

What our Managers Fear

In a world of accelerated globalisation and ever harsher competition, the pressure on managers fighting on several frontiers, too, increases. Firstly, in the case of stock-market oriented enterprises, there are the stockholders who want the dividends and stock values to rise as high as possible. Secondly, employees should be kept motivated in order to give their best to the company. And thirdly, there is also the market getting more and more unpredictable. Customers want ever better products and service.

So we should not be surprised if managers on all levels suffer from stress and anxieties they try to overcome through all sorts of techniques and fitness programs.

Rupert Lay, priest, psychological therapist, economist and counsellor shows ways how to better cope with these anxieties.

Preface

True managers are athletic, slim, clever and cool from top to bottom, energetic, enthusiastic and prepared to make up their minds fast. They have nerves of steel, survive crises and - ever with a sideways glance at the shareholder value - follow only one goal: the success of their enterprise and thereby their own success. The word fear is not part of their vocabulary. This is the manager as an outwardly cool but grimly determined inner Rambo.

A silly caricature? We cannot exclude the possibility that there are managers who nurture this kind of self-image, but the reality looks different. It is not a rare occasion for managers to suffer from a heart attack. How else would the proverbial "managerial sickness" come by its name? It is not necessarily always a heart attack that makes managers break down. Blood circulation problems, migraine, nervousness and sleeplessness are other, milder symptoms. What are the reasons for these? In a world of accelerated globalisation, increasing complexity and ever harsher competition, there is more and more pressure put on the manager fighting on several frontiers. Firstly, if you have two enterprises in the stock market, you have the stockholders who want to see higher dividends and increased stock value and who show their directors the open door when their performance is not good enough. Secondly, you have the employees who need to be motivated in order to give their best for the company which in the long run is only possible in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Creating and maintaining fields of trust is what makes a good manager, especially if in times of crises processes have to be rationalized and employees have to be made redundant. This is a huge challenge and only few managers face it successfully. .

And thirdly, there is also a market getting more and more unpredictable. Customers want ever better products and service. Loyalties as they were known formerly have become the exception to the rule. This is true both for customers and partners.

So it does not come as a surprise that managers on all levels suffer from all kinds of anxieties that they try to overcome with various techniques and fitness programs.

Rupert Lay, priest, psychological therapist, economist and counsellor, also uses techniques. However, his "therapy" for managers goes far beyond that. What is important for him is that patients learn to reflect their own behaviour and activities, practice self-discipline and experience a positive change and development from being a leader to being a leading personality who is also capable of overcoming specific anxieties.

The Ronneburger Circle wants to give advice and orientation in a confused and abstract

time. Not being connected with any political or unionist groups and therefore not having to fight for power, popularity or sales records, we can afford what we want, namely to give people first-hand impulses that lead the way through this outburst of information cascades that threatens to overawe them.

Rudolf Jansche
Director of the curatorium

What our managers fear

Big Boy - Small Boy

Paper by Rupert Lay read on the Ronneburg, 2001

Today, our topic is fear. Fear seems to be the direct opposite of joy, because when people are happy, they mostly have few anxieties. However, we should bear in mind that being human necessarily includes fear. For some people more, for some people less. After all, shortly after being born, we were set into an emotional and social uterus. This new setting was coupled with a basic anxiety, namely that of being thrown out of this uterus. Reminders of this basic anxiety can be determined in all people when they undergo psycho-analytical therapy or are involved in a psycho-analytical discussion called coaching.

A human feels this basic anxiety, namely being thrown out of this social and emotional uterus, with particular intensity when an important person, for example the mother, is away for long. Children also make the experience that this basic anxiety is justifiable if an extremely over-caring mother does not make it possible for the child to unlearn this basic anxiety. This set of basic anxieties we are still carrying around inside has been experimentally verified by Frederick II, the Staufer. He put constantly changing midwives who had additionally also been made speechless by getting their tongues cut out in charge of children from Mauretania in Sicily - at least that is how tradition has it. It is said that all these children died. That means that, during their first year in life, they found no socially stable uterus to be hatched in. In other words, this basic anxiety is a fear of death which accompanies all of us and has its roots in the first year of our lives. I know few people who are immune to fear of death. But even here, we must consider if maybe the non-existence of this fear of death is just a suppression or some other kind of psychological defence.

