

## A Heart for Cynics

They're not popular in any organisation: Cynics and „turned-offs“. They dismiss every optimistic formulation, especially when it comes from management, they often don't see any soup at all, it's just hairs, and their cynicism has the unappetizing properties of gastric juice: it flows in every crack and corrodes everything...

Unfortunately they don't keep their cynicism for themselves but choose to make it known on suitable and unsuitable occasions, which influences the mood sustainably: the behaviour of cynics can easily lead to collective depression – about as efficiently as Tullius Destructivus breeds discord in „Asterix and the Roman Agent“.

One shouldn't overlook that it's tragedies that happen, as there is a rule of thumb saying that cynics are former idealists. Almost all cynics are people who once were full of ideas and then made experiences that hurt and disappointed them deeply. They despair of a world in which they perceive values and moral as playing a minor role, if at all.

What does the tough supervisor say? „I don't care what childhood he had, he just should stop to bitch about!“. Just that often he doesn't say it to the person concerned, or a routine is installed keeping the dread in balance: admonitions and warnings, followed by periods of temporary relief, until the next occasion arises to issue the next admonition...

The most tragic of these tragedies is created when nobody contributes to change the state, and that is all too often the case, not least because the situation holds a relief for all participants: Supervisors get a justification for missed goals („it's tough with a team like this...“), cynics get one for their limits („I could perform better, but with this climate...“), and all the functions in the neighbourhood of the situation – upper management, HR, social counsellors, work council – are busy and thus legitimized.

Was that cynical? It actually is highly infectious...one must say, however: you can't tolerate destructive behaviour for a longer period. No matter what you have seen, your reaction to it lies in your responsibility, and in the context of contractual duties it is legitimate for supervisors to expect that one looks for other solutions than destructive ones. If you don't find a way out, you should find the courage to terminate the employment. But before you do so, look inward and question whether you are standing in your own way. Two scenarios in which you don't like to recognize yourself, but sometimes are true:

- As an executive: you make sure structurally that cynicism has an ideal breeding ground, and when your employees are ready you fire them because they are being destructive...
- As a cynicist: you openly depreciate your company and your supervisors, you provoke sanctions by the display of such behavior, and then you blame the company for suppressing you...

The thing is: if you throw this at people, problems will only get worse, apart from the general problems with interpretations. The way out consists of laying down the clubs and giving yourself the chance to compassionately look for the common ideals that got buried, to at the most make some amends and to revive what used to flourish. The opportunities both individually and structurally are so big that it is worth the effort.

As always, there are no guarantees, but there is a chance for a happy ending, and who knows, just to use the Asterix metaphor once more: there might even be a big banquet with a wild pig meal at the end. May you succeed.