

Dr. Joachim Kreische (*1966) is librarian and heads the university library at the TU Dortmund. He lives in Bochum with his wife and daughter Femke (*2013).



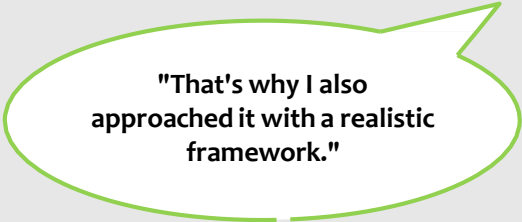
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The theorist

When we meet, Dr. Joachim Kreische still looks a little overnighed. No wonder, because his first daughter was born just four weeks before our interview. Now the newly minted father is back in the office for the first week and has a lot of work to catch up on. So I'm all the more pleased that he's happy to engage in the conversation despite the fact that he doesn't really know why I've approached him.

Coordinated distribution of roles

His daughter is just four weeks old, Joachim Kreische says readily. His tired look speaks volumes. But there is already so much to be done in the office. Fortunately, he is met at the of the TU Dortmund with complete understanding, as he reports. "I am touched by the great sympathy here at the university. So far, I have received a lot of support. However, he adds that he is aware that his room for maneuver is limited. "If I had said, 'I'm going to take three years of parental leave,' that would probably have been problematic.



"That's why I also approached it with a realistic framework."

He calmly cradles his head. Since he has only been in charge of the Dortmund UB for a good two years, it was clear to him that he would not be able to leave for a longer period of time so quickly. "I also feel a certain sense of duty that way. I feel that I'm not taking a break right away after two years. It has to be said that the library has had a difficult few years and I'm just glad that things are slowly moving forward again. So it was my sense of responsibility to say that I can't take a longer break right now."

However, the librarian hastily adds that he had agreed on this with his wife beforehand. He recalls: "The decision was made two years ago. Before I applied here, my wife and I discussed it. what happens when a child comes along. In the position before that, I could have done completely different things, but it was clear that when I took on this job, the roles would be distributed in a certain way. Joachim Kreische sighs and raises both hands apologetically in front of his chest. "That also has to do with material conditions. But we have accepted this situation at- de and now it is the way it is."

Design options

The job at TU Dortmund University also gives him the opportunity to live out his personal definition of career without restrictions. For him, that means first and foremost the opportunity to shape things, says the 47-year-old resolutely. "That's what I've always been looking for, to be able to shape things so that I don't have to live under the pressure. 'suffering' entrenched structures, so to speak, and having to shut up." These are precisely the conditions he encountered during his training, but he was never able to come to terms with them. "It was out of this world of experience that I deliberately sought my current position," explains Joachim Kreische enthusiastically:

And these opportunities to create, that's what I've always thought of as a career." Pecuniary reasons, as he calls financial aspects, are secondary.

"I said to myself 'You want to do this differently, you can do this differently.'"

The planned distribution of roles is currently that his wife, who works as a scientist, will take a year of parental leave and then return to work half-time. The common daughter shall then Joachim Kreische is not yet able to say exactly how it will be handled. "The main aspect is that it can be spatially organized for both of us, so that we can share the workload and it doesn't automatically depend on just one person. That's why we want to stay as close to home as possible. We have already chosen a location that is as close as possible to both of us, so that both of us can react ad hoc. Whether it's a daycare center, a childminder or something else, the spatial circumstances simply take precedence." The idea of the father also going into parenting time has not yet been completely discarded, as he thoughtfully reveals. "We're keeping months 13 and 14 open. If we can really work it out with the childcare, I'll take the time off. Maybe again in the transition phase."

70 hours week

The fact that his wife is now staying at home first is, he says, primarily due to his current professional situation. His job simply does not allow him to work part-time. A 70-hour In the last two years, working weeks and weekends have been the norm, he reports blatantly. But he is no longer prepared to do that. "That's my absolute approach," says the father firmly. "I don't really want this 70-hour week anymore, and I also have the ambition to slowly build up structures that get by with less of my own time presence. I have to be able to leave at six o'clock in the evening without the world subjectively collapsing for me.