Fear and Freedom

Entire philosophical theories have been developed about anxiety. Let me outline the basic ideas. Schelling, for instance, says: The true source of all life is terror. That is, we live, act and decide in order to avoid terror. We are all founded on terror and the avoidance of such. Or another approach by Søren Kirkegard, who, along with Sartre, believed in existential philosophy and then combined freedom with anxiety. You can only have freedom for the price of fear.

What is freedom, anyway? According to a sample survey both at Johann-Wolfgang-von Goethe University and our St. Georgen university, most students define freedom as being able and prepared to live your own life and take responsibility for how you live it. And this self-responsibility cannot be obtained without anxiety. I cannot delegate responsibility. Whether or not my life is a success cannot be made the responsibility of other institutions such as state, church, or god or whoever. It is me and me alone who is responsible for making my life a success. And this knowledge that it is up to me alone will certainly make me afraid in certain situations. I do not know if I can come up to the

standards of personal success in my life at all times. If the answer is no, I will be afraid of wasting my life and losing myself. My life would then be senseless. At the end of my life, I would not know why I lived.

For Søren Kierkegaard and to a huge extent also Jean-Paul Sartre, freedom and fear are closely connected. They are dialectically opposed to each other. I cannot have freedom without paying the price of potential anxiety. This is the positive value of anxiety. It is not possible as long as I am supported right and left by concepts telling me what to do in order to make my life a success. For a Christian, this means: adhere to the Ten Commandments or the moral norms or whatever concepts you hold dear, and your life will be a success. If, in addition to that, you also do not break any laws, the country will never interfere with your life being a success, though it often tries.

As you see, it takes a lot of courage to be free and live one's life in self-responsibility without being supported politically, economically or morally. As a consequence of anxiety, you might either become free or paralysed. In psychological analysis, we even know the fear of fear. It is called phobia. Phobias belong to the neurotic symptoms and need therapy. If you are possessed by secondary anxiety, that is fear of fear, you are no longer free. You are possessed by something different, namely by fear. It is not just that you are afraid, but you are possessed by anxiety. The way towards regaining freedom is certainly therapeutic coaching or even a psycho-analytical therapy.

Heidegger declared fear to be the pre-stage of Nirvana. The vague feeling that I am standing in front of the nirvana behind which nothing will occur, not even I myself. This feeling makes most people afraid. In Frankfurt, I counsel a facility for the elderly. It is my task to make the important step towards the Hereafter a little easier for old people. Heidegger does not call it the Hereafter, but the Before the Nirvana. Some people can experience this as the fear of the Hereafter. What Hamlet calls the question of Be Or Not To Be is here the fear of the Hereafter. "Because we are afraid of the dreams that might come in the dream of death. This is how conscience makes cowards out of all of us."

The concept of Jean-Paul Sartre is based on a dialectical relation between fear and freedom. He believes that the one cannot exist without the other, that a change in the one always also means a change in the other and that they are not identical. These are three basic requirements. However, his definition of freedom differs from that of Heidegger or other philosophers. "Once the concept of freedom grows inside a human soul, the gods no longer have a grip on him" (Les Mouches). Freedom only grows up inside a human being after he has managed to overcome the fear of downfall. "The human life only begins on the other side of desperation" (Les Mouches).

