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# Recognizing and overcoming internal stressors in everyday work

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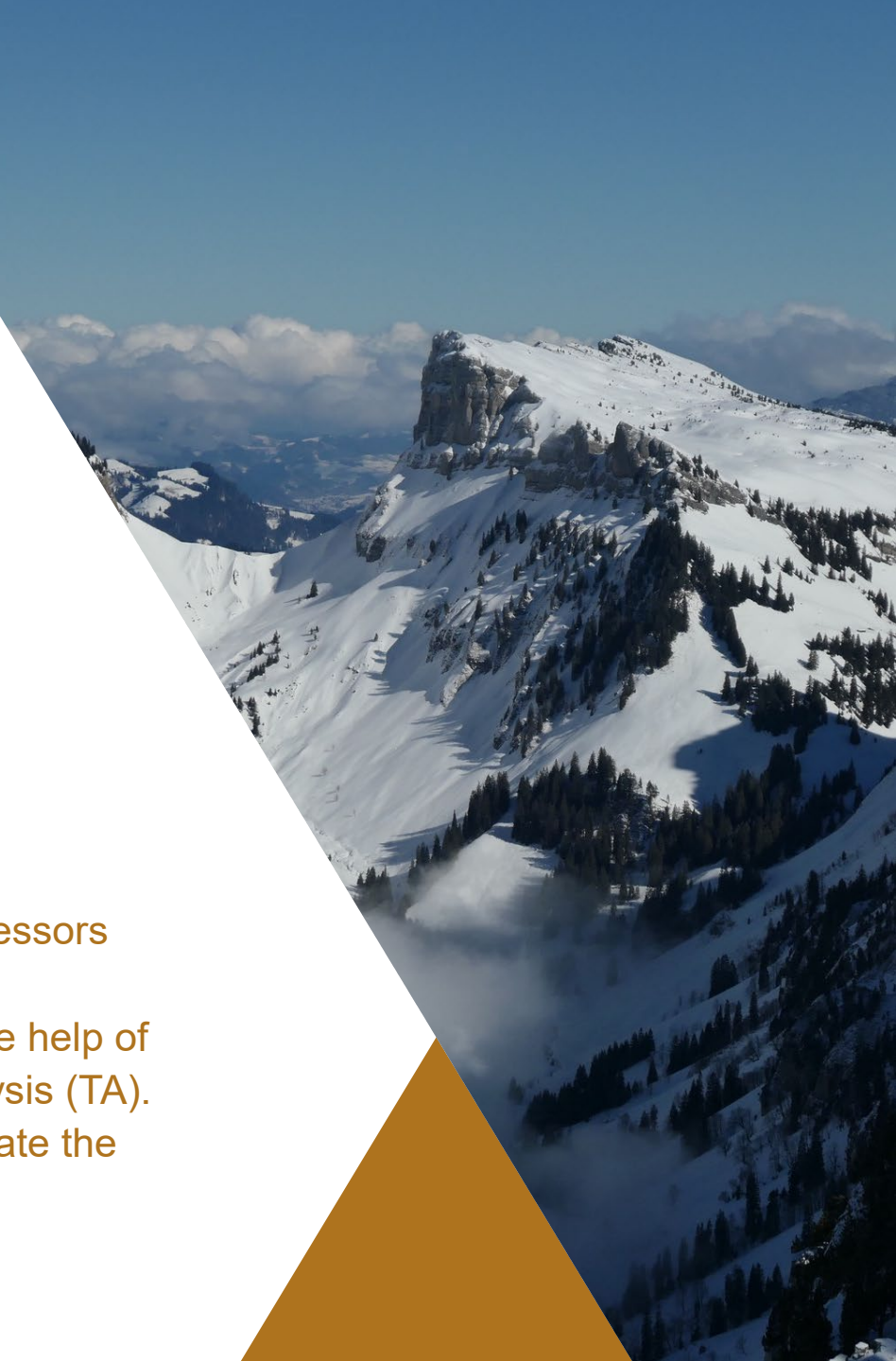


## Programme

1. A moment of relaxation
2. The Psychological Stress-Model
3. The 5 drivers of Transactional Analysis TA
4. Dealing with my drivers
5. Drivers in organisations
6. Questions

In addition to objective stress and excessive demands, there are also inner stressors that create or intensify stress.

In the workshop, the first step is to recognize one's own inner stressors with the help of psychological models - for example with the driver model of transactional analysis (TA). Afterwards, possibilities will be presented on how to overcome or at least mitigate the inner stressors.







