

## COVER STORY

# PESSIMISM NEVER WON ANY BATTLE

**Reinhold M. Karner** on escaping the vicious circle of negative thinking.

## The new sword of Damocles of an uncertain future

There is no question that we are living in times of great challenges. War, pandemic, energy crisis, inflation and risky dependencies on raw material sources, supply chains and markets in the hands of despots, and constantly new bad news.

The Russian method of lying propaganda and fake news aims to create confusion and mistrust so that no one trusts each other anymore. Trust is eroding on a large and small scale.

Who dares to say what they think, to mean what they mean, in any place and to anyone, regardless of who they are?

Successively, a paralysing effect comes into play that also dangerously undermines courage, confidence and trust.

Democracy at times seems powerless and helpless because it cannot act so arbitrarily; the democratic process takes time.

All this seems to be written on the wall in deep red as a new sword of Damocles of an uncertain future. It is hardly possible to look away from it anymore. This is not a happy way of life. How can we create a positive future without optimism, trust and confidence?

## The counterweight of spiritual reorientation

Yes, it is terrible how Russia's regime tramples on international law, the global order, the value and dignity of human life, and the brutality with which Vladimir Putin is waging his war of aggression in Ukraine and arbitrarily turning on the gas tap. He must not get away with this, must not set us back centuries. There is too much at stake for us, our children, the next generations and our civilised world order.

We will overcome all these challenges if we do not betray our values, stand up for them consistently and, above all, do not allow ourselves to be drawn into black holes of negative thinking.

We, as democratic citizens, are not responsible for the political, economic or climatic general global weather situation, or at most indirectly, highly diluted in a homeopathic way. Resignation, fear and worry only add fuel to the fire. Instead, the world also needs our steadfastness, especially at this time.



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With disciplined, positive thinking, this is possible. It costs nothing; it just needs a mental reorientation as a counterbalance. In this way, we will ultimately emerge better and stronger because the idea of being a surrendered follower-victim of a global dynamic is nonsense.

## Sand in the gears

Our culture has lived for decades in a time of abundance and peace. During this process, the self-image that things would always go on like this was created, that things would always get better and more, that this was normal. This not only created habituation to prosperity but, in many people's minds, the claim that the state and the community, must continue to guarantee this.

However, everyone has by now noticed that all the crises are throwing sand into the gears.

Therefore, a general feeling of unease is growing in these times, underpinned by the central question of whether our high level of prosperity can still be maintained and whether there will still be an upward trend in the future.

In times like these, it can quickly happen that the nerves of society are on edge and the collective fear of global deprivation is rampant, which seems to be at least as contagious as a virus. A lack of future opportunities, perspectives, income and livelihood, a lack of stability and security, answers to urgent questions of the time, reliability and

predictability. There is also a growing concern about democracy, coherent systems, affordable energy and food, transport and mobility.

Everything now seems to be subject to reservation, like: Yes, we want to fly on holiday again next year if that's still possible. Yes, I will build the house if I can still finance it. Yes, we intend to have it warm and cosy in winter, if it's still possible and affordable.

That does not promote a good attitude to life. This is understandable because it is not always possible to escape the ongoing programme of threatening and negative news, the whinging and whining, the complaining, the listing of facts from all the different media and its echo by our fellow human beings.

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***We will overcome all these challenges if we do not betray our values***

## Even the earlier times were not all golden

Let us be aware that there has always been a somewhat different lack from time immemorial and in every epoch. The earlier times were not so golden, so much better and more beautiful; there was only another dearth. And such tipping points as a century and millennium change have always unfolded significant dynamics that can have an earthquake-like effect, harbingers and aftershocks. This may not seem obvious today, but if you research carefully, you will see this. There used to be a lack of, for example, equality, transparency, opportunity, consumer goods, education, comfort, a lack of health systems, inventions, technology and mobility concepts.

There has always been a lack somewhere and at every conceivable time, just as there have always been terrible famines and wars somewhere in the world. However, there is again now a war in Europe. In the past, average life expectancy rose very slowly; in



Your future depends decisively on your dis

Western Europe, it was only 33 years in 1830, and in 1900 it was only 31 years worldwide. In 1909, however, the second industrial revolution produced one of humankind's most outstanding technical inventions. The German chemists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch succeeded in producing artificial fertiliser on an industrial scale after 20,000 experiments at BASF. This achievement became one of the most important weapons against the hitherto overpowering scourge of hunger. Within only about 100 years, it made possible the excessive increase in our global average life expectancy to 73.4 years (WHO 2019), and some countries to 88 years, as well as the explosion of the world's population from 1.6 to almost 8 billion people.

