# Twitter Thread by The Kaipullai

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**I am reading this book, "Sway : The Irresistible pull of Irrational Behaviour", where it gives the psychology behind irrational decisions.**

**The first case study in it was the world's worst Air crash, the Pan AM - KLM crash in Tenerife, where 583 people were killed.**

The more I read about the accident, the more I am convinced about fate and the role that it plays in our life.

Two 747s that crashed on that fateful day, weren't even supposed to be there. There were supposed to fly to the Gran Canaria islands with loads of Holidayers.

And they were flown by the most experienced people in their respective airlines. The KLM flight was piloted by Jacob Von Zanten, the airlines chief flight instructor. He had appeared in KLM ads, as a metaphor for safety and responsibility.

The Pan AM pilots were no slouched too.

Just when they were about to land, a small bomb went off at the Gran Canaria airport & there was a call that a second bomb had been planted

As a result the authorities closed the airport and diverted all the flights, including the Pan AM and KLM to the nearby airport at Tenerife

Event 1 just happened.

Now Tenerife airport is a very small provincial airport. It was not equipped to handle big 747s. But it had no choice.

Amidst a lot of smaller planes, both the flights landed and jostled for space. It was at this point, von Zanten started worrying.

His 8 hour duty was coming to a close. And if he exceeded it, a mandatory rest was warranted. Which Zanten wanted to avoid. So he decided to refuel the flight, right there.

Just as the flight started refueling, the Gran Canaria airport reopened.

Now the KLM was the first in line to depart. Followed by the Pan AM. Pan AM was ready to go, but couldn't leave because the KLM was refueling

The Pan AM pilots tried to become a Chennai auto and tried to find a gap. But they were missing it by 20 feet

20 feet was the difference

Now, by the time the lengthy refueling was done, the weather became worse and there was fog all around

It reduced the visibility to zero. And the ATC couldn't see the runway & the aircraft

With the pilots almost blind & the ATC completely blind, the process of take off started

So in a small airport, with zero visibility, with controllers who never handled 747s, the two planes were started to take off

Because of the small airport, the planes had to taxi down the main runway, turn around at the end and then take off

The KLM went first and Pan Am after

The KLM, with a full tank of fuel and a jumpy captain went to the end of the runway and really wanted to take off.

At the same time, the Pan AM was taxiing down the same runway. Because of the fog, nobody could see each other. All communications was on the Radio.

Which was when, the ATC guy, told von Zanten what to do, after take off while accidentally using the word "Take off". And then he moved to Pan Am giving them instructions on how to get off the taxiway.

He asked them to take the third exit. The Pan AM guys miscalculated

While giving instructions to Pan Am, the ATC guy he realized his mistake and went back to KLM and told him to wait for confirmation

Which got lost in the Radio noise

So von Zanten took off, while the Pan AM was still on the runway

Pan Am tried to get out of the way. But failed

Von Zanten tried to take off. But because of the full fuel load, he couldn't.

Result, the KLM smacked into the Pan AM. The full fuel load ignited and resulted in the world's worst Air disaster, with 583 people losing their lives.

If you look at the chain of events, a small bomb, a diversion, a jumpy captain, an impromptu decision to refuel, a gap of 20 feet, a miscalculation, a wrong usage of take off, a Radio disturbance all came together in a deadly cocktail, that caused 583 people to lose their lives

Any one event, of the long list above, hadn't happened, 583 would have gone on to have a fabulous holiday on the iberian coast and gone back to their families.

Sadly, it didn't happen.

Makes you realize, you may think you are in control of your fate.

But you probably aren't.

Don't be too hard on yourself.

You may think one wrong decision of yours, one mistake may have caused some great tragedy. You may beat yourself up over it. Lose confidence.

But you should understand, no event is isolated in itself. If something bad has happened, things were in motion long before it got to you

A lot of things have to come together for something bad to happen. It's not your fault.

It never is.

On the contrary though, it would have taken one person taking a good decision, to prevent this whole disaster from happening.

It only takes one good person to change everything