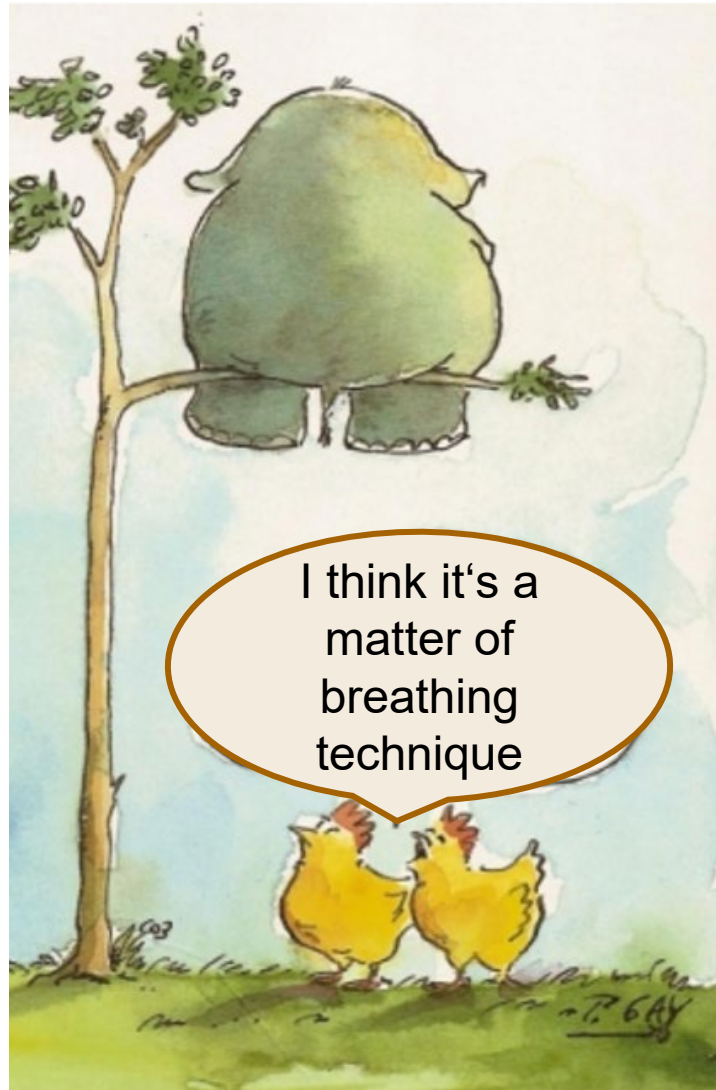
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# A moment of relaxation

What is health in a working context?



## A moment of relaxation



### What is mental health at work?

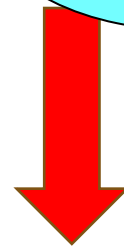
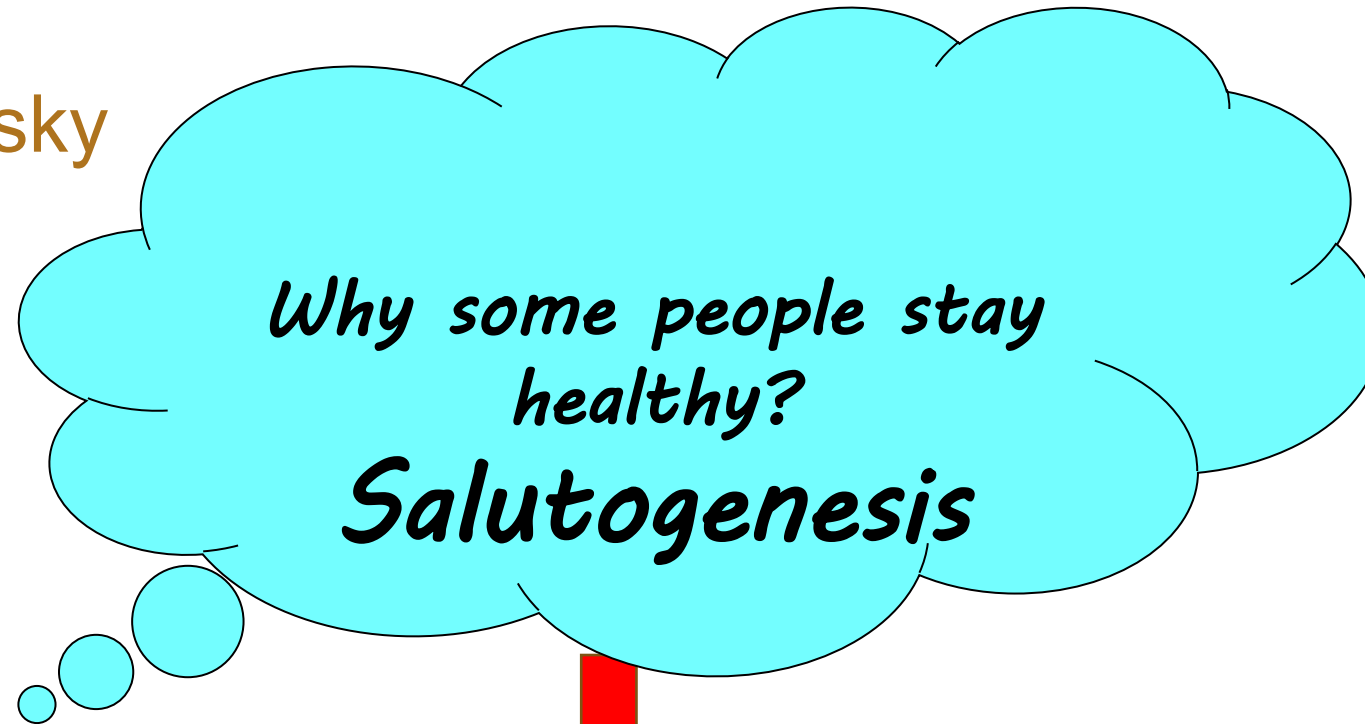
According to our understanding, a person is mentally healthy,

- who is able to cope with the demands of everyday life / work in a committed yet relaxed manner,
- who has a positive attitude towards himself and his own possibilities of action,
- who pursues goals, can experience meaning in his or her actions, and feels socially in good hands.

