

It's your turn! – playfully supporting transformations

Transformations - personally meaningful

Transformations are intersections and thresholds in our lives. There is no standstill in them. Whether as an infant, a young person, in working age or as a senior citizen: Transformations are an invitation to take risks and to move forward. They are challenging.

Transformations often mean uncertainty and an open outcome. Caution and mindfulness, departure and risk, hope and fear, curiosity and disturbance are usually close together. In transitional situations, the stakes are often high.

You stand on the threshold of one situation to another or go from one phase of life to the next and feel that you cannot avoid it, only try to shape the transformation as best as you can.

You realise that it is now your turn to be a mentor of your own transitions and to face the challenge.

Transformations can also become crises. Every now and then they suddenly invade our lives. We experience it ourselves or know about it from others. We live with people for whom transitions are associated with flight, displacement, traumatic experiences or other precarious life situations. Upheavals that have fatefully come upon them. We ourselves feel it when illness takes hold of us or when social and economic life is restricted and changed due to a pandemic. Nothing is the same anymore.

Sometimes our own room for manoeuvre seems so limited that resignation and a depressive mood set in.

Transformations - supporting through play

Play can help to overcome stressful situations. Play provides breathing space, some distance from the everyday situation and can thus open up new perspectives.

The (Corona) crisis has changed the rules of our social coexistence and entails economic changes with individual consequences. It can be a challenge to not see the societal, political, social rules that are set from outside as rigid and to stand frozen before them, but to explore which leeway they offer and what they make possible.

In every crisis there is an opportunity. Something new, perhaps even better, can be built from the rubble of what has collapsed.

Those who play are also on a different path in times of transitions and crises. Playing does not save you from the crisis, but it helps you to deal with it creatively and flexibly.

Playing without a purpose, without any pedagogical intention, can help, especially in times of uncertainty, to come to oneself and to recognise the possibilities. The creativity trained in play can become the starting point for expeditions into the new. A playful attitude makes and keeps one capable of action.

In myths and fairy tales, mentors or companions often play an important role. On the hero's journey, one is rarely alone. A master takes care of the training, a fairy accompanies them, or the person is

given something that makes it possible for them to venture into the unknown and into danger and to face the challenges - a motif that many young people are familiar with from films and digital game worlds.

Educators are challenged to be mentors for others. It is your turn to support transformations and upheavals.

Sensitive and experienced mentors have experienced transitions and crises themselves. Therefore, they can encourage, give impulses, challenge and support. Everyone has to go his or her own way and find their own path.

Accompanying transformations through play means seeking ways together in changes and crises with the means and type of play, creatively, loosely, flexibly, in a game of trial and error....

This requires one's own experience of play and a playful attitude that enables one to keep an eye on the risks and dangers as well as to recognise and creatively use new possibilities and scope for play.

In play, the unconsciously experienced, but also the (yet) never experienced, the utopian, come to life. Play therefore not only enables the processing of memories, but also utopias and changes.

Play is a tool for finding solutions. It multiplies the options for action through creative ideas, through trial action in a place protected by rules and structure, where one's own rules can be developed, existing rules can be changed, existing room for manoeuvre can be explored.

Hardly any other medium combines freedom of action, authenticity and structure as well as play. Games appear "contradictory" in that they presuppose adherence to certain structures, but at the same time also encourage people to try out new possibilities and opportunities, constellations and options through play.

If we look at our transformations and crises with a playful eye, they always turn out to be a space for play - a place for encountering the unknown. A place for new thoughts and new insights, where the previously insignificant gains significance. The unimaginable becomes imaginable. The impossible becomes feasible.

Transformations - Perception in the 21st Century

Contemporary biographies are characterised by frequent changes, both professionally and in social status. Phases of reliable, constant conditions are becoming shorter. The demands on individuals to constantly reorientate themselves are increasing. Transitional situations are becoming more frequent. The acquisition of competencies for personal "change management" is considered a prerequisite for sustainable success.

The philosopher Michael Bordt's statement, already before the Corona crisis, describes it even more obviously: "We live in a time of transformation. Parties, churches, trade unions and the global market economy have lost their power of persuasion. The new is not yet clearly visible. It is not yet clear what will replace the old order." (Welt 28.12.2018).

It makes us uneasy. It makes us curious. And sometimes also afraid.

We know that people in this situation are dependent on support and creative ways of finding solutions. "Where the element of play is missing in human action, it becomes a mere reflex, a totalitarian execution of the given and leads to forgetting what freedom means" (A. Grötzinger, theologian,

University of Basel). We urgently need courage in society and politics to shape the scope we have. Transitions and crises can be impulses to venture out of the familiar.

Playful behaviour is the basis for deep and long-term learning and understanding. Trying things out and simulating enables us to find the right paths. Playfulness is therefore good advice.

Spielmarkt 2021 in Times of Crisis - New Ways, Decentralised and Digital

The current crisis also poses challenges for the Spielmarkt. In the search for possible spaces to connect under current conditions, a special concept was developed for this situation: the 29th Internationales Bildungsforum Spielmarkt Potsdam, on 30 April and 1 May 2021 will be organised as a decentralised and digital event.

Instead of being held in various rooms and tents on Hermannswerder island in Potsdam, there will be workshops, expert lectures, seminars and participatory activities at various locations in Germany and abroad. Participation in many of the activities and offers will be possible from anywhere via a website and will still be available after the Spielmarkt.

"Playfully supporting transformations" as a pedagogical task and looking for new ways and spaces to play in crises and transitions - the situation will be part of the theme we face at the Spielmarkt: "It's your turn!"

On behalf of the Spielmarkt team