In antiquity, the Middle Ages and also in modern times, there were hopes, opportunities and possibilities on the one hand and abundance on the other. Lack and abundance are a manifestation that has always existed in various forms, is existing, and will always exist.

## There is no countdown to the end of the world

Our times appear to be somewhat extraordinary and very turbulent. In reality, they are just as 'normal' as all other times. They have their difficulties, they have their problems, but they also have their solutions.

And one thing is certain: after every day comes a new day. And every new day brings



Disciplined preliminary work of positive thinking. PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

new opportunities, new challenges, new discoveries, possibly new problems, but also new solutions.

Neither the world nor humanity is going against the wall; there is no countdown to the world's end!

Regarding the world and the future, it is important to realise that there are two different dimensions: There is the world – and your world. There is the global future of humanity, but also your future.

### Who determines my future?

The fact is, neither the future of humanity, that of different groups or peoples, nor yours is laid down.

Therefore, there are two possibilities to help prepare for the future: One is to participate disproportionately in the collective future – that is, you do not shape your future yourself, but you let your society prepare and shape it. This could also be called the external determination of one's future. This is undoubtedly what happens when you follow what everyone hears and reads, letting yourself be mentally pulled into the black holes and manipulated. If you fall into the negative mood that everyone is currently in, if you let yourself down or let yourself go, as many are doing right now, who only see the big drama in everything happening and very much exaggerate the negative side. In doing so, however, they forget or do not realise that there are controls, interests and a lot of money behind it, that manipulating, opposing and scare-

mongering is a flourishing industry. So don't even think about it!

The other possibility is to determine your own future to a large extent. You can't do that 100 per cent; that is probably true. But the question is, do you determine only 10 or 20 per cent of your future yourself, and for the rest you suffer in a victim role of lack of initiative, negative thinking, or lack of faith in God and yourself, at the mercy of others?

Or do you determine 70 to 80 per cent of your life and your future yourself? Of course, there might still be 10, 20 or 30 per cent, that depends on external factors such as society, the zeitgeist, the times and global developments.

But this decision about sovereignty over one's future precisely makes the decisive difference!

Yes, these are turbulent times, and yes, all times are always turbulent in some way, and the future will always be turbulent in some way, demanding change and challenges; there is always something. The so-called calm times did not and do not exist in reality. You can try to gloss over the various phases of the past, but that doesn't correspond to reality.

### The programming of our thinking

Let's suppose you are afraid of the future and fear lack. In that case, this is a strong negative imprint on your thinking and actions, an inner decision that dictates to

your mind what you obviously want, and this will inevitably set the machinery - the self-fulfilling-prophecy - in motion to make it happen.

This insight is ancient and has not just been around since the US psychologists and linguists Richard Bandler and John Grinder developed Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) in the 1970s.

But if that's not what you want, then don't keep thinking these negative variants! Then, stubbornly orient yourself like a donkey to tell yourself that it is not a time of lack in the comprehensive sense and maintain a sense of humour.

### Man becomes essential

Rather, it is a time when many people and organisations have the opportunity to think about what is important and essential to them. For example, what their enthusiasm, their heart beats for, what their true competencies, passions and priorities are. What order in life is essential to one; be it family, profession, business, career, property, and future direction. Whereby essential is much more than important because there are numerous things that you think are important but are not. Essential means it is part of your being.

The German expressionist poet Angelus Silesius (1624-1677) once summed this up very wisely in a formula: "Man become essential". A call to put things into perspective, reflect on what is essential, and focus. Use this time, sort and orientate yourself,

and get rid of the non-essentials. In this way, even times of lack become the times of your most significant gain! Then the times when the wheat is separated from the chaff will become the good times for you.

Your future depends decisively on your disciplined preliminary work of positive thinking, the world of your images, your visions and thoughts, and your hopes and convictions, which can then only pour into reality as a result.

Therefore, man become essential! Especially in these fantastic times, with so many exciting developments and extraordinary achievements, in which, on the one hand, so much is at stake, but on the other hand, so much is possible.

Instead of sowing mistrust, save trust and confidence, give faith a chance, and trust in a promising future!

As Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969) the five-star General of the US-Army who became the 34<sup>th</sup> US-President, rightly said in July 1955: "We cannot look at this whole situation without realizing first that pessimism never won any battle, whether it was in peace or whether it was in war."

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