

# HAPPY 10TH BIRTHDAY



SUCCESS ACROSS

OUR TOP 10 LESSONS  
LEARNED DURING  
THE PAST 10 YEARS

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PEOPLE

WANT TO BE SEEN.



Whenever we interact with people – independent of our task - training, coaching or consulting, – the greatest challenge we face amongst individuals, teams or organisations is:

### THE UNFULFILLED NEED TO »BE SEEN« BY THE OTHER(S).

This obviously creates tension, frustration and sadness. This clearly slows down efficiency, productivity and innovation. Our job is to see people. And what we see (most often) is good, beautiful and meaningful. We often detect a mismatch: What people want to be seen for is often not what others perceive of them.

### IT IS VERY SIMPLE: IT IS A MISUNDERSTANDING.

In our role as consultant we step into an organisation from the outside. A strong position from which we can easily highlight, name, re-edit and re-position.

### IS IT ALWAYS AS SIMPLE AS THAT? UNFORTUNATELY NOT.

We are being called into situations in which there is a ‘no match’ between what a person has to offer and what a team needs.

In these situations we need to take it a step further and find alternatives; like restructuring teams or adapting tasks and responsibilities. With these adjustments, people often feel a better match in terms of what they offer and what a team needs.

Suggesting face-saving (for all parties involved) change as an external advisor is the key to success. Supporting individuals in a personal change process is a very human approach in re-creating harmony and functionality for that person. It will also have a positive impact on the wider group.

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DYSFUNCTIONAL TEAMS  
WANT TO BREAK FREE  
FROM LATENT CONFLICTS.



Most of us are conditioned to believe that we should »accept« and »live« with conflicts. Most humans are conditioned to accepting that there is no life without conflict. Attempting to ignore conflict is a widely spread strategy. We ignore them – the best we can ...

WE DO NOT WANT TO BE THE ONE WHO  
»LIFTS THE LID OF THE CONFLICT POT«.

Guess what: all other members of a group (husband and wife, family, team, department, organisation, society, country, world) feel the (latent) conflict too.

IT TAKES ONE PERSON'S COURAGE TO SPEAK UP  
AND LIFT THE LID OF THE POT.

Think of Greta Thunberg ...

What happens then is up to us: Either we are relieved, because the latent conflict is finally surfacing. Or we become protective and attempt to re-establish the former status quo. Or possibly, we continue to ignore the conflict – even after surfacing.

What we have seen in the field during the past ten years is that accumulated frustration, anger and all other negative emotions have to be set free. It is easier and healthier to provide an environment in which the wall(s) of the »retaining dam« are being lifted by an external expert.

SO OUR LESSON LEARNT IS: WE CAN'T WORK  
ON TEAM DEVELOPMENT UNTIL THE TEAM IS  
WILLING TO LIFT THE LID AND OPEN THE DAM.

The quintessence quote from Ruth Cohn captures this perfectly: »The postulate that disruptions and violent feelings have priority means that we respect the reality of man; and this reality contains the fact that our lively, emotional bodies and souls carry our thoughts and deeds<sup>1</sup>.«

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1 Cohn: Von der Psychoanalyse zur Themenzentrierten Interaktion. 1975, p. 122

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CREATING ROOM,  
SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT  
THROUGH AN  
EXTERNAL TEAM.



Breaking free from existing conventions will require a safe, non-judgmental environment. The process requires guidance and constructive moderation.

All parties involved »sign« the Confidentiality Charter, and in this phase of the process it is very important that we dismantle hierarchical structures.

OR WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO SPEAK UP,  
WHEN YOUR BOSS IS IN THE ROOM?

The people we have worked with in private-, public-sector and academia alike crave a »neutral« setting that focuses on the relationship level rather than on the fact-level. Through feedback we have perceived that managers and leaders alike do not rank this as a priority. In addition, employees intuitively feel that the hierarchy hinders the level of trust needed to open up.

»WE LET YOU DO THIS« IS WHAT WE HEARD  
AFTER EVERY INTERVENTION.

So even though we need to be very close and focused on each individual, we need to leave the scene and feel the power of distance and avoid becoming involved in the organisational command chain and the politics that come with it.

