2016 Two More Chains Fall Issue "The Big Lie" Feedback Responses

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
1. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Learn how to read wildfires. Underestimating potential leads to accidents.	[No Input]
2. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have over 33 years' experience working for All Risk Fire Departments in California including CAL FIRE. Qualified as DIVS, SOFR, STCR, FAL1 to name a few. Through this experience and studies I have long ago formed the following opinions: With the risk management process, we seek to mitigate risk, but cannot always remove risk. Therefore, manage the risk and decide if the mitigations are acceptable before we engage. I also agree that there is a culture to memorize and recognize the Standard Fire Orders, but in practice the culture does not fully support following the orders or complying with the intent of the orders. With this type of culture, we often set ourselves up for the opportunity to experience catastrophic results.	We need to discuss revising the entry level training programs to include this information and focus more on the intent of the Fire Orders (not just memorizing) what they really mean—and how to mitigate risk to acceptable levels before we engage. What happened to S-133 and S-134? Have these course been eliminated and if so why?

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3. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Research/Data."	We know from research that decisions made in a stressful situation are very different than those made otherwise. I am worried about the "checklist" mentality. I think a checklist should be used like aviation uses emergency checklists—as a reference that is available to help you through a process in a stressful environment. We know people forget things and the checklist can be used if you have time and it's appropriate. It shouldn't be used as a way to measure if you screwed up in your handling of an emergency. I agree we need to acknowledge that we work in a dynamic, dangerous job, and work to become more skilled, proficient, and resilient as an industry. This will minimize the errors, and prevent as many fatalities and injuries as possible, without wasting resources on trying to work toward zero. I realize all this has been said before, but it's really only now that I feel like we are all comfortable with this concept.	We need more calm, "non-defensive" discussions. This is too important to dig our heals in and only listen to what reinforces our beliefs. I also think we need to work on our public image. I don't think we purposely created an image in the United States that a Fire Department can solve any problem it's called to, but I think we kind of enjoy that image. Think about it. As new risks came along, changing forests, more WUI, or modern construction and fire behavior issues in the structural world, have we ever really told the public that we might not be able to provide the same level of service? I don't think we have. I'm not saying we were dishonest, just silent. We let people continue to hold onto their belief that if you call the Fire Department, they can do anything.

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4. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Losing friends and coworkers over my career, being part of an effort to change the local culture of firefighting on the Forest I worked on at the time.	More dialogue on this subject. Spreading awareness to those who may not take the time to read this periodical.
5. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Other."	It is unrealistic to set forth the expectation that working in and around fire in the wildland interface is "not risky". By not acknowledging the inherent dangers and that there "will be losses," you are setting yourself up for an unachievable outcome. I like this quote from "The Big Lie": "There is acceptable risk. There is no acceptable loss. But there will be losses." This is what should be brought forward and put into the Chief's letter and other documentation. Acknowledge the risk. Acknowledge that even when we do everything in our power to minimize the risk, the only way to remove it is to do nothing (which then causes other risks).	I honestly believe that there needs to be a "meeting of the minds" from all wildland fire communities/agencies to put together a strong yet truthful directive that acknowledges the inherent risks with the job—and acknowledges the potential for loss of life and/or serious injury. It is not saying we accept the loss, but that we acknowledge that it can/will happen—no matter how "safe" we try to make the job. All aspects of this field of work have dangers (driving, flying, topography, weather conditions, FIRE).
6. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	In my 23 years in wildland fire in primarily a support function in Dispatch and Fire Training I have personally been on a Unit with a fatality and have heard of many other deaths. I am bothered when I hear folks say our goal is zero fatalities because I think it is unrealistic. Like having that goal for police officers, or structure firefighters, or even the military. Firefighting is inherently dangerous. I think that message should be more openly discussed. I see new firefighters so excited and thrilled with their new job and my guess is that no one has	That is a tough question. I think these articles to open the dialogue are a step in the right direction. Perhaps there could be segments of the annual Fireline Refresher that deal with these topics. That might promote additional discussion.

	mentioned that they might want to prepare a will. And I agree that their families would be in shock at the thought that this cool summer job could cost their loved one their life.	
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7. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	With 30+ years in wildland fire, law enforcement, and a stint in military combat arms, I too had that "He's right!" reaction. I don't know if it's political, generational, or other but it seems people "deny" the reality of risk. They want to be safe from consequences, are angered and/or shocked at negative/tragic consequences. Accepting the risk in a way to minimize the tragedies can only be achieved if we regularly look the mission completely in the eye.	I'm planning on utilizing this essay, as well as the associated articles, in my next Firefighter Refresher in order to promote some open dialog. I'm also going to employ it the next time I teach a Firefighter Academy and bring it into discussion at the beginning of my next CRWB, ENGB, HMGB etc. deployment.
8. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have been in the business for over 30 years and it breaks my heart whenever there is another fatality. We mourn and say we will never forget and then send more kids out into the woods to cut down "hazard" trees that just need to burn themselves down, drive into smoke screens and "feel" their way out, and put too much emphasis on the "fight". This has to end.	We have to have leadership admit that there is acceptable risk. They are already doing so.
9. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I've been working in fire for the USFS for 15 years. Accidents are going to happen in our environment.	I believe the first step needs to come from the top and our senior leadership needs to admit that zero fatalities is unrealistic.
10. *Fire Manager* Agree./Based on "Personal Exp"	[No Input]	[No Input]

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11. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	While I am a wildland firefighter, most of my experience is in structural firefighting. Many of the same risk v gain, stated/written policy v reality type situations apply to both worlds. In my experience, much of the root cause of this is from the self-perception/identity of the firefighters themselves vis-a-vis risk and safety culture. Nothing was more shocking to me than listening to some of the interviews with Charleston SC Fire after the Sofa Superstore mishap [the 2007 building fire that claimed the lives of nine structure firefighters]. Talk about a (at the time) non learning culture. Another example would be the LA Co fire roof collapse in May 2015. That was action taken, not in support of a tactical objective, but because of a "that's what we do" mentality. Did the IC tolerate it from a standpoint of cultural acceptance—or worse yet, not have the courage to address it?	Leadership, Crew Bosses and Chief Officers need to create and drive the culture and think in terms of risk in the context of mission objectives. It is normal for a 23 year old kid to have more [exuberance] than brains. It's up to the leadership to reign that in and not worry about what people think. It's the classic: "If the Chief had just given us 5 more minutes we would have got it done" kind of thing. The structural fire community is in the throes of a similar debate about methods of fire attack, safety vs risk, etc. The opposing views and "social media echo chambers" are very much part of the debate. Generally speaking, there is lack of intellectual hegemony on the subject at the leadership level, and it's likely to get worse before it gets better.
12. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Firefighting deaths and injuries are part of the job. These are essentially industrial accidents. We used to know this because many of us burned clearcuts in the spring and fall or did other BD work. We were part of western vegetation management. Fire fatalities are, in many ways, the same as the choker-setter crushed by a log while altering the local vegetation. Both are tragedy, a person dying violently in the process of making a living. But they are part of how we manage western forests. Big trees, cliffs, windy canyons, bad zoning, stupid building codes, agency corner-cutting; all kinds of ways for firefighters to get hurt or killed.	Stop having parades for dead fire workers. Stop all the paramilitary trappings. Wildfire management is not structural firefighting. You want to honor wildland firefighters? How about dental insurance or a raise? How about passing a national building code for WUI?

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13. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Fire is hot. Forest fire is unpredictable and volatile.	Stop putting people in harm's way. Do prevention, evacuate communities, then let fires burn.
14. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have never found the 10 and 18 to be anything more than guiding principles to which we should strive to adhere. They aren't so much "rules" as they are items to keep in mind during your decision making. I agree that it would be almost impossible to follow all of the 10 and 18 all of the time, we'd be subject to analysis paralysis. In many cases we wouldn't be able to engage because we couldn't account for all of them. As stated in the article, when the 10 and 18 came into our programming and training (when there were only 13 "watch outs") there was no intent to "lie" and infer that wildfire fighting isn't dangerous. The old adage *"If you run trains you're going to have wrecks."* comes to mind. It is just as callous to say you are not going to have injuries and fatalities as it is to say you will. Especially so, when each year we lose firefighters on the line. How you go about minimizing them is the key. What we do is not inherently safe. We need to make the best informed decisions based on what we know at the time with the current conditions and operational goals in mind. We are often making decisions in an environment that is constantly changing; keep the 10 and 18 in mind and make the best decision you can. Keep in mind also that making the decision to disengage is an operational decision that the IC may have to make, and it is likely warranted more times than most of us would like to admit.	Start a dialog within your organization on the 10 and 18 and the Big Lie article. The next time your organizational fire leaders get together, have an open and honest discussion about them, how to use them, and how to train and operate within the context your organization establishes.

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15. *Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have seen a cultural, and maybe a better description would be, a generational change, with our firefighters. A generation that is not expected to think of the outcome of one's actions but where government is supposed to keep you safe with rules and laws. A generation where kids wear helmets to ride their bicycle and the parents let them ride in the street. As a firefighter, I have seen the benefits of seat belts but when one chooses to text and drive, one must be aware of the outcome. You think? So we create laws but people still die. And my parents tried to fix drinking and driving. But always the outcry is, we need new laws to protect us from reality. And cold hard truth is: *"If you don't watch the road you can die, seat belt of no seat belt!"* In today's world it appears the norm is: *"If you can't fix the problem fix the blame."* At Thirtymile, good people died. We can second guess what took place and we can blame more people. So to make us feel better, and less responsible, we investigate the outcome with people that have initials behind their name, and then by golly we blame someone and have "FACTS" on what happened and who was to blame for the deaths. And we all find a nice conclusion to close the books on another investigation of the loss of life with a nice little cliché: *"We don't bend them, we don't break them."* I say BS. But in the end, someone is still dead from being exposed to supper heated gas and flame and no oxygen for life. Did I miss the "for what" explanation? DA! The reality is, bad things happen to good people at a point they think they are safe. Like the child riding their bicycle in the street with the pretty fitted helmet and oh, did I forget the reflective stickers! And we are surprised when the child loses the battle with the 2,000 lb. car. And we sue the guy for having bald tires. I feel better now!? As a child, my Dad told me: *"You mess with fire son, you will get burned."* That was reality, he was honest with me and factual. But do we really know reality in today's world? Our children and grandchildren watch movies that have people doing things that take super strength and speed. They are like "Superman" without the cape. And they are immune to Kryptonite and bullets—they have the protection of the 10 and 18, the seat belts and bicycle helmets. They can withstand all things. The reality of life today is obscured by the belief that if we do anything	We find ourselves playing catch-up in today's environment. So until we take money out of the equation we will not get the answer we all hoped for. I believe there are people out there who see a firefighter death as just being something they see on the 6 o'clock news. Or they will send some money and maybe put up a sign and thank the brave firefighter so they feel better about themselves or maybe find a way to blame someone else and put a new law in place—or better yet a new acronym. Because some people will never understand who is responsible when you build a home on a cliff to get a view and then look for someone to blame when your house slides off someday? We all must listen to nature and realize someone sold us some goods that don't meet today's needs in fire suppression. And that may include the 10 and 18. We need to answer the hard questions on why do we fight fire when the same thing we fight has the potential of making our job easier. Sometimes it is beneficial to get a clean table and have people looking at the problem who are

| someone should have protected us if something goes wrong. Even if it was our own misguided belief. Hence lies the forest conditions from us doing such a good job putting out fire and our deterioration of our environment, climate change and our next generation in our in pursuit of money and we blame someone else by not protecting us with a new law.

So we continue to blame someone else and hire another person with initials behind their name to prove us to be right once again. "The Big Lie" I see as words that make us all uncomfortable and to speak out and to say things that will push everyone to the reality of our vulnerability in fire. And to ask the hard question: Why do we do what we do?" And if we don't feel good with the answer maybe we should not do that. | not so close to the situation. Let's all start with a clean slate. I always tested my actions on these few words: *"What would my Mama think about that?"* And not think that I have all the answers. I know I don't have all the answers but I do believe we are finally looking down a different road instead of repaving the old one.

