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EXTRAORDINARY FLASH EDITION

Quarantine Testimonials



In this my tale of the life of those who use the body as a working tool, dancers, sportsmen, acrobats, circus performers, in this period of quarantine now almost worldwide, I want to present the testimony of the one who really know what it means to no more have the freedom to use her instrument, who had to adapt, had to bend to life, but thanks to her enormous inner strength and spirituality has been able to rise and resurrect like the phoenix. I think that the quarantine is certainly harder for her than for all of us. Today I would like to introduce you to a very dear friend of mine, with whom I shared a rich experience for me from a work point of view as well as from a human one. She is not a dancer, today she is a very high level sportswoman, esteemed and respected for her many victories and medals, an extraordinary person and she was already an extraordinary person when we worked together on the creation of my choreography on her show of equilibrium and contortionism.

Today the testimony of **Silke Pan**. Happy Easter to all of you.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: Silke, where you come from and what was your path to date?

Silke Pan: I am of German origin, born in Bonn. I did my schooling at the Rodolphe Steiner school and my baccalaureate in French-speaking Switzerland to continue with the national circus school in Berlin. I worked for about fifteen years as a circus artist, trapeze artist - contortionist, until the day when an accident during an aerial number in an entertainment park in Italy made me paraplegic. After that, my husband and I moved to Switzerland, where we founded our balloon and inflatable decoration company, Canniballoon Team. Next to that, movement, working on my body, has remained an important part of my life, a way for me to express myself and to feel serene, both physically and mentally. In 2008, after 7 months in the hospital, I launched myself into a sport, at that time completely new to me, the handbike. I had discovered this discipline by admiring athletes with a disability while I was still recovering. In 2012, I started to compete and I had the pleasure to win some nice titles at international level, in world cup, world championships or at the Giro d'Italia. My sport's career started with the German federation, but a request for Swiss naturalization was in progress... Until I got it, I raced for an Italian team, of which I am still a member today. Last year I was admitted to the Swiss national team and my next goal is a qualification for the Paralympic Games in Tokyo... which have just been postponed for a year because of the global health crisis.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: *How long have you been in quarantine?*

Silke Pan: Since 11th March, the restrictive containment measures have been tightened and have become increasingly restrictive. In the following days I received one cancellation after another, both professional and sporting events. It has now been just over five weeks since I have been at home and I no longer see my family and friends. It seems like a long time and yet I think I can say that we have not yet reached the end of this episode. Out of respect and solidarity for those around us, we will have to maintain this quarantine so that contamination by COVID-19 can be drastically reduced.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: *How do you do your daily training, how do you organize yourself?*

Silke Pan: Training alone at home is by far not as motivating as riding outdoors with friends. But you adapt and find solutions. I've tinkered with the facilities so that I can work on my strength and resistance. And then, I concocted an endurance training session by pedalling on a roller. Even if it's not the most pleasant thing, you have to have self-discipline, persevere and grit your teeth and wait for better days.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: *What are the most common feelings and thoughts?*

Silke Pan: We are living in a spring that will certainly remain in our memories for a long time. Rather than going out, admiring nature waking up, breathing in the scent of flowers and listening to birds singing in the forest, the rapid spread of coronavirus is pushing us to more introspection and reflection. Moments of meditation, within our four walls, that perhaps allow us to have a new look at what is happening. There is a lot of uncertainty around us, nobody knows yet how the situation

will evolve and when we will be able to resume a normal life. Therefore, I am currently avoiding projecting myself too much into the future. I live from day to day with gratitude for all that this ordeal teaches me and brings me. By dint of receiving dozens of bad news every day, I have to do a great work on myself not to let myself be pulled down, to keep my thoughts into something constructive and joyful. I then look out the window and remember that I have gone through much more trying times than this one and that, in the end, there are so many things around us for which we can rejoice... as long as we accept that we want to look at them, feel them, capture them with our hearts.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: *Who do you spend quarantine with, and how's the mood.*

Silke Pan: I spend the quarantine with my husband and my dog. They're very good company. This confinement is a period of solitude for two...or three, and I take it philosophically.

Francesca Senzasono Groux: *What advice or what would you like to communicate at this difficult time for everyone?*

Silke Pan: I think it's important not to get caught up in an emotional whirlwind. When we hear bad news, we need to take a step back and look at what is happening to us from different angles, different points of view. And, I can't stress this enough, don't let ourselves be manipulated by fear. Let's try to keep a healthy and serene mind. Let's stay confident. After the dark night, the morning sun will be even more beautiful! Let's act with respect and love for our neighbour rather than sulking and indulging in criticism. Let's take advantage of this time to tidy up, both in our apartment and in our own lives. This will allow us to resume our daily life with a lighter heart. This ordeal is not going to last forever. However, if we choose to learn constructive lessons from it, we will come out of it grown, stronger and more fulfilled for the rest of our lives.

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