That plan got an extra kick, he says, from the birth of his daughter. "There has clearly been a shift in priorities."

"I have to live with the fact that I'm dissatisfied here when in doubt."

He gives a muffled laugh. "But better that than not Having enough time for my child." From this

That's why he now tries to finish work on time more often, partly so that he can help out around the house afterwards. At the moment, his main task is to put his daughter to bed at night, says the new father.

quietly. In return, his wife takes over the night care during the week. At the latest when his wife also returns to work, Joachim Kreische thinks a domestic helper makes perfect sense. "From my own experience," he explains tensely. "I notice that already in the few hours I spend with the child in the evening, that then not even the smallest thing works on the side. It's perfectly clear to me that my wife is not getting around at the moment, even during the day, and is quite happy to have some relief in the evenings. At the moment, it's really all very life-affirming."

The Anti-Father Type

Although Mr. Kreische has not been a father for very long, he already finds the question of what type he would define himself as exceedingly exciting. Especially "because I actually define myself as an anti-type to my own father.

re," he reveals candidly. In this sense, it is very important for him to build an emotional bond with his daughter. "That is my

The main motive for the first four weeks is to get as close as possible to the action.

to stay and not be such a father from a distance. Because that was definitely what bothered me so much about my own childhood."

He emphatically states that he does not want to be a "strict decision-maker father from a distance" or a kind of "last resort. He and his wife clearly do not want to fulfill any cliché-ridden mother and father role models.

len. "I hope that, in terms of aspirations at least, we will succeed," says the father, still somewhat uncertain. "But at the moment we are also combining all kinds of things with the idea of not educating in gender role clichés and not behaving in that way ourselves. I'm curious myself how that will translate into reality later on." In view of this self-claim, however, it is not surprising that Joachim Kreische views our interview with mixed feelings. "I don't want to be heroized as a father like that. I work here in an environment with about 90% women as colleagues. There are some single parents among them, and from what I hear - it's sometimes much harder to reconcile work and children." A certain uneasiness is written all over his face when he finally adds sheepishly that he himself is "in a comparatively privileged situation.

Positive naive

This is due in no small part to the support of friends that Joachim Kreische and his wife can currently call on. He is surprised by the great willingness to help, says the father, honestly amazed. "Since we are already of an advanced age, there are many people in our circle of acquaintances whose children are already older than us.

and there is a lot of experience and willingness to help. Many say "We can help you with this so and so'." He certainly appreciates the offer. "It warms the cockles of your heart. Also, from many Places where I wouldn't have expected it before now suddenly turn out to be totally helpful. Of course, that's not a continuous supply, but it helps you in new situations if someone has a solution to a problem and knows how to do it.

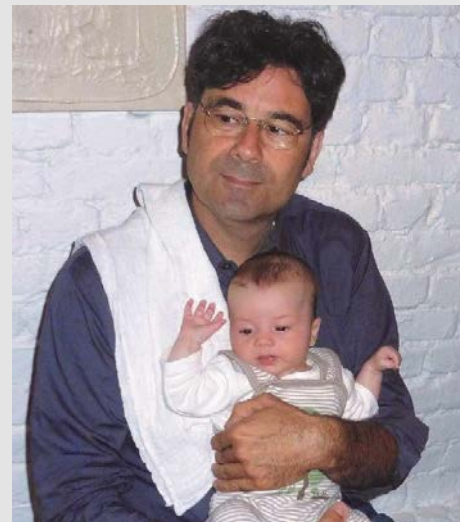
"We let a lot of things roll toward us intuitively."

The parents were able to benefit from this wealth of experience even before the birth. Sighing, Joachim Kreische reveals that he "wasted a lot of energy" looking at the living conditions in his circle of friends. That was very disillusioning, he says. "I kind of always felt like everyone was too planned out. Where I always thought to myself, 'Guys, wait and see what comes out of this.'" In the end, most things worked themselves out, he says calmly. That's why he and his wife took such a relaxed approach to parenthood.

The daughter now has priority: Joachim Kreische with his daughter Femke.