That means that human life only begins on the other side of the fear of falling into the Nirvana mentioned by Heidegger from which we, after all, came. The existential philosophy understood humans from the aspect of freedom, and the basic question of existential philosophy was: what is freedom, and when does man gain freedom? Man can only be free on the opposite side of desperation, that is after he has overcome the anxieties that can climax in desperation and when he has gone to the after-world of this desperation. Sartre tries to outline this in his drama "Die Fliegen" (the flies). Orestes only gains his freedom after having freed himself from the Erinnyes (Greek goddesses of vengeance). After a human has become free, even the gods are powerless against him. - Now I do not wish to expand on Sartre's definition of god. It is not identical with the Christian definition.

Maybe the theory of behaviourism is also interesting. Here, anxiety is interpreted as a need that was learned. This contradicts my personal concept of anxiety, according to

which basic anxiety is not something you have learned, but something that starts with birth. It is the basic anxiety of being ostracized socially or emotionally. That means it is a disposition that is instinctively there and not an anxiety that has been learned and can therefore be de-learned.

The main argument against the behaviouristic theory is the assumption that humans can de-learn anxiety. To be sure, the six anxiety phobias (situation anxieties) can be de-learned. For instance, you can de-learn fear of big rooms or small rooms or the anxiety of crossing a street. That is certainly true. Even fear of spiders and dogs can be de-learned, because they all have been learned. But you cannot de-learn the fear of death. There are a number of other definitions and explanations of the source of fears that will not be dealt with in this article. What, in my opinion, is important is that fear is a *conditio humana*, a condition that must be met by us if we want to be human. Some people never seem to be afraid, no matter what happens. They answer everything with a smile and say: I am not interested. This freedom from fear, which is occasionally found among managers who proudly show off with it, is an illusion. As soon as you dig deep enough, you find an entire ocean of fears.

The World of Nature and the World of Culture

One theory particularly concerned with managerial fear describes the distance from a world of nature in favour of a nearer but unfamiliar world of culture for which we have no instinctive repertory, i.e. we are not its masters. Instead, it threatens to be our master. This world of culture is not only a world of ABC weapons, but also the world of those people who have said farewell to craftsmanship and embraced management. They no longer live in a world of nature, but in a world created by people in which they have to act and decide accordingly. The further you drift away from a world of nature, the harder it is to act fearless in a world of culture. This is why I advise managers first and foremost to take a stroll through the forest at least two hours each week, open their eyes, heart and ears, listen to the sound of the wind and the trees or the singing of birds in spring and think of nothing else but reconciliation with nature.

I am sure the lack of reconciliation with the world of nature and the phobia of being part in a world of culture is the reason for quite a few anxieties. They are typical cultural anxieties which will not appear as long as we are close to nature. If we understand ourselves as children of this world - according to Indian myth, that is exactly what we are, not just children of our mothers but children of the earth - then many anxieties will disappear. All those that spring from the world of culture.

Let me define some types of anxieties also predominant among managers.

Anxieties of Expectation

First and foremost, there are anxieties of expectation. I expect something to happen that I have not taken into consideration.

What I expect is something emotionally on the negative scale, be it an unexpected financial check or the fact that one of my major customers turns to the competition. Nearly all of us have such anxieties of expectation, even if to different extents. Mostly, this is about the anxieties in the world of culture. To be sure, the world of nature also knows anxieties of expectations. There is the fear of floods, earthquakes and volcano

eruptions, etc. But in our hemisphere, almost none of these anxieties of expectation exist, because they have never been part of what we learned or experienced. Nearly all of our anxieties of expectations are cultural. The actual culture we have been born into is the reason for our anxieties. Fear of wars, atomic fear, fear of accidents, being afraid of the financial administration, fear of failure, fear of the unexpected as such.

For some people, especially older managers, the fear of the unexpected is one of the prevailing anxieties. Whatever is new and advancing towards me makes me afraid. A director who retires at the age of 53 or 54 and does not find a new job, for instance because he is not computer literate, will probably start having anxieties of expectation at the age of 49. He will constantly ask what is to become of him after his retirement as a director. I know directors with these kinds of anxieties of expectation. They are not fit in the cultural techniques expected of men and women in leading positions today (employability).