Schaarschmidt & Kieschke, 2007, S. 29



Aaron Antonovsky

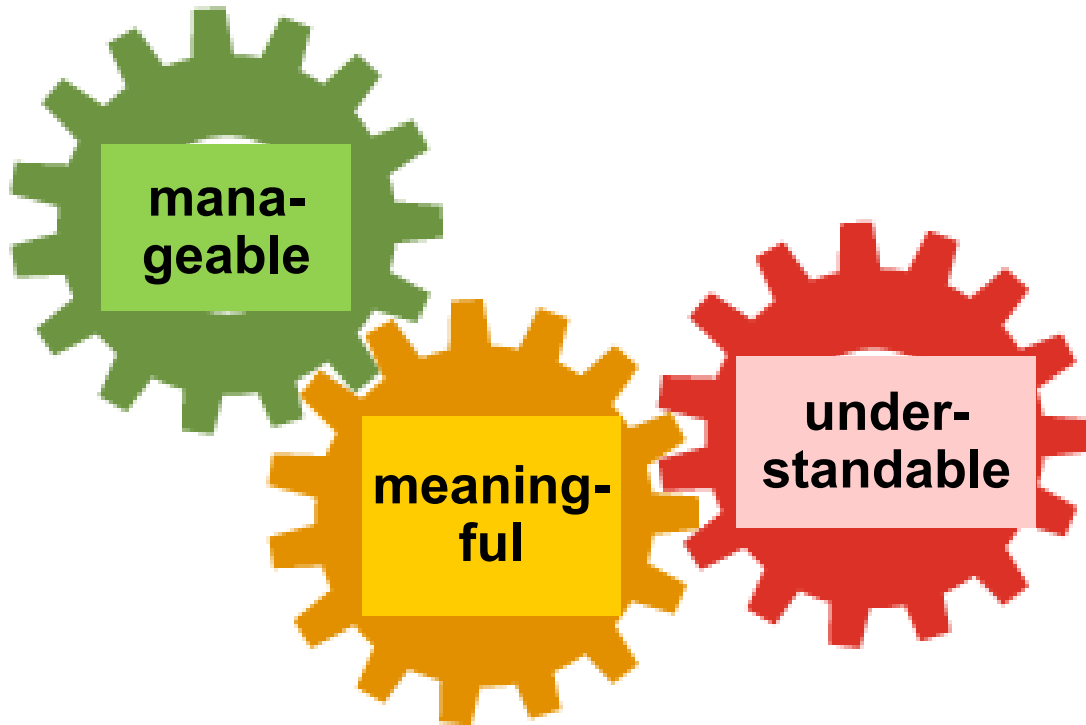


**Sense of coherence!**



## Sence of coherence

**Aaron Antonovsky** describes three central factors for mental health and he calls them Sence Of Coherence SOC (1988). The sence of coherence is a dynamic feeling of confidence in life and the challenges we face with the following three aspects:





