

The executive search and the evolution of boards

How executive selection processes can ensure more impartial, diverse and innovative boards

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Impactful or harmless, what is left unsaid in communications can transform relationships. This is the reflection proposed by the unpublished article by psychologist Thelma M. Teixeira.

TEAM FINDS



The film "Society of the Snow" is inspired by a true story involving generosity and humanity.

A DISTURBING STORY OF GENEROSITY

Recommendation by researcher Brenda Martins

"Society of the Snow," Spain's submission for the 2024 Oscars, is a vivid portrayal of the tragic plane crash that occurred on October 13, 1972, when an aircraft carrying a Uruguayan rugby team collided with the Andes Mountains. The film, recommended by Dasein researcher Brenda Martins, delves into the harrowing journey of the survivors during the 72 days they were lost in the mountains, facing extreme cold, severe injuries, desperate hunger, and the ethical dilemma of cannibalism.

"By telling the story through the character Numa Turcatti, the film highlights the importance of solidarity and collective effort for survival while exposing the duality between the brotherhood needed to face imminent death and the brutality of this confrontation. It's a saga marked by irreparable losses but also moments of hope and unity, with the main goal being the survival of everyone, even when that seems impossible."

What: "Society of the Snow" movie. | **Where to watch:** Netflix.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE IN A FASCINATING DILEMMA

Recommendation by Rebeca Prates, analyst at Dasein EMA Partners Brazil.

An apparently normal work environment takes on new and surprising dimensions in the series *Severance*, on Apple TV. The narrative follows the employees of Lumon Industries, with the backdrop of a consensual surgery that compartmentalizes their memories, separating them between personal and professional life. Considered by critics as one of the best productions in recent years, this recommendation is shared by Rebeca Prates, an analyst at Dasein EMA Partners Brazil.

“It’s a fascinating choice for those looking for a post-apocalyptic story rich in emotions and human dilemmas. The series captivates the viewer by exploring the complex relationships between the characters, as well as the challenges faced in a devastated world, highlighting the importance of trust, loyalty, and morality amidst the chaos, providing a deep and engaging experience. If you enjoy science fiction and dramas that explore human nature in extreme situations, *Severance* is a must-watch.”

What: “*Severance*” series. | **Where to watch:** *Apple TV*.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO YOU?

Recommendation by Jéssica Lima, technical coordinator at Dasein EMA Partners Brazil.

Hectic routines, endless to-do lists, and a sense of incapacity are all too common among professionals in an era marked by excess. Amidst the myriad of stimuli vying for our attention, we often find ourselves asking: what truly matters? To help answer this question, Jéssica Lima, technical coordinator at Dasein EMA Partners Brazil, recommends the book “*Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*” by Greg McKeown.

An international bestseller, the book advocates for a return to simplicity. “The work teaches you to focus on what’s essential in both your personal and professional life by eliminating distractions and unnecessary commitments. It’s about the need to prioritize what really matters and to say no to many activities and obligations that scatter our focus. It offers guidance on how to identify and pursue what is truly meaningful, helping people simplify their lives and make more conscious decisions.”

What: “*Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*” by Greg McKeown. | **Where to buy:** Online and street bookstores.

LEARNING FROM: ANA FONTES

“They always told me that women don’t help each other. Revisiting this belief was the first lesson I learned.”



A woman, northeastern Brazilian, of African descent, Ana Fontes had to deal with discrimination from an early age. After 17 years in the corporate world, with a stable career, she was no longer willing to endure the hostility of that environment. She was one of 35 selected out of more than a thousand applicants to participate in the 10 thousand women program by Fundação Getúlio Vargas, a reference in business education in Brazil. She created a review site and a coworking space, but neither succeeded. She then decided to share what she had learned in the course with other women. By the end of a year, her audience included more than 100 thousand women entrepreneurs. In 2017, she founded what is now the largest support network for women-owned businesses in Brazil—the Rede Mulher Empreendedora (Women Entrepreneurs Network). In this interview, we share more about this inspiring story.

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Recognizing that female entrepreneurship is different from male entrepreneurship, that women have a different profile and face different challenges, is a step forward.

