FRIEDENSNOTE NR. 23

You Will Be Helped

The warmth of the heart we thought lost sometimes reveals itself in everyday situations, right where we would least expect it.

It has not been just for the past two and a half years that people's hearts seem turned to stone. The throb of elbows appears stronger than that of hearts. Where has humanity gone, many are asking these days. And yet it still exists, these rare and precious moments. The moments in which it becomes clear that beneath people's ribcages the heart still beats for more than merely keeping the body's vital functions going. Jens Lehrich recently became not only a witness to such a moment in an organic supermarket, but was completely and emotionally seized by it. From this almost magical instant he drew a piece for the Friedensnoten.

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SONG	Human Heart
PERFORMER	Coldplay

Standing in a checkout line at Alnatura feels like a waste of time. It is much the same with the traffic jam on the A7 before the Elbe Tunnel, or a sluggish parents' evening at school that simply will not end. Different, though, on this late afternoon at the end of October in Hamburg. My wife and I have chosen checkout 2 and have only one wish: to get home as quickly as possible.

At that very moment a man in his early 40s pushes past us and places his purchases on the conveyor belt. He does not turn around, his gaze is fixed. "Let's just let him go ahead", my wife tugs at my sleeve, and it is immediately clear to me too that this person has a serious health problem. His whole body is trembling, he seems utterly disoriented and absent. When the cashier tells him the total, he reaches into his trouser pocket as if remote-controlled and pulls out some small change to pay. The cashier shakes his head and points out to the customer that something is still missing. I understand „1 euro 50" and take a 2-euro coin from my wallet and hold it out toward the till.

Once more the calm and friendly cashier shakes his head and indicates that even that is not enough. Only now do I see the sum of 7 euros 56 on the till display and ask my wife whether she has any more change on her. At that moment an elderly gentleman comes hurrying forward from further back and offers his readiness to help. Right beside me now stands a man who is also searching his wallet for euro coins and remarks kindly:

> *There is surely enough money standing in this line to be able to help.*

I get goosebumps. Rarely in the past months have I experienced such an intense moment of human kindness among strangers. The Alnatura head cashier, called over in the meantime, takes the purchase upon herself, and I even get my 2 euros back.

I am moved by this moment and grateful to have experienced it. We take the lift down to the underground car park with our shopping bags. Tears well up in my face. In this precious instant I feel that we are helped by strangers when we truly need help.

The Ahr Valley showed on a grand scale, in an impressive way, how people stand up for one another. The scene at Alnatura on the very smallest scale. Human kindness is everywhere. In each of us. Even in the greatest crisis of all time. That gives me hope that the dystopias with their doomsday forecasts are wrong. The road to peaceful change is surely still a painful one, but we can shorten it. It comes

down to each and every one of us. To each individual heart.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jens Lehrich

Jens Lehrich, Jahrgang 1970, ist gelernter Hörfunk-Journalist und freier Autor aus Hamburg. Seit über 25 Jahren produziert, spricht und textet er Comedyserien für den privaten Hörfunk. Als sein Sohn im Jahr 2010 an Typ 1-Diabetes erkrankte, begann für den dreifachen Familienvater der Blick hinter die Kulissen der Pharmaindustrie.

Lehrich gründete den Blog ahundredmonkeys.de, auf dem er Menschen präsentiert, die abseits vom Mainstream für eine bessere, gerechtere und gesündere Gesellschaft eintreten. Darüber hinaus gehören das Klavierspielen und Schreiben von Satire zu seinen Leidenschaften.

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