The Fear of Too Much Being Expected

The second type is certainly the fear that too much might be asked of us. Some people are afraid of not being able to deliver what is expected of them - which makes it part of the anxiety of expectation. This not being able to deliver can be rational, emotional or social. It is possible to fear that you will be socially asked more than you can achieve, that is, the set of social expectations put in me cannot be met. This is not only true for what the representatives of employees, but also for what employees, customers, capital owners, etc. expect from me as leader. If I am not fit to meet these expectations, probably because I have not taken the pain to learn about what my employees and customers expect, need, are interested in and value, then I will not cope. What happens in this case is that tension between the leader and employee will arise and the leader would have to say that he is basically not qualified for his job.

Expressed in modern terms, this means: the value a company gains by me being in a leading position is measured by the sum of values the company gains by my direct subordinates. As soon as I realize that the sum of values gained by my subordinates is close to zero, the aforementioned fear will start. Many directors employed on the basis of a five-year contract, but also one level below that, suffer from these kinds of anxieties, i.e. they are not sure if they can deliver what is expected from them as directors and do not know if the board of directors of 8 will give them a new contract next time around.

I am on the board of directors of some enterprises myself or even chairman of such and have there been forced to annul contracts of managers. During interviews, anxieties of expectations arise and then I have to point out that I will not accept leadership through anxiety. Instead, I insist that the basic strategy of all leaders must be to build up areas trust. Whoever cannot do that must - at least in companies where I have one of the aforementioned positions - fear with total justification that his contract will not be extended. It is more likely that I advise him to annul his contract instead of waiting until said contract is at the end of its term. An extension is absolutely out of the question. What we are talking here is the fear of too much being asked of a manager. The higher a manager's position gets, the greater his fears

These fears will be the greater the more a person suffers from loneliness because he was not capable of creating areas of trust around himself and instead has tried to "rule" his employees with fear and terror. Several years ago, I asked a managing director of

personal about the reason for paying their directors such exceptionally high income. The answer was:

We pay our directors because of their loneliness, rather than according to the extent by which they improve our enterprise value. They cannot have friends inside the enterprise, and have no time for friendships outside the enterprise. This gave me pause. A lonely person who cannot share his fear with others often falls victim to fear getting too powerful, and this is the first step towards wrong decisions and wrong reactions. What is worse: fear is contagious. A director in the grips of fear will also try to rule others by the mechanisms of fear, which makes him not qualified to be in a leading position in the first place. Someone trying to rule with fear and distrust will probably initially have more success than someone guiding his team by creating areas of trust.

Several years ago, we conducted a long-time survey on this. Students visited companies that had been counselled by me and asked questions about the prevailing style of leadership. Even in those days, I insisted that, besides the economical responsibility, developing areas of trust both internal and external must be the most important task of a leading personality in an enterprise. Where this does not happen, but where instead fear and distrust prevail, we may have a leader, but no leading personality.

In Germany, we have several thousand people too many in leadership positions. We could easily do without them if only we had ten per cent more leading personalities. What we need is managers who can create areas of trust both internally and externally and who, besides their economical concept of values have a second concept of values, namely that of social responsibility. Building up areas of trust is an ethical, moral value. If you are not capable of this double-goal decision, if you cannot optimize both factors, then you are not qualified for leadership.

Whenever I start counselling enterprises where immediately before my arrival a famous company, mostly US- American, has done the advising, I discover the fear of too much being asked in all leaders. It is the fear of being made redundant because they cannot meet the expectations those advising companies have put in them. It is then my task to see to it that in those companies communicative skills are restored in order to have information flow adequately, truthfully and freely, rather than hesitantly. This is the only way to get the enterprise on its feet again.

