he saw potential bad outcomes if I continued along the line I was. He was, in fact, trying to save me from myself!

I wonder how many maintenance professionals feel like the Doctor who tells patients all day long to lose weight, stop smoking, or get exercise. Other people in the company have excuses, rationalizations, and probably good reasons for ignoring the advice, just like I do.

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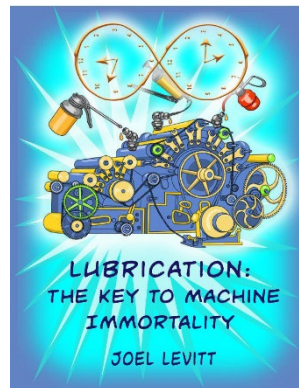
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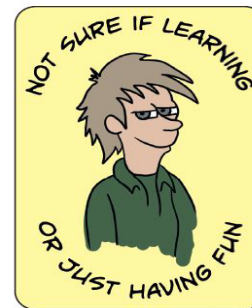
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