

Between Recklessness and Delusion

Finding the way between two extremes is not always easy. One might even say: It is almost always difficult.

Why is that so? We can illustrate the answer with the help of a scale. It takes very little to create an overweight on either of its two sides. It becomes even more difficult when we try to find the point on an axis where equilibrium is established between two objects of unequal weight thanks to leverage. This is how we feel in many things. Achieving a balance in the things of life is not an easy task. Slipping into extremes, on the other hand, happens by itself.

In the question of security, too, it is a demanding balancing act to find the middle, in this case the middle between irresponsible recklessness and an unrealistic delusion of being able to protect oneself against everything and everyone, the middle between negligence on the one hand and neurosis on the other. But there, in the middle, dwells rational responsibility and mental health. It is worth arriving there.

A long time ago a tragic event took place in the Alps. Two young local men, together with two girls from Scandinavia who were on vacation, went on a mountain hike at an altitude of a good 2000 meters to a managed mountain hut. But it was autumn, and it had snowed earlier at that altitude, so the snowpack on the less steep terrain was high enough that some trudging was necessary to get around. After several hours of marching, the four young people's strength was wearing thin. The hut was already in sight, but they could no longer get their legs up in the deep snow. Calls for help did not reach the hut. The sun had set, the temperature dropped, night fell. The next day, all four were found dead. This need not have happened.

This is just one example among many. Yes, safety is an issue of personal responsibility. Much, very much, of disaster is a consequence of careless, ne-

gligent behavior, even if a completely risk-free life has always been and remains an illusion.

Safety is a big issue in pretty much all areas of life. That's why every one of our "suitcases" has something to do with it. Here, however, we are talking specifically about security against attacks on physical integrity, i. e., against violent assaults, and against damage to assets such as through theft, burglary, robbery and the like — in summary: against hostility on the part of certain fellow human beings.

Such assaults are basically based on a relationship problem, to whatever causes this may be traceable. To some extent, we can have a defusing effect on such problems, for example by making efforts to de-escalate or by refraining from provocations. This often already goes in the direction of establishing a relationship. The readiness to cause damage is promoted by a lack of relationship with those affected, as well as by considerable disturbances of a possibly existing relationship, whereby, for example, envy, greed, selfishness and the associated hatred of one's neighbor come to mind.

However, as is well known, such possibilities prove to be limited, and in view of this it is reasonable to develop concepts for the protection of persons and property and to regard them as indirect investments directed against threatening losses. As is the case with investments, they have an inherent risk of often unknown magnitude. This is even more the case with security expenditures, because the probability of an attack often seems very low to us. However, we occasionally miscalculate in this respect as well.

Some safety precautions, however, require no effort other than attentiveness and adherence to rules. Leaving valuables in a parked car, for example, is inherently risky, though not to the same degree in every location. Carrying them around in a handbag among a crowd is also not a good idea. You'd better come up with something better than that.

So we look around for advice from experienced people in this field, and it makes sense to create an individual concept for each of us that can provide us with a reasonable security framework.

[\(back to the subject area\)](#)