I do not want to warn against advising companies. There are also positive examples. Ignazio Lopez, but also Tom Sommerlatte of A D Little and myself, we always try for the maximum when it comes to building up trust. This might well initially result in a little less increased achievement than the anxiety maximum. However, in the long run, that is after about three or four years, the trust maximum contributes significantly more to a higher company value than the distrust maximum. When you ask an advising company for their services, you should be quite specific about your wishes. That is, lowering costs, especially among unskilled workers, should not have first priority. This simple insight should be self-evident to all directors, they do not need advice on this. What you should aim at is optimizing the achievement in order to have an improved cost/achievement relation. In the companies where I had a word to say about strategies, no employee had to be made redundant for company-related reasons so far. This is why I see myself as worker for workers. With this concept, we can distance ourselves from thinking only in terms of cost where cost is easy to reduce, namely by making employees redundant who later, when there is an economical boom, will be badly needed but cannot be found.

The third kind of anxiety is the fear of failure. At first sight, it is rather similar to the last

fear, except that it ends differently. The manager suffering from fear of failure will sooner or later come to the conclusion: I am a failure. And as soon as this conclusion has been reached - be it explicitly or not, admittedly or not, consciously or not - he will be eaten up with fear. If someone has to call himself a failure, this is about the worst that can happen at all. He will soon be full of fear. Fear will grip him, he will no longer be afraid, but be possessed by fear.

Originally the word "achievement" was used in economics of Marxism. It is the measure of how far a goal has been achieved. More correctly, we prefer to call it a contribution towards increasing the company value. A person's contribution might be higher than that of his peers. However, the fear of failure will always remain dominant. In order not to make this fear of failure permanent, he will constantly try to prove to himself that the verdict "I am a failure" is not true. But the verdict will never disappear, except if he takes the painful step towards therapy.

The Benefits of Non-Profit Work

Another not totally atypical fear among managers is the fear of getting older. Today, it is quite common not to allow an extension of the mandate to serve in the board of directors after the 50th birthday. That is why many directors who have reached that age are unemployed. If they are financially secure, I have an effective cure for them. In Germany, we do not only have enough work, but even a lot of work that is not done, the non-profit work. But strangely, hardly any of the managers and directors I met who have left their active work-life phase behind them as the young generation of the 50+-year-olds come up with the idea that it might make sense to leave fear behind and instead start non-profit work.

Let me give you an example: a few years ago, after having asked permission from the hospitals' administration, I sent two directors of enterprises in Frankfurt who were in that age group into hospitals. Permission had been asked and given by the hospital administration, the nurses' service and the actual nurses in charge. The two managers went to visit only those patients in two different hospitals who had no other visitors. Mostly, nurses in charge know the individual situation of their patients quite well. The two directors sat on the beds of these patients and just listened patiently. They only talked when asked. Slowly, both of them got people to understand their lives and themselves, because there was someone they could talk to, someone who listened with interest. Both said afterwards: Pater Lay, never in my life have I done anything more meaningful than what I am doing now. And I am sure that we have several millions of openings in this area (non-profit work).

I also think that many people who live off social welfare could be persuaded to take up non-profit work if we gave them a little something like 100,- Euros without tax and refunded their expenses. By doing this, we probably could help half a million unemployed towards finding meaning in their lives, because most of the unemployed are not just too lazy to work. On the contrary, they are quite willing to work. All you have to say is: here is some work for you, it is not highly profitable, but it might give you and your life meaning and you will again know who you are.

Because the real crisis about unemployment is that the people concerned no longer know who they are. The problem of unemployment is that it causes meaninglessness because people have not learned to see that regular work has the same value as non-profit work. This makes the situation absurd: if, for example, in a marriage we choose joint ownership of property, then the property will only be separated at the moment of

divorce. In other words, the non-profit work is made legally equal to the regular work. We should start a little earlier and also appreciate non-profit work, because for the entire national value, it is certainly just as significant as regular work. A mother of three has probably contributed more to the total economical value of the country than a director earning a million a year who tries to motivate his direct underlings by fear and threats. The latter is paid, the former is not. Where is that just, if the fair payment is determined by the extent by which someone contributes to social value? This is the modern definition of fair income and this is how it is determined.