Thanks for the mental stretch. |

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16. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I believe in the law of averages. Given enough time, I will kill a crew. How can an activity defined as inherently dangerous consistently reach 0 fatalities? The Swiss Cheese Model elaborates 3 slices that envelope incidents. There have been many safety and learning tools developed over the decades to mitigate hazards within them. I think we've tapped out the low hanging fruit there. Organizational Influences, however, haven't even been touched. I believe the ambiguity often encountered on the fireline today stems from there—the whole "public expectations" thing and how that trickles into national fire policy and local decisions on fires. The Life First thing has been stuck in my head pretty firmly and I was compelled to do a "self study" this summer utilizing the Swiss Cheese Model. ~~Can I send it to someone?~~	I think that encouraging continued conversation is critical, as you are. And that even the Chief should be invited to monitor it (read the outputs). I don't think that we have anything to be afraid of on a national level because I believe that the Chief truly cares about us. That's why Life First came about. It's not meant to be an insult.
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17. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Much like in any other disaster-related response (hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, etc.), expectations of a zero-sum injury and fatality outcome are impossible to achieve unless the work itself is avoided altogether (which is not an option).I'd say we have integrity issues as a	Stop ignoring the fact that near-misses were just times when firefighters "stepped up" to save their fellow workers. We need a medical direction system, better medical equipment, legal protection to act, frequent "incident within

	culture if we continue to prop-up the control model.	an incident" training, and in-house (on the crews and engines) medical personnel ready to respond if needed. We cannot defeat every danger we face but we can certainly do a better job of actively mitigating those risks instead of just paying the constant lip service we do now.
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18. *Firefighter Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Going forward there are several conditions that require additional thought or clarification. The days of talking out of both sides of our mouths is unacceptable—meaning if we are going to take the risk we need to also know that the possibility exists of creating an environment in which folks can get hurt/killed, otherwise don't take the risk but deal with the political ramifications that will ensue.	Create an environment that allows for clear direction and dialogue.
19. *Line Officer* **Disagree.** Based on "Personal Experience." **Please Describe the Specific Parts of the Essay You Disagree With:** The assumption that we tell our fighters that the job is safe. I tell them the exact opposite.	Every firefighter knows the job is dangerous. The failing of the fire service is the CYA processes designed to reduce the liability or guilt of the fire bosses. Our profession is no more dangerous than many in the natural resource world. Go find an unbusted-up cowboy.	I do not think that opposing views really exist. I have never met anyone who thought firefighting was safe or could be made safe. The best next step would be stopping the proliferation of processes which provide the façade of safety.
20. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Although I am no longer a firefighter, I was one for 24 years. Through personal experience, I agree with him. The aviation aspect of firefighting is even more so—I know people that think they are always in the low risk environment when flying or responding to wildland fires.	To talk and talk often. To change the way we recruit and retain future firefighters.

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21. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
22. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Fire is a dynamic environment. Rules cannot be written to address every situation that could/might/will occur. Even if you are perfectly trained and prepared, bad things can and do occur, and yes, we work in a dangerous environment. My personal experience was with an ATV rollover. I did not set out to roll over my ATV. I did everything correct (training, PPE) to the best of my ability but hitting a rock at the wrong angle (at a slow speed, on a slope of about 10%) led to a bad outcome. Happy to say that I came out of it with only a few bumps, bruises, and cracked ribs. The outcome could have been much worse.	Keep the conversation going.
23. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
24. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	A lot of Agency Administrators lack the fire experience to truly appreciate the risk that their fire staff face each day. This is delegated to a fire manager who looks at the situation differently than the Agency Administrator.	It has to start with Agency Administrators becoming cognizant of the real risk versus benefit approach to their fire programs. While we all share the responsibility, the approval signature cannot be delegated.
25. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Wildland fire is too dangerous of a job to have zero fatalities. It is similar to the expectation that the states will have zero highway fatalities. If you do something dangerous long enough something bad will happen whether it is injury or death.	Have honest, open discussions and come into these discussions with open minds. The hardest thing to do is to go into a discussion with an open mind.
26. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	In a nutshell, it has to do with innate human intrinsic motivation to be "safe" vs. extrinsic motivation (policy, safety awards, Agency agenda) to be "safe". (Take a good look at the official definition on good ol' Wiki for intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation.)	I believe we as a community of professionals need to take a hard look at mental perception/health and the true, science-based psychology behind the perception of hazards and the decisions we make to "mitigate" them in any inherently dangerous situation. We need to come together on common ground

| | | and get on the same page regarding terminology and all the words that get thrown around by people that potentially don't know what they really mean. I could go on forever . . .

For instance, going on a tangent here, but "unnecessary exposure/risk" seems to be understood by all of us. It's thrown around ALOT, especially by Line Officers and people whose career or livelihoods are on the line. But I haven't heard one person in a leadership position give any Leaders Intent regarding "necessary exposure/risk" to the folks actually wearing the shelters. |
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| **Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?** | **Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.** | **What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?** |
| **27.** *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)*
Agree.
Based on "Personal Experience." | I had to run from—and order a young first year to run from—a blow up on an Rx fire in Georgia last spring.

The immediate cause was a wind shift caused by a sea breeze that we had not been briefed on. An additional factor was that we sat around and wasted time in the morning getting started.

If we had started an hour earlier we would have been driving home when the wind shifted. | I feel my next step is to pull my crew out of a fire and shut it down because of delayed starting times.

This is a continuing problem with the Georgia Interagency Burn Team and, at a minimum, leads to mopping-up after dark. Complaining gets no results, direct action may be necessary. |
| **28.** *Firefighter*
Agree.
Based on "Personal Experience." | Complexity has been increasing and will continue to do so. Overly simplistic, rules-driven responses become less valid when variables change over time.

The job has always been dangerous and will continue to be so. To ignore that fact, or to brush it aside by saying: *"OK, we've done the 215-A"* and seemingly automatically coming to a moderate conclusion after applying basic PPE—or other seemingly minor mitigations—is not necessarily reducing much risk. | People have to be willing to come to the table and discuss their views and open-mindedly engage in an ongoing discourse. Easier said than done. |
| **29.** *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)*
Agree.
Based on "Personal Experience." | I have experienced a "work harder not smarter" mentality many times on incidents and in training environments. The dominant culture makes the options of standing down or strategically pausing non-options if a professional doesn't want to appear weak. The "get it done" culture puts people at unnecessary risk in some cases. | [No Input] |

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30. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	As a first year seasonal, we were told that firefighting was a dangerous job and it was a known issue when accepting that position. It was further drove home to me when, on the first week, we filled out emergency contact forms and burial instructions if anything were to happen to us while doing the job. It was never said that this would be a safe, risk free environment. But to be always heads up and looking for things that could go wrong or look out of place.	Developing talking points for fire managers to talk with incoming workers about the job and the risks associated with this occupation. Having a broad conversation at all levels about the risks that we take daily as part of our job and the tax-paying public's perception of the risks that they expect us to take.
31. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have worked on the line, you cannot get zero casualties. You cannot mitigate all the "What If's" out there.	Facts do not lie, people get hurt or killed every year. We need to own up to this fact and not lie to ourselves about reality.
32. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have never been a victim of the "Big Lie". Every direct supervisor I have had has said in both operations and the first week of work that this is a dangerous job. Our job is dangerous, risks will always occur. As long as there is risk a chance of injury or death can occur. Unless we simply do not engage we must accept reasonable risk. Growing up in a Forest Service family, I have been exposed to the many sides of fire and have known of the risks from when I first started my career 14 years ago. I do agree there is a disconnect between a large portion of the overhead and ground troops when it comes to daily operations that need to be fixed. I also agree that most firefighters live daily in a medium-risk environment and this has slowly been more realized through the years. During the last two seasons, I have even noticed firefighters coming off the line sooner than ever before in the evenings. I believe this to be a mitigating of risk to combat fatigue, lower driving risk, and exposure to risks not seen in daylight. The days of fighting fires till 2300 every night and up at 0530 are giving away to up at 0600 and in chow at 2000. The two biggest issues I see that are described in the article are first, the culture of firefighting is something that both strengthens and hinders progress. If you don't believe you can do something, you're setting yourself up for failure from the start. I think it needs to become more of *"Is this our best option with acceptable risk?"* and not a *"Can you do it?"* scenario. It takes a lot of buy-in from the people on the ground and support from those above to evolve the culture. I think this is slowly occurring just with the generational change and mindset of those up and coming leaders. This is something that can also be seen outside of fire. But for there to be a complete change overnight I don't think is	For any change to happen, open communication and dialogue is the first step that needs to occur. And, as you state in the questions, it's about bringing both sides together. So often it quickly becomes what side is right and what side is wrong; the task and truth is what needs to be focused on.

logical.

The largest issue I see that is addressed in the article is the public's perception on what we do out on the line and what truly are values. Coming from a rural logging town that got hit extensively by both reduction in logging and historic fires, I've also realized that as ignorance goes up so does the sound of one's voice. I sympathize with those people and their livelihood and fully support an increase in logging, but risking lives is different than doing our job.

We need the support of Forest overhead/IMTs and local government to back those on the ground and not cave to political pressures. For those on the ground it's much easier physically and mentally to just say *"Yes I can do that"* than fight on why we won't go chase that smoke 300' in or punch line in that nasty area—especially when there are X amount waiting for their chance to shine.

This takes a lot of courage to do in today's volatile politically-fueled society. Nobody wants to be criticized, especially for not doing something. But ultimately having the courage to stand up for those below you will create the biggest change to the way we do things. When each person in the chain of command is fully supported and backed for good decisions by those above them, a climate of trust is created and we can break down the walls of the current culture of how we do things.

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33. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I always wondered why very good crews and FFs I respect seem to always break or bend rules and have been injured or killed. Jim Roth from Storm King Mountain Technologies tells a great story of his brother not willing to drop a pack because he was razzed about it on a fire a few days before. [*Editor's Note: Jim's younger brother, Roger, was a McCall Smokejumper who was among those firefighters who perished on Storm King Mountain on the South Canyon Fire. In the aftermath of this personal tragedy, Jim started his company to research and develop better safety equipment for wildland firefighters.*] I also fight structure fires and respond to car crashes. We always start a run by saying don't get killed on this call—it's not worth it. In a nut shell, all responders need to know ALL calls have great risk and we need to try to mitigate hazards as much as possible.	All wildland firefighters should read this essay. It makes sense to be a student of the game. We put great effort to teach weather ops and fire behavior. Now we need to teach what true risk is.

