

# All things new.

No, this time it is not an introduction to a Corona Statement: It has been 25 years since ARGO was founded by 4 partners – the same 4 founders are still managing the fortunes of ARGO in this anniversary year 2021.

And nevertheless:

### Things are new!

#### First of all, there is our office:

From May 1st, we are found at our new rooms at Dresdner Straße 43/DG: Open, flexible workplaces, quiet coaching areas give plenty of space and a foundation for intensive exchanges indoors and on the roof terrace.

#### And of course the design!

Insiders will recognize the new in our logo and newsletter design. A glance at our web page and in our working materials proves: No stone has been left unturned as we renovated our design! Get an idea: [www.argo.at](http://www.argo.at)

#### But above all: Real-life, face-to-face exchanges!

Here the reference to Corona is OK!

We have all learned the value of personal exchange after not being able to have it for so long.

Our new office is deliberately intended as a place for exchange, for the ARGOnauts themselves and for all those who - in good Viennese style – pop by for a visit.

Since May, we have been regularly channeling the

**Spirit of the Month:** The mood, the theme, the exchange – and the appropriate setting for it!

# 25

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## The Spirit of May: Celebration!

Sure – we are celebrating our 25th anniversary!  
A long time, and a good time.

Where were you 25 years ago?

What has changed?

What has stayed the same?

What should change?

## Let's talk!

Celebrate with us with a glass of champagne in May!

In a small round with "your" ARGOnauts according to your wishes or on the last Friday of the month, May 28, 4 p.m., at the monthly Get Together of all ARGOnauts.

**Safety first:** tests are available if required – and 190m2 roof terraces provide real distance and air!

To visit: [office@argo.at](mailto:office@argo.at) or 01 369 77 00; ARGO Performance & Development, Dresdner Straße 43/DG, 1200 Vienna, [www.argo.at](http://www.argo.at)

May the new ARGO be a place of lively exchange!  
I'm looking forward to it, Barbara Thoma

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Barbara Thoma,  
Management

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# Steady Mind, Steady Leadership

## How to develop equanimity and resilience

*As the corona crisis continues in Europe, and with the delays in vaccine roll-out dashing our hopes of a return to normalcy by summer, nerves are frayed, and doctors are reporting chronic heightened anxiety in the population. So employees need their leaders to be sources of stability and empathy now as much as at any time during the pandemic.*



Matthew Strauss,  
Partner

So how can we develop stability of mind, or in other words, equanimity, so that we can be the source of stability, as well as the resilience that allows us to rebound from setbacks and disappointment and maintain a healthy mind during periods of extended stress?

And while an accurate self-assessment does play a part in self-awareness, it is not the essence of self-awareness.

The self-awareness that is critical for equanimity and resilience is the ability to recognize our emotions moment-by-moment as they arise, without getting caught up in these emotions and in the mental stories they generate. Self-awareness is actually the ability to "see" three interconnected processes: our emotions, our physiological sensations, and our thoughts (basically: feelings, body, thoughts).

How does it work. Well, imagine I am in a team meeting and one of my colleagues says something demeaning to me. What is going to happen to me emotionally? Anger will immediately arise (and probably a bit of embarrassment and shame, which will further fuel the anger), even before I can get my head around the situation. My body will tense, my muscles tighten, my eyes will narrow as if targeting the source of my anger. My heartrate will increase, as well as my blood pressure. What thoughts will come to my mind about this particular colleague of mine? Well, you can probably imagine.

## Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is the core competency of Emotional Intelligence. However, its power drastically to improve the quality of our performance and lives is often overlooked. Most leaders I work with, when asked, believe self-awareness to be similar to Socrates's "know thyself" – to recognize intellectually our values and our strengths and weaknesses.

But imagine this: It is now many hours later, and I am home with my wife and kids cooking dinner, and this situation from work comes to my mind while I am cutting a potato. As I play the scenario over in my mind, what is going to happen? I am going to experience the flood of emotions and physiological response all over again. But now it is generated only by my thoughts, without any external stimuli.