For many people, the fear of getting older is identical with the fear of retiring from the job. Afterwards, a terrible emptiness waits, and this is determined by fear. I can understand that, especially if you have not started early enough, i.e. while you are still in the last years before retirement, to look for some non-profit work.

The Fear of Insecurity

Especially among management coaches, this kind of fear is pathological. Almost all coaches I know first tell me how many days of the year they have already sold, that is, sold themselves. If the number is around a hundred, then they start getting upset, if it is around fifty, panic sets in. They are afraid they will be forced to earn their money as street musicians in Zürich's Bahnhofstr in about ten years if their demand decreases further, provided they can play an instrument. The extent to which they accumulate money for fear of having nothing in the future - though currently our federal administration wants people to care for their future - is often way beyond what they will actually need. Money is hoarded and stockpiled in the hope that then one will not have empty time at one's hands in retirement. They believe money can fill time. It cannot. Time can only be filled with work, and there are different forms of work.

The fear of empty time is beautifully described in the book "Momo". People save time on a time bank, even though they know that they will never get back time. There are small grey men, representatives of the time bank, who want all people to give away time for safekeeping. Just safe an hour here and an hour there, and then you carry all those hours you have saved to the time bank and get a deposit book and one day you can claim it - no, that is not possible. Accumulating money in order to be secure in old age does not at all protect us against the fear of insecurity in retirement.

The Fear of Meaninglessness

Then there is the aforementioned fear of meaninglessness: "I do not know what meaning my life has". This fear can only be overcome if I give my life meaning. Probably something holy has given our life meaning, but unfortunately, most of the time we cannot see it. So it remains for ourselves to give life meaning, which requires for us to have a star we can follow even in situations where we have to make difficult decisions.

You all know that the star I am taking pains to prophesy and that has not only shown to be a success for myself, but also for many other people, is the so-called biophilism. Biophilism means that you should act and decide in a way that promotes your own and other life, rather than impeding it. That includes personal life in all its dimensions, from craftsmanship to psychological, physical, social, emotional, intellectual, religious and ethical aspects. When I go to sleep at night and ask myself where I have promoted personal life and where I have impeded it, the answer mostly comes immediately. Then I wonder what I can improve where I have impeded life in order to do better in the

future.

This short question about having promoted or impeded personal life should become a standard procedure wherever leadership happens. It is particularly important when employees are made redundant for internal reasons, which, as a matter of principle, I consider unnecessary, because enterprises, too, are factors on the biophilism axes. In a well-organized enterprise where trust and co-operation, rather than fear and terror prevail, people get the opportunity to unfold their personal lives, rather than restrict them. This happens by paying them adequately and providing a certain amount of well-feeling.

It is possible that, after responsible mental balancing, I come to the conclusion that an enterprise can only be saved if ten per cent of the employees are made redundant. After all, if the enterprise goes bankrupt, then all its biophile provisions given consciously or subconsciously to its employees, too, will be lost. Not every decision to make employees redundant is necessarily in the interest of the shareholder value. In principle, I would not say that these kinds of decisions are justifiable. The priority of an enterprise should not be to please shareholders, but to please its employees. That means: before I serve the capital, I have to serve the employees.

So this fear of meaninglessness can only be overcome if I have a star to follow. Then my life has meaning in all situations. In doing so, I might intentionally - and in my life this is so - put myself in opposition to institutions, because these institutions are ruled by morals, rather than ethics. That means for these institutions the definition of "good" is that it has to be good for the enterprise or institution. If I mentally relate this to my biophilism, then a serious conflict might arise. I am perfectly willing to fight these conflicts. Up to now, too, I have always fought these conflicts in my life. If you want to flee the fear of meaninglessness, then I cannot promise you a successful life in the shallow sense. All I can promise you is success in living your own life.