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34. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Been doing this for 37 years. From the beginning I have heard how we need to work toward zero in fatalities and injuries. We work in a field with human factors and mechanical things. Something is going to go wrong. It's "Murphy's law." Bad decisions will be made, something will be overlooked, one of the thousands of moving parts in a helicopter are going to fail . . . We have to look at all the things we do and assume that there is risk. We have to mitigate to the best of our abilities. Training is our friend but we, as a collective group, need to get everyone to accept that this is a dangerous profession from the top to the bottom.	A ground swell from the bottom up to get the whole firefighting community to acknowledge the truth of the problem.
35. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Where many people, including upper level managers and agency administrators, demand a "Life First" everyone's entitled to a safe work environment approach, it's driven by statistics and a world view that fails to recognize that the environment is inherently dangerous by itself, let alone when it's on fire. On the other hand, it is also driven by managers, ever so poorly hired in the last few decades for various social/political reasons with no ground experience let alone fire experience, looking to minimize DART ["Days Away, Restricted or Transferred"] rates etc. on the performance review so they can manage their career on up to the next level. There is no such thing as "totally safe," the best we can do is be smart about our decisions to accept risk. In our litigious society and failure to accept that our "Little Johnny" may have made a mistake or worse yet took a risk and ended up with a bad consequence, blame always goes to the deepest pockets, the "organization" for not keeping Little Johnny safe. Well, Little Johnny knew the risks, they are always there. If he didn't know the risks then we truly failed. We need to be honest about the risks, as the essay states.	Sorry, I just don't understand those that fail to see the logic or the problem that Mark has presented. However, perhaps a symposium discussion on the topic would help, with invites to people of all levels—not just the office staff that can make it to such things in the off-season. If safety is a priority, I have always said that true priorities come with funding. Therefore, national funding should be allotted to be sure we get FFT2s across all agencies to attend such an event.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
36. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	There are numerous near misses in which it was more of "luck" on the side of a good outcome rather than the 10/18. I teach fire courses. Never once do I claim for fire to be safe. In Florida State law regarding prescribed fire it even states "inherently dangerous". I've known from the get-go that what we do could easily turn from a good day to a bad day—even if you follow 10/18, LCES, etc. While we need to better explain how firefighting isn't the safest arena, we also need to push the steps that can be taken to make it safer.	That's a tough one. In my "world" of firefighting we are experiencing a passing of the torch. For some reason, there seems to be a gap from the old-timers to my generation (early 30s). We were brought up through the ranks being mentored by the old-timers and learning from them and being taught the old-school methods. When you look at the tragedy fires, the incidents all sound the same from way back when through today. The same accidents, entrapments, etc. are occurring. Policies have changed, rules have become burdensome, yet tragedy still happens. A true analysis of why these incidents continue to take place should be done. What was common among them? I think a baseline survey/analysis of firefighters from ground pounders to ICs and so on needs to be conducted to see what others feel. Information such as experience (training level and in practice), ranges 1-10 of thought on risk under certain situations/scenarios, and regions of work would provide useful information. There may be a skew that those up on top view certain situations as less risky—or there may be regional variances.
37. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I also agree with the data. We talk about "Life First" as well. But what is not taken into consideration with that is what is talked about in the essay—the inherent risk involved with what we do. We can talk about risk all day long and we can deem something safe to do, but what happens when someone takes a wrong step and falls 100 feet down a steep slope? We deem a tree is safe to come down, but the top breaks out and falls.... We talked about it, right? We deemed it safe and proceeded....So what happened then?	I think having a dialogue with a whole spectrum of people through the ranks of the fire service. Kind of like the "Honor the Fallen" Group, but have it at each level of an agency. For example, have a working group on a national forest that includes Rangers, FMO, AFMO all the way down to the tool swinger on an engine or crew. Get 5-7 of those folks together in a room and talk about it. That way even the Leadership on organizations can actually talk with people on the ground. So all these initiatives concerning safety that come from the top down can come from the group up.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
38. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Like Mark Smith says, wildland firefighting is a dangerous job. We can preach safety to firefighters and promote "Life First" and "Safety Journey's" until we are blue in the face but in actuality, accidents and fatalities are going to happen. We have to mitigate hazards to the best of our ability. I believe that we do a pretty good job of that, but human error is something that will always happen. You cannot foresee everything that could/would happen in a dynamic environment like wildland firefighting. Will accidents happen on every fire? Probably not. Can all accidents be prevented? Probably not. Our Leaders think it can be. "Growing numbers of Line Officers do not have the same ground-truthing experience as earlier generations who carried a compelling depth of fire knowledge in their backgrounds." This is an accurate statement. We have many new Line Officers who have little to no actual fireline experience and do not understand the risks that firefighters encounter during suppression (as well as prescribed fire) operations. You have to trust your fireline leaders—from the IC all the way down to the Squad Leader—to make good decisions. No one wants to see someone get hurt doing this job. The goal is for everyone to come home safe. But we need to be realistic. There will be a time when that is not the case. This was a great article and I hope it does promote future dialogue.	I'm not sure. But I think it may have to start at the lower levels of the organization and work back to the top. District and Zone leaders may have to promote a change of thought in the way they do business and then push that up the ladder. We have usually been forced to accept what upper levels of leadership have deemed to be the correct way to do things. My agency has always been a reactive organization instead of a proactive organization. Many people tend to keep their thoughts and ideas to themselves for fear of reprisal or not being politically correct. Open and honest dialogue needs to be promoted at all levels of the Fire Service.
39. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	As Art Torres used to say: *"This is a serious job with serious consciences."* I remind my firefighters of that every year.	I think we are still primarily a top organization, meaning our direction comes from the top down. In many cases the Leader's Intent gets diffused or misinterpreted or not heard at all the farther down the chain it goes—especially if the message is not cut and dried or black and white, like this issue. In this case, if we looked at the lower level firefighters and had them work this back up to the top, I think it would help bring clarity to the issue,

		as well as provide a newer perspective.
		I have always known this is a dangerous job and my wife and family have known it also. That's why my family says be safe when I go out on fires.
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
40. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I've never had an experience of someone telling me that any aspect of firefighting was safe—but I do see evidence of it in the culture. It's evident when, any time I hear about an incident of fatality, the questions surrounding it automatically point to the person involved having done something wrong—not followed assignment, not having situational awareness, etc. And that reinforces the idea that if only he/she had done those things, they would have been fine. Conversations like that shut down any opportunity to see what needs to improve in all aspects of firefighting—our culture, our agencies, our training, etc. It's still a blame-placing exercise. It harkens back to the time where reviews conducted on wildfires and escaped prescribed burns felt more like inquisitions—witch-hunts to find out the human flaw. And that blame-placing exercise not only set back our ability to speak honestly and openly about escapes/injuries/etc., it also ignored the fact that THERE IS INHERENT RISK IN ALL THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRE—whether you are lighting it or fighting it. I think one of the promoters of this avoidance attitude (I agree with Mike D., I don't think it's a purposeful lie) are the higher-ups in an agency—the folks most removed from the ground experience and the risk. This is not an attempt to divide or vilify, these people are absolutely crucial. But if you've never had experience as a firefighter and you aren't in a medium or high risk job and your world is bureaucracy and lawyers, how natural can it start to feel to need to pinpoint a specific cause to blame when the public is up in arms about an incident? We are in a society where these higher-ups can't exactly shrug and say: *"Well, that's the nature of the game, folks, we all knew the risk".* Their job is tough, and not one that just anyone could easily do. But the need to have a flurry of activity after a tragedy, to pass down more policy, to point out wrong-doings, to show you are actively doing SOMETHING . . . I'm not saying we don't review the incident to learn as much as we can about it. We should constantly be looking to improve our programs and up our standards. But nowhere in any of the reviews that I've facilitated did anyone	One of the ways we've tried to start doing that within our own agency is through revamping our review protocol for both wildfires and escaped prescribed burns to better reflect nationwide trends (the 2012 JFSP report "Using Escaped Prescribed Fire Reviews to Improve Organizational Learning" was extremely useful). And yes, I'm "that office guy" when I say that part of it is policy. But if we want to change the discussion and the culture, and we want to build more trust, then we have to change how we handle the tough situations. We have to be held accountable for the way we approach these reviews by cementing it in policy, so that staff know exactly what is expected of everyone and how the process will be conducted. Less inquisitional, more open discussion. Less blame-placing, more understanding of decisions made. It's in that critical moment that we need to reinforce trust and

		communication. Otherwise, the more important conversations will never happen.
	mention the fact that risk was always present, no matter what you do.	
	It's not a big conspiratorial lie for me. It's just an elephant in the room that nobody talks about. And the avoidance of that discussion puts a significant amount of pressure on firefighters (both suppression and prescribed burners) to try and achieve this unattainable goal of no injuries, no fatalities, no escapes. That there is no elephant in the room is simply the lie we tell ourselves.	Because the policy has been updated, there's been a significant change in how we talk about spots, escapes, medical emergencies, etc.. There is less negative stigma surrounding it, perhaps because the understanding is in place that *"just because these things happened, it doesn't mean we don't have your back".*
	A disclaimer: I've been involved in prescribed fire for the last 12 years, as a biologist, a graduate researcher, and now a program specialist (who is lucky enough to still escape the office every fire season). I've also been involved in suppression for the last five years in state agencies and have done several trips out west.	And buried underneath all that, albeit indirectly, is the idea that yes, these things can and will happen.
	I am experienced enough to follow the conversation and be involved, but when I read both articles, what struck me was the parallels to the prescribed fire world. So please forgive my possible move off-topic. But if you switch out the concept of firefighter fatality with the occurrence of spot fires or an escape and take the inherent risk down a number of notches, the articles are still pretty spot on.	
	Should we accept them when they happen? No, we learn from them as much as we can and try to make the number as small as possible. But we don't move through life with the idea that prescribed fire carries absolutely no risk, and that goes the same for fighting wildfires.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
41. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	With so many known and unknown variables in the fire environment, our work is inherently dangerous yet the assumption that it can always be done safely every time seems to exist. We all have our own perception of what acceptable risk looks like and how much risk we are willing to take; how much risk we are willing to expose to our crews based on experience and comfort with the assignment. While everyone agrees that there is risk, it is not that common for people to actually talk about the dangers outside of reading the Risk Assessment. I don't hear people saying that our job is safe, however the lie of omission is present when nobody is willing to talk about it.	Continuing dialogue between opposing views.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
42. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	Yes.
43. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	During the 14 years of being on and supervising a Hotshot Crew, I know it is only a matter of time that there will be a fatality. Even if you follow all the rules there will be that one log, rock, snag, or undetected spot that will hit you in the blind spot. We are only human and cannot fully control such a complex system.	Difficult to do. But one thing we need to do is start highlighting our successes more. With fires becoming larger and more complex, climate change influencing the length of our seasons, wildland urban interface, and . . . our training for these "new age" fires needs to updated—especially the human factors side of things. Working for the Feds, we are still not the recognized fire service that we need to be. We are doing a lot more than building hiking trails, out thinning, range work. We need to become a professional fire organization.
44. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have personally had many close calls throughout my career and I have talked with friends and coworkers who have had similar experiences.	I would argue we change the context and discuss "The Big Truth" and rework the problem. If there is no acceptable solution for any of the parties at the table then we need to all come to the table and redefine what we are really talking about. Disregard the politicians, disdain the lawyers, and in fact, please politely excuse those people from the table who haven't spent a few years on the fireline (don't worry we will invite them all back later) and have a real conversation. What are we really talking about here? The reality for me is perhaps instead of "the big lie" we need to face One Big Truth. To steal from the essay's author: "The truth is a worthy anchor point to begin to honor both the living and the fallen." The truth is we cannot promise we can create enough safety measures or risk mitigations to ensure everyone goes home

every time.

"Safety" cannot be summed up in 5 words, especially in this context. The reason why the Redbook has the definition of safety that it does is because the authors recognized there is no such thing as a 100% safe work environment (this is a subtle infiltration of this One Big Truth).

What do we do to share One Big Truth? We need to educate. We need to be frank and honest with our politicians, our management, the public and our families. Let's rework the problem together because there are more Big Truths to face.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
45. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Numerous experiences where the human factor was the true cause of a close call or incident.	Continue the conversation, have the topic included in the next round of safety initiatives presented by the Forest Service.
46. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	During pre-season meetings/presentations from Line Officers I always hear: *"I will never ask you to put your life at risk to save a structure."* (Or a tree for that matter.) Then, during the season, they do. There's a great quote out there, I'm not sure who said it: *"There is no fire out there worth the loss of a firefighter, yet every fire is risking the life of firefighters."*	Continue the conversation and make MIDDLE leadership understand. I think fire directors in Washington get it and are trying with new Leader's Intent and policy/doctrine. The people that don't get it are the one's calling the shots: the agency administrators. Not all, but some... Maybe even a majority.
47. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Interesting regarding the 10-18—how often we break them for the mission.	Education that we know the job is dangerous, let all understand it's dangerous, and remember 10-18.
48. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Always giving assignments without looking at the big picture.	Million Dollar Question.
49. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I believe that the true risks of wildland fire are not discussed. The training says if you follow the rules you will be safe. There is little recognition that things happen due to the environment we operate in	Keep talking and sharing stories

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
50. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	A long time ago on a 20-person crew (with 15 brand new firefighters on the year of South Canyon) we found our inexperienced crew summoned by another crew boss to help in a steep valley with fire all around. Most of us new folks knew something was very wrong with this, as did our experienced squad bosses, and thankfully our very experienced crew boss got us out of there telling us this was extremely unsafe. He never told us this was a safe assignment either and there was risk but did everything he could to get us home. This idea about a Big Lie has been out there a long time quietly murmuring in the background.	Keep the dialogue going, stop saying there is no risk in the world. I have always had trouble with the zero accidents concept. If something does happen then you feel guilty that you did something wrong. We need safety protocols but need to admit that some things we do have greater inherent risk. And we should have more in-depth training and acknowledge the level of risk; than the less risky stuff (siting at my computer all day).
51. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	If you don't accept the idea that risk is inherent in the job then you are less aware of a negative outcome in a hazardous environment.	Acceptance and understanding of our environment is the key to moving forward towards a clear mission, transparent organization, and an organization that holds itself accountable in all circumstances.
52. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
53. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Other."	Personal experience backed by data. We knew for 20 years we were losing 1-2 air tanker crews each year. Then the wings came off two aircraft in the same season. And, oh yeah, the horrific moments were caught on video. Only then did upper levels say: *"Yeah, that aerial firefighting thing is dangerous."* I have watched trees fall on places I have sat moments before. I have seen vehicles roll off the side of roads. I have seen helicopters crash. Those are the experiences. At the same time, I heard an increasing cacophony of exhortation from Line Officers and upper staff to "not bend or break" the 10/18. There has been a clear mismatch between what the practitioners observed and what the decision makers proclaimed.	The next step is for ground-level leaders (crew and engine bosses, battalion and division chiefs) to have local conversations. Talk thru the perceptions. Then lead from the bottom up by educating all those Line Officers without fire experience. The first step of conversation amongst the ground troops can happen today. Education of Line Officers is a long hard slog that requires a sensitive touch and probably never ends. But if we care about our people going home, what could be more important than helping the decision makers have a "Come to Jesus" moment?

