Balancing acts between extremes: a mountaineer and expert for neonatology

Hubert Messner, Lenz Koppelstätter
The Balancing Act
[Der schmale Grat]
As a doctor and explorer between life and death

Hubert Messner, born in 1953, grew up in a mountain village in South Tyrol. He studied medicine and trained as a neonatologist in Toronto and London before joining the neonatology unit in Bozen. He accompanied his brother, mountaineering legend Reinhold Messner, several times as the expedition doctor in the Himalayas and in ice deserts.

He fights for the smallest and most fragile – a commitment that has marked his medical career from the very beginning. Hubert Messner, Reinhold Messner's brother, is a neonatologist – a doctor who cares for newly born children.

When does life begin? When is it worth living? And when is it better to gently let a small patient go? These are all questions that are important to him, not only as a senior consultant in Bozen Hospital, one of the best-known intensive-care neonatology units in Europe, where he has supervised numerous premature births, but also as a father whose oldest son was born far too early.

It is very often the balancing acts between extremes we can learn most from, as Hubert Messner knows only too well. The focus is always on feeling the value of life and, at critical moments, making the right decision.

It is with empathy and passion that Hubert Messner tells of his childhood and teenage years in the mountains, of his professional work as a neonatologist, his most difficult cases and the adventurous expeditions side by side with his brother Reinhold.

Lenz Koppelstätter, born in 1982, studied politics and social science. After training at the German School of Journalism he worked for various media such as FAZ and Die Zeit and contributes to GEO and Salon.

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