### Self-awareness is Self-correcting

So how does self-awareness help? Self-awareness is the ability to see the emotion as an emotion – simply as energy in the body –without getting caught in the story around the emotion. It is the ability to see thoughts simply as thoughts, rather than seeing them as “truth” that has to be obeyed. And this is a super-power: because

Self-awareness allows us to see emotions clearly.

as soon as we can see, for example, anger with this simple, pure awareness, the anger and the thoughts it generates, lose their power. The anger begins to dissolve, like mist in strong sunlight. And it works for any emotion. This is not theory.

You can try it yourself. Bring awareness to the next negative emotion that arises – without getting into the story of why you have every right to feel this emotion – just seeing the emotion, feeling it in the body as energy – and see what happens with that emotion.

There is nothing we need to do. We do not have to “control” the emotion (in fact, we should not try to “control” – because control usually means suppress, with negative consequences for both physical and mental health). The awareness does the work for us.

### Letting go

There is one more step: Letting go. But letting go is also not controlling. It is not a doing. It is more of a not-doing: It is not hanging onto the emotion and the stories in our head. It is not chewing on the story and the thoughts again and again in our minds.

### Letting go is simply:

1. seeing the emotion,
2. naming the emotion,
3. sensing it in the body,
4. letting it pass,
5. bringing our focus back to whatever we are doing, and
6. carrying on with our lives.

In summary, self-awareness allows us to see emotions clearly, without getting caught up in them, giving us some distance from the emotion; and letting go is allowing the emotions to pass away and refocusing our attention elsewhere.

The more we practice this, the better we get. And the better we get, the more equanimity and resilience we develop.

Of course, many of you are probably thinking: “Sounds good, but how do we practice self-awareness? How do we develop the skill of letting go?” For that you will have to wait until the next article, or feel free to reach out to Matthew Strauss at [m.strauss@argo.at](mailto:m.strauss@argo.at)

I wish you all much resilience and stability of mind as we support our people (and ourselves) in this difficult time.



Christian Rumpler  
Partner

*What is this time doing to us? With much sympathy to all those who are experiencing great restrictions, existent threats and personal distress due the pandemic, we do believe that we need to ask ourselves this question in a different way.*

1 year of the pandemic.  
1 year also full of learning opportunities.

### What can we do with this time?

It means that in this crisis, we can also take learning opportunities and thereby adopt a creative, active attitude. Admittedly, this is not always easy – but it pays off! That is why we would like to share the most important learnings and possible benefits that we have experienced, on the one hand with our customers and partners, and on the other hand within ARGO.

In many conversations and in many teams, we have seen how much **trust** has grown during this time. Mutual trust, as a result of agreements being kept, responsibility for the whole being taken, and cooperation over distance working. Concerns about „home office“, to name one example, have often been unfounded.

The experience of a completely new situation combined with a crisis has greatly strengthened **internal cohesion** in many organizations and led to a focus on common values and strengths. This brings energy, and we see less internal strife. People move closer together despite physical distance.

Distance work has its disadvantages. In the long run, there can be a negative effect on team structure and team identity. Self-management in the home office is not equally easy for all people. These disadvantages will increase if we do not manage them.

We see that managers are **increasingly taking care of the needs** of their employees at this difficult time with authentic interest, and we have seen as well that leadership is more focused on **strengthening personal responsibility**.

We have seen with great admiration how quickly our customers have been able to adapt and reinvent processes, products and services, more or less overnight. This **adaptability** brings great potential for the future as well.

Many teams began early on in the crisis to systematically collect these findings and thus to initiate a **joint design process** of the „New Way of Working“, in which employees are actively involved, bringing their experiences.

At ARGO, we share many of these experiences. Our work, traditionally characterized by personal contact, has entered the virtual world, in which much more is possible than we originally thought, but also much less than we would wish. We are very much looking forward to the time when we can continue to work together in person again!

However, one experience fills us with particular pride. We have seen how stable and sustainable our relationships with you, our customers and partners, are. We too have experienced **trust, cohesion**, an honest **interest** in each other and the **willingness to adapt**. These are qualities for which we would like to express our sincere **thanks to all of you!**



social

We are happy to announce that **Christoph Vrzal** has agreed to join us on board of ARGO as partner. His international experience regarding industry and sales will boost our projects in this field of work.

Welcome aboard!