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
54. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I don't feel a strict interpretation of the 10 and 18 is realistic. For example, you'd never leave the station if you had to know what your fire is doing at all times.	Some kind of regional or local gathering. People who care enough would probably participate in an in-person event.
55. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	So I talked about the 10/18 and the issues there, because I think they perpetuate the lie that somehow religiously adhering to them will save your life despite the fact that they are clearly flawed. So is this dangerous? I do it because it is dangerous. Otherwise I would've been a librarian. I love to drive in bad weather because it's more challenging than driving on a sunny day. I am not interested in an "X" sport to get my rush. I interested in using all my skills to do a job. To put my wits up against 1,000 variables that are constantly changing. This job is appealing because it's dangerous. Because it challenges me. I simply don't see any of the people I work with on these crews getting together on a Saturday afternoon to organize and re-shelve books at the library. That job needs to happen, but I'm not doing it. Give me a crew and some real life-threatening variables.	Knowing when to walk away is huge. It can provide an enormous safety buffer. But blowing out a tire on the way to the fire, having a heart attack later at home, is part of this job and still our biggest killer (and the wrong kind of adrenaline rush). The only thing that is going to save those lives is an enormous amount of money on tire checks and extensive health checkups. To say this is not dangerous and that somehow the 10/18 is going to keep you alive is fantasy. It's like saying *"just teach them abstinence and no one will get pregnant."* At least that is actually true if everyone practiced abstinence. If everyone practiced the 10/18 and that was it, we are all screwed.

Driving on a plowed road with salt and sand down is still an extremely dangerous proposition compared to just staying at home. Our job is a shitload more dangerous than driving on sand and salt. When you name one aspect of your job "the widow maker" and it's true, you are probably in a dangerous field.

If facts don't work on convincing people that this is a dangerous job and death is a real outcome, what else do you have? In academia we basically have to wait for retirements to really bring in innovation. I suppose in firefighting we will have to do the same. However, recognizing that we are paying our bills with a known number of deaths each year, might actually start saving lives.

A scenario might go: Saving this town will cost on average, $XX in gas, $XX pay, and $.005 lives. Now we can ask, is it worth it? And we can be more refined: At the moment the cost for life is $.00003 lives. That is an easy risk. Let's do it. But that could change to: Storm moving in over the witching hour, the cost just jumped to $ one crew. Now it's easier to see how much I don't give a shit about that town. And if the gets them to see the cost to them, gets them trained so that they understand how the cost of them changed and that the bill is coming due, they can say: no. And if they do, the cost in lives just dropped to $0.

Without admitting that we pay our bills with gas, equipment, salary and lives, means that the amount were willing to spend is generally trivial to the |

		actual cost of losing any town we are trying to save. Because after all, it's just gas, equipment, and salary.
		No worries though. Not admitting normal regular firefighting costs, people's lives will just mean a few more deaths (20ish a year. Figure another 20 years before the majority opinion swings the other way? That is only 400 deaths.). And, what the hell, I like firefighting because of the danger. Admittedly it's kind of an odd way to get extra danger and clearly gets people killed. But as long the policy that gets people killed claims that it doesn't get people killed we're all good.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
56. *Fire Manager* <u>Disagree.</u> Based on "Personal Experience." **<u>Please Describe the Specific Parts of the Essay You Disagree With:</u>** I don't think any fire manager expects there is no risk to firefighters, because risk is present from the moment we are dispatched until we get back home. The standard fire orders and situations have to be guides and I don't know of any fire managers that look at it differently. Honestly, I have a hard time grasping what Mark is trying to really say. When a fire team completes an IAP, that plan is only a starting point to begin the day and DIVS and crew bosses have to adjust their tactics during the shift. Mark seems to suggest that there is too much centralized authority, that we blindly fight fires to meet objectives of some managers in a glass building, which I don't agree with.	I have 25 years' experience on fire teams, 32 years as an FMO, 7 more as a wildland fire consultant, 25 years as a qualified FBAN.	Mark has some good ideas, however I have a hard time understanding several of his points. The next step? Well, if you are not confused you aren't paying attention. There are several good ideas floating around that have been presented at meetings with The International Assoc. of Wildland Fire and other meetings and conferences. Most of these ideas are being ignored. I am extremely disappointed in the resistance from Crew Bosses to Ops Section Chiefs to Line Officers to even try or test new ideas—let alone implement them.
57. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I once heard a colleague tell his spouse that *"wildland firefighting is exciting, but not dangerous."* I've witnessed it being treated as a kind of "extreme sport," not the least because so much of the suppression effort is either wasteful or useless, so it seems more like a professional game than a profession inherently valuable to society, and who dies in a game? Given wildfire's seasonal, weather-dependent nature,	Each relevant agency should mandate all its personnel to do the reading you suggest. Just this week I was an instructor at an S-420 class. With both students and cadre, there were 70 people in the room—all with a relatively high level of experience and commitment or they wouldn't be at a 420 to begin with. When I asked how many had read Smith's essay,

	firefighters are often given short shrift during the wet years and standards of performance lapse. Therefore, if that's allowed to happen, there's a tendency to believe that surely it can't be all that dangerous.	only myself and one other had done so. You can't discuss what you don't know.
	Pay, compared to other professions, is relatively low, so either society doesn't highly value wildland firefighters, or assumes that they don't face enough hazard to warrant higher compensation. No firefighter does it to get rich, but you cannot help being influenced by the implicit attitudes of the community.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
58. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I am starting my 26th year as a prescribed firefighter in the Great Plains. Almost all of my work has been with land owners and land managers. I have caught 100-acre wildfires on my own with just a torch. I still learn a ton every year and am stunned with how much I have forgotten at the beginning of every spring. The first 20 years, my firefighting experience was outside the Red Card system. I first heard of the 10&18 while sitting in a classroom at the local community college with a group of about 40 trainees. My first thought? It looks like something a lawyer would push so that an institution could cover its butt. I didn't take them seriously because to me they simply couldn't be accomplished and the author had to know this. "Know what the fire is doing at all times?" Not a single person reading this believes that this happens on every safe fire. I burn in the tall grass prairie and can see for 30 miles in every direction and I don't know what my fire is doing 100% of the time on all my burns, particularly on my large burns. On most of my burns I can't even see half my crew members because they are a mile away bringing up the far flank. So before making it out of the classroom I already know the 10 has got some serious feel-good BS in it. "Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first." You are a danger to my crew if you live by this standing order. Being a firefighter, as we all know, is not just a direct attack with a hose. That is, for most, the smallest	I am not sure how you get both sides to talk. The 10&18 were created to help save our lives. They were assembled with a lot of care and thought. I suspect back when burlap sacks were considered a pretty awesome tool, any thought about safety beyond "Have true grit" was a dramatic improvement. For instance, getting e-mails across my desk from Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center has dramatically improved my thinking and consideration of safety because it keeps safety on my mind all the time. It exposes me to new situations and gets me thinking about how I would handle a particular situation. So if the 10 is flawed it was/is still an improvement over nothing. And I would say a huge improvement. When I see it in my pack as I dig for that granola bar it reminds me to clear my head and think about safety. It reminds me that there is a safe way to do this. And that way is probably a safer path than the current plan I have. I need to find that path, evaluate it, and make changes if necessary. I think this every single time I see it. When I see one of you guys pull it out in the morning briefing to quiz us, it gives me chills as I hear it reminding me that 26 years of experience is not enough and if I don't find the safer path the brothers and sisters in front of me are going to pay

		my bill. It has done a great job. What is the chance it could be better?
	part of the job.	
	Nearly everything that is going to go wrong is going to go wrong due to things beyond the actual spraying of water on fire. Are you going to aggressively change a tire, prep your gear, dig line, and refill your tanks? "…having provided for safety first?"	I don't find the advice it has printed on it particularly helpful. If it is going to help us find a safer path, we should heed its own warning: *"Give clear instructions and insure they are understood."*
	Give me any job, including librarian, where this statement doesn't apply. And if that's the case, then how is it supposed to help one of the cadets sitting next to me stay alive or help me keep my crew safe?	
	I agree it's a good idea but it in no way informs anybody about the unique environment we work in or how to be safer. The 10 are clearly not for all firefighters despite the fact that it says it is. Most of the points are for people in some leadership role. "Maintain control of your forces at all times." I have issues with much of the 10. The 18 I like. But I am not sure it targets most problems we face, get injured in, or die from.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
59. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Substantial time on the fireline. Despite dedication to safety and learning by memory—word for word—the 10 and 18, I've experienced several close calls. The difference between safety and a bad outcome is very frequently luck. Or lack of it. I've also lead multiple safety journey and Life First engagements. I was surprised how frequently groups got hung up on the "zero fatality" message coming from top levels of leadership. Although I very much appreciate what I think is their genuine concern for our safety, I found this message to be a distraction—a point of conceptual debate that diverted our attention from the main goal, ensuring (or in my mind, improving the probability of) their safe return home each day. At worst, I found it to drive some people away from the conversation from a perception that leadership isn't even willing to admit, or see, the truth—that they are not leveling with them. I noticed some people get so hung-up on this that they are less receptive to the messages to	I say open the conversation to this topic. There is a very apparent disconnect between the direction to take any degree of acceptable/necessary risk, but not accept the necessarily (based on simple probability) linked associated "acceptable loss". There are two reactions among managers and leaders to the thought of having this conversation openly: 1) that admitting a degree of acceptable loss will increase our tolerance for risk and make us less safe vs. 2) admitting to the concept of inherent risk, and its tradeoffs, will enable us to see and discuss issues more clearly and minimize this loss (make us more safe). I'm firmly in the number 2 camp—and have been for many years. Much like the article states, I have found myself very uncomfortable with opening a conversation with this message, outside closed doors. Like my dedication to safety/agency will be in question. Even questioning MY OWN dedication;

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	follow.	how can I say any loss is an acceptable trade off for what we do? But I am convinced that this "opposing view" needs air time for open discussion, sanctioned and encouraged by leadership. I think our current focus on "risk management" is right on target because it recognizes inherent risks. And this is a natural next step of that conversation, one follows the other. With risk, comes undesirable consequences when the dice are rolled enough times—it's simple statistical probability. Acknowledging this is very powerful and will decrease the probability of bad outcomes
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
60. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Other."	I agree due to both personal experience and data. My personal opinion is that, by and large, our profession appears to elicit an emotional response to fireline deaths by elevating those individuals to martyrdom, as if we are on a moral crusade, with idioms such as "never forget". What am I not to forget? The individual, or what got them killed?	Dunno...religion and science only rarely mix in such a way to get the same, favorable, result.
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
61. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Background: Started on the ANF in 1970. Retired Fire Captain, USFS 25 years. Forests: ANF, CNF, LNF. Currently AD PNF. No matter what the extent of our training is and the level of our firefighting experience we will continue to have body bags coming off of wildland fires! It is inherent to the job and will continue to be unless we no longer engage and suppress fires. Being a Captain for 20 years and working with (some supervisors) survivors of incidents where fire deaths occurred taught me something. Each season I would make sure my crew knew the 10 Standard and 18 Situations. Then I would start the real training. I had a file that was a foot thick in my office. It contained every fire	The Truth. If anyone believes that firefighting can be made "safe" they are living in a fantasy world. There will be many more wildland fire deaths in the future. And that is the Truth. The close call deaths are a success in my book.

