

Interview Max Krause and Therese Anders, June 2017

“Never again without these cards!”

Good morning, Mr. Krause. You say you have been using the Gefühlsmonster® cards in your conversations for two years. I am interested in your first steps, how you have begun to include this tool into your work.

I had met the cards in a consulting session and was curious, whether I could use them even for my conversations. So I took the next opportunity in a crisis talk and asked the co-worker to show me with help of the cards, how he feels in our company. This was unfamiliar to both of us, but the subsequent conversation was so deep and enlightening that I developed this method for myself.

Do you know what to say when you invite the cards? If someone comes and you want to use them?

Of course I'm already thinking: who is coming to me? I have people in the company- very complex from the personalities, from facility managers to the double-approved doctors. I know that there is about 10 % of my staff members I could not use the cards with.

The cards stand on a board in my room where everybody who enters the room sees them. There is a picture of my little nephew, a painted children's picture, and there are some other things that are important to me. This is amazing for some people. They may think, "Krause is a loud, determinate, directing and controlling person, and has suddenly a kind of esoteric corner....?"

I also habitually offer some water, coffee or tea, and it's also very important to me to hold these conversations in a corner of my room at a small table, not at the desk.

Then I take the cards. Depending on the situation, I say, "Pull four cards for how you feel." Then I specify a period, for example, in the last four weeks, the last six months, the last year. And when the person has chosen, I give her the second set of cards and say, "Now I want you to choose how you perceive me. The last four months." The results are sometimes totally interesting!

Most of them already know this and say "Do we have to pull cards again today?" But they like it. Some come and say "Can I take cards?" Interesting, isn't it? "Can I take cards?" "Sure!"

As staff members you have doctors, surgeons, laboratory staff, administrative staff, assistants...

Yes exactly. Very diverse persons. Some also totally sceptical. If I succeed in asking how they estimate me for example, when they say I was unfair or I was choleric. Then I say "Let's talk about it". Then they draw four cards, and then the cards are lying upside down, and I uncover them, and start sorting them. That's quite interesting.

I try to put the cards so that they lie sideways, well visible to both. Then I touch them, saying, "Ah, he! And this one, hmmm!" And then I just try to refer to the feelings that I see in the card. And I say "And for what did you choose this one?"

So when you sort the cards the persons have chosen for you, you tell them what you think about that?

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Yes. If it was this card for example, I would say something like "Ah, look here, he's cool, everything easy going, under control, everything is going smooth."



And with this card maybe "Oh, the schoolmaster, who is always controlling and up to date, who runs the store."



"And here the happy one (laughs), joyfully energized, the hearty one."



And then I ask: "What does the schoolmaster stand for? What is the carefree for? What does this one stand for? "

And then something opens up, people begin to talk, and a story is told. Then you have maybe four stories, and I get a fantastic feedback.

Meanwhile with this instrument, after the two years I am working with it, I realize a considerable personal growth.

Imagine I got from all persons, independently, just eight cards that are drawn for me. Of course, always differently sorted. And then I say "I can identify with it. We will keep this confidential, tell me what you really think".

Most of the time with this way there is a high degree of trust, and then I say, "Now it's your turn. Please talk about yourself, how you feel in our company." So we hear both sides, and there is suddenly an openness I did not experience before.

So you sometimes start by inviting the other person to choose cards for you.

Yes! This can be very different. It depends, too of the time available. I have half an hour, or an hour. If its a good talk, then in a moment an hour is gone. This is crazy- I have 100 staff members!

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To understand well, you help to have an open atmosphere by letting people give yourself a feedback. And then you begin to interpret the cards to help people understand how to do that. And then they find their own words, which can be quite different - and you invite them to do so.

Yes, there I have no reservation. And I notice that the staff member who are learning to deal with the cards are becoming more and more experienced, are no longer afraid to talk openly, but even say that they want to "pull cards".

You experience a common developing and a greater openness.

Yes, the cards are first of all a door opener. They help that I succeed in opening a door, where a conversation emerges which would never arise otherwise. Because normally people tend to speak in a global, overall way.

So afterwards, people are always totally excited that they have opened up. Sure, sometimes there are unexpected feelings, even tears- imagine I am having a tissue box in my speaking corner now, quite embarrassing ...

What feedback do your staff members give about the new instrument? About your way of communicating?

Well, now we have a very good atmosphere in our company. I think that we- I speak of my partner and me- are doing very much for the emotional well-being of our staff. And one part are these talks. My door is always open, everyone can say "I want to have a conversation with Krause". If people then afterwards say "I feel good, I've talked about it now," then I feel I'm on a good way.

Interview with Therese Anders, a week later

Mrs. Anders, how did you notice that Mr. Krause is now working with these cards?

