

**Andreas Rabe** (\*1965) is a mechanical engineer and works as an occupational safety specialist in Unit 7. He lives in Witten with his wife and two daughters.



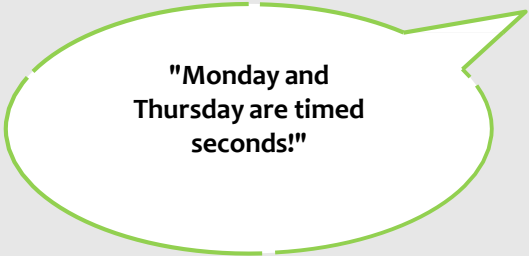
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## The outgoing caretaker

*When I arrive at the office building of the Occupational Safety and Health Department, I am greeted from several sides. Obviously, I was expected with great interest. I finally find Andreas Rabe in his office, which he shares with a colleague. As an occupational safety specialist, he immediately notices that the cable I brought with me has probably not complied with safety regulations for some time and therefore helps out with a more modern model. He is in a good mood and is eagerly looking forward to the interview.*

## Everyday life does not exist

Andreas Rabe has never known a normal day in his work. "There is no such thing as a daily routine at work," says the machine technician, shaking his head. "Here, every day is actually completely different. You can't standardize that." But the 48-year-old thinks that's a good thing, because that's what he values him for. "In my job, fortunately, it's possible to realize yourself," he says with relief. In addition, he says, he is now very flexible. "We've had flextime for two years. If something comes up, you could definitely arrange it a bit flexibly." This is "simply ideal" for him, says the father happily. In addition, he recently reduced the number of hours he works, which means he can pick up his youngest daughter from daycare around 4 p.m. or fill in if she is sick.



**"Monday and Thursday are timed seconds!"**

In his private life, too, there is no sign of a monotonous routine. During his working hours, he doesn't even notice that he is a father, but as soon as he leaves the office, a hectic, highly structured daily routine usually awaits him. "There are days when I'm

I'm immediately involved in family tasks. With great concentration, Andreas Rabe reveals the strategy plan he needs to coordinate the "driving services" on these days. He plays the role of cab not only for his own children, but also for those of his neighbors. "Then I have to get off work early at work and then drive home to pick up the child from the KiTa. Then pick up another child, take them to music school, drive home from there, pick up other kids again and take them to swimming."

He catches his breath briefly. "Then I have a 15-minute window that's all mine. And then the whole thing starts all over again." In addition he shares the household chores with his wife. Bathrooms and floors, as he nonchalantly says, "have been put into other people's hands," namely into the hands of a cleaner, but "all the other things are shared so that whoever has the time does the shopping. It's different every day."

## Kids Outlook

Although his everyday life sounds like a lot of stress, Andreas Rabe takes it cheerfully and with a sense of humor. He leans back calmly with a friendly look on his face. However, this organization is only possible thanks to the active support of his neighbors, emphasizes the father. Conveniently, they are also good friends of the family, the children are in the

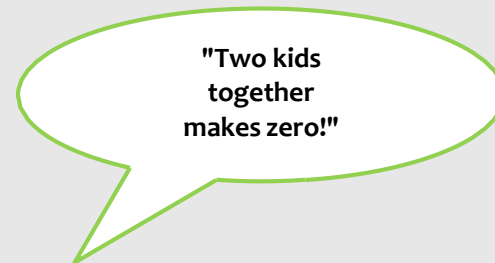
They are the same age, go to the same school and are also friends with each other. As a result, a real network of pick-up and drop-off services has developed over time. "The children walk to school together, but they are picked up by their mothers, sometimes by their grandmothers," he explains. "That's why I have my daughter's friend's grandmother's schedule, because when there's snow, she doesn't go, then Plan B and Plan C kick in." The father grins thoughtfully. "Actually, you'd have to have a children's Outlook to help plan the day."

### **Gigantic synergy effects**

When asked how the friendship with his neighbors came about, Andreas Rabe laughs and explains with a wink that his wife is a pro at it. "If you meet someone with a stroller, and you do so more often on the same street, you're bound to strike up a conversation. Any dog owner can confirm that you know every dog owner at some point. So at some point I also knew all the stroller drivers on the street, and that led to private contacts. We really enjoy the fact that everything fits together." However, he and his wife have increasingly gone for walks where there were playgrounds, the mechanical engineer admits. "People were kicking down open doors there. You didn't have to do much to get the

contact with other families. That was actually wanted by both sides, you were approached and talked to. So maybe it seems to me that everything happened automatically, but there was a little help."