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According to SEBRAE, the number of women entrepreneurs in Brazil has grown

to 10.3 million. Despite this historic milestone (34% of businesses are led by women), women still need to work harder to prove their competence, the viability of their ideas, or to gain the support of their families. Balancing achievements and challenges, is there still a long way to go before we achieve gender equity in the business world?

Yes, there is still a long way to go to achieve equity. But it's important to highlight the progress we've made in the last decade, starting with the recognition that female entrepreneurship is different from male entrepreneurship; it has a different profile, and women face different challenges. Another sign of progress is the growth of female entrepreneurship in traditionally male-dominated fields such as technology, finance, and industry. Obviously, they operate in smaller proportions, the numbers are small, but it is progress. Among the biggest barriers is access to capital, as women are more often denied credit. The imbalance in family care responsibilities, including children and the elderly, is also a very common issue. The care economy is predominantly female, which means women don't have the same time available to dedicate to their business or personal development. Another major barrier to equity relates to the type of business, which is often tied to traditionally feminine skills. Not that this is the problem, but for these businesses to grow, similar to those led by men, it's necessary for women to receive more support and incentives for development.

Various studies point out that women pose less risk and generate higher returns for investors. However, one of the major bottlenecks for female entrepreneurship is the

difficulty in obtaining financing. How do you view this paradox?

This paradox reflects a sexist society where the territory of money has always been occupied by men. They are the ones who talk about money, and the figure of the provider has always been male. The low access of women to resources, despite them being good payers, is the result of a social construct that benefits men. Another problem is the lack of public policies for the inclusion of women, as exists in other countries, with differentiated credit lines considering different profiles and specificities. Our financial education is still geared towards men; the language of money is very masculine. It should be more accessible to women and better reflect their reality. Until there are changes in these aspects and we have credit mechanisms that consider gender (today they are the same for both), until the credit score takes into account that women are good payers, cautious, and better financially organized, this situation is unlikely to change.

From executive to leader of the largest support network for entrepreneurship in the country: over 1.5 million women connected. Looking back on your journey, what were the challenges that taught you the most and can inspire other women?

They always told me that women don't help each other. Revisiting this "belief" was one of the first lessons I learned. In the last 15 years of entrepreneurship, what I've seen is women supporting each other, mentoring one another, helping each other. Another lesson that has stayed with me is the importance of mentoring, which didn't even have that name

in my day. Having someone who has gone through the process, who has already started a business, faced difficulties, and has experience to share makes a huge difference in any entrepreneur's journey. Today, I have mentors who guide me, providing recommendations that are extremely important. Accepting and embracing vulnerabilities, asking for help, is essential. Being vulnerable is not being weak; on the contrary, it shows that you know what you excel at and when you need others. Giving proper attention to mental health, self-awareness, and understanding that life is full of ups and downs was very important in my journey, and I recommend it for the development of other women entrepreneurs.

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The first step is to bring prejudice to consciousness, to admit that we live in a sexist, racist, LGBT-phobic society.

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You are one of the most inspiring women in Brazil. Throughout your journey, who have been your main role models? Who are they, and why?

I had women in my personal circle who held my hand, supported me, and they are still role models for me today. In addition to them, I've been inspired by great entrepreneurs like Luiza Helena Trajano and Sônia Hess (who

is part of the Rede Mulher Empreendedora's advisory board). I'm also inspired by women who don't necessarily have an entrepreneurial profile but address fundamental issues such as combating racism and sexism, like the philosopher Sueli Carneiro and the psychologist Cida Bento. I like to look at other role models in the entrepreneurial environment, at women who are just starting, building their journey, and who have a lot to teach. I always learn and am inspired by each story.

From one leader to another: how can we break the barrier of prejudice in companies and build effective practices so that women gain more space in leadership positions?

The first step is to bring prejudice to consciousness, to admit that we live in a sexist, racist, and LGBT-phobic society. If people and companies do not admit this reality, we cannot change the game. Once aware,

organizations must seek effective actions, different from those "cosmetic" ones, which through communication pretend to be doing something but are not doing anything in-depth. Companies and leaders need to be intentional. Only then we can have a fairer and more inclusive society. In 2023, the excuse that there aren't qualified women or Black people for leadership positions is no longer acceptable.