OUR LESSON LEARNT: MAINTAIN THE BALANCE  
OF TRUST AND DISTANCE.

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THE »BEZIEHUNGSEBENE«  
MEANING THE RELATION-  
SHIP-LEVEL IS  
UNDERRATED IN THE  
WORKING ENVIRONMENT.





We have been educated that professionalism is key to business success. Whilst we agree with this idea, another component has become equally important over the past years: The relationship-level in any business situation is equally important.

Especially in a German working context we have, for a long time, thought that when we let personal values and expectations enter the professional working life, we are being perceived as »unprofessional«.

This conviction becomes a big obstacle when we work in an international environment, because other cultures need and request the personal relationship in professional life in order to establish trust and a working atmosphere in which they can thrive.

### THE BIGGEST MISUNDERSTANDING IS THAT WE MIX UP »PERSONAL« AND »PRIVATE«.

If you think about the meaning of these two words, you quickly understand that there is a difference between personal and private. The chemistry between working partners needs to match, but if one party doesn't share personal values and expectations, they no longer contribute to the chemistry mix.

When delivering cross-cultural team building developments, we aim to establish a balanced approach between the strict professional and the more personal relationship level. For example: Sharing stories about your hobbies, family, travel, reading and movie preferences will help to create a more relationship orientated working environment. Sharing this information will not put at risk your professionalism, but extend it to a more complete version of yourself. Give it a try, and you will see that people will react differently to you.

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DIFFERENCES IN WORKING  
HABITS CANNOT ALWAYS  
BE EXPLAINED THROUGH  
CULTURE. IT IS MORE  
COMPLEX, AS THE  
»RING-MODEL« SHOWS.

It is very interesting to see how two opposite opinions can be held by a single individual. For example:

»I HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH OTHER CULTURES, BUT I CAN'T WORK WITH HIM, BECAUSE HE IS GERMAN«

(this is an example and could be replaced by any other national culture)

This is quite interesting, because we come directly – via extreme generalisations – to the core of the challenge and the reality of working in a multinational environment: Generalisation, lack of differentiation and closed doors. This is when it gets interesting and change is about to happen. In this moment we are using the ring model in order to open these doors – on opposite sides of a room at the same time.

THE »A-HA-EFFECT« THROUGH THIS SIMPLISTIC MODEL IS BEAUTIFUL TO WATCH.

The explanation is quite simple: Not every conflict situation can be explained through cultural differences. And culture can never be the sole reason for a conflict situation.

A conflict situation is most often a multidimensional complex that is being fed by different reasoning layers at the same time.

And here we are on a different level of differentiating situations and conflicts. A necessity when we want to resolve or restructure working reality.



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CONCISE COMMUNICATION  
IS KEY TO MINIMIZE  
MISUNDER-STANDINGS.

In any dialogue misunderstandings can occur. Not all your dialogue partners are interested in driving the dialogue into a specific direction. You have all met dialogue partners who talk with you, without clarifying any specific outcome or goal. This can be a very excruciating experience.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT:  
THE MORE CONVOLUTED YOUR DIALOGUE  
PARTNER COMMUNICATES THE MORE  
PRECISE AND CLEAR YOU MUST BE.

This is hard and some of you will even find this painful. But being lulled in and wasting time with no sense talk is even more painful. So the only way out is being as concise, logical and precise as you can be.

This will either change the communication behaviour of the other person, or this person will »run away« from you, because his communication pattern can't be »lived« with you as a partner. Well, this might be for the best.

HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THE MESSAGE  
I SEND IS BEING RECEIVED CORRECTLY?

The bad news: there is no certainty. The good news: there are techniques you can apply to increase the likelihood that the message that you send is being received.

- 1.) You have to be clear and precise about what you want to say. We often start talking/writing without being sure of what we want. How should the other person be able to understand what you say, if you don't even know what message you want to send?
- 2.) Say/write concisely what you want. In a direct way. Direct / straight does not mean steno-style or impersonal or even rude.

