

17.03.2021 – 17:26 Uhr

BLOGPOST: Monthly motivation: The power of confidence



What have lockdown, pandemic-related restrictions and corona-blues done to our confidence? How can we stay positive and regain our strength for the upcoming months? Philosopher Jörg Bernardy examines the power of confidence for the March issue of our ['Monthly Motivation'](#) blog format.

On the need to stay confident

Do you know the difference between an optimistic, a pessimistic and a confident person? Let me quickly introduce you to the famous frog parable. It's the story of three frogs that fall into a jar of liquid cream and find themselves at risk of drowning. The pessimist, who sees no way out, immediately gives up and goes under. The optimist thinks to himself: 'I'll be alright, someone will get me out of here any minute!' But this frog is mistaken too and he also drowns. Only the confident frog keeps on paddling long enough for the cream to turn into butter, which eventually allows him to escape the pot.

Two lessons

There are two lessons we can learn from this tale. First, confidence doesn't mean that all feelings of doubt and dejection are dispelled from our lives. Rather, confidence is about maintaining a positive attitude in spite of dark thoughts, in spite of real obstacles and fatigue.

And secondly, every crisis eventually ends. In most cases it simply comes down to hanging on long enough as best we can. But this only works as long as we don't break down internally or externally, and never truly give up or lose our will – regardless of how limited our freedom to act.

Never abandon hope completely

The latter phenomenon is also known as the Stockdale paradox, created by the management expert and bestselling author Jim Collins. As a young U.S. naval pilot, Stockdale fell into Vietnamese captivity during a mission in 1965. He spent more than seven years in the notorious Hanoi Hilton Prison. Instead of hoping that he would be released early for good behaviour, he pulled himself together again with each new day. And though he was subjected to torture, he resisted the temptation to ally himself with the enemy.

While some of his optimistic fellow prisoners dreamed of going back home soon and partly broke down because of this, Stockdale did not allow himself to entertain false hope. In retrospect this increased his likelihood of survival. To stay with the image of the frog, Stockdale just kept on paddling from one day to the next.

Confidence and the discovery of inner freedom

Instead of James Stockdale, one could also take Stephen Hawking as an example. Shortly after his 21st birthday, doctors told Hawkins that he was suffering from a rare muscle disease. Not long after, he was confined to a wheelchair and had to come to terms with a progressively weakening body. And yet he never considered giving up his career as a physicist or pursuing his other goals in life.

In his book Zuversicht ('Confidence'), science journalist Ulrich Schnabel comments on Stephen Hawking's fate: 'The more his external ability to move was taken from him, the more Hawking was forced to explore his inner freedom.' Becoming aware of one's own freedom, even in the most adverse circumstances, is crucial to developing a confident outlook.

The power of confidence: a necessity

There are rights, laws, duties – and there are necessities. Even if some of the sources from which we normally draw courage and confidence have run dry, we possess latent abilities and powers within us that enable us to survive even the most difficult and long crises. Being and remaining confident is crucial for our vital energy. And that, in turn, is necessary if we want to remain capable of action.

No more corona blues

'Avanti, avanti – Jetzt neuen Schwung kriegen' ('Avanti, avanti – time for a new energy'), the latest issue of ZEIT Wissen magazine has it. In February, the magazine Psychologie heute ran the headline 'Away with old patterns.' Spring is approaching and many of us long to shake off the corona blues – for aside from the external constrictions, we're starting to feel confined internally as well. Let the three frogs, navy pilot Stockdale and Stephen Hawking help you not to lose courage and find new ways to a renewed energy.

,In three words, I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.' – Robert Frost

Yours, Jörg Bernardy

This article was originally posted in our blog:

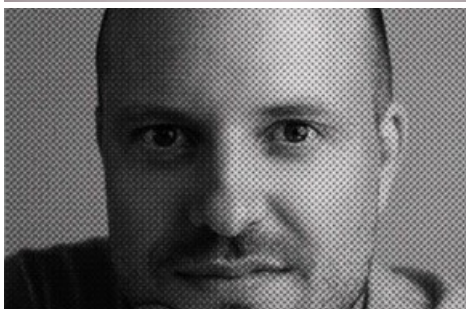
<https://www.newsaktuell.com/blog/monthly-motivation-the-power-of-confidence/>

This blog is published by news aktuell, a subsidiary of dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Medieninhalte



news aktuell Blog: Impuls des Monats: Die Kraft der Zuversicht



Dr. Jörg Bernardy, Autor, Philosoph und Dozent.

Diese Meldung kann unter <https://www.presseportal.de/en/pm/6344/4866723> abgerufen werden.