Either way, Andreas Rabe is simply very grateful for the contacts he has made in his neighborhood and through the KiTa. It is simply perfect that the children also understand each other, he says euphorically.



"They deal with each other, do not want to be seen by you and nix more have to do with one. That's wonderful. The synergy effects are gigantic when the kin-the and the parents then also understand. That's a perfect combination, if that's also is still in the neighborhood, where you can even maybe leave the kids there. Sometimes with this, sometimes with that - that's ideal." Without this He could not imagine managing everything without his friendly contacts.

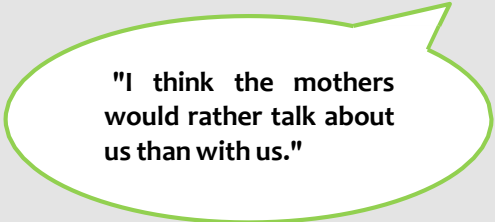
## Kita kick, pub crawl group

The first contacts were made in the maternity ward, the father recalls. Over time, the circle of friends expanded considerably. "Afterwards, we called it KiTa Kick. These were the fathers of the KiTa, who got together for the We met when we were playing soccer. First to play themselves - then to watch." Couples' get-togethers, on the other hand, hardly ever take place anymore, which is a completely logical development in Andreas Rabe's eyes. "One of us has to stay at home and look after the children. So that has separated from each other. My wife has her circle and I then meet with the fathers in rotation. But with the same families, so one after the other."

Occasionally, the entire family does something together, for example, for birthdays. But as a rule, fathers and mothers separate from each other, although Andreas Rabe has a dark suspicion as to why this might be. Grinning conspiratorially he lowers his voice a little "We, the fathers, wanted to put it together once, but the mothers didn't want that at all."

"Eight years ago, many friendships began through the toddler group. That group still exists and is still called that, only now the moms without kids meet at the pub."

The father laughs heartily. But basically, he says, there's no denying that the circle of friends has also changed as a result of the children.



**"I think the mothers would rather talk about us than with us."**

His "disco days" are clearly over, the 48-year-old says reasonably. "I can't go around the houses anymore now. And the single buddies who would be pretty stupid if they were to join forces with me. The interests have developed in a completely different way, of course."

## First man on parental leave

However, the well-connected father emphasizes that he has found the transition to family life very positive. It was just the right time for him, he says, relaxed. "It was not too late and not too early. I didn't have the feeling that any I don't think I've missed out on anything, because after giving birth you're very busy. A self-confident life may soon return," Andreas Rabe hopes with a laugh.

Since there was no parental leave at the time of the birth of his first daughter, the mechanical engineer went to the

support of the family, he worked full time. But when his second daughter was born, he immediately took advantage of the new opportunity and took two months of parental leave, making him one of the first at TU Dortmund. The announcement in his department had something very ironic about it, the father agrees with amusement, since at the time he was the only man in a women's department and at the same time the only one taking parental leave.

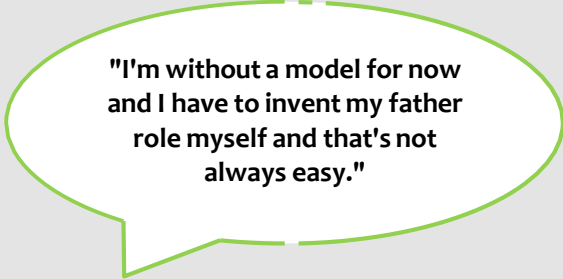
"But the women were very positive about it and supported my decision accordingly," he says. "Two months are also manageable and can be organized. I work in a field where you can work preventively, which is why my absence was manageable." His wife, on the other hand, stayed at home for a whole year, but before their second year of life, both girls went to a local daycare center.

"That was a private KiTa, which cost us a fortune and where it was not easy to get a place. It was only possible with a lot of luck and contacts, and as I said, it was already at the upper edge of what was feasible in terms of price." That was a real challenge for the family, the father admits seriously, but the conditions were "fantastic. That's why he was happy to accept it.