# 2

## The psychological stress model







# Stress-Model

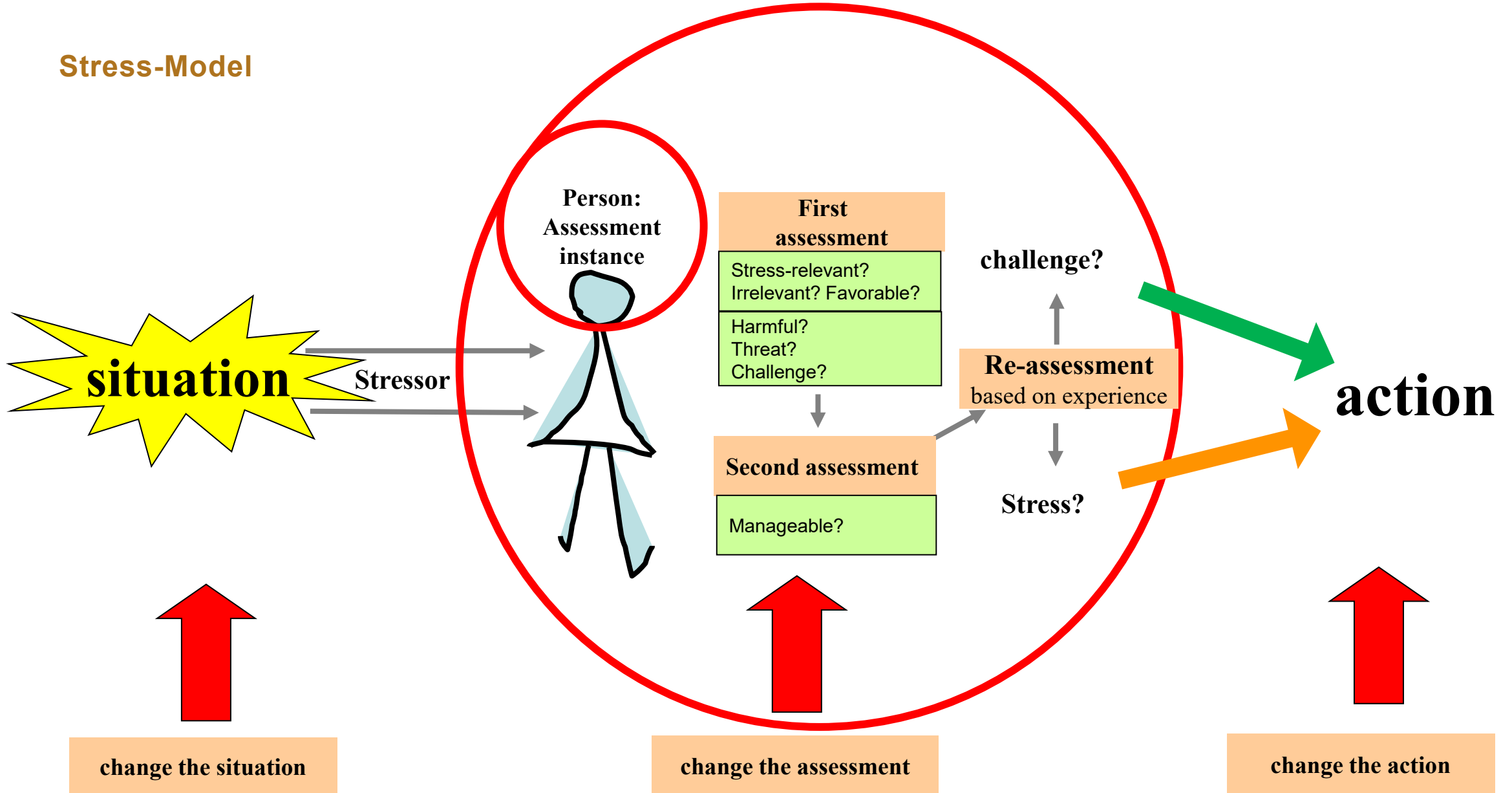
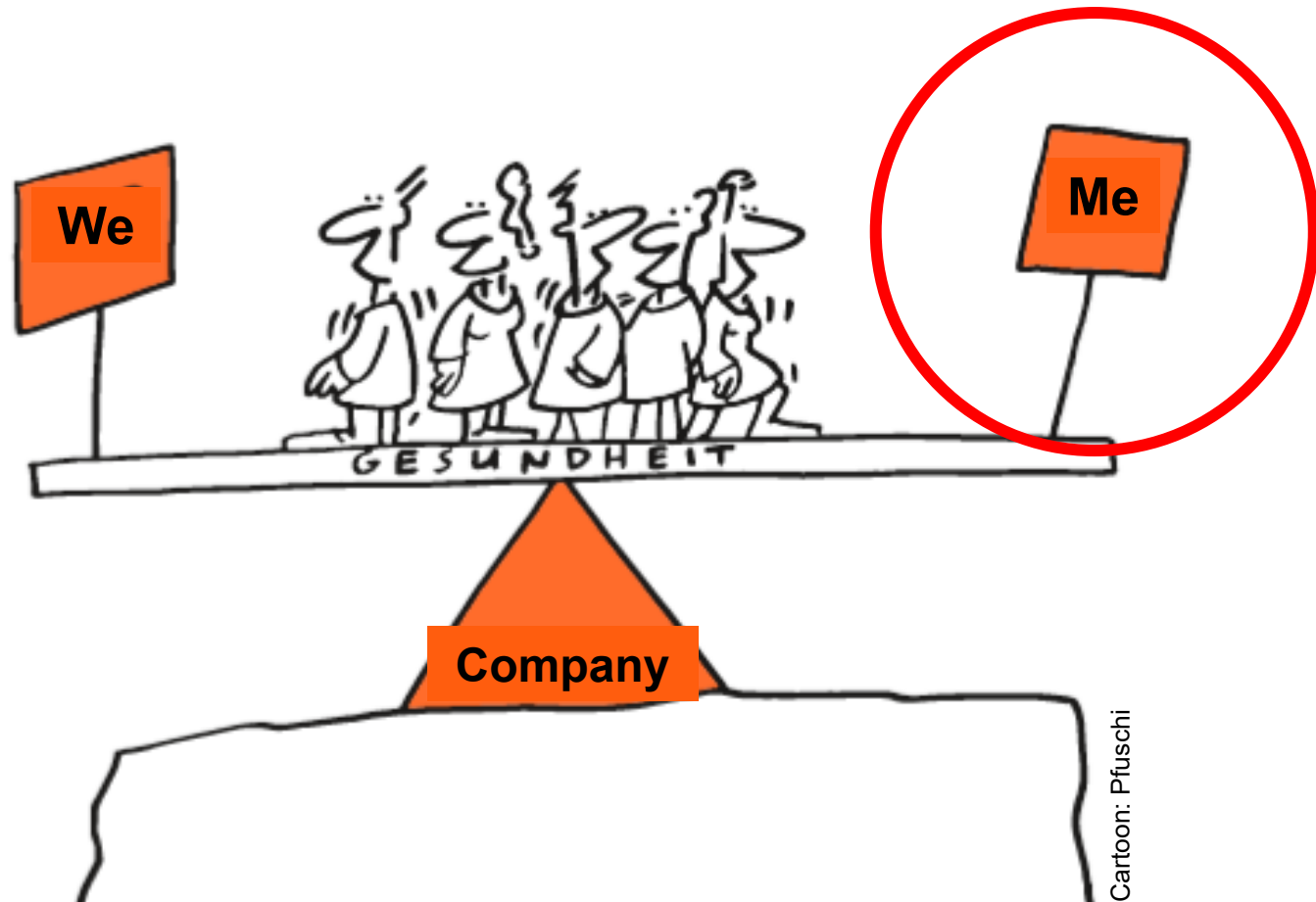


Abb.: Das Stressmodell nach Lattmann (angelehnt an Lazarus / Launier) (2003)



## Self-regulation

# Balance self-regulation – personal aspects of inner stress



Cartoon: Pfuschi

Herzog, S., Sandmeier, A. & Affolter, B. (2021). Gesunde Lehrkräfte in gesunden Schulen -Eine Einführung. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.