	fatality report that I could get my hands on over the years. Some were stamped "Not for Public Use", "Classified"... etc. Many contained photographs of the burned bodies of the fire fighters! I would use these reports to sit with my crews and review them.	
	A lot of discussion would take place. And I would always state the following during these discussions: *"If you feel or think you are a better firefighter than the one or ones in this report you have already put yourself at risk! Do you think this? Mostly likely you do, or you're saying to yourself 'that will never happen to me'. You and I have been lucky! How many close calls have you already had in your life, and I am not talking about firefighting! So, what is the difference? There isn't any! Think about it!"* I would go on: *"There are not new born babies out there on these fires hanging from brush or trees that we are saving, it is just a fire. My objective as a firefighter and your Captain is for everyone to come home in one piece. Firefighting is High Risk All the time. ZERO risk on a fire doesn't exist, it never will, too many variables out there. We can do a lot to lower risk, training, working together, watching out for each other—the same thing a lot of these other fire fighters did who are now deceased."*	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
62. *Fire Manager* Disagree. Based on Personal Experience **Please Describe the Specific Parts of the Essay You Disagree With:** I disagree that people are not discussing the risk and loss with incoming firefighters. I believe the discussion depends on what part of the country and what agency one is "growing up" in wildland fire.	I started working as a wildland firefighter in Florida for the Florida Division of Forestry. I remember being told that if I made a mistake and didn't listen and learn, I could die. Later when I moved into the USFWS as a prescribed fire specialist, I was told: "You can die in the helicopter, you can die on the airboat, you can die walking through the woods—trees falling, alligators, bears, bad people hiding out, and fire. We talked about the risk and the opportunity for loss in every position I have had. I bring up the risk of loss and the losses that have happened when I instruct. I talk about what I know and who I know. I have lost people.	Keep talking. Keep dialoging. Add a place in S-130 to have the conversation. Add other places in other classes to add to the conversation as people move up in quals. I learned so much from the "old school" about the things that happened to them just sitting in classes listening to their stories. And asking questions. As a woman in wildland fire, every time I have had young women around I start the conversation about how dangerous the job is, how people die and the different ways and how hard the job can be on one's body. Yes, I discuss this with young men, too. I just don't want the young women to think they are safe. And no, I do not try to stop them from being a wildland

		firefighter. I just want them to think about all the possibilities and how to be smart to live through it. I think it is important that all people know how risky it is to do this job.
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
63. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I believe there are risks in almost anything we do. To say that wildland firefighting is not dangerous is to imply that there is no risk in getting into your car and driving home. I believe that there are so many aspects of the Human Factors that we haven't even scratched the surface. One individual is more risk taking, another is more risk averse. Your experiences and your influences are what really drives how you approach risk. I don't believe there is a "big lie" being told as much as there is a "lack of experience" and denial within the agency as DeGrosky wrote about.	I agree with the authors that there needs to be more discussion. I firmly believe and I feel that the fire community would support a discussion from our senior leaders. I really would like to hear their honest opinion. Not what they think the agency would want them to say.
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
64. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	1. We'd never get anything accomplished if the 10s were truly rules that had to completely be in place in order to start work, especially on IA. And I've never been told that the 18 are rules. They're watchouts to mitigate ASAP. 2. Look at the stats. They're pretty unchanging even with better training and a 0 tolerance policy. It's been somewhere between 18 and 26 LOD deaths, except for the year with 34, since I've been doing this, and the same since my Dad started in 74 from what he tells me. I rarely hear someone at the lower levels say we aren't in a dangerous job, but I do see avoidance at higher levels and under political pressure.	Talk about it and quit worrying about politics. I'd love to see a 0 fatality year, but it's unrealistic to expect it every year. It's a great goal, but we work with an unconfined chemical reaction affected by multiple constantly changing systems interacting in extreme environments. All we can do is our best to mitigate risks as seen and make decisions based on experience and training. This usually gets us through. Sometimes we get lucky and learn from close calls, and sometimes some of us get bit. In order to honor our fallen and learn from our mistakes, we must put them in the light and talk about it from multiple different experience levels. Sometimes we'll never get the answer to *"What were they thinking?"* or even *"Why did they do that?"* but we can try to work through to *"How do I learn from this?"* and *"How do I avoid that outcome in that sort of situation?"* Try to build a slide from

		someone else's experience. LORD make (my decisions) fast and accurate.
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
65. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	I have been doing this since 1983. I grew up in Southern Cal watching fire on the hill sides. I have never been in a fire shelter (lucky, good overhead, ???) but have sat in plenty of safety zones. As a DFMO sending folks to fires and having been around people involved in Stanza and the I-90 deployment it has been pounded home to me that this is not a safe job. I spent a good part of my career as a fuels officer and have a passion for how fire moves on the landscape. I figured out a while ago that we do not control fire and we are kidding ourselves that we do. There are too many unpredictable variables involved without the human interactions. The safety journeys I have been forced to listen to have really pounded home to me how unrealistic the goals of the agency are. On this District we have had the conversations with the captain level about how this is a danger job and people are going to die. I even said it once at a FLT meeting, it did not go over to well, but the civil rights officer agreed with me (he was ex-military). We are at a crossroads with fire and I am not too sure how or what will happen. The landscapes need fire, we have to figure out how to adapt and live with fire, yet we keep spending millions of dollars putting the things out. We need leaders (real leaders) in some key places and looking at our hiring practices we are in deep trouble. Line does not get it and the new line never will.	Have real conversations instead of being PC. I think a lot of line officers (DR, FS) would faint if they truly understood the risk and what the worst outcome would be. Fire managers tend to shield some of them because we know they could not take it.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
66. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Following all the rules. I've seen conditions go from good to bad in a matter of seconds. And no amount of "rules" would have changed the moment that situation happened	Open forum. Without the liability attorney present to curve the discussion in their favor
67. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	27 seasons, a lot in the trenches. A lot of aviation experience more recently.	Get people open to the "other" viewpoint and dialogue.
68. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	There were a number of occasions in my career that I found myself in situations that would be considered medium to high risk.	I think there is a need to acknowledge that firefighting (wildland or structure) is inherently dangerous and that there will be fatalities. We also need to acknowledge that mitigating risk is not the same as removing risk. There needs to be an honest conversation between management and line and ground troops that allows us to talk about what risk is and how we move forward toward an organization that fights fire effectively while working to become a learning culture vs a blaming culture.
69. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	30 years' experience has fully shown the risk inherent within wildland fire management.	[No Input]

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
70. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	I've had near misses. I've watched other people have near misses. Chainsaws, working on steep slopes, working 16+ hour shifts, working at night, burning. How can these tasks NOT be considered risky? Do we still need to do them? Yes. Can we work to minimize risk? YES. Can we ever eliminate it entirely? I don't see how.	Our ideology only matters in so far as it changes the way we do things on the ground, and the pressure—or lack thereof—that crew leaders/division sups/ICs feel to approach incidents a certain way. So whether or not we fundamentally agree on whether all risk can be eliminated, we can certainly work together to try and maximize the odds of everyone returning home safely. We can encourage people to report near misses and talk about what they can do better next time. We can make it clear that having a near miss doesn't make you a bad firefighter, and how talking about your near miss actually makes you a good firefighter. We also need to think about instances when crews turn down an assignment because they think it's too risky, and then Division turns around and asks a different crew to take that assignment on. Obviously different crews and leaders will have different comfort levels with risk and different perceptions of risk. But what do we learn when we ask firefighters to be candid about the risks they face, and then overhead goes and basically disregards those messages on the ground? And imagine the pressure crew sup's face when they turn down an assignment and overhead just decides to ask another crew. I'm merely a crewmember, so I can't put myself totally in my leadership's head. But I imagine when that kind of situation happens, they feel immense pressure to up their "acceptable risk" thresholds and take assignments they don't totally feel comfortable with, for fear of earning some kind of negative reputation, or for fear of getting fewer or less desirable assignments in the future. This is something I've overheard our leadership talking about. I'm glad this essay was published and that people are already discussing it. I knew going into firefighting that it was dangerous, but I feel lucky to be on a crew where we talk openly about this fact all the time. And I believe the leaders of my crew are doing everything they can to minimize those risks for us. We are only asked to do dangerous things when it makes sense and it's actually going to help preserve a value at stake. Otherwise, we don't engage. It seems like other crews are doing this too, but maybe not all. Hopefully, discussions like this can get us to the point where all crews and management teams are talking about risk on the same terms, and are making sure the values at stake justify what firefighters are being asked to do. I've heard the term "risk a lot to save a lot" thrown around a fair bit. I like it in some ways and I don't like it in others. Overall, I buy into this concept, and I think it works, so long as this is a contract that everyone on the ground has signed-on for. So I guess that points to making sure new hires understand that their job is risky. I did, and I feel willing to take on risk for the benefit of protecting communities and to have employment that I enjoy and feel proud of. But maybe not everyone is comfortable with risking a lot, even to save a lot. And I'm certainly not willing to give my life to save a house, so my hope is that even if we are "risking a lot to save a lot," we have thresholds

| | | in place to make sure we turn down assignments that are too risky. |
| | | At a certain point, if the fire is beyond our capabilities, or the terrain is just too severe, we have to be humble enough to realize that our efforts are never going to be enough. At that point, the risk level is too high and we also stand to gain nothing by trying. But the real question to me is, how do you recognize when you've reached a threshold like that? How do you decide that the risk level is finally just too high to proceed? And what do you do when the overhead on an incident and the crews on the ground disagree about whether a threshold has been reached? |

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
71. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I've been in fire for 28 years, 26 as a hotshot, and 18 as a superintendent. Mark Smith is dead on. The other article, (from management), just tows the company line. (I knew it was written by a manager by the time I had read the 3rd paragraph.)	Can't be done.
72. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have worked suppression on engines and with hand crews in Region 6 and Region 5, as well as extensive RX fire experience in the southeastern US. Risk taken and tactics used on many fires regularly violate the 10 & 18s. They place firefighters in many unnecessary situations which can result in potential injury or death, and waste man-hours. Hot line is constructed when natural barriers exist or fuels and weather would allow for burnout, but instead retardant and water are dropped "danger close" to hand crews contracting line, fighting to save acreage where no homes are at risk. Complacency is always talked about, but never addressed. Those who do speak up are told maybe "you're in the wrong field" or "it's the job, suck it up". We take risks every day, whether it's doing suppression or prescribed fire work. Both types are inherently dangerous, I don't feel some members of the fire community who spend most of their time doing suppression get that. The number of times I've heard someone from out west say "Oh, it's just a burn unit or it's just a controlled burn" shows a lack of understanding about the dangers faced by prescribed fire crews on the line. That attitude is just as complacent and dangerous for firefighter safety. It's no different than those doing	I believe attitudes about safety need revamping. Attitudes about how to aggressively fight fire needs to change, making it more acceptable to give up acreage and use fires for "resource benefit" more often. Both are likely to be unpopular options. I also believe the suppression and prescribed fire portions of the community need more engagement. Many, like myself, have entered the fire community from the science and conservation perspective, which can create a different perspective on how we manage wildfires and firefighter safety.