Fear of Loss

The fear of loss in prestige, influence, power, and property is widely spread among leaders in enterprises. Sometimes, when an enterprise has asked my advice, I sit in on a couple of conferences before signing the contract. Then I witness almost all leaders present - first, second and third rank - defending their claim. Let nobody enter my field of interest. Most conferences and meetings do not aim at finding the best solution. Instead, everybody aims at defending his or her own field of interest and enlarge his or her own claims, rather than minimize them.

These meetings and conferences as we know them today are in invention of modern times. The techniques for normally solving an average problem in 20 to 30 minutes have been forgotten during renaissance and humanism. In former times, it was a necessary requirement for any student in order to be permitted to study at university to know these techniques. But today, anybody can start studying at university, provided he has a high school diploma or some other document to show he has finished school. If you do not want to study a subject with numerus-clausus entry requirements, it is totally irrelevant what marks you have in your diploma. Thus, many people have numerous diplomas, all of which contain rather mediocre marks. Occasionally, these people rise in the hierarchy according to the Peter principle until they finally hold a position they are not fit for. If they are then lucky, they get a position in the board of directors.

Some people have such acute fear of loss because they are obsessed by prestige, power, influence, money, or something else. This is not about "ownership". Ownership

can be quite acceptable, but being obsessed takes away freedom. Whatever I am obsessed with limits my freedom considerably. If someone knows nothing other than striving to preserve and enhance his property, if this, rather than make his free life rich, is his life's goal, then there is hardly a defence against it. If you read in the Holy Scripture - the study of which I recommend - about obsession, then mostly these people are not, as is naively believed by the masses, obsessed by evil spirits. The evil spirit is the obsession with power, prestige, influence, money, etc. And this is the type of obsession Jesus heals us from. He makes us free again. We can then possess whatever we want to possess, but we will never again be possessed.

Fear of Intrigue and Loneliness

I do not want to expand on this. Instead, I want to present another aspect: does fear also have a positive function, and if so, which one? And can fears be turned positive? In my opinion, there is a polarity between fear and trust. If I live in a world of private and professional trust, and the longer I live in this atmosphere and the more I have unlearned my fears and also my basic childhood anxiety, the less I need be afraid. I feel accepted because I am a person, rather than because of my "achievements" by the people around me and also by my immediate superiors.

Since being human is always multi-dimensional and not just directed from top to bottom, I also have the duty to treat my superiors as humans, rather than a necessary evil. After all, superiors are also people. Not just because, like us, they belong to the species homo sapiens, but because they, too, are full of fulfilled and unfulfilled expectations, hopes, disappointments, longings and needs. And it is understandable that a person who has been bitterly disappointed after having hoped, a person whose every experience has been belittled, a person whose every attempt at being good has been turned bad, that such a person sooner or later will no longer be capable of trust. But this situation can be healed.

During statistical surveys at university, we have tried to find out the meaning of trust. Especially among the commercial employees, this is not so clear. Then we described ten situations of which we believed they might mean trust for employees on a postcard. The most frequent answer was: "For me, trust is if, after having made a mistake, I can go and see my boss and talk about it without fear". If this is what currently prevails as enterprise culture, then there is nothing for me to look for in such an enterprise.

I think in the long run fears inside ourselves can only be overcome if we trust other people. This, however, we can only do if we are also at the receiving end of trust, i.e. if other people trust us. Trust goes both ways. There is active and passive trust, trust given and trust received. If I manage to have both, then I think I have succeeded in doing something in accordance with my star, i.e. my goal.

Trust cannot be applied as technique. Trust has to be built according to the aim I have set for myself, i.e. for my own life. Someone who adheres to the maxim: "I want to promote rather than restrict personal life both inside myself and for others" has found his star. He will go his way. Someone who loves other people will be able to create areas of trust around himself. He will be at the receiving end of trust and accept this. Whatever he does, his life will never be meaningless. It will be meaningful no matter what he does.