# 3

## The 5 drivers

**A model of Transactional Analysis**



## Self-reflection drivers

- Why do I keep going beyond my limits?
- Why do I get involved in things that are not good for me?
- Why is it so difficult for me to say no?
- Why do I often come last in my own priorities?
- Why don't I take things a little easier?...

*Why does this happen to me all the time?*

## Drivers - definition

# Drivers - inner stressors

by Taibi Kahler (1977) a model of Transactional Analysis

The driver is defined as a characteristic set of words, intonations, gestures, postures and facial expressions which mirror the inner message:

### I am only OK, if I always ....

- Be strong!
- Try hard!
- Be perfect!
- Hurry up!
- Please people!

„Petruska Clarkson (1992) suggested that each driver has a **strong positive component**—enthusiasm, speed, amiability, endurance, excellence.“

Julie Hay (2009) proposes calling the sunny side of driver behaviour “**working style**” and the shadow side “**driver**“.

<https://transaktionsanalyse.online/antreiber/>





## Drivers

# Be strong

## Quality

- „Calm and steady, this is how one can best describe “Be strong” people.
- They deal well with stress and are therefore good crisis managers.
- They are perseverant and not likely to give up on a whim.
- They are people with a strong sense of duty, who are not shy of doing some of the dirty work.
- They keep a logical steady mind when others begin to panic.
- They don't ask others for help very quickly.“

William F. Cornell, Anne de Graaf, Trudi Newton and Moniek Thunnissen (2016). Into TA: A Comprehensive Textbook on Transactional Analysis. London: Karnac (S. 138)

## Pitfall

„Who here actually needs a plan? I can do well without.

I also don't need any support from others.

I'll do it alone.“



## Drivers

# Try hard

## Quality

- People who take on tasks enthusiastically.
- They especially put a lot of energy into new things, by examining all sorts of possibilities.
- They rarely overlook something. They are highly motivated people who do well getting things off the ground.
- They are at the front of the row when there are new tasks that need to be done.“

William F. Cornell, Anne de Graaf, Trudi Newton and Moniek Thunnissen (2016). Into TA: A Comprehensive Textbook on Transactional Analysis. London: Karnac (S. 138)

## Pitfall

„Everything is connected to everything - I can't skip anything.

There is so much I have to think about that it takes effort to know where to begin - and certainly to get it done!“





## Drivers

# Be perfect

## Quality

- „People who follow the driver “Be perfect” are those looking for perfection.
- Everything should be done as carefully as possible, without error.
- They are extremely well-organised in their job.
- They look forward, because they want to avoid problems.
- They are accurate people who do their work conscientiously and carefully fulfil their commitments.“

William F. Cornell, Anne de Graaf, Trudi Newton and Moniek Thunnissen (2016). Into TA: A Comprehensive Textbook on Transactional Analysis. London: Karnac (S. 138)

## Pitfall

„I take so long to get my plan exactly right that I certainly won't get it done, let alone get to the point of implementing it.“



## Drivers

# Hurry up

## Quality

- They work fast, respond well to deadlines, and are able to do much in little time. This is the main quality of these people.
- They can get a mountain of work done quickly! Their energy increases as the pressure increases.
- “Hurry up” differs as a working style from the others. Usually, this working style is an addition to one of the other styles; often to “Please me” or “Try hard”.

## Pitfall

„I've already done the work, can I go now?  
OK, it doesn't look very organised, but I think it's good enough.“



William F. Cornell, Anne de Graaf, Trudi Newton and Moniek Thunnissen (2016). Into TA: A Comprehensive Textbook on Transactional Analysis. London: Karnac (S. 138)



## Drivers

# Please people

## Quality

- Excellent team players. In their team, everyone's view of things is considered. They make sure of this.
- They seek harmony in their work, they are intuitive, and reserve plenty of time and space for the feelings of others.
- They offer their services and have a cooperative attitude.
- “Please people” people are pleasant to have around because they are tolerant, empathetic, and understanding.“

## Pitfall

„I want someone else to tell me what to do.  
You're the manager here, you tell me if what I'm doing is OK“



William F. Cornell, Anne de Graaf, Trudi Newton and Moniek Thunnissen (2016). Into TA: A Comprehensive Textbook on Transactional Analysis. London: Karnac (S. 138)

## Drivers are a risk for burnout!

**People who often follow the destructive part of their drivers are under high risk for burn out:**

- They act under permanent stress with all its negative effects.
- They need a lot of energy and time to please their drivers.
- They ignore their personal needs.
- They act with decisions of the past and ignore what is needed in an adult manner here and now.
- They risk to lose their energy and their ability to recreate.
- They therefore risk to burn out.

fekt!

Beeile dich!

Mach's allen recht!

Streng dich an!



# 4

## Dealing with my drivers





## Dealing with my drivers

### Drivers self-assessment

- What are my preferred drivers?
- Which driver is the strongest, which is less pronounced?
- How do my drivers affect my (professional) everyday life?

### Helpful Steps – Defusing Drivers

- Perceiving and recognizing
- Checking - inhibiting or promoting?
- Permissions - to give yourself and others
- Take small steps of change!
- Set realistic expectations for yourself and others



## Drivers - definition

# Permissions to defuse the drivers

Taibi Kahler (1977) a model of Transactional Analysis

Be strong!

Be open and express your desires!

Try hard!

Just do it!

Be perfect!

You are good enough the way you are!

Hurry up!

Take your time!

Please people!

Make it right for yourself! Care for yourself!

