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Send, send, send - why does nobody understand how communication really works anymore?

Yes, we had all been mistaken in a complex set of environments. There was a dirty ego election campaign in the US like never before. Between sex accusations, email suspicions, FBI influence, unjustified allegations, attacks without proof.

And Brexit - also underestimated its proponents - underestimated the entire mélange of the situation.

As a consequence, we saw lots of head shaking about the NON-understanding in Western Europe's politicians' offices, editorial offices, and among us communication experts.

What had happened?

In principle, Europe does not understand the USA.

German politicians, journalists and us communication people have one thing in common: *We put the world in "thinking bonds". Determine what is right or wrong. Hope for scenarios until they become reality or not. As with the Trump election.*

Desires and established opinions always beat reality.

What are the reasons?

- We are not open to other opinions
- In our comfort zone, we want something that does not exist: predictable safety. An invented-word from the 20th century.
- We speak in subjunctives like "we could ", "let's see", "it might be", ("let's look, it could / should / would".)
- The German communicative world is largely driven by a preserving attitude. That's why it is difficult to push forward innovations, courage, progress and paramount thinking and action. This is completely different in the US. There you are fighting crazy and you take the chances you see. Even now. Here one can see negations & defeats;

From my point of view, there were at least five reasons for the Trump election and the Brexit decision in regard to communication:

1. Maintaining a convincing basic attitude
2. Complete authenticity and power until the final

3. And Donald Trump, but also the Brexit advocates like the AfD, talk about contents, which are not all as they are sold. According to the motto of Konrad Adenauer: "What do I care about my chitchat from yesterday?"
4. Extensive use of social new media including Twitter. While Hillary was working with superstars, Donald was drilling for the middle class. For the base. For voters who do not vote.
5. Trump and the Brexiteers, targeted with their communication the already convicted, "with content as emotional and simple as possible, in order to get this content extremely loudly distributed by their audience, which leads to the message drowning everything else and being immune against criticism. "

What can we learn from this as a communication professional?

- We urgently need to accept the communication of today and tomorrow. Nothing exists. Action and reaction coincide. Everything is open, everything is possible until the end. We live in the non-predictable click society.
- Statements, conjectures, emotional attacks or slander always beat a well-researched lecture. Today, all Internet users are politicians, opinion makers, media makers, stakeholders. We can not escape the swarm-intelligence of the internet. We have to derive strategies from this knowledge.
- Politicians, the so-called communications experts and spin doctors with the security of the mainstream and the relevant media pass the ball to each other. The defenders of such a nice comfort zone must finally rethink their strategy, otherwise they will be history.
- Google / Facebook / Snapchat / Netflix / Amazon / ..., are the real winners of choice. They are chancellors, foreign ministers, economy ministers, defense ministers, marketing managers in one. We must understand that.
- Today everyone is opinion maker and broadcaster. And finally, it is time to develop the counter-concept. That is why the populists today have such a great opportunity that we need to prevent
- Communication means, first of all, one thing: understand-understand-understand the other. Nobody had Donald Trump on the agenda, nobody had the obvious arguments against the Brexit, nobody had prepared themselves efficient and in the long run: The biggest defeat for the opinion makers.
- Speaking of preparation: 50% of a successful interactive and meaningful communication is a professional preparation. In Germany it seems nobody even had Mr Trump's telephone number.
- Deductions of any kind are out of place: nothing is comparable. Just understand communication: putting ourselves in one another's position with high empathy. Towards the other. Towards other cultures. Towards other levels of understanding. But please do not filter by your own lens before sending.

We have forgotten to understand, accept and act on diversity. But how?

If the goal is to overcome the divisions that not only exist in the US but also in many places in Europe, hashtags and slogans do not help. We need to talk to each other.

We live in separate worlds. On the countryside in Brandenburg/Germany, in South Dakota or Greece. In some regions, there are hardly any people with a migration biography. In big cities, diversity of biographies and life concepts is entirely common. But still: most people live in homogenous milieus.

So we basically live among our own. And since in public many people collectively lower their heads and fix their eyes on the mobile phone, they don't even leave their own reality on the train or on a city stroll.

But if I do not have any exchange with other *Lebenswirklichkeiten* (life experiences), neither in terms of content nor in reality, it becomes much harder to understand motives, to accept other opinions. They appear so absurd from one's own point of view that the other must be stupid. Otherwise he or she could not think that way.

Another complicating factor is that living environments portrayed mainly by media produce images which are not always reality. This is not due to a "Lügenpresse" as the AfD calls it or "fake news" as Donald Trump calls it or one-sided reporting. This is simply a matter of the fact that media usually reports on the special, the extraordinary. So, if I know certain parts of society or the world only through media, I quickly experience the special as the normal. This additionally makes my acceptance more difficult.

We have forgotten how to approach each other. We have forgotten how to perceive each other, to take each other seriously, to listen to each other.

And finally, something about fake news:

Fake news is not new, fake news from non-accountable sources, based on no facts at all seems to be increasing and, with social media, it can quickly undermine the government, democratic systems of a country or trust in our media or between us.

What concerns most is that fake news spreads fast and undermines our democratic systems and the media in general.

Experts have lined up to say that fake news is not an opinion we don't like but a story based on no truth whatsoever.

A growing danger caused by our own actions? That's hard to track, but we are responsible as communication experts ourselves too; we cannot be depicted as inactive swallows of news.

We may not knowingly spread blatantly fake news, but we need to decide whether to share news about an issue we don't know how to discuss face to face. I see many Twitter profiles that say "sharing a tweet does not mean I agree or accept as fact", so why are we sharing it then?

I can't help thinking, however, that with the increased pace at which we are all receiving information and the manner in which we are interconnected, being thoughtful and discerning is a lesson about which we all require reminders. The 'new' notion of fake news is actually an old issue, resurfacing as a result of online information and the fast pace of life.

Thanks for listening.