### **Auxiliary mom and show intern**

Even in the run-up to our interview, he had a lot of

thought about what type of father he would describe himself as, Andreas Rabe says, and still seems to be pondering. His own role model, his father, belongs to what he calls the "antique father model - a great authoritative person". He immediately shakes his head vehemently. "That model doesn't work today. Not if you want to equip it in a modern way."



**"I'm without a model for now and I have to invent my father role myself and that's not always easy."**

He sighs somewhat helplessly. "What type of father I am, that's ultimately for others to decide." But it's clear that he didn't take on this role, his father role, from his father. So where did he find role models? Questioningly, he looks at me. "Do you have one? I would like to have one. I don't. You're really a bit up in the air. Emancipation has taken 40 years now, so you've had years to prepare. The role of men has certainly changed as a result of the change in the role of women. From that point of view, I can't say that at all now."

After thinking about it for a moment longer, however, he does think of something: "Sometimes I'm a help mom, sometimes I'm a show intern, most of the time I'm a caretaker. Most of the time, you have to be able to do everything from comforting to organizing. There always has to be someone who can do it."

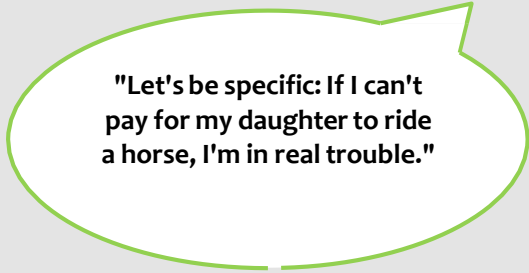
### **Stability and satisfaction**

Just like his father's image, Andreas Rabe also initially defines his career in negative terms. A classic career, like the one his father had, was out of the question for him, he resolutely rejects. "I don't just want to be at home for 8 or 16 hours a day, and vice versa, I don't just want to work and think about my career. It's the mix that makes it."

For him, it is precisely this mixture of family and career that creates his life satisfaction in the first place. Accordingly, it was never a question of climbing certain career ladders. men. That, he says unabashedly, is hardly possible in his profession. "The question of career does not arise for me. I have a great job. I do what I enjoy."

For him, stability in his job is much more important than constantly striving for the top. He is all the happier, therefore, that he is employed in the public sector with an old employment contract. In this context, he sharply criticizes the

current trend towards temporary contracts: "A temporary job is poison for a family, both for planning and for existence. As a young, dynamic and flexible person, you can certainly still do it, but I really think that temporary employment contracts are poison for starting a family. Because the uncertainty of how you can pay current bills or whether you can continue to live in the same city are too uncertain for a family." He pauses for a moment and then specifies with a pointed smile:



**"Let's be specific: If I can't pay for my daughter to ride a horse, I'm in real trouble."**

### **Retreat with sports subscription**

When asked what the next few years will be like for him and his family, he answers pathetically, "I see a light at the end of the tunnel." With a smile, he says: "I'm going to get a buy a sports subscription to a private channel and retire to my room." He won't be losing his sense of humor anytime soon, that's for sure.

But even without irony, he's convinced it will get easier now that his children are out of the woods. "These small services and bring-and-hold services will certainly be minimized." Instead, he sees new tasks coming his way, full of expectation. "Maybe someday I'll be the one waiting outside a discotheque at 11 p.m. instead of the one leaving at 4 p.m. to go horseback riding." He enjoys this phase with his children. But lei- se he adds that he won't be sad either, "when there will be a few hours of privately determined life in it again".

The interview was conducted by Deborah Rahma in ~~at~~ 2013.



Likes to play chauffeur for his children:  
Andreas Rabe with his two daughters.

Source: private



Andreas Rabe (\*1965)



Source:  
private

## The Update Interview 2017

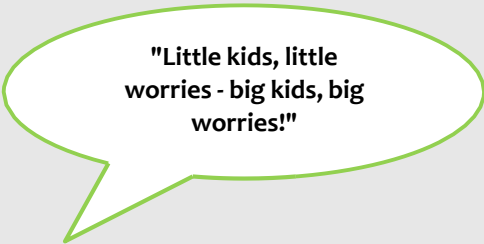
*Reaching Andreas Rabe turned out to be more difficult than I had expected from the reports of my colleagues who already knew him. When it finally works out with an interview, he seems a bit stressed. But no sooner do we start talking than the words just gush out of him. Obviously, there is a lot to report.*



## More relaxed, my ass!

Andreas Rabe reported in 2013 that he had been the first in his team to take parental leave. He had also subsequently reduced his working hours to look after his two daughters. Somewhat surprised himself

he reports that he is currently considering reducing his working hours even further. When asked whether it wouldn't get easier as his two daughters grew older, he reacted with amusement and irritation at the same time: "I thought that too, and it surprised me. But at the moment, the planned transfer of his younger daughter to a high school without lunch supervision is actually confronting him and his wife with the question of whether it would not be better to reduce hours once again in order to "moderate" the afternoon a bit, as he calls it.