**Caution: Drivers cannot be changed so quickly - they have a protective function and are based on early unconscious decisions.**

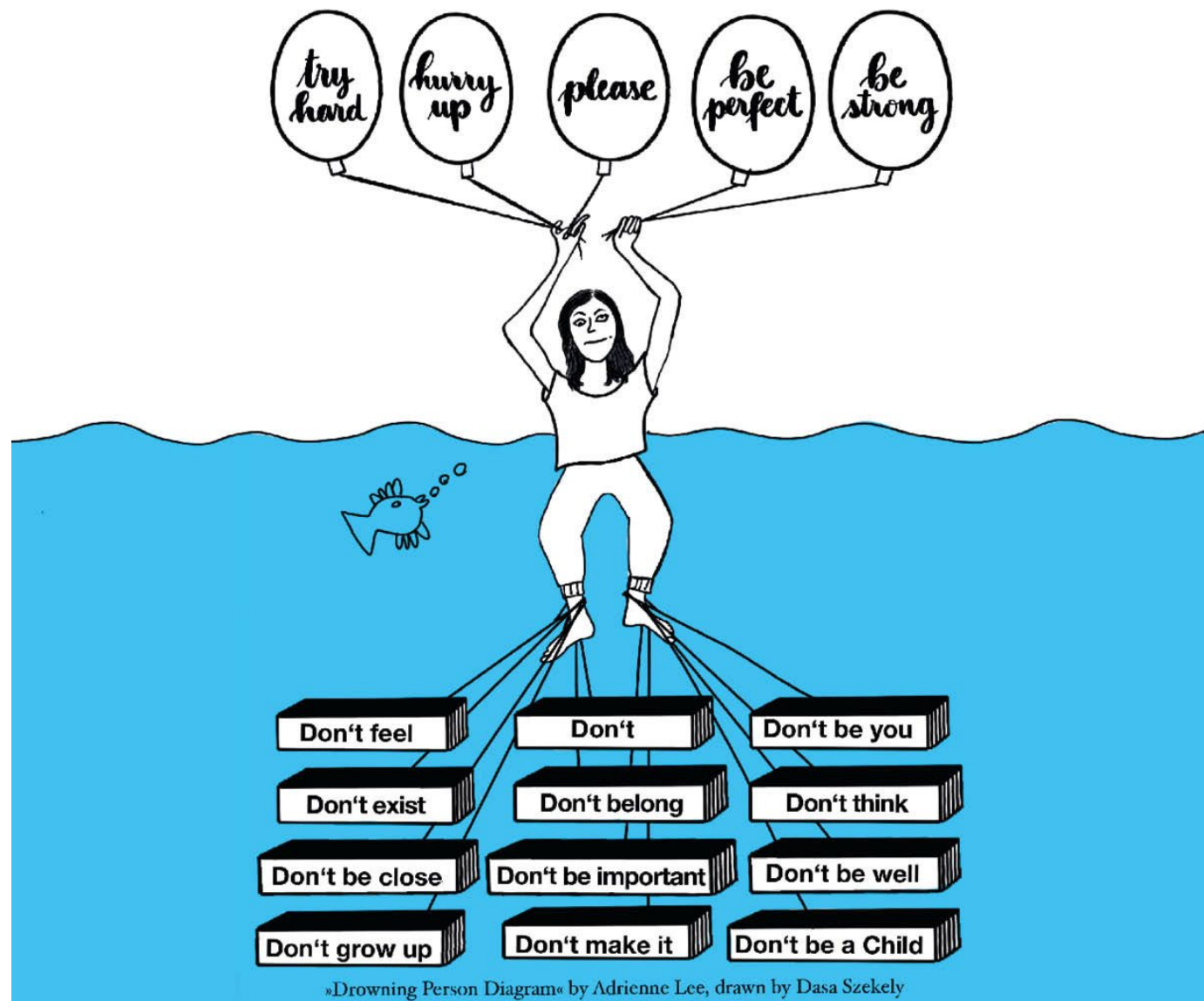
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## Be careful when reducing your driver- behaviour!





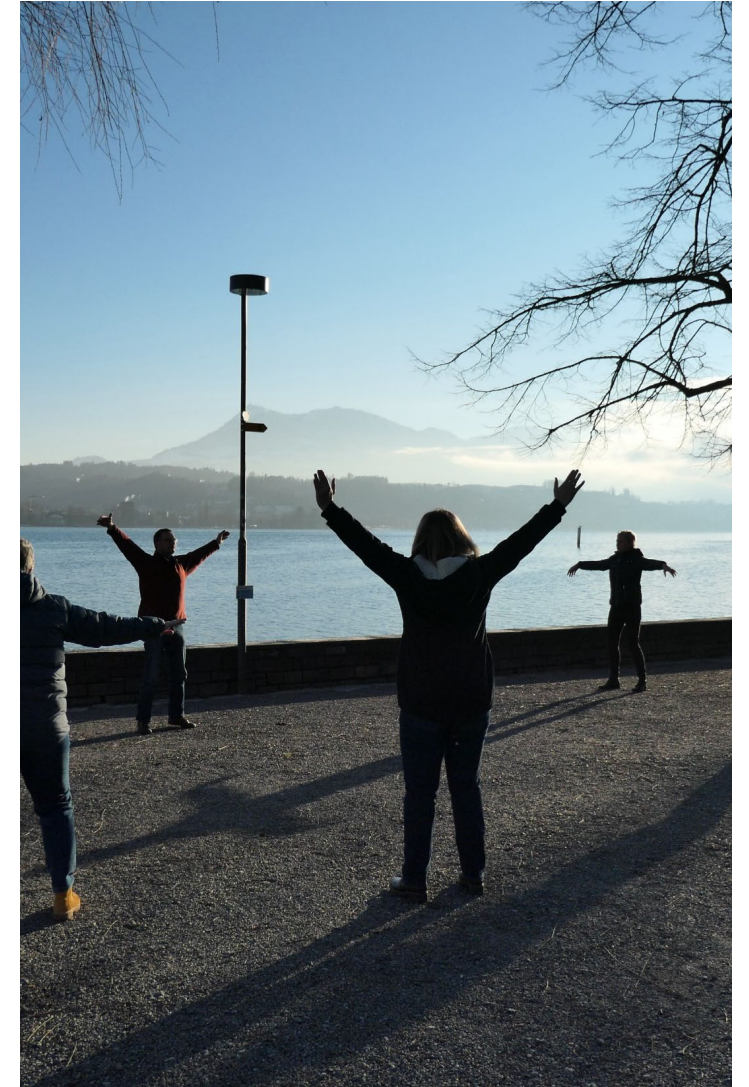
## Self-interventions for driver behaviour – part 1

