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WORK AND LIFE CONNECTIONS

What do you currently perceive as the biggest challenge or the biggest opportunity in your life?

(KG) Definitely the combination of growth and sustainability at MAXIN'S. As a company, we're growing, new markets are opening, more people and clients are joining, and the responsibilities are increasing... But at the same time, I'm very aware that if we want to be successful in the long term, we need to grow wisely – with thoughtfulness, with people, and for people.

And then there's also a personal challenge – staying in shape and beating my colleagues in the company sports challenge. We have an internal 92-day competition tracking calories burned through apps and I'll admit, I've found I can't sleep if I'm in second place. I'm just a competitive type, and when something motivates me, I go all in...

(OZ) I see one of the greatest challenges lies in building and nurturing meaningful relationships—at a time when people often feel stressed or overwhelmed. Whether at work or in our personal lives, it has never been more essential to cultivate understanding, empathy, and a sense of shared purpose.

On the other hand, the greatest opportunity lies in the accelerating breakthroughs in clean, affordable energy. I am convinced we are on the verge of moving beyond not only fossil fuels but also many of the current, often inefficient, green

energy solutions. Fusion technology, in particular, is progressing at such a pace that I genuinely believe I'll witness its implementation within my lifetime.



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On a more personal level, I am captivated by the integration of robotics and AI, both in our workplaces and in our homes. This shift has the potential to completely transform how we work, create, and collaborate, opening doors to possibilities that are still difficult to fully comprehend.

What achievement from the past 12 months are you proud of the most?

(KG) I'm proud of the entire MAXIN'S team. Achieving a leading position among HR agencies in Slovakia isn't just about the numbers; it's about people, values, and the courage to sometimes

go against the grain. And on a personal note, I'm really happy that even after years at the company, I can still get excited about new projects, whether it's digitalization or creative ideas – like internal challenges that bring people together in a very different way than regular meetings do.

(OZ) Professionally, I'm proud that we chose the right path—identifying and seizing opportunities with clarity and confidence in 2024. One particularly rewarding achievement was welcoming a new director to our private interconnected school—a kindergarten and grammar school nestled in Krásne Sady Mlynica, surrounded by the beauty and inspiration of nature. This school offers holistic, authentic education using innovative methods in a safe, natural environment under the guidance of qualified and compassionate educators.

Seeing a highly skilled individual apply for a leadership position here confirmed that the work of the past seven years has truly made a positive impact. Moreover, Krásne Sady is not just about education, it also embodies a vision of sustainable and regenerative living that contributes to a better future for our children. The latest Poľana Krásne Sady project takes this vision even further, showing that in a world changing faster than ever, it's increasingly important to find ways to live meaningfully and in harmony with ourselves, our surroundings, and each other, fostering a strong sense of community

Achieving professional success often involves navigating many challenges. The responsibility towards their families and their employees makes business leaders carefully consider each minute of their day. We want to know how they like to spend their time out of work, what inspires them and motivates them.

and authentic human connections that make life truly fulfilling.

On the family front, I was deeply moved when my son recovered from a serious injury. Watching him back on his feet—and even standing on the winner's podium—just six or seven weeks later was nothing short of inspiring. It reminded me of the incredible resilience of the human spirit.



That they won't need a "work-life balance" because they'll live life fully—not just after working hours.

KATARÍNA GARAJOVÁ



What is the favorite part of your day and why?

(KG) Mornings. I love the moments of quiet before the daily whirlwind begins. I don't drink coffee, but I do "sip" thoughts and plans. This short ritual helps me set my priorities for the day.

And at the end of the day, I enjoy the sports recap, because when I know I beat a colleague by 800 calories, I sleep even better.

(OZ) It's the early morning hours. There's a kind of profound silence that exists

both within and around me during that time, a stillness that allows me to think deeply, plan purposefully, and connect with myself before the world wakes up.

What regular habit or routine has had the biggest positive impact on your life?

(KG) Daily movement. Not necessarily a marathon, but making a conscious effort to move even on busy days. It's during movement that the best ideas come, my head clears, and sometimes even my frustration is released.

It's also the only time when no one needs anything from me, and I have space just for myself.

(OZ) Reading, without a doubt. Constant learning is the fuel that keeps me evolving and adapting. Also, discovering and receiving classical Chinese medicine treatment as a form of preventive healthcare has been instrumental in maintaining balance and resilience over the years.