	suppression, who are minimizing the risk going in against an uncontrolled wildfire and get upset when you take a moment to get some SA for yourself, rather than just relying on your leadership to watch over you.	
	I worked many prescribed burns where we spent the day chasing spots or posted multiple lookouts due to weather and adjacent fuels, which were ripe for a potential wildfire. I've also worked several prescribed fires where the decision was made to shut the fire down, so it went from Rx fire to a suppression action in a matter of minutes.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
73. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	If we're there or sending firefighters there, accidents and fatalities are going to happen. Is that something we're willing to live with?	Continued education for our Line Officers, decision makers, and our public. They ultimately shoulder the burden of the risk when firefighters turn it down.
74. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Having worked in the "fire rich" environment of California in the transition years in the early 21st Century, I saw every mitigation measure taken to ensure safety and seen them fail and seen the lives left behind after the mitigation efforts failed.	Accept the truth that firefighting is an inherently dangerous profession and sometimes losses are incurred. To protect the public, there will be times where risk management is weighted in favor of risk. Risk a lot to save a lot.
75. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Worked 20 years from ground firefighter up to Helitack Manager. The job was inherently dangerous, everything from minor injury to death—why else did we hear and say things like "Be Safe" often multiple times a day? Or have SOPs that really didn't sink into your core until you experienced yourself or someone you knew almost dying, or worse? And have mottos about those same guidelines and policies such as "they were written in blood." Not to mention, whenever the horrible did happen, people would wonder when the next guideline, checklist, or whatever was going to be added to the pile of such things already there? I could go on and on, but I won't. Firefighting is a dangerous occupation, and this needs to be acknowledged.	I think the first step is to continue encouraging full disclosure through mediums like FLAs. Anytime something is hidden or is perceived as hidden, it is difficult for people to not have a negative association with it. This promotes an even larger sense of right vs. wrong, blame and shame than what the people going through the incident are already coping with. Blame and shame hinder actual learning and provide a disincentive to letting go of denial of distasteful, horrible truths

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
76. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	It has been awhile since I read that article but I do remember nodding my head in agreement many times while reading it. I read DeGrosky's article as well and appreciated that too. I agree with DeGrosky in that I don't think there is a purposeful intent of management/leadership to lie to firefighters about the dangers that this profession contains. At the same time, I do agree with Smith in that we can only continue to kill/injure 10-20 people a year while saying that safety is our number one priority and that no tree/house/watershed/ is worth dying over before someone has to say: "Time for a tactical pause and let's think about what we are saying and doing."	Fairly loaded question but I'll try. First off, I don't know if I think people across fire management have truly polarizing views on this issue as we all want this job to be as safe/injury/accident free as possible. This is some of the common ground that Smith mentions in his response. One of the things we fall prey to is second guessing management actions and believing that the alternative would have had a different result (stomping a fire at a 1/10th acre and hurting someone vs managing a fire and hurting someone). We cannot do that. There is no way to ever know the answer to the question of "Can we do this job safely?" We fool ourselves into answering "Yes" to that question much too often. In my opinion, we need to do a much better job locally with our Line Officers concretely identifying what the values are on a District/Forest and sharing these with the Pulaski motors—and also sharing WHY these things have value. You follow that with discussions about potential actions for these respective values and probably what some suppression actions (or no suppression actions) may mean to them. We also need to do a much better job of describing the conditions of our forests and potential impacts to communities when there is no smoke in the air about what some potential responses are for fire in a given area. Why we may go "big-box" because of all the snags and what that may look like (why are they just watching it.....they are just letting that thing go etc.). I think there are so many opportunities to marry fire fighter safety and increasing fire on the landscape that are not taken advantage of—but should be part of the ever-evolving public message for the fire service

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
77. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	7 years retired after 37 years in wildland fire suppression, general observation.	Break the fear this headline brings to every manager. "OSHA cites the US Forest Service for serious, repeated violations..." Or, a Notice of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions.
78. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Both personal experience and the research/data support my position. I have been involved with helping to change a culture. I believe the high-water mark was hit many years ago. We have perpetuated the same story for far too long. We are in a circle of insanity instead of a spiral of resilience.	Time for summits. Create a place to come together. Change the mindset to "this is a dangerous job" and train and pay accordingly. Create a wildland fire service that allows us for doctrine to be indoctrinated. A seasonal workforce is not doing us any favors. We do what we can with what we have when we have it.
79. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	We are very good at talking safety and risk management, but we struggle to put words into action. I sometimes think the driving motivation is greed, also known as overtime. Some agency missions create conflict too.	Let's start by keeping the conversation going and let's define a realistic model of what success looks like. We also need good strategies to engage the public in these discussions. We can't move the risk needle without public support.
80. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	I have been with 3 wildland fire agencies in my career including federal, state and local government units. The culture and discussion has been the same during all of this time (15 years). It seems that when accidents happen, the discussion immediately wills us to ask the question: "What did they do wrong?" and we immediately look toward our 10 and 18. Though I believe that the 10 and 18 are great tools for us to use to attempt to minimize or manage our risks, I agree that they can't always be applied to the letter. That is where our risk management process kicks in and we start looking toward the "Acceptable Risk" based on our personal experience and perception. I don't believe that everyone that runs through the risk management process can come to the same conclusions as we all look at things through different filters based on our perception and past experiences. I have heard many times in my career that if you stick to the rules of engagement, you will go home safely at the end of your shift. Though this may be what we tell ourselves or our younger or less experienced peers, I	I think that this is a step in the right direction. I believe that in order to change a culture, you need to first acknowledge that there is a shortcoming to our current one. Once that is agreed upon, then—and only then— can we take steps to change it. Both sides of this discussion need to be articulated so that all of us have access to it. I would like to see a lot of different levels respond to this and I would love to hear different views, as we don't all have the same filters as we sift through the ashes.

	believe that it is a natural coping mechanism that we use to make ourselves feel better about taking the risks that we do.	
	I don't feel that it is an outright lie. But maybe we should reframe our statement to acknowledge the amount of risk that is inherent in the path that we choose.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
81. Fire Manager Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	42 fire seasons—having worked as a firefighter all the way through OSC1, including wildland as well as a structural department—give me some perspective. I've been on mega fires as well as 100s of initial attacks. The environment has changed. Fuels, WUI, the public, as well as our workforce are so very different now compared to even 20 years ago. Forest Service leadership, in particular, is out of touch. Their reference is the 1970s when they might have carried a Pulaski. The fire ground is a different place now than it was then. I am so disappointed in our leadership but at the same time I couldn't be prouder of our crew and engine Captains. They are heads above where we were back in the 70s, 80s and 90s. We need to respect them and provide them the best support we can. Let's acknowledge the hazards of the job, provide them the tools they need and remove the impediments necessary to be successful.	I've sat in meetings with higher level agency leadership where things have been said that just make me scratch my head wondering how these ideas have grown. I believe it's about education, exposure to the folks doing the work, and an understanding of what goes on out there on the line.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
82. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	As an IMET and forecaster with the National Weather Service, I have often put a forecast out for thunderstorms knowing full well the firefighters will continue to put themselves out on an exposed ridgeline. They will have no means of safe shelter from lightning aside from hiking back to their rigs. It's a forecast...not yet reality, so a low risk at that time.	[No Input]
	Most of the time when I tell them thunderstorms have formed and are heading our way, the low risk has shifted to moderate or high risk. Afterwards, I hear folks decided to head to a lower elevation and avoid being the tallest thing on the ground despite the fact lightning strike locations are inherently unpredictable. They tend to go for the path of least resistance located on the highest point, but not always.	
	It initially bothered me that firefighter's actions were against everything I tell the public to do, but then I came to understand firefighters will do what firefighters will do. I know what they have been taught in S-190 and what their incident command path folks have learned in S-290 and S-390. Given that knowledge, they are making a subjective risk assessment and trying to balance that risk against an overwhelming drive "to get the job done." They are making an informed decision.	
	From my perspective, firefighting is dangerous, with every shift being potentially life threatening. There are numerous factors out of one's control with only so much mitigation possible. Weather is the significant factor I am an expert in. However, risks also range from random trees or branches falling, to drunk drivers crossing the center line, to a twisted ankle, to poison oak and/or a bee sting. Even camp crud can turn into pneumonia. Firefighters are making an informed decision.	
	I head out to the fire line also having made an informed decision. As much as I long to feel the radiant heat from the fire and see how the weather interacts with it, I factor in the safety for myself and of the firefighters I am keeping weather watch over. I fly the fire area in a helicopter knowing that a ten-cent clip holds my life and those with me in the balance. In those cases, the risk is worth obtaining mission critical information and knowledge.	
	That's why we receive and give briefings. We should know what we are getting into before we head there. I feel every person in this business has the right to an informed decision. When information is not passed on, bad things can eventually happen.	

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
83. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I started as a Hotshot in R-5 in 1988. Was a crew member for 12 years, a IHC Foreman for 6 years and finally a Supt. for 6 years. All told, I was a IHC for 22 years. I am now an Air Attack. I have seen the "culture" change a few times in those years. I always told my crew that firefighting was a very dangerous profession. I have seen "bad" things happen to "good" people. The Agency, as a whole, still has to grasp this. I am not holding my breath, as long as "politically correct" is in the equation.	Fire people should be led by fire people. NOT District Rangers and Forest Supervisors and everyone else at the Regional and WO level.
84. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	We are in an inherently dangerous business. While risk reduction and taking smart risks is appropriate, we can never be fully safe.	[No Input]
85. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I have always known that wildland fire is an inherently dangerous job, but have always been taught that if you do everything "Right"- 10's & 18's, drink water etc. you will be fine. There is NEVER any acknowledgement from leadership that there are risks we cannot mitigate and the culture continues to believe that we can meet objectives while "providing for firefighter and public safety." Do military commanders go into battle expecting that all their soldiers will survive? Never. How is our environment any different? If we really ask ourselves before we commit to an assignment "Can we do it safely?" and we answer honestly we will have to say "No." That doesn't mean we can't do the assignment, but it means we should then decide if it's worth it. Instead of teaching new firefighters that if they follow all the steps and checklists that nothing will happen to them we need to prepare for bad outcomes. This will require a huge shift in all of our organizations- i.e. we can't be classified as "forestry technicians." It's not doing anyone any good.	More discussion. I read the Big Lie last year and it's great to see that it has gotten a lot of airplay and getting people talking. We should shift to a risk management process that identifies acceptable risk for an operation, such as implementing the GAR process (Green Amber Red from the U.S. Coast Guard). I do a GAR with all my crews prior to an assignment and it identifies riskier operations than more mild ones. We also need the top brass in wildland fire to admit that we cannot engage fires with zero losses. To continue the fallacy that we can fight fire aggressively and safely is detrimental to all involved and I feel cheated.

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86. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I think this is a subject that most of us on the ground understand, we all know it is a dangerous job. I am writing this on the tenth anniversary of the Esperanza Fire. I have always known how dangerous this job is and tried to impart that to my subordinates.	[No Input]
87. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Firefighting is a dangerous occupation, been at it since 1983 and got the injuries to prove it.	New management does not have any real field experience, too many college kids that have not worked hard labor in their lives. Hire from the field.
88. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Research and Data."	As a firefighter with a state agency, we are constantly being tasked to do more with less—including fighting fire. We are also in a downward spiral of losing experience to retirement, losing numbers due to not replacing retirees, and a "watering down" of our position description (hiring forest techs vs. fire officers). It is only a matter of time before a fatality occurs—the odds are stacked against us.	I wish I knew. Until the there is a general shift in the opinions of the public, legislators, and upper-level managers, things will only continue to get worse.
89. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	27 years of total Wildland Experience, 18 on an IHC, from Temporary Crewmember to Superintendent. This job is undoubtedly DANGEROUS. As stated, anything can happen at any time, regardless of Agency policy, checklists, engagement rules, years of experience, etc.	Continue the conversation.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
90. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Despite our efforts to reduce fatalities to zero by learning from pervious accidents and fatalities, we are unable to lower our annual fatality rate let alone make it zero. As a fire leader, my greatest fear is that my actions or lack of action may contribute either directly or indirectly to a serious accident or fatality. I have never thought of asking my employees if they have a will, yet I know there will be fatalities every year. I have recognized the danger and accepted that about 20 firefighters will die each year, but I haven't taken the next step of preparing myself or my employees to this reality. I suspect this is the case for me because I think I should know better than be one of those who make up the statics: denial and arrogance. Yet, I insist on dissecting fatality fires and lessons learned with my crew. I have the faces of those that died on Storm King Mountain on the wall above my desk. I live and promote this duplicity maybe in part to the fact that I don't want to have that hard conversation with my employees. I am morbid enough without becoming more so. I also think part of it is that when I got into fire in 1993, it was just a fun summer thing to do in wild places with fun people. Over the years that reality warped into something I don't believe in completely and I didn't sign-up for. I don't really see my role as an emergency responder, but instead someone who looks at fire as either good or bad and where do we go from that point.	I believe that the concept of finding common ground and then moving forward is a good start. I believe that the numbers don't lie so let's face the facts: What we are doing at this point is not working. We, as an agency and a culture, need to recognize that change is needed, either on how we perceive what our roles and duties are in wildland fire and/or who we are and what is expected of us as a workforce. Thank you for the survey and asking my opinion.
91. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Other."	In fighting wildland fire for many years before realistic and organized training, I found we were doing ridiculous things. In bringing the agency up to the NWCG standards, I find we are implying that if you follow the "rules", no harm will come to you. I differ with instructors who preach the Fire Orders as rules that can never be violated. I think it to be unrealistic. I welcome the idea of having the tough conversations and making our work better.	The leaders in the fire service's "practice and education" need to look beyond the simplistic rules and have our people educated in the fact that we are in a dangerous profession.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
92. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
93. Fire Manager Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
94. Firefighter Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Wildland firefighting is inherently dangerous. Acknowledging this is not admitting it's OK for a firefighter fatality but to facilitate a learning environment.	[No Input]
95. *Firefighter* Disagree. Based on "Personal Experience." **Please Describe the Specific Parts of the Essay You Disagree With:** I disagree that there is any real assertion in the fire discipline that risk can be reduced to zero in any activity, work or otherwise, by application of rules. I disagree that the Standard Fire Orders must be violated and Watch Out Situations ignored to conduct effective suppression operations. I disagree that diligence in the application of the Orders and Watch Outs cannot produce a fireline work environment free from unreasonable hazard while making an aggressive but prudent suppression effort. I disagree that Fire Order #10 presents an unsolvable riddle.	I believe that rule violations in all workplace accident investigations are typically used to bludgeon the victims and their peers, rather than to identify and correct failures of management, leadership, or workplace culture. This is not a problem specific to the firefighting workplace, nor to public or private or contract workforces—it is a historic weakness in workplace safety. Worker safety is a big and important issue, but "10 & 13*" are fine and firefighting is not an exceptional case. (*Five new rules basically repeat existing guidelines.)	Not sure. There is a lot of polarization in fire these days over this and other issues of substance—placing the next generation of fire culture at risk. I perceive vocal proponents of The Big Lie paradigm who have considerable time in the field to be just another flavor of dangerous leader I need to watch out for and to protect my subordinates from. I have not managed to find or initiate a two-way dialog, so I don't understand how proponents perceive the apparent flaws in this premise.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
96. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I, personally, find fire to be quite scary and awesome. I have learned to dull this fear in order to work on fires. Some of the decrease in fear has been good and has come from watching fire behavior and learning from more experienced people. I think I also have encountered the "lie" that firefighting is safe. I've found myself thinking, well, no one around me is acting like this work/situation is dangerous, so I'll discount my reservations and go along. "The Big Lie" felt true to me because it validated my feeling that the work is dangerous and people aren't fully talking about this fact.	First, you stop calling the views opposing. I think there should be some broad discussions with diverse groups to try to find the common ground. These discussions should try to include people at the fringes of wildland fire, like resources advisors, BAER specialists, and other technical specialists whose primary job is not in fire. At some point, there should be more discussions about concrete outcomes we want from the dialog brought up by "The Big Lie". Do we want to revise forms, procedures, trainings, policy...? I don't have any good ideas about how to facilitate the needed discussions, but I hope others do.
97. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	The Yarnell Fire started me thinking more. It left gnawing unanswered questions such as why/how could this happen (again), what are we doing wrong, what are we not learning, what are we missing? I think part of it is the Big Lie, I think the other part of it is that fire can be a rapidly changing environment with little to no clues (limited lead time) in which to make decisions that can ultimately become life/death decisions—which feeds back to the Big Lie.	Acknowledge that loss is an outcome of firefighting. Acknowledge that the changes to the Red Card/Task Book system don't guarantee that people have better skills or abilities or that it makes us safer. Get serious about risk assessments, be honest with people, and communicate opposing views. Not to change the mind of the other side, but to start working from the common ground. I would also say to have discussions about acceptable risk, modify the forms, etc.—but in the end, will this improve firefighter safety? Will it decrease fatalities? I'm not sure what the final on the ground outcome should be. Will Line Officers, ICs, or others in the leadership chain feel better because the true risk is acknowledged or mitigated down? Is that just going to make people feel better when there are bad outcomes, or is it going to contribute decreased fatalities? I guess maybe I'm not sure where we go because I haven't figured out the why we want to go there part .

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
98. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	The answer to the question is easy when you have the answers and work backwards. I listened as a young USFS seasonal 22-year-old tell me all the mistakes the people at South Canyon made. I thought, wtf does this guy know? If it could happen to guys of their experience and knowledge...it could happen to me!	Almost impossible. Humans look for patterns and tangible rationale for tragedy. Much harder to digest that we are just gonna get it wrong from time to time.
99. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
100. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Other."	It is really a combination of both. What I have seen and feel to be true and what I have read about and heard of from others.	Discussion, discussion, discussion! Total transparency at all levels and among all fire personnel.
101. *(Respondent selected "Other" for job position.)* <u>Agree.</u> Based on "Research and Data."	Data, common sense, and experience all show that even if a human could be perfect—and we aren't—bad things still happen due to random failures (a bird strike on an airplane for example).	Push to have the discussion happen at all levels of experience.
102. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
103. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Both personal experience and data. I have seen folks get hurt firsthand and the data supports it. This job is not "safe"	Engaging in open and candid conversation at ALL levels. Including Interagency
104. *Firefighter* <u>Agree.</u> Based on "Personal Experience."	I was on the Panther Fire in Happy Camp, Calif. and have seen this first hand. We take inherent risks every day. But to deny the truth that "accidents" are preventable is a lie in itself. We can try to mitigate the human factors of accidents, but overall an accident is an accident. Not something we planned to be involved in.	I think it's a cultural thing that needs to change. Managers and Line Officers need to realize that accidents are going to happen eventually. Personally, I think most upper level leadership do not WANT to confront the topic—that this can and might happen to one of their own one day.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
105. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	31 years of on the ground experience from FFT2 to RXB2/DIVS does not match what I read in my agency's (USFS) letter from the chief about "we cannot accept any loss of life" statement.	Use DeGrosky's and Smith's viewpoints as a means to engage Line Officers, Forest Supervisors, and others who have no clue what they are talking about to have dialogue about this topic.
106. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Career from first year seasonal firefighter in 1975 to Division Chief in Federal and state and local wildland firefighting.	I don't know how we change the mindsets of agency administrators, but we can start by being brutally honest with our entry-level firefighters and giving them the intellectual tools to "fight fire aggressively having provided for safety."
107. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	[No Input]
108. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	We normalize or negate risk daily. From a standard JHA or 215A, these acknowledge that risk is present but "negated" because we discussed it. This does not reduce risk but rather daylights it so that all personnel are aware. Fire is no different. We ask our best crews to take the "difficult" assignments. This is just a way of saying we want our most experienced to tackle the assignment because their judgment is better and likely a better outcome. To muddy the water even further, we have no unified mission to follow toward fire. Full suppression, managed, prescribed, or WUI ops are all appropriate for the resource benefit, but we don't have the unified mission or support to back this up. If fire is inherently hazardous why do we tell our people that H-pay only applies to suppression and managed fires? What is different about Rx? If we do acknowledge that fire (and operating locales) are risk inherent do we risk the loss of H pay as that negates the intent? Just operating a chainsaw has risk, regardless of the terrain and fuels—but this is accepted as "what we do."	Opposing views are good. By definition, they are differing solutions to a problem. We must first agree on defining the problem. Then through discussion and discourse can we progress toward solution. We can agree that even one firefighter fatality or injury is too much. However, it is statistical murder to even attempt a goal of zero injuries or fatalities. Thus, we take an overarching theme of "Be Safe." That has no meaning and puts any damage later as the fault of the individual. Rather, if we focus on individual topics such as driving and make it a priority (financially) from the top down with supporting guidance we can change the "Be Safe" to "drive slowly and take your time, the agency supports you." Another concept to start with would be to classify our seasonal workforce to acknowledge the actual job as a firefighter instead of a forestry technician.

	The option for turn down is appropriate, but not in every scenario to ensure a safe work environment. When we acknowledge that aspects of the job have risk and make everyone working aware of that risk there is no harm.	
	As a Supt. I know that a certain number of my personnel will leave the profession every year. For many, this is financial. But for others they realize that this job is not for them. This is OK and we should be OK with this understanding as well. Like the military, we can be inclusive without lowering our standards or expectations.	
	But to do this we must accept a certain culture that doesn't treat this as failure but success of the individual and organization.	
	Acknowledging risk doesn't always normalize behavior or minimize risk reductions. It does, however, give ownership to the individual and local leaders to address it as appropriate.	
	Give us a clear mission and the tools to accomplish it. Human losses are never acceptable, but neither is failure to act. Even when the action is to not engage it is better than agency paralysis.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
109. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	From 10 seasons with the Forest Service, I believe there is an overall idea that we can make the job safe (i.e. Safety Journey). We can recognize and attempt to avoid or mitigate risk, but it is not safe. At first, I told my parents/girlfriends/friends that the job was safe because of my supervisors' experience/training and my training. After a few years of reading reviews of injuries & deaths, I began to tell my girlfriend (now wife) that at some point I will be gone on a fire and she will hear that a firefighter was injured/killed, but to not worry that it isn't me. I did this to avert "The Big Lie" and hopefully she would be more prepared to hear news like that and be less freaked out. I could continue to elaborate, but I might break "Google Forms"	Boom! Cover it in WFSTAR. Encourage folks to have the conversation about the dangers and that not everyone comes home or in one piece. Have that conversation with their friends and family as well. For me, I took more ownership of the risks I was taking (yes, driving & walking in the woods is risk!) after I had the conversation with my pregnant wife and actually verbalized those risks.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
110. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I think everyone knows firefighting is dangerous work, but we're told if we follow the 10 and 18 we'll be "OK". I think this essay points out this is not always true. The best laid plans...	Whether you disagree or agree, everyone wants to bring firefighters home safely and to learn from mistakes. That's your common ground to move forward on.
111. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	31 seasons – 23 on hotshot crews	First, even if we all become perfect firefighters, accidents will happen because we can't control gravity. It irritates me that we talk about preventing fatalities, but a huge portion of our fatalities are medical related. The obvious way to lower that portion of the fatalities would be to: 1) Baseline Fitness Test our employees; 2) Hold supervisors and employees strictly accountable for not physically training every day; 3) Fire people if they don't actively work out or meet a stricter PT test (we need one of those too). Also, it irks me when people suggest that we don't engage aggressively on every fire. Look at South Canyon, Yarnell, and now Chimney Tops 2. All of those fires weren't actively engaged when they were first discovered. If we continue to go "Big Box" on all of these fires, all we are doing is increasing exposure and risk. No matter what, every fire is going to have to be engaged with boots on the ground. Personally, I'd rather do that when the fire is small. Logistics is the hard part of firefighting. Operationally, it's pretty simple: attack the fire where it's the weakest, put the fire on one shoulder, make use of some natural breaks if you can, and keep cutting line until you end up where you started. Remember and learn from your mistakes and the mistakes of others; STUDY YOUR CRAFT; communicate your intentions; don't get fancy, and you will be OK—except for our enemy gravity.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
112. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	It is truth, and reality, in a dynamic highly complex environment, utilizing large numbers of "resources" aka people.	Spend some time on the subject, make it OK to talk about, encourage discussion of the topic with everyone from first-year crewmember to senior leadership (i.e. District Rangers on up the chain, Regional Forester etc.). Devote some time to reality, not wishing our accident rate will be zero. Goals are made to be attainable, that one is probably not, unfortunately. Please feel free to email at the address below, I would love to discuss further. -D.B. Robbins, Engine Captain, TWISP WA. drobbins@fs.fed.us
113. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	[No Input]	Recognize that things change and you need to change. Fluid environment
114. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	There are too many vectors occurring on any given day for the 10 & 18 to cover every nuanced situation and every experience level. There have been lots of situations on various IA fires that I was forced to think independently and rely on my own experience and best judgement to discern the lowest risk course of action, not the safest.	I think we need to start being more forthright with the potential terminal nature of this business, at the very basic level. When I teach S-130 I make sure all my students know that this job can get them killed; that people have died on our district fighting fires; that I have had near-miss incidents because of poor decision making that I engaged in. I'm not sure how to bring opposing views together. It make take more essays like "The Big Lie" to poke the bear in the cage to get folks to have more productive discussions.
115. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I was 20 during my 3rd season in fire, first season with the Forest Service. That was also the season my friend perished while working on Granite Mountain IHC. I remember coming home and handing my mom a hand written will (thinking that's how it worked). As stated in "The Big Lie," firefighting is simply a dangerous job, and I believe many of us accept that risk with honor. We can train, study fatalities and near misses, and mitigate hazards. However, at the end of the day we cannot control the environment we work in.	I believe most boots on the ground would agree with this opinion. It needs to travel up through the chain and reach the individuals who initiated "vector towards zero fatalities."