**"Little kids, little  
worries - big kids, big  
worries!"**

In addition, the daughter could then also be picked up from school. Since he currently works a few hours a week more than his wife, and she earns more than he does anyway, it would be a good idea for him to be able to work.

It is logical that in this case he and not she would possibly reduce the number of working hours once again.

However, they are not yet in complete agreement about whether this is the right way to go. In fact, he is still striving for a somewhat less controlling approach to education. Nevertheless, he revises shortly afterwards, almost grimly, his wish: "That's also such a somewhat naïve approach." He recognizes this above all when he looks at how the afternoons are spent with his older daughter: Instead of doing homework, she often spends her afternoon doing other things, he shakes his head, visibly annoyed.

At the moment, the smartphone is an additional factor in the dispute, he blurts out angrily. Despite this, he has to admit with an involuntary grin that there is a small advantage: Since over Messenger services, this reduces the organizational workload for him with regard to the many pick-up and drop-off services.

"Children's Outlook" desired, now this had become obsolete thanks to the children's smartphones.

## Become a tamer

As a father of pubescent children, he said, he is not a "outgoing caretaker" anymore. He shakes his head as he recalls his father type from 2013. Rather, he sees himself as a tamer right now. He laughs mischievously. His task

profile has become a different one. "It's certainly more strenuous," he adds with a subtle smile. He makes no secret of the fact that the sparks fly more often at home. "Small children, small worries - big children, big worries," he says.

laughing a little. The fact that this current situation is also stressing him out is plain to see. For the children, it is now others who are the role models, not their parents, for example YouTube stars. At the moment, there are usually more points of friction than points of contact.

For the future, however, he hopes that at some point he will be able to have a friendly relationship of trust with his daughters. Currently that is probably simply not possible due to age. He sees fathers who have established such a relationship with their grown-up children as a kind of role model.

### **Less giving in, more rules**

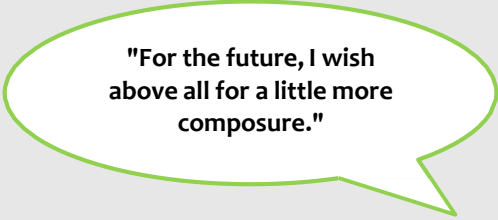
Looking back, he shakes his head. He is sure that he would do some things differently if he could. he once again turned back time. "Children don't need friends, they have enough of them. need guidance and a role model," he says thoughtfully, assessing the past. He had perhaps given in to his daughters too often, had been too often be wrapped around their finger. Surely there would not be the one big mistake to revert to change everything. He admits with a grin that he has too often allowed "laissez-faire" to prevail. Toddlers are often too sweet to see clear

rules, he suspects with a wry grin. He believes that this now sometimes takes its revenge. However, he then deviates somewhat from his harsh résumé and deflects a bit.

Some things are also the character of the children, and you can't control everything. He has to laugh briefly when he admits that he is not an overly tidy person either. So how can he tell his daughters that their rooms must always be neat and tidy? He shrugs his shoulders with a grin.

### **Hope for calm after the storm**

For the future, he would like to see a little more serenity above all. He also hopes that things will be calmer when his daughters get older. His mother often advises him to look at some problems in a more relaxed way, but he is not quite able to do that. He also says that he should let the children make their own mistakes and experiences, grudgingly recounting his mother's advice.



**"For the future, I wish  
above all for a little more  
composure."**

It is important to him that his daughters have their own experiences.

He also sees his mother's suggestions, but he still finds it very difficult.

Once again, he emphasizes his wish to have a more relaxed, friendly relationship with his daughters at some point in the future. He sighs as if he cannot believe that just yet.

▀ The interview was conducted by Stefanie Raible on 19.04.2017