What advice would you give to your 20-something-year old self?

(KG) Less stress, more trust. Everything that's meant to happen will come – and when it does, you'll be ready for it.

Also: don't be afraid to ask, to reach out, to try. Before someone else tells you no, say yes to yourself.

(OZ) Be ready to adapt quickly. Seek out mentors, especially those with at least a decade of experience in the field you're exploring, and

absorb their wisdom. And before you make your first move into any new area, challenge yourself to rethink your assumptions at least three times. It's a small step that can save you from many detours.

What are the parts of your work that still excite you and give you motivation?

(KG) People. All those moments when someone makes progress, solves a problem, comes up with something new, and you can see that they care.

I also really enjoy mentoring. Passing on experience but also listening. Every conversation with a colleague or partner is an opportunity to learn something.

(OZ) What excites me most is the visible, positive change that emerges as processes unfold. For me, it's all about the journey rather than the ultimate goal. Each new challenge comes with greater responsibility and risk and that's where growth happens. And of course, the continuous opportunity to learn is a motivator in itself.

If you had to make a career switch, in what other profession can you imagine yourself?

(KG) Maybe something between a mentor, business coach, and trainer. I've always been fascinated by helping someone discover their potential.

And I'll admit – I'd quite enjoy organizing expeditions or challenges that combine physical endurance with teamwork.

(OZ) Art or science. Both domains embody curiosity, creativity, and the desire to understand or express the world around us and that resonates deeply with me.

Can you name three sources you have recently learned from or have inspired you the most?

(KG) **Podcasts** (e.g., Jay Shetty, Dare to Lead) – they give space for slowing down and reflecting.

The experiences of other leaders – often it's in informal conversations where you discover the most.

My own practice and silence – paradoxically, the more pressure there is, the more I'm able to bring out from within myself.

(OZ) I have recently learned and found inspiration from three sources: the Lex Fridman podcast, where his deep and thoughtful conversations continually challenge me to think beyond the obvious; my colleagues, whose expertise often surpasses mine and whose perspectives constantly inspire me to grow; and my kids, whose joyful curiosity reminds me to approach life with wonder and open-mindedness.

What is your biggest fear for the generation of today's children? What about the biggest hope?

(KG) Biggest fear: That today's children will grow up in a world overwhelmed by information but lacking in wisdom. That they will get lost in the digital noise, lose the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, and focus more on comparing themselves than on developing their own uniqueness.

Greatest hope: That they will know how to separate work from life, success from self-worth, and performance from happiness. That they will maintain their personal boundaries, be more present in the moment, and not sacrifice their private lives in pursuit of recognition. That they won't need a "work-life balance" because they'll live life fully—not just after working hours.

(OZ) I don't fear for this generation. I see challenges they'll face, of course—like staying grounded and deeply focused amid the constant noise of the digital age. I hope they'll grow to truly understand who they are, where they come from, and what that means for them. I also hope they'll learn to communicate, to accept others, to make mistakes, and, most importantly, to grow from them. And my greatest hope for them? That they'll ride the wave of exponential progress. They have opportunities we could only dream of and I trust they'll find their way to thrive.

To provide you with some bookish inspiration, this section of the *Connection* magazine features reading tips from various interesting people related to AmCham Slovakia. We have approached them with the following question:

What book has left the greatest impression on you recently and why?



THE INFINITE GAME

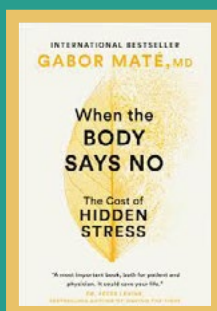
by Simon Sinek

It reminds me that we're not playing for short-term wins, but for lasting value. That strongly resonates

recommended by

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with my view of leadership – it's not a sprint, it's an ultramarathon.



WHEN THE BODY SAYS NO

by Gabor Maté

An enlightening exploration of how

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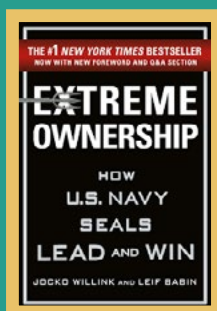
English version:
The Hidden Life of Trees

A fascinating dive into how the German mindset of long-term, traditