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Press release

Date: 17th November 2022

Extreme mountaineer Evelyne Binsack at the International Roto Trade Press Day / Resilient organisations have professional management / Identifying strong and weak personalities / Being aware of the power of mirror neurons / Taking and passing on responsibility

Nothing is possible without management

Rottach-Egern – People feel a deep sense of satisfaction when they achieve objectives they have set themselves. Achieving objectives even when there are many obstacles in the way also fills people with gratitude, explains Swiss extreme mountaineer Evelyne Binsack. She has observed this in groups she has led as a mountain guide, but of course also within herself. She appeared as a guest speaker at the International Roto Trade Press Day on 17th November. She gave the following interview to accompany the event.

Ms Binsack, in your talk you described how people as well as organisations can train to be more resilient and should be able to overcome obstacles on their way to achieving their objectives. What role does resilience play for you personally on your trips, tours and expeditions?

Evelyne Binsack: People who put their trust in me as a mountain guide can and must demand a certain resilience from me as an individual, in other words the strength to analyse and overcome problems. I must be able to make decisions in difficult situations, even if these will be unpopular with the group I'm leading. I therefore have to show strength and accept the fact that others might not like me or that I might not live up to their expectations. At the same time, I have to be prepared not to succeed in the worst-case scenario. But the route to the summit leads to the mountains and, just like in life, you will almost always experience some lows first. If you are familiar with and accept this principle, you will find it easier to wait for your second chance, which often turns out to be better. In the mountains, the direct route often leads to an impasse, which can take a great deal of energy to extract yourself from or can even have fatal consequences. In other words, resilience is absolutely essential in many situations, especially in the mountains.

What can I as an individual do to strengthen my resilience and improve my handling of particular challenges?

Evelyne Binsack: You first have to learn how to practice self-awareness without taking yourself too seriously. If you are self-aware, you can correct a course at an early stage, can quickly realign your mindset, modify your own behaviour and act appropriately in order to fulfil your objectives. But how does that work? This is why humans have developed an ego over time. This ego has nothing to do with egocentrism or egoism, but is embedded in our willpower. Willpower guides the ego and vice versa. It is a reflection of truth and reality and promotes the ability to think logically, coherently and abstractly. It is willpower that enables us to regulate our feelings and control our impulses. Ultimately, willpower strengthens an individual's judgement, the ability to set boundaries and the ability to synthesise, in other words to integrate other people's helpful opinions, useful skills and corrective beliefs, etc. If

you want to strengthen your resilience, you should take a close look at how strong your willpower is.

The term "resilience" plays an important role in contemporary management theory too. Organisations and companies want to become more resilient. What role does the resilience of individual members of staff play in this?

Evelyne Binsack: A major role. Organisations or, to put it more precisely, managers within organisations strengthen their employees' resilience by giving them encouragement. Managers should put themselves in employees' shoes and observe where they are, what they're missing, what they can see and know. This is the only way that managers can support employees on the same level. Employees feel recognised and will play an active part in success and in achieving the objective. Everyone is on the same page and pursues their shared objective. Of course, for this to work, everyone has to be clear about what the objective is. Only when everyone is on the same page will a good manager go on the offensive and, if necessary, enter into a confrontation to challenge and encourage individuals. That is the most difficult part of the process as it involves autonomy and responsibility that is passed on.

If this process isn't too fast or slow, every member of a team will give their best. Each and every person can be proud to be part of the whole and everyone feels responsible and integrated. The aim of most employers is for staff to identify with the company. However, this brings greater responsibility. This is because if an employee identifies with the company, they open themselves up to mutual dependency, both mentally, emotionally and with regard to knowledge and, ultimately, also financially, as knowledge has a (monetary) value.

How can the resilience of a well-integrated team and a company be further improved?

Evelyne Binsack: I would like to reiterate a well-known yet often forgotten insight here. "A team is only as strong as its weakest member." It's my task as a mountain guide and also the task of every manager to bring a certain homogeneity to a team so that the weaker members are not overwhelmed but so that the stronger ones are sufficiently challenged. That's not to say that the weaker members don't belong in the team. It only means that you have to be aware that the needs of a weaker member hamper the team as a whole. This process is unconscious. Mirror neurons in the brain adapt both to the weakness and the strength.

This is why I think that a flat management style only works in "fair-weather conditions". In storms and cold weather, it is absolutely essential for an expert manager with considerable expertise to take responsibility and take charge of navigation and communication. In a crisis, it's crucial to position weaker individuals behind stronger ones so that the weakness isn't transferred to other members of the team. You will have seen yourself how someone who thinks, speaks and acts negatively has an impact on others. That's the effect of mirror neurons. If we are aware of their role, as managers we can use mirror neurons intentionally and assign a stronger person for every weaker one. Resilience within a team is therefore closely linked to the quality of management at a company. There's a holographic principle:

"As above so below." And once you start looking closely, the truth of this saying always becomes obvious sooner or later.

Extreme athlete Evelyne Binsack at home in Switzerland.

Image: Evelyne Binsack **EB_1.jpg**

In the Khumbu Icefall on Mount Everest, Nepal

Image: Evelyne Binsack **EB_2.jpg**

Skiing in her local mountains in the Bernese Oberland

Image: Evelyne Binsack **EB_3.jpg**

From her front door to the North Pole by bicycle and with sledges in 105 days

Image: Evelyne Binsack **EB_4.jpg**

A challenging climb on Wendenstöcke in Switzerland

Image: Evelyne Binsack **EB_5.jpg**

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