"Maybe it's also because of our age, but we've been a bit, in a positive sense, naive about it." Good-naturedly, he shakes his head gently. "We also didn't read stacks of books or anything, or think about our own task sharing too much thought." And that's exactly how they want to keep it in the future. Joachim Kreische is confident that things can only get easier. "The child already wants to be properly looked after, and my ambition is to structure the work environment in such a way that I can also be absent sometimes." The librarian is not worried, on the contrary. Smiling, he looks up. "I'm in the best hope that it will get easier rather than harder."

▲ The interview was conducted by Deborah Rahma in spring 2013.



Source:
Private

Dr. Joachim Kreische (*1966)



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The Update Interview 2017

Joachim Kreische seems interested when we talk before the interview about the new edition of the fathers' brochure and about which fathers I am still interviewing. I've made a note of a few questions about his 2013 interview, and I'm eager to find out the answers. I'm especially curious to hear how his resolutions worked out.

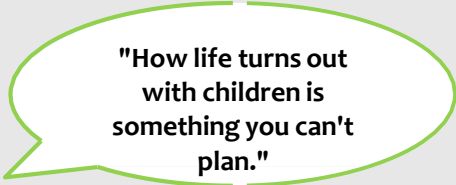
A "low maintenance" child

When Joachim Kreische was interviewed in 2013, his daughter Femke was just four weeks old. At that time, he reported that the months 13 and 14 of his daughter's life could possibly become his parental leave. Officially, he had no He did not take "parental leave", but made the time off possible with overtime and flextime arrangements. In any case, he had saved up overtime in order to be "present in the early phase". This was primarily intended as a buffer for possible problem phases, which in fact hardly ever occurred. His daughter was generally a very "low-maintenance child", which is why U3 care was also quickly possible with her. This meant that his wife was quickly able to return to work, and she is currently working at 70%. At present, daughter Femke attends a kindergarten. When looking for childcare options, the main focus was on short distances for both parents, also in order to be able to react quickly to emergencies. Also because the child is so easy to care for, his wife was able to go on business trips and have evening appointments early on. But you can't plan what life will be like with children," he admits with a shrug.

Family friendly employer

Actually, he wanted to work less, or so he had resolved at the time. Today he realizes,

he has managed to work "not less, but differently". He has rearranged his workflow so that it is more compatible with that of his wife. The "good culture at the TU" is central to this, he says. Her importance. His entire team had assured him, even when he became a father, "that they wanted to be considerate.



"How life turns out with children is something you can't plan."

It's a good feeling to have such a great culture in the working environment and not to have to "fight out" the work-life balance as a "privilege. He enthusiastically recounts an anecdote from the time when his daughter was still younger: He used to walk around campus on Friday afternoons in a stroller with his daughter, who was also in the office. The associate dean for diversity management, Ms. Welzel, must have seen this and reported it at a conference. "You don't have to do that if family friendliness is only seen in a poster-like way," he praises appreciatively and admits with a smile, "That made me happy."

Dialectics of experience

In his team, there are mainly working mothers who work part-time. He notices that even today the "greater burden" still lies on the shoulders of working mothers.

Whether in his family or in his work environment, he is truly "in awe of managing this double burden." That's why it's important to him in his work environment to create structures.

He is motivated by the need to create a kind of "community" that is sensitive to the difficulties of working mothers and thus makes things easier for them. He is motivated by a kind of "dialectic of experiences" that he has made in his role as a supervisor on the one hand, and in his role as a father in his work environment on the other. For example, when appointments are requested for the afternoon - and thus outside the working hours of part-time employees - the appointments are entered into the central calendar tool. The team then clarifies how the appointment can be realized.

Proximity type

"You don't know yourself how you're going to react," he says, explaining why, among other things, it was difficult for him to choose a specific father type in 2013. But he still finds it difficult to choose a term that describes him as a father-type. He still defines himself through the rejection of the role of his own father, which had been very classic and traditional. So he could work with a model like the "breadwinner" or "head of the family" nothing to catch. He takes a similarly critical view of the father of the evening, because he sees him primarily as a father who stands for "extravagance," "not for the stresses and strains of everyday life. "My wife would have something against that," he adds mischievously. He is just

not an "after-work dad. However, this also required him to change his lifestyle, especially in terms of his social life. It was important for him not to be "emotionally distant" and to experience the "social closeness" that he had not experienced from his father.

experience with his child. "I don't see why a father shouldn't have that," he says. He is most comfortable with the term "closeness type. However, his relationship to father types as a whole is quite ambivalent. On the one hand, he has no particular concept of fatherhood, but on the other hand, he has no positive image of a father. He also often wondered where the contrast between his father role and his wife's mother role should lie.