Self-interventions for  
**"Be strong"** driver behaviour.

Work with a task- and time-book so you can estimate and keep track of your workload.  
Ask or ask other people for help.  
Set up an activity in your free times that you really enjoy.

Self-interventions for  
**"Try hard"** driver behaviour.

Stop doing many things by choice.  
Make plans that include (successful) completion of a task.  
Figure out the essential aspects of a task so that you really only do what is clearly expected.



## Self-interventions for driver behaviour – part 2

### Self-interventions for "Be perfect" driver behaviour.

- Set realistic standards for execution and accuracy.
- Practice asking yourself what the consequences really are - practice this whenever you find a mistake.
- Make it clear to others that their mistakes are not bad.

### Self-interventions for "Hurry up" driver behaviour.

- Plan your work in stages; set time points with intermediate goals.
- Focus on listening carefully to others carefully until they are finished with what they want to say.
- Learn relaxation techniques and practice them regularly.

### Self-interventions for "Please others" driver behaviour.

- Ask questions to other persons - find out what they really want instead of just assuming.
- Be kind to yourself and ask others for support when needed.
- Practice telling other people clearly when they have done something wrong.



*Every great journey  
begins with a small  
step:  
My own decision!*





A scenic view of a mountain trail. In the foreground, there are large, flat, grey boulders. A stone wall made of rough-hewn stones runs across the middle ground, with a metal railing on top. The trail continues up a grassy slope towards a dense forest of green trees. The sky is not visible, suggesting a clear day. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

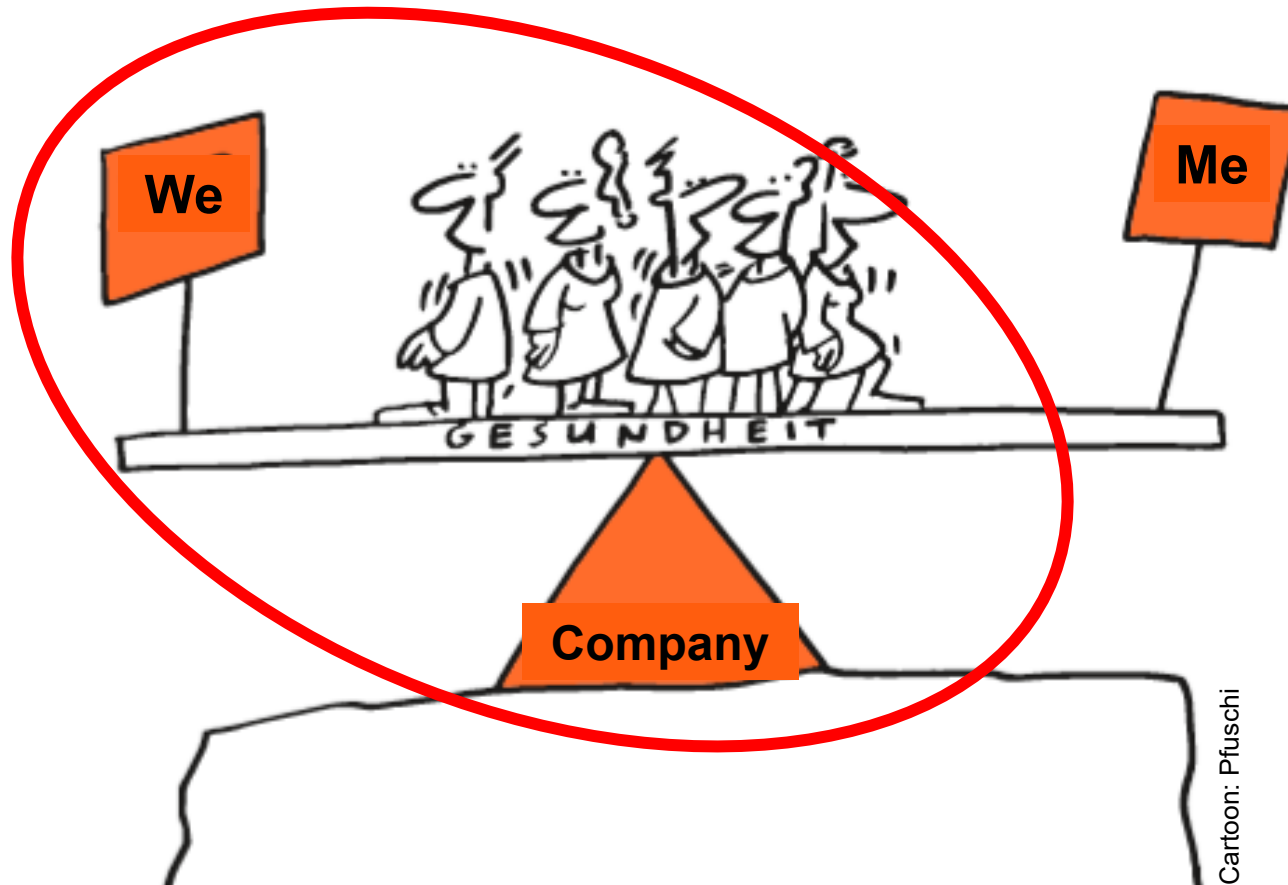
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Drivers  
in organisations