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The excuse that there aren't qualified women or black people for certain leadership positions is no longer acceptable.

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Ana Fontes founded the largest support network for women-owned businesses in Brazil – the Rede Mulher Empreendedora (Women Entrepreneurs Network)

DASEIN INVITES: IZABELLA CAMARGO

Why we need protective equipment for mental health

World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Social Security, Labor Justice... Are all these institutions wrong when they emphasize the importance of mental health in the workplace? Are they lying when they reveal the impact of neglecting mental health on the rising rate of worker absenteeism? Is the Center for Economic Policy Research of the European Union mistaken when it shows that people diagnosed with burnout can suffer serious and long-lasting damage to their careers—and that women are three times more susceptible to these consequences? Or that the repercussions of burnout extend to the family, reducing the spouse's productivity and even affecting the children's school performance?

Is the 1988 Federal Constitution, which guarantees the right to mental health for every citizen, obsolete? And what about the nearly 400 billion reais lost each year in Brazil due to psychological and emotional challenges, according to research by the Federation of Industries of the State of Minas Gerais?

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To avoid physical risks, workers have helmets, boots, gloves, ear protectors, etc. But what about psychological risks?

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There is no shortage of data and findings to warn us that mental health education is an urgent demand to address a real, painful, and costly phenomenon for the entire population. Even so, where are the mental health PPEs? Yes, Personal Protective Equipment! To avoid physical risks, workers have helmets, boots, gloves, ear protectors, etc. There are even campaigns promoting their use in factories, with fines for those who fail to comply with the rules. But what about psychological risks? Even sitting down, without being exposed to visible dangers, I can become ill if I neglect the signs

of my cognitive and emotional limits. How is it that some people still prefer to ignore the facts and continue thinking as if they were in the last century? I'm tired! Tired of sitting back with so much accumulated knowledge. Tired of hearing the same lazy excuses about taboos and prejudices surrounding the issue.

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There's no point in complaining about a toxic environment if I have toxic behaviors. It's essential to develop self-responsibility—for yourself and for others.

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That's why— and for all the people who have been questioned and judged for their invisible pain and unrecognized diagnoses—I laun-

ched in May 2024 the first global manifesto advocating for the creation of mental health PPEs. From this point on, I will shed more light on the ideas and projects that are already working, on the lessons that can be shared and adapted among companies. I will organize data and meetings to actively make and change history.

But what exactly is mental health PPE? It is leadership literacy in psychological safety, it is the prevention of any form of harassment, it is the right to disconnect, it is the flexibility of time and place of work, it is access to therapy sessions, it is the possibility to engage in a journey of self-discovery or internal tourism, as I call the process of identity renewal. There's no point in complaining about a toxic environment if I have toxic behaviors. It's essential to develop self-responsibility—for yourself and for others. Mental health is a right, not a privilege. It's time to decide whether we will continue wasting time denying the undeniable or rise to meet the new challenges.



Izabella Camargo is a journalist, presenter, speaker, and advocate for health, workplace well-being, and longevity. After experiencing a blackout live on TV Globo, Brazil's largest television network, she became one of the country's most respected researchers on burnout syndrome.

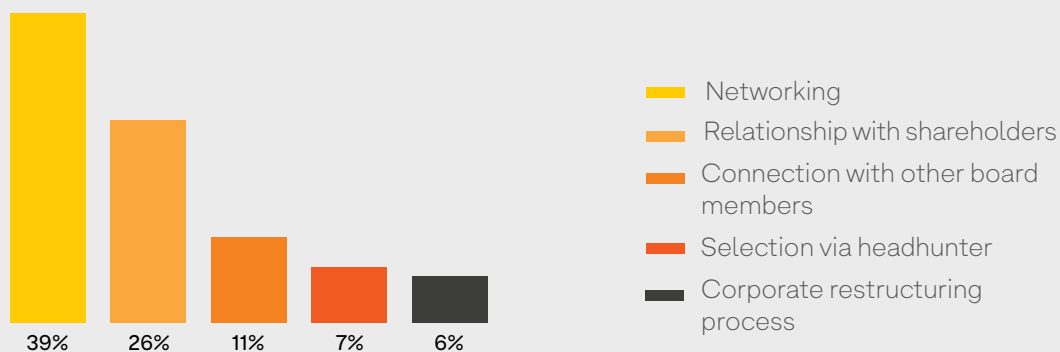
TRENDS & EXECUTIVE UNIVERSE

EXECUTIVE SELECTION PROCESSES ENSURE MORE IMPARTIAL, DIVERSE, AND INNOVATIVE BOARDS.