	We, as humans, like to believe we can control the world around us. But there are many things out of our control. I believe it is wrong to plant the seed in firefighters and up and coming leaders' minds that we will achieve zero fatalities. Not with the way we currently handle wildfires.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
116. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I think it's a lie that we tell ourselves and teach the newer guys: That if you follow the 10 & 18s and have L.C.E.S. in place then you are being safe—when there are so many variables in the fire environment that are constantly changing.	Explain that some people may die, even if you do everything right and check everything on the checklist, things can still go wrong. By accepting the risk, we are accepting the fact that you may lose your life even if you do everything right and "by the book."
117. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I've always felt uncomfortable when teaching intro firefighting courses about the 10 & 18. Deep down, I felt like I was lying while telling my students "10 Fire Orders: We don't break them or bend them." I do think they are important principles, however, I felt like I was lying by saying "I NEVER bend or break the Fire Orders." I agree that we send conflicting information about safety.	I think dialogue is next. There must be discussion on our culture for safety.
118. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	The biggest barrier to a meaningful conversation is a lack of commonality. Firefighters do not share the view that zero fatalities is a reasonable "goal" and statistics support their view. Until leaders can accept or change those perspectives, there is no meaningful dialogue to be had about safety. There are just empty nods, and: "OK, sure, whatever you say."	Ask a senior leader to utilize data or some other objective examples to support their point of view. Find one of them that believes in "zero fatalities" but is willing to ask a firefighter what a more reasonable target to define safety would be and have dialogue. I know the impossible task of approaching even one tree without the possibility of it killing me, so clichés like "no life is worth a tree" are just hollow to me. If you can find someone that can start a conversation from that, perhaps there is common interest to be found. Until then we are just different people, living in different worlds.

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
119. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I think it is a combination of all 3 choices. I have the conversation with my folks: "I will put you in harm's way, so how do I best prepare myself and you for that." That is my cause or intent and it is a never-ending pursuit.	Understanding the root cause of their position and how their experience—or lack there of—shape their view.
120. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I feel the lie is internalized. Smith makes some very valid points surrounding true risk analysis/mitigation techniques. I do not believe upper management is truly trained in these methodologies. Young line officers, resource specialist, and a host of support do not truly have the skillsets as they dive into WFDSS to perform risk analyses. Fire personnel make on-the-fly risk decisions. But how much training have they actually received? How many have been lucky to date and carry that mentality forward. This is no fault of theirs it's just reality. We internally default to old practices for fear of reprisal, public outcry, etc. It's difficult to be at the reigns of something when it goes bad if taking a modified approach. It's far easier to say we were giving it everything we had and it still beat us and burned your house or smoked you out for weeks. It's hard to be the crew that says: "No way. That's a foolish endeavor." It's hard to be the crew that hears the armchair quarterbacks if you do say that. Sure, we mitigate the heck out of things. But who in the firefighting community hasn't said to themselves or crew members multiple times in their career "What the hell are we doing out here?"; "We won't hold this chunk of line"; "We'll be over on that ridge in a day or two doing this all over". In essence, exposing themselves to unnecessary risk, bumping the tab up on costs, wearing themselves down for when it's really going to count.	Decision support, justifying, and analysis of chance of success on a daily basis. Somehow bringing to the forefront discussions of egos and making evidence-based decisions; and truly understand risk mitigations in a larger operational context vs just mitigating potential risks on the set course of action (which in many cases is extremely risky and unnecessary).

	How many have spoken up? How many ops sections are wanting to listen? How many line officers really have a comprehension? How many objectives and strategies tied to the original Decision analysis have already been abandoned/ignored?	
	It's time we stop "mitigating risks" and giving it the old college try and really accessing risk to drive sound and reasonable suppression strategies. In most cases, I guarantee that extra 1,000 acres or 10,000 acres will not matter all that much.	
	If we are talking public safety and property, the problems occur when we have to rush to get there because our focus has been on some ridgeline that was not going to work in the first place and the fire surprises us.	
	How about throwing the major spending in Life First and Safety journey initiatives into enhanced risk analysis/management skillsets and training?	
	I do not think there is a "Lie" per se to hide that it's a risky environment. Plenty of upper management quickly will acknowledge there is inherent risk, but then spin 180 and say priority is everybody coming home, and then stand by as the data supports a current action on the ground pushes everything into to the red with very little in the way of values saved.	
121. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	The reason the Big Lie had such an impact is because it causes firefighters and managers to stop and question the bigger ideas behind why we do what we do, rather than to keep our heads down, digging—to use the parlance of our profession. I believe it portends such polarity because it inspires alternatives, suggesting that the status quo is not acceptable. We do absolutely need to question our tactics and strategy in the national wildfire scenario as we see more complexity added to the job as a result of several factors. These factors include the increasingly negative feedback cycle of self-defeating fire suppression policy, warming climate, overly dense forests and unnatural fuel loads, increased homebuilding in the WUI, policymaking	The next step is to change public and media perceptions and then make policy changes informed by smarter land management. We also need to explain why the current system is destined for failure and perpetuates the idea of a negative feedback loop through proper channels rather than fear-mongering for ratings—will allow for change. Cutting out the middle man in this case is tantamount to the success of fostering positive change—allowing firefighters to tell their stories directly, showcasing the intense scenarios that we as firefighters are subject to as a result of short-sighted management/policy decisions and making the connection between it all is a job that needs to

	at a political level rather than a practical one, and a certain undiscussed hubris that seems to permeate the fire culture.	be done more effectively by agency communications personnel who are unafraid to tell the right story.
	However, recognizing these issues is only a step, and one that generally only leads to frustration as the public and media increasingly demand that government actors put firefighter lives in jeopardy to account for failed fiscal and tactical policy.	Essentially, making effective associations between healthy forests, firefighter safety, and prescribed and managed fire is the key.
	Proper refusal of risk is an issue that is hardly discussed—specifically, the negative connotations associated with it. Fire managers/Line officers need to develop a thicker skin and work to find better alternatives to their directions if they are turned down for valid reasons. Ordering a crew who will accept the mission is not good leadership, yet I have seen it happen time and time again.	We also need to implement better hiring procedures, putting intelligent, educated, and progressive individuals in fire management positions, rather than creating a rat-race of qualifications and horse-trading that accompanies organizational mobility. This goes all the way from the very top to the very bottom of the organization.
	There is absolutely no room for questioning someone's work ethic or feeling insecure in their perceived status as managers when firefighter safety and well-being is concerned.	Please feel free to contact me in order to discuss this issue further, as it is one that truly hits home. Clearly, I have no shortage of opinions to contribute.
	The 10 & 18s are not standard at all, they are merely a loose set of guidelines created to help young firefighters understand hazardous conditions and develop slides before these principles naturally ingrain themselves into subconscious thought processes.	
	What we need is to completely reevaluate how we manage fire as an organization, drop the attitude, incorporate all available lessons learned, and make better associations between healthy forests/ecological process and firefighter safety.	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
122. *Other* Agree. Based on "Other."	There is a complexity, or should we say a variable, known as the human element that is involved in this. The emotions that are involved surrounding our own, or shared values, perspectives, identity, personification of action, politics, goals, wants, needs, sense of security, observations, interpretations, and sensations of the unfolding events affect us all in different ways.	Further discussion and data are needed focusing on multidirectional voice and feedback that is mindful of our diverse perspectives.

	This affects our decision modes, even on discussion of risk, let alone taking action. Action is visceral and immediate, and settles that emotional part of the brain that creates anxiousness. Discussion doesn't settle that visceral immediacy that the emotional brain needs, particularly when faced with opposing viewpoints. But how often has gut feelings or instinct kept you out of trouble? Was it chance, or recognition that there was more risk than implied?	
Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	**Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.**	**What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?**
123. *Other* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	Firefighting is dangerous, period. Young people feel superior to danger. Experienced leaders feel emboldened by their own success. I've seen it, felt it.	Raise your right hand and repeat: "Firefighting is dangerous. I pledge to keep myself and others out of harm's way." Now what can we do that is not a threat to lives? I have nothing more to discuss. But just so you know: ecjordan@fs.fed.us
124. *Firefighter* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I became a wildland firefighter BECAUSE I knew it was dangerous. I craved the adrenaline, hero-respect, and, above all, the deep and irreplaceable camaraderie that accompanies dangerous work. (I'm not sure why the young men do it. But after caregiving for my husband through years of terminal illness, I needed what fire gave me.) I recognized "The Lie" and lumped it with all the other bureaucratic-CYA lies that release agencies from liability. I accept ignoring that lie as a cost of doing a job that I love. HOWEVER, now that I am a fireline supervisor, my perspective is very different. I have honest-as-possible discussions with my ducklings, and I do my best to keep them away from the risk I used to embrace.	Honest conversation is a good start. But I think the biggest obstacle we face is economic. It's difficult to imagine progress, because if the fed agencies admit the degree of risk and skill involved they might have to treat us as professionals worthy of commensurate wages, instead of as temporary-seasonal laborers. Especially since the value of facts has become so debased of late. I wish you luck in this endeavor.
125. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Research/Data."	[No Input]	[No Input]

Do you agree or disagree with "The Big Lie" concepts? Why?	Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree.	What's the next step? How do we bring opposing views together?
126. *Line Officer* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	In my mind we are all in on "The Big Lie". There is no conspiracy or conscious willingness to fool anyone about the dangers of the job. However, from the highest levels of fire agencies down to the newest seasonal firefighter there are cultural, social, and personal pressures to ignore some realities. We are all in on "The Big Lie" because often it is easier than the truth.	There is no conspiracy.
127. *Fire Manager* Agree. Based on "Personal Experience."	I feel safety is a blanket term used to make everyone feel more accepting of The Big Lie. As an IC, safety of my people is my utmost concern and always will be over political direction, forest and regional pressures, and the various policies that dictate when and how we fight fire. I often struggle to see the end goal when the cards are so stacked against forest managers and firefighters as a whole. The issue I struggle with the most is policy. There is over 55,000 pages of policy directives for the USFS. If safety is our number one concern why do we lose more firefighters today than before? Why do we allow policy to dictate forest management and fire suppression tactics? Why do we stop logging to protect one species destroying natural selection and forest ecosystems? Fire is a natural process like we all know so why do we still suppress fire so aggressively knowing we are doing more harm than good? It all will burn one day and it has before. Exposing people to unnecessary risk to save trees that are so disease stricken form overcrowding and pest infestations due to poor forest management practices is insane. If we took safety seriously we wouldn't be putting people in harm's way so often. We would let fire run its course. Corral it as needed and let fire behavior dictate.	It starts with properly educating our youth regarding fire in the ecosystems, living with fire, and proper forest management principles. Also through dialogue. The science is there. We just have sift out the garbage from the good and change our ways drastically.

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