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META-COMMUNICATION  
AND REPHRASING  
WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD  
AND UNDERSTOOD  
IS A POWERFUL TOOL  
TO IMPROVE BUSINESS  
RELATIONSHIPS.



Every so often we are sure that we have understood what the other person is saying. However, this is not always the case. It goes back to the standard communication model from F. Schulz von Thun,

### THE »4 SPOUTS AND THE 4 EARS« - COMMUNICATION MODEL.

One way to ensure that we have correctly understood the message that was sent, is re-phrasing what we believe to have understood.

### THIS IS CALLED »ENTERING THE META-COMMUNICATION LEVEL«.

Is asking and re-phrasing a weakness? No. of course not! We strongly encourage you to give it a try, it works so well, and your communication partners will most likely perceive it as something positive. You ensure that communication works.

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TRUST IN A GROUP AND  
THE PROCESS THAT DEVELOPS  
IS KEY FOR EVERY MANAGER  
IN A MULTINATIONAL TEAM.  
(»PROZESS-VERTRAUEN«)





We have frequently experienced, that despite great guidance, strong leadership, ambition and drive, that a team can lose track and perceive the leadership to be too boxed, too autocratic, too controlled. In none of the development processes in which we have been involved in did this happen »on purpose«. In fact, the opposite was intended, and although the objective was to encourage and empower, every so often the team members felt, that they no longer had a say and that there was no flexibility or room for creativity.

### IN THE END THEY FELT, THAT THERE WAS A LACK OF TRUST IN THEIR CAPABILITIES.

This is the moment, when we start working with the managers on the topic of »Prozess-Vertrauen – trusting the group process« that they started.

In this process, the key element is to create joint momentum, move forward together and drive change. The shift is only possible after the team and the manager repositioned reciprocal trust in each other. And from our experience, both sides feel so much better, so much more appreciated, and relieved. This immediately resulted in tangible shifts i.e. increase in productivity, decrease in scrap rates and an increase in employee satisfaction, decreased HR cost because of higher retention and less sick days.

### THE BEAUTY OF THIS KIND OF PROCESS SUPPORT IS THE TANGIBILITY.

Everybody is convinced by the quantitative and qualitative results. I hear you say: but they have to be measured against the same data before the process started. I completely agree, we measure this in our status quo analysis, then we intervene and then we measure the same things after the process improvement.

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IGNORING THE WORLD'S  
DIVERSITY AND/OR BEING  
AFRAID OF IT WILL ISOLATE  
YOU – NOT THE OTHERS.



The heading says it all. It feels like if you know Success Across and if you have read until here you don't need an explanation for this heading ;-). I will share two in depth research studies that give you proof and evidence that

DIVERSITY IS A NECESSITY TO SURVIVE  
IN TODAY'S REALITY AND TO THRIVE  
IN TOMORROW'S WORLD.

At the same time, the attitude and value side of this approach is equally – or even – more important than scientific evidence. The marriage between attitude and scientific evidence should enable you to be a part of the value cascade that embraces diversity! Go for it and

»BE THE CHANGE  
YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD«.  
(Mahatma Ghandi)

Here are the two very interesting scientific studies:

Harvard Business Review:

[»Diversity The Latest Research«.](#)

McKinsey & Company:

[»Delivering through diversity«.](#)

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TAKING RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR YOUR OWN  
BEHAVIOUR - WITH ALL THE  
CONSEQUENCES - IS THE  
FOUNDATION FOR REAL  
AND STABLE INTERACTIONS.

You might have seen my TEDx CIFE talk on [»The power of building bridges«](#), in which I use my 18 TED-minutes for a couple of key messages and convictions.

## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN BEHAVIOUR

– with all consequences – is probably the most essential behaviour that we need to apply in order to remain constructive instead of destructive.

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I would like to close with the quote from South African Nobel Peace Prize winner (1984) Desmond Tutu:

»My humanity is bound up in yours for we can only be human together. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another<sup>2</sup>.«

We are extremely fortunate and grateful to each person that has walked with us during the past 10 years – and we look forward to continuing this journey together into the future. We have never felt as alive as we do today!

Thank you for your trust and willingness to contribute to a better world.

Yours truly,  
Nina Frauenfeld



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