The relationships with shareholders, board members, and C-level executives are the main gateways to company boards in Latin America. Precisely 65% of board seats were chosen through networking, as shown by research from the Latin American Corporate Governance Institute (IGCLA). The study, which included 1,174 board members from Argentina, Brazil (representing 30% of the sample), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, and Peru, raises the following question: in the face of increasingly volatile

perspectives, is this practice of selecting board members sufficient to navigate the challenges companies face? According to the market itself, the answer is no. An example is the recent rule created by the Brazilian stock exchange, B3, requiring more diversity in the top management of listed companies. Under the new rule, organizations have until 2026 to elect at least one woman and one member from an underrepresented community to their board and executive teams.

HOW EXECUTIVES JOIN THE BOARD



* Board Members Survey Latam/IGCLA



Adriana Prates emphasizes that combining diverse perspectives is necessary for board innovation. Photography: Glauber Prates

While networking plays a significant role in the appointment of board members, relying solely on this method can compromise the board's effectiveness, diversity, and independence. According to Daniel Rezende, director at Dasein EMA Partners Brazil, the lack of diverse perspectives and experiences affects the quality of decisions, making them more similar and limited in addressing the company's challenges. It can also harm corporate governance and lead to conflicts of interest.

Furthermore, Rezende highlights, "Basing board appointments solely on networking can exclude highly qualified candidates who lack these personal connections but could bring valuable perspectives and increase the board's capacity to make strategic decisions and pro-

vide adequate oversight of the company's operations. If board members are appointed due to personal ties, they may feel a greater loyalty to the interests of those who recommended them rather than acting independently and impartially for the company's benefit."

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES BRING NEW SOLUTIONS

Combining diverse perspectives and eliminating unconscious biases is how new and better solutions can emerge at the top levels of companies, notes Adriana Prates, CEO of Dasein EMA Partners Brazil. "Consultancies play a crucial role as impartial mediators in the hi-

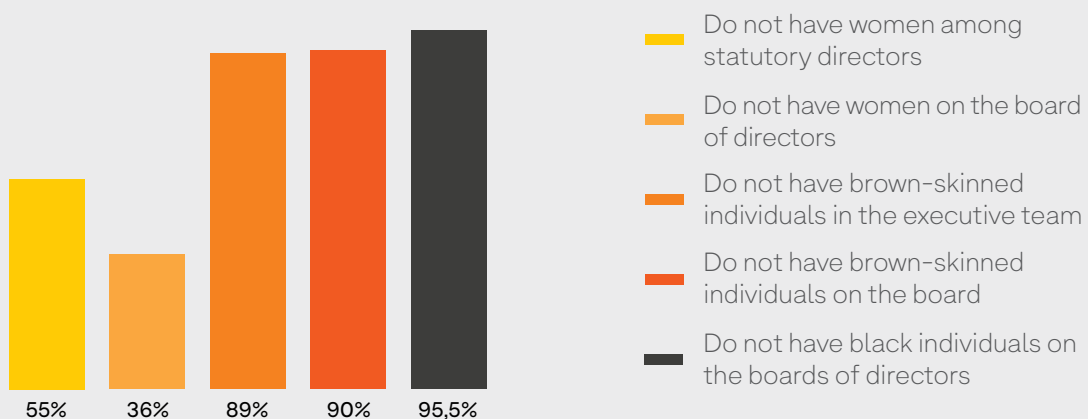


For **Daniel Rezende**, relying solely on networking can compromise the board's effectiveness. **Photography: Glauber Prates.**

ring process of more diverse board members and in establishing responsible corporate governance in all aspects. In our selection processes, we look for candidates from different

backgrounds, with varied life stories, representing the diversity of a continental country like Brazil.”