## Self-regulation

# Drivers in organisations



Cartoon: Pfuschi





## Drivers in organisations

- Which drivers are particularly pronounced at your organization or in your team?
- How does this affect the employees and me personally?
- What permissions can we give ourselves as a team?
- What should happen for these drivers to have less influence?

Hurry up

Try hard

Be perfect

Be strong

Please people





6

Questions?





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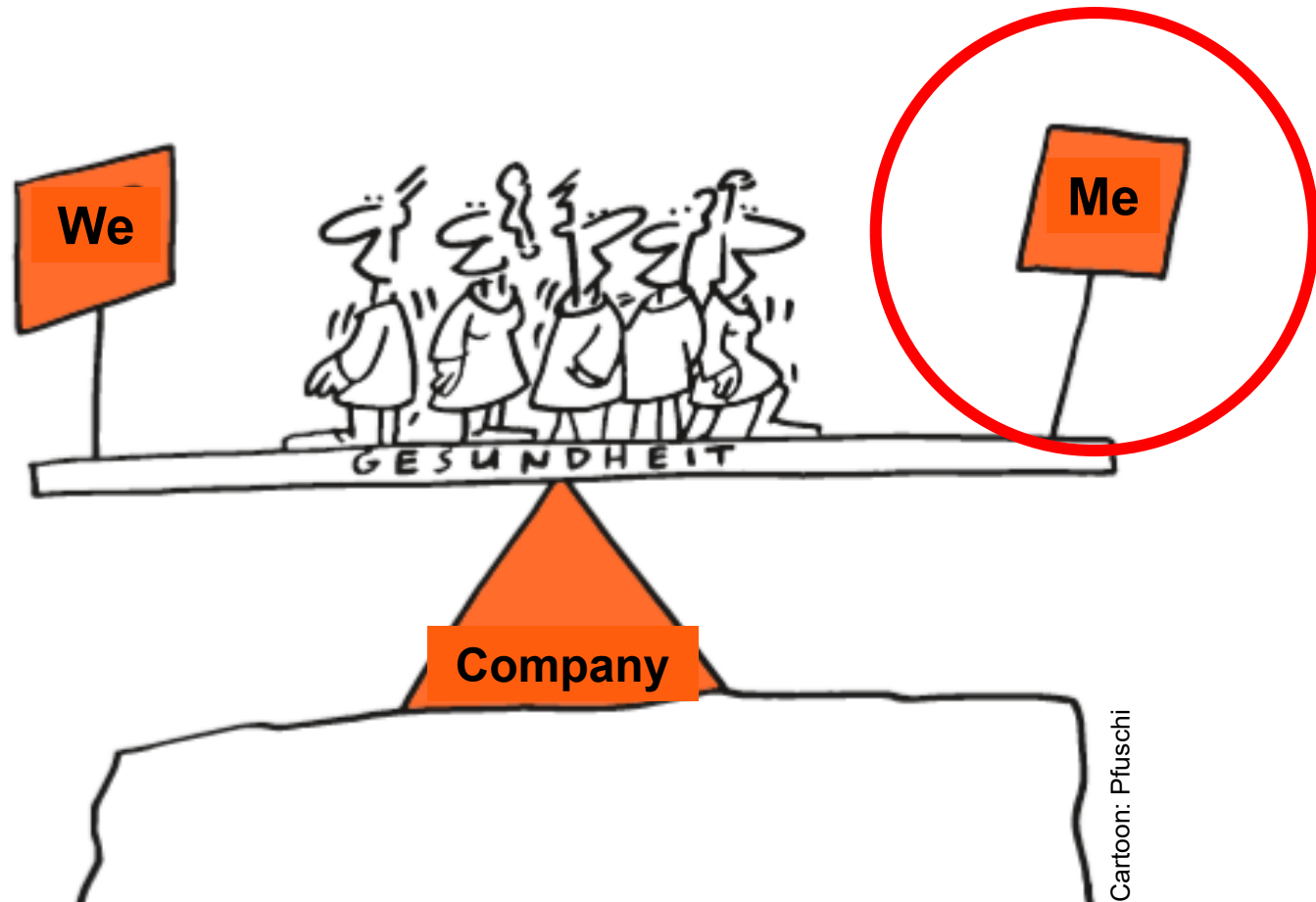
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Mach's allen recht!

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## The end

„Remember what really matters in life, because at the end nobody says, "I should have spent more time at the office.“

Eckart von Hirschhausen



## References

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