I first experienced it in my own employee interview two years ago.

Do you remember how you were feeling about it?

I found it a bit surprising, that there is such a way to communicate more easily.

Did you feel concerned about this new craft?

No. (laughs)

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Was it a normal employee interview?

This was a very normal meeting, exactly, it was about how I felt, how I was at that time in the company.

Did Mr. Krause also ask you for feedback about himself?

Yes, he did.

How did you do with it?

Actually quite well. It was a serious question and I tried to answer accordingly. I believe his attitude has helped me to accept this new way of communicating.

Did you worry about his reaction when you give him feedback?

No, I did not.

Mr. Krause said in our conversation that he basically always gets the same cards as feedback. He spoke of about eight cards. Could you perhaps show me these cards and explain what the staff members want to express with these cards?

Yes, I can show you. I also think I know what he means (laughs). He often lets people give him feedback and then asks how they feel. And we always have two extremes, I think... (takes her time to choose the cards)

You have now sorted the cards into two times four cards. What do people say for this series?



Yes, let's see what to start with ... this (10) is just one who is annoyed , if something does not go the way he wants (laughs). Exactly, this one is emitting that something is in the air... People then realize that something is not satisfying ...

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Then sometimes there is an immediate first reaction (16), why this did not happen as it should, why perhaps people have not been aware of the consequences of something.

O.K., yes ... And the reaction, how do people describe that?

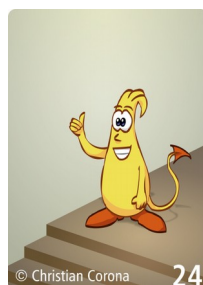
Yes (hesitantly) ..., one could say, there is some trouble ahead. That's the direction of what people say, yes. And the next one is chosen for his choleric side (8).

What does it say?

Well, I would say, just before exploding. And then this one (7) (laughs) follows. Tearing his hair, yes ...

That is interesting. You said first a sort of irritation, if things don't go smooth, then the reaction is becoming more distinct and then, if nothing changes, then it comes to that hair-tearing....

Yes. And then there is also the other side, there are these cards:



Can you say how the people comment on these cards?

This (18), for example, is often chosen for being the goal-oriented one, that he wants to advance something and, of course, is doing this with positive energy. This is his strength, I think.

Then openness (11), also with the staff members, to accept their ideas and not only to make his own way.

Then this (24), which stands for his ability to say what is well done. That he is able to say “thank you” or “you realized this really well!”

And then we have the hearty here (15), what means that he is also able to get involved with people.

I would still like to understand how this kind of conversation is accepted. You certainly can not answer this question for everybody, but what is said in the company? From the methodical point of view, that Mr. Krause is working with this instrument?

For most people it is quite good. Of course, we also have staff members who do not dare talking

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about their feelings. The usual question: "Is everything all right, how are things going for you?" Would be answered by a simple "Yes, everything is okay!" (Laughter) And then the conversation would be over....

And when they get the Gefuehlsmonster® cards and a concrete question is asked, it is easier for them. I think they can express themselves better with these cards. If the cards lay on the table, Mr. Krause asks what they mean for the person present, and the result is a real conversation.

O.K., that is the variant, where it works well. Are there also some people who say, "Oh, now he always wants to talk about feelings and I do not want that at all!"?

Sure. Of course there are these persons, too. Some people know ahead of the talk, oh, now he will use the cards and now I have to open up, somehow, and not everyone likes that.

And as far as I know, Mr. Krause does not use them in that case.

That's right.

Does it happen that someone chooses a card for Mr. Krause and he completes this by adding a card?



Yes, sometimes. Most of the time, of course, this card is already on the table, but it can be that he says "I get that you are perceiving me like this." That happens, too. This can of course also be of help, because some people only after his comment can say, "yes, that is true..."

The persons did not dare to choose such a fierce card ...

Correct.

Then this more drastic expression might be a relief.

Correct.

Do you think of something you found remarkable, or unusual, in one of those conversations you were taking part in?

I like that people also see the good sides. We often tend to speak rather of negative qualities and are circling around this, but it's important to see both sides, the positive one, too.

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If you wanted to give advice to someone who starts to use the cards in his company, as a boss or team leader, what would you recommend? And could you also say what the person could win or what might become difficult?

Well, I would recommend, as Mr Krause does it actually, to begin with people for whom it is difficult to express themselves, which are maybe shy, reserved. And then you really see that the conversations are easier with these people.

So to begin the conversation with the cards you would focus on situations where talking is difficult or exhausting?

So I see that, yes.

If this person wanted to get feedback from staff members, what would you say that he should pay attention to, or what is to be gained?

There are also more direct statements to win. Not just a sentence, but you really have a conversation and can talk about what you are interested in.

Thank you for this conversation!