DIVERSITY ON THE BOARDS AND EXECUTIVE TEAMS OF B3-LISTED COMPANIES



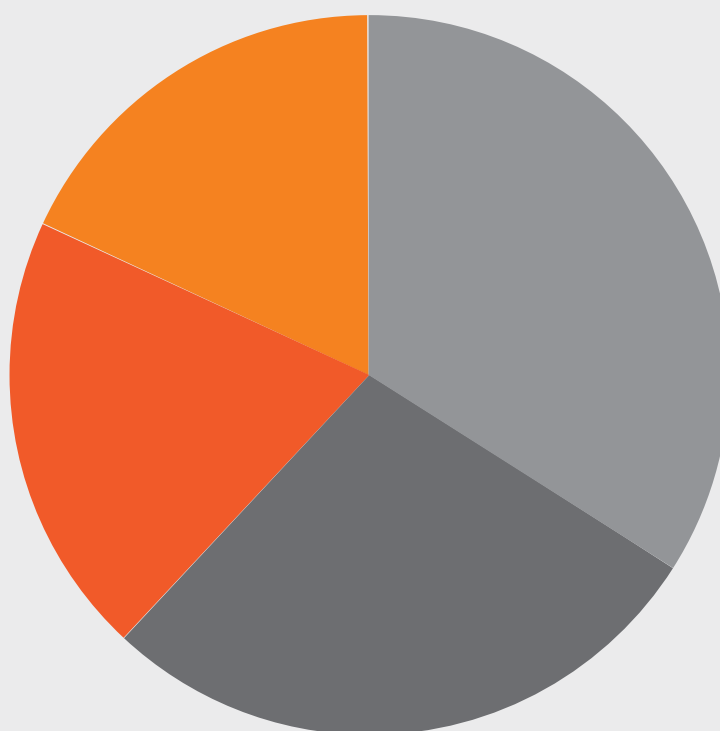
*Data from 343 B3 companies. Reference Forms 06/2023

“We understand that all voices need to be heard and considered fairly and impartially, regardless of gender identity, race, sexual orientation, or disability. Combining this diversity with an objective, competency-based approach, focusing on skills, experiences, and achievements relevant to the role, has yielded excellent results for our clients—our success rate in executive selections is 99%.”

THE BENEFITS OF EXECUTIVE SELECTION

Philippe Eyer, VP of the global executive search network EMA Partners, emphasizes that selection processes with external expert evaluation involve comprehensive and impartial analyses of candidates' qualifications and

BOARD MEMBERS' EXPERIENCE



- 34% | More than 10 years of board experience
- 28% | 5 to 10 years of board experience
- 20% | Less than 3 years of board experience
- 18% | 3 to 5 years of board experience

**Board Members Survey Latam | IGCLA*



According to Philippe Eyer, one of the key advantages of selection processes is ensuring comprehensive and impartial analyses. Photography: EMA Partners

experiences. Through exclusive tools and expert knowledge, it is possible to reach executives whose profiles align with the companies' short- and long-term goals. It is important to stress that each organizational reality requires a specific executive profile, and consultancies support companies in this direction as well. Many companies already have established boards and need restructuring, while others are implementing corporate governance and will require a professional with specific experiences. Eyer explains that the processes are guided by studies and performance metrics of the candidates, identifying the results achieved, industry knowledge, and strategic acumen for the board. "By prioritizing merit and expertise over personal connections, compa-

nies mitigate the risks of favoritism and conflicts of interest, promoting transparency and fairness in the selection process."

EXCLUSIVE MENTORSHIPS

In addition to hiring board members, C-levels, and other leadership positions, executive search consultancies also offer mentorship to top executives, contributing to their awareness and training on diversity, unconscious biases, skill development, guidance on board dynamics, and support in addressing the complexities of modern times.

HOW CAN CONSULTANCIES SUPPORT BOARDS?

Development:

Focus on enhancing essential board skills, such as strategic thinking, governance, risk management, and financial literacy.

Career:

Development of clear career paths for senior executives, including routes to board positions.

Succession:

Identification and preparation of internal talent for board positions, ensuring successful transitions in executive roles.

Mentorship:

Individualized guidance to help overcome governance complexities and improve the effectiveness of each board member.