"I'm just not an after-work dad."

"I see myself more as a guardian," he explains firmly. Thoughtfully he asks himself and summarizes: "Perhaps the distance to my father's type is already the success? (...)" I strive to be reflective about the role, but not to derive a concept from reflection. Lead. That kind of comes off to me."

Equal parenthood

An essential basis for parents not to fall into gender-stereotypical roles and divisions of labor is certainly that his

Wife and he already had a relationship without asymmetries before the birth of the daughter. The The experience of the first two years contributed to their "intuitive" adoption of this equal division of labor for their new role as parents. Den-

nor do the couple often reflect on their division of tasks and responsibilities, because ge- Bad attributions should not play a role here. Thus, they often question their division of labor: "Why is it like this now?" A role resolution therefore only works with a lot of

"Management", otherwise it happens easily to fall into a "clichéd division to slip".

For the daughter, both father and mother are equally important as caregivers. "Mom or dad!" This is how a call for help from today's four-year-old sounds, and for Joachim Kreische it is a clear signal of the equal value of the parents. Sometimes the quick call of "Mommy or Daddy!" turns into a "Mapa!

"Mapa child" instead of a mommy or daddy's child, he laughs happily. Precisely because both parents are equal caregivers, he can't say whether he or his wife is the parent.

A "very low-maintenance child": Joachim Kreische with his daughter Femke.

He says that she is the stricter one, but spontaneously he would claim that it is his wife. He smiles amusedly: "But I wouldn't be surprised if she claims the opposite."

Overkill of parent-defining guidebooks

Even when it comes to contacts with other fathers or parents, Joachim Kreische is ambivalent. On the one hand, he says, there are some fathers in his environment whom he meets at the neighborhood playground, for example, and who have a similar professional background. He likes to exchange ideas with them, which helps a lot. On the other hand, Joachim Kreische is also very skeptical. He says there are so many dis- courses, advice literature and norms around parenthood. "The environment can drive you crazy," he says, shaking his head in annoyance. Intui- tively, he and his wife face this "overkill of



Source: Private

He is very skeptical about the "parent-defining guidebook," perhaps also because they both grew up very simply and down-to-earth, without "all the hoopla. Here he is "actually kind of handed down," he smiles.

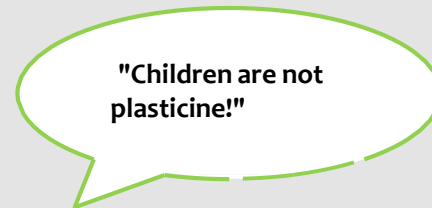
He always asks himself "Did you need that when you were a kid?" and usually answers with a resounding "no." He is already "shocked" at the measures popular among parents to control their children's learning at an early age, which he actually never would have thought before. He uses the word "armament" for the undertakings with which parents want to steer and control their children. They are more like "anti-helicopter parents," he says, because a child is also incredibly much "on autopilot." That's why it's more important for him to observe and accompany his daughter than to control her. "Children are not a plasticine mass," he says, annoyed by the malleability theories of the parenting discourse, which he counters above all "naturally and ironically.

Pay attention to the autopilot

If he were to become a father again, he would actually do very little differently. He never had a big plan or a detailed concept for parenthood and even sees himself confirmed in this course by all the discourses and norms.

So he can't revise a plan either, he laughs, shrugging his shoulders. "Individual decisions"

of course, you would always want to meet differently, but whether that would be the case for the next child, he didn't know. You can't just impose a concept on the child.



He is happy to accommodate his daughter's needs, which she now also expresses on her own, but does not pre-plan what she will need to have had a pink phase. She's just going through her "pink phase," he says, shaking his head. "My feminist woman rolls her eyes."

The interview was conducted by Stefanie Raible on 26.04.2017.