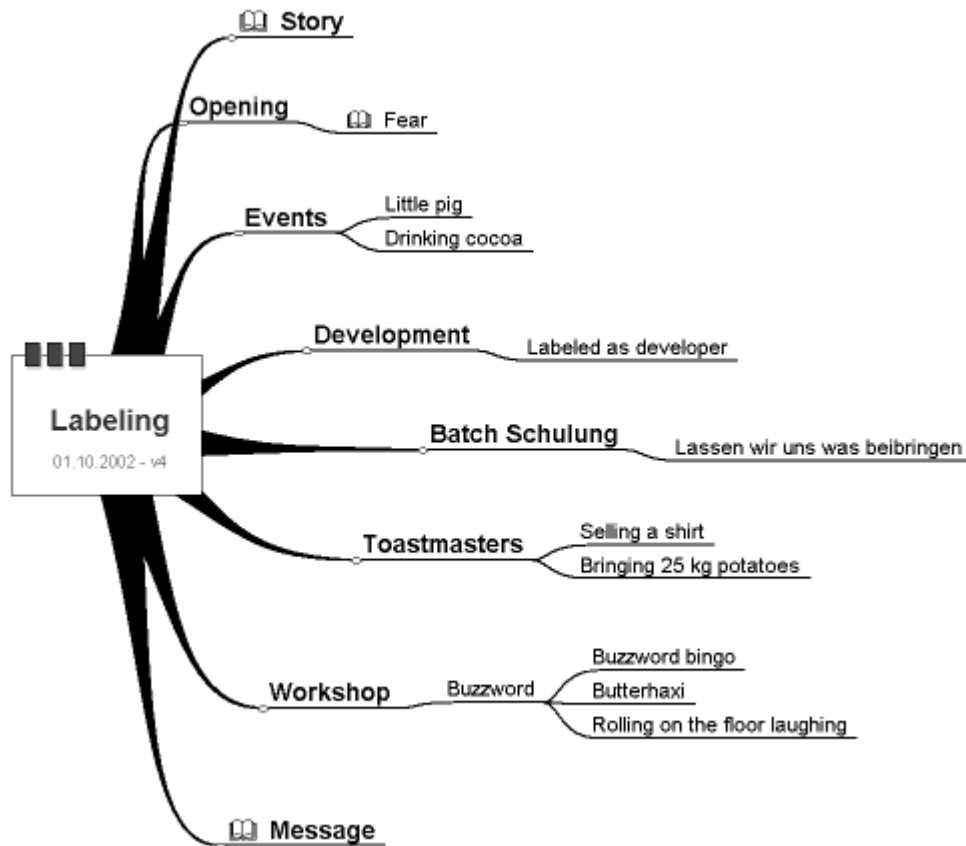


Labeling



1 Story

Three times in my life I have heard. Mr. Hartmann, don't you know that you are feared?

The first time I was surprised, the second time I was flattened and the third time I decided I had to change.

In reality I like to make people laugh, I like people laughing but I'm no good in telling jokes. Most of the times I am rather a victim of a situational comic that was not introduced by myself. And sometimes that comic was extremely difficult to stand.

Take for example one of my first public appearances: My friend Werner and I, both at the age of 12 were performing at a concert playing some Schubert music for four hands. Public appearances in front of 200 people give you some butterflies in your stomach, but I have to admit that at that time I felt rather relaxed because I had liked the music and I knew that I could play it.

My relaxed mood changed immediately when Werner produced his magic talisman. It looked like this: (big pig) Now, I use the big pig so you can see it. The actual pig was smaller, like this one (medium pig), actually it was even smaller (real small pig). We looked at it and broke out in laughter. We decided that the pig would go with us on stage. (take chair) the pig would rest on the left, the hidden side of the score board and we would start to play. The whole 7 minutes I went like this (grimace). Sometimes we had to pause. A girl was sitting to the left of my side, ready to turn the pages. When she reached over, my eyes followed her arm and of course I had also to look at the pig.

I remember that after bowing and returning to the stage 3 times I literally rolled on the floor with laughter. ROTFL.

Another event from my childhood implied the same friend together with another friend drinking cocoa. I don't recall the remark that led to disaster, but if you have not encountered the sudden urge to laugh while you are drinking from a cup, you don't know what I am talking about.

Didn't I tell you that in my profession I am feared. That was not always so: I was in development for more than 9 years. When I sat in my room that could be overheard by people walking around in the corridor they would witness my exclamation: "I am so stupid.", "What a nonsense", "How can somebody be as silly as me?" Interspersed with sudden outbursts of fury, despair and utmost anger. They did not know what I was doing so they believed in the tragic of my existence and in the inbecility of the pursuit of my job. Talking about it today, All these excitements were just a harmless expression of some frustration of a job that had taken me two hours instead of one, while somebody else would have probably worked a week on it. Nowadays, I can prove, that I was really a quick worker at that time, but still I was frustrated when I was slower than my own expectations would ask for.

As a developer I was accepted as the genius fool, but later I had to change the company, because people would have never seen a serious salesman in me and life would have been too difficult to follow suit in that same company.

I learned to become serious, to appear serious.

Situational comic came again with Toastmasters. As you will see the shirts hanging there, I never go out without some spare shirts anymore, since I have experienced the hard spot sale of a shirt in Switzerland. They literally bought off my dinner jacket white shirt in a disco, which was ok with me, but all the other people laughed at me.

I can not quite understand why people would laugh if they see me handling a bag of potatoes, which I considered a perfect present when asked to bring salads for a party. Unfortunately, I was in another city and I had no means to prepare a potato salad so I thought I would make up in bringing a larger portion of unsaladed potatoes. I remember, that Justin and I bought a 25 kg biological breed potato lot as a token of our appreciation.

The final breakthrough however came during this last weekend, the final success in getting labeled and making the transition of a fear inspiring guy to the laughing reflex associated human being I would so much like to be.

In a workshop this weekend we had to learn nonsense messages and take out one special word from them:

My message, that- believe me - I did not come up with on my own - went like that.

Kriksi, kraksi, Butterhaxi,

Schönen Gruß vom Hühnerfuß

Und zum Schluß Breitfuß.

A childrens' rhyme that translates to roughly:

1,2 (finnish), Butterhaxi (a leg made from butter)

Greetings from a chicken's leg,

Finally, from a broad foot.

You understand, that the meaning of it was actually none. Our task was to use one word and work with it. Well the major word is Butterhaxi. The magic word.

During the course of 3 hours, we were walking through the theater room and pronouncing the word with different intonations.

Like the saddest word in the world. Butterhaxi

Like the funniest word in the world. Butterhaxi

Like the most horrible word in the world. Butterhaxi

Like the most obscene word in the world. Butterhaxi

Like the funniest world in the world. Butterhaxi

...

1.1 Fear

Machiavelli:

It is better to be feared than loved, more prudent to be cruel than compassionate.

Aristotle

Wicked men obey for fear, but the good for love.

Albert Camus

Nothing is more despicable than respect based on fear.

W.H.Auden , English born Poet, 107 till 73

Among those whom I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love,
I can: all of them make me laugh.

Mark Twain

Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

2 Message

Enjoy if people laugh at you!

Christian Morgenstern

Laughter is not a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is the best ending for one.