Photography: Karolina Grabowska / Pexel

OBSERVATORY

HOW THE PRESSURE FOR PERFECTION IMPACTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

You don't need to be exceptional to progress and do well.



Photography: Yankrukov / Pexels.

“I could have done better,” said an inner voice during those distant college days. Persistent, this voice grew louder during the early professional experiences and didn’t quiet even after the hard-won achievement of a leadership position. It’s no wonder: in a highly competitive environment, every effort seems insufficient compared to exceptional talents.

Though illustrative, this scene is a reality for a growing number of professionals who, aiming for grand performances, fall into the traps of perfectionism. According to Thomas Curran, a researcher at the London School of Business and one of the leading experts on the topic, there has been a 40% increase in socially prescribed perfectionism over the past 30 years—where individuals are excessively vigilant about their performance, especially in comparison to others.

Despite the rise in perfectionism, studies do not suggest it is linked to improvements in professional development or company results, as recent research from York St. John and Bath Universities in the UK confirms. According to the data, the pressure for perfection is not driving success; on the contrary, it’s contributing to high rates of mental illness, stress, anxiety, and depression.

THE FEAR OF NOT APPEARING PERFECT

Even though the idea of perfectionism has been debated, many professional environments not only accept it but also consider it positive. It’s still very common for job candidates to cite it as a self-compliment disguised as a flaw (no matter how cliché that may

sound). This fact is explained by historical factors: for a long time, we associated perfectionism with high standards of delivery, motivation, and discipline. But it’s important to understand that these characteristics differ from perfectionism for a simple reason: they are achievable.

Perfectionism, however, does not set high standards. It sets unrealistic standards—it sees failure to achieve a goal, even one that was practically impossible, as a sign of weakness in various aspects of life. This condition leads many people to give up on their goals, prevents them from creating, from trying something different because the fear of not appearing perfect is far greater than the desire to try.

THE ORIGIN

There are several studies that link perfectionism to excessive demands in childhood, leading to tension, fear of disapproval, and limited creativity. According to British research, this phenomenon has grown significantly in recent years—today’s university students are much more prone to perfectionism than those of the 1990s and 2000s.

Further studies suggest that this culture of perfectionism in childhood can be understood as a reflection of the excessive demands that parents place on themselves, striving to achieve more and more. When the idea of success is based on accomplishments, failure is overemphasized and, in many cases, deemed unacceptable.



Photography: Karolina Grabowska/ Pexels.

THE NEED FOR SOCIAL APPROVAL

The growth of devotion to exceptional performances is also explained by the rise and excessive use of social media. According to Hootsuite and We Are Social, Brazil is the 3rd highest consumer of social media worldwide, averaging 3 hours and 41 minutes per day. Even though we know the perfect life portrayed on social media doesn't exist, many

people still judge their own worth based on comparisons or the number of likes a colleague receives.

The need for social approval is not new. On the contrary, it has always existed. The difference lies in the magnitude that this pressure to appear perfect has taken with the excessive use of social media. According to the same research, the presence in virtual environments has generated feelings of inadequacy and anxiety, leading many people to

consider themselves not good enough—extending beyond physical appearance to professional performances, for example.

WOMEN FACE MORE PRESSURE FOR PERFECTION

The pressure for aesthetic perfection, affecting over 70% of women, echoes across various social roles for women. They are expected to be caring, understanding, and dedicated in every task they undertake in their numerous work roles. Not surprisingly, perfectionism and the need for women to do much more and better are ingrained not only in women's minds but also in many work environments and at home.

This is evident as women face more barriers to reaching leadership positions—not just in the company but also in their family routines. They are more often tested and questioned about their competence, lead in the rates of microaggressions (such as being silenced or embarrassed), and face wage disparities (men earn 25% more on average). These factors help explain why women occupy only 29% of leadership positions in Brazilian companies, according to the National Confederation of Industry (CNI).

GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE THE EXCEPTION

It's important to treat grand accomplishments as they are: exceptions. Despite the extraordinary performances you may have seen on LinkedIn, this is not the reality for the vast majority, nor is it a prerequisite for professional and personal growth. Perfection, as we've clarified in this article, is inhuman and unattainable. People fail, have ups and downs, and do not always exceed expectations.

