

**Detlef Janzon** (\*1986) is a system administrator at the IT and Media Center (ITMC) of the TU Dortmund University. He lives in Bochum with his wife and two daughters, Tilda (\*2015) and Caroline (\*2017).



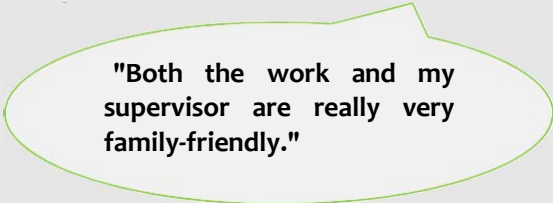
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## The Family Guy

*A quarter of an hour before the agreed appointment, I am already standing in front of Detlef Janzon's office, which we will use for the interview. A while later, he arrives and is about to call someone. However, he is completely surprised to see that I am already there and he hangs up again in a hectic and polite manner. He shares his office - filled with computers - with a few other colleagues. We sit down opposite each other on the office chairs and start talking a little earlier.*

## Family friendly

Detlef Janzon works full-time and can organize his job flexibly. If he has something going on in his private life, he can adjust his working hours in consultation with his supervisor so that he leaves earlier and works longer on other days.



**"Both the work and my supervisor are really very family-friendly."**

First, he weighs up which cases are urgent at home and which are urgent at work. Detlef Janzon goes home, for example, when his wife has fallen ill and no one can look after the children in the meantime. Normally, his wife is responsible for picking up his two daughters from care. However, it sometimes happens that her schedule is postponed. And if Detlef Janzon has nothing to do at work, "I might as well go pick up the kids," says the father.

Both daughters are currently being cared for. The older one is cared for 35 hours a week in a daycare center that is located in the immediate vicinity. from her apartment. The little one is still with the childminder, where both children were cared for from the age of one.

## Everything is done in consultation

Detlef Janzon's wife started studying educational sciences at the distance learning university in order to embark on something new. After the birth of her second daughter, she quit her job as an office clerk. "We also decided that together as a family and I think it's great. You just have to be satisfied in what you do professionally. You transfer this satisfaction to all situations in life. Not only at work, but also in your private life." This new situation can occasionally lead to care bottlenecks when his wife has important appointments. The parents then consult with each other and decide on which days he can adjust his working hours. Then he either takes Tilda to daycare in the morning or starts work earlier and is home earlier in the late afternoon.

"In the afternoon already at 2 p.m. I don't shaffe to pick up my daughter," regrets the father .

When Detlef Janzon is at home in the afternoon, he spends a lot of time with his two daughters. With the older daughter Tilda, he reads a lot, tells her stories and sings with her. The younger Daughter Caroline, on the other hand, loves to exercise, play and build. "Caroline is very motor-minded and also loves to be outside in the sand," he mentions. Fortunately, the family lives in a ground-floor apartment with a communal garden.

## No strict separation

Both parents take care of the household together. "We don't have a strict separation of duties; whoever can do laundry does the laundry. Whoever can take care of the vacuuming, vacuums the apartment," Detlef Janzon emphasizes.

**"We don't have a strict plan for who does what. We agree on**

However, he admits: "Of course, there are certain preferences that people have in the household. I don't like to mop, but my wife doesn't like to clean windows. That's how we can divide up the tasks. ben do." In his opinion, the division of tasks in the household is equal. The father then proudly mentions: "Our children also have no problems at all with falling asleep. That's why we spend at least the evening hours together and use them mostly for household chores."

The parents also consciously organize time off without children. Sometimes his sister-in-law steps in, and every two weeks they treat themselves to a babysitting service. Then the couple has the opportunity to go out together in the evenings and spend time with each other.

"The time spent together is also something beautiful. Of course, everything depends on the organization," admits Detlef Janzon.

## Harmony and satisfaction

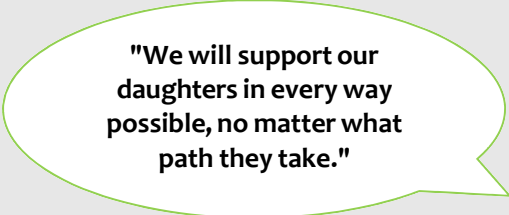
When asked about career aspirations, he replies, "Money isn't everything. It's more about being satisfied with what you do professionally." He adds, "You don't want to transfer your dissatisfaction to your family."

As the father of two children, he sees his role as providing for the family income. He doesn't think that becoming a father has affected his career, but has taught him to be more careful.