The fear of making mistakes, or not seeming good enough, cannot outweigh the desire to try—this is the conclusion of the various studies used in this article. Instead of focusing on what isn't pleasing, invest time in identifying and developing your strengths. Understanding your potential and dedicating yourself to nurturing each one of them is one of the safest ways to protect against depression and anxiety. By adopting this new attitude, that inner voice that insists on bringing you down will gradually give way to thoughts of encouragement, pride, and self-confidence.

SLOW DOWN

THE UNSPOKEN

*"I cannot blame anyone for the fate I have given myself.
As the only one responsible, only I can change it. And I will."
—Fernando Sabino, in the book "O Encontro Marcado"*

By Thelma M. Teixeira

How many times have you held back from expressing a thought or feeling to someone, fearing it might bother them, lacking the courage, thinking it might hurt them, or even fearing it could harm the other person?

I watched the movie *The Great Escape* and found so many points for reflection and learning (in addition to the good laughs) that I couldn't list them all in just one text. As a psychologist, I want to highlight an aspect that may go unnoticed amid the importance of so many others but is fundamental in relationships in general. This is about the unspoken.

We know by heart all the factors responsible for effective communication and interpersonal relationships. There is a vast literature on this topic. However, the "unspoken" and its consequences are rarely explored. I want to talk about it through the events in *The Great Escape*, which can illustrate various situations in our lives.

The couple in the film has a 70-year-long relationship and gets along well. During a trip by the husband (the origin of the film's title), he reveals to a new friend advice he gave to a colleague during the war, also 70 years ago. The consequence of that advice caused him a deep sense of guilt, which he kept to himself. He never spoke to anyone about what happened. The new friend, in turn, had confided his condition as an alcoholic, triggered by an experience during the war that also caused him a deep sense of guilt.

At this point, I remembered the famous book *The Kite Runner*. The protagonist, as a child, accused his friend of something he didn't do, causing significant turmoil in his friend's life and later in his friend's son's life. The situation is only remedied when he manages to rescue his friend's son for a new life and thus frees himself from the feeling of guilt.

Let me clarify that not all unspoken matters are necessarily about guilt. There's another unspoken situation in the movie when the wife reflects on two important occa-

sions in her and her husband's lives. She refrained from saying what she didn't want him to do. Instead, she encouraged him to do it, thinking it would be good for him. Her action isn't about guilt but about taking responsibility for her omission.

We often confuse guilt with responsibility. Guilt is an emotion, a feeling of regret for something said or unsaid, done or not done. Responsibility refers to behavior, action—it's about taking on the consequences of a decision or action.

To avoid giving away too much of the film, my writing may seem enigmatic. Let me clarify by returning to the beginning of the text. The unspoken is what would have been important to say but was withheld. Whether out of lack of courage, fear of hurting or harming the other person, or fear of exposing oneself.

I believe, from personal and professional experience, that everyone has unspoken matters, and we need to deal with them. I'm not advocating that we should say everything that comes to mind, everything we feel, and all our intimate thoughts. Everyone has their limits. But I've had experiences working as a human development psychologist and can assure you that it's healthy, at some point, to reveal your unspoken thoughts if they weren't expressed at the right time.

Returning to the movie: after revealing the truth to his friend, the husband tells his wife about the event and the feelings that had troubled him for so many years. In a beautiful scene, she listens, shares her opinion, and provides him with the much-needed catharsis.

I said I could "guarantee that it's healthy" to act this way. Guaranteeing may sound a bit arrogant because we know we don't have absolute certainties and can't simplify everything into good or bad, right or wrong. We are complex, paradoxical, ever-changing, and systemic beings.

However, I encourage you to inquire, investigate, and question your interpersonal communication in life. What would you have liked to say to some people but didn't? How cathartic, therapeutic, and relieving it was to be able to talk about it, or simply acknowledge it to yourself. I encourage you to do it.



Thelma M. Teixeira is a psychologist, psych dramatist, business administration specialist, and columnist.

In the age of excess, *singularity*.
Amidst a maelstrom of voices,
models, options: *your choice*

We present the new concept of
Dasein and invite you to tell us –
where can your ideas take you?
Where do you want to be in the future?



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