**"In a career, a harmony mindset is important."**

"I wouldn't call it impairment. But of course, after becoming a father, you're more cautious about all your decisions because you're has a greater sense of responsibility. Without children, you would take up riskier career options that you can't do now because you have to secure your family's income. The family man adds:

"Maybe without the kids, you'd be more headless."



**"We will support our daughters in every way possible, no matter what path they take."**

The parents know that at some point they will be faced with the difficult question of how the children's educational path should continue. Through their studies in educational science, they have dealt a lot with humanistic education and types of schools. They would like to see a different school education for their daughters. "We are lucky in Bochum to have very many alternative schools. That's why we're just informing ourselves in this direction about what's available at reform schools, because we want for the girls that they are not exposed to the usual state school pressure, but rather can develop freely in order to develop in a Humboldtian way." The parents don't want to force their two daughters into any kind of career, but rather give them everything they need to develop freely later on. can decide for themselves.

### **Father Time**

Detlef Janzon describes his parental leave as a "Father Time." With his first daughter, he combined different options: First he took a vacation and then a

month of parental leave. Immediately afterwards, he rejoined the company with 50% working time during his parental leave.

He was not entirely satisfied with this combination: "It turned out to be not so pragmatic, because you were always away from your daughter to go to work. And on the work, it didn't really work either because you weren't really present."

So the family man made a small change with the second daughter Caroline: one month of vacation and two months of full parental leave. That worked out much better for him as a father. When their older daughter Tilda was born, the new parents first had to learn how to deal with a baby. Accordingly, PEKiP courses were attended in order to acquire all the important knowledge on the subject of babies. In addition to tips and tricks for the usual care of the baby, the parents also learned how to cuddle and play with the baby. In some exercises, they also learned how the little one can best lie on her stomach and turn around. "With Tilda, my wife took two years of full parental leave because we wanted to take the time for our first baby."

It was different when Caroline was born. Detlef Janzon was more responsible for the older daughter so that his wife had enough time to take care of the new baby.

**"At that stage,  
everyday life kind of  
ate up all of our time."**

Thus, the father took over recreational activities with Tilda. "It was October, so going out was very weather-dependent, and we often went to the playground when the weather permitted. Otherwise, we've retreated to a room at our house and had on there. We are a big fan of Ostheimer figures. Besides that, we also told each other a lot and I read to her a lot."



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Father and daughter also went shopping together and took care of all the errands, so Tilda was intensively involved in everyday life.

"In Caroline's case, my wife only took a year of parental leave because she wanted to return to work, but that didn't work out because of her employer at the time. She had always wanted to study in a completely different direction anyway. That was the best time for us and it worked out very well. Thanks to her studies, she can now also be there for the children in a much more variable way."

### **Family First**

At that time, he and his wife decided to take parental leave. At work at ITMC, he could see that many fathers took a long parental leave. But for him, it was more about coordinating with his wife, and deciding how it best suited them both. Consideration for the employer was not on their minds. "The focus was and still is on the family," he admits calmly. Detlef Janzon is sure of one thing: "Family comes above everything for me. I'm a father first, then a husband, and then an employee at TU at some point."

**Likes to play in the sand: Detlef Janzon with his daughters Tilda and Caroline.**

The return to work after parental leave was no problem for him; he found it uncomplicated and seamless. "ITMC made things as pleasant as possible," he says with satisfaction.

It was more problematic at home, because there he was now missing. "The more difficult thing, however, was that the time with the children suddenly decreased and I could no longer devote as much time to our family. Especially when Caroline was born, I had a lot of time with Tilda and it was noticeable that I switched to my job relatively abruptly. That's when I missed being with my daughter," he regrets.

The father of the family often took the opportunity to talk to other parents at the TU-Dortmund Parents' Café. He received many good tips for himself and his family. He made further contacts in the PEKiP or in the postnatal classes and also with parents he met on playgrounds. Although they have not met privately, when they do, they like to talk about the many different topics relating to children.

Detlef Janzon would like to see financially supported and shortened working time models so that parents can be better supported and find more time for their families. Particularly in the early days, parents want to be there for their children without having to

**Detlef Janzon sees himself as a family guy with his two daughters.**

it becomes "a tightrope act".

"My wife and I have also both been through worked with reduced hours in 50% positions. So we could spend a lot of time with the kids." The 50% idea didn't work for you, however, because the time you wanted to spend together as a family fell by the wayside. With this model, only the transfer of the children was regulated. "If you had the opportunity to spend more time together as a family, perhaps through a longer parental allowance, that would be nice," says the father of the family, wishing for the future.

▲ The interview was conducted by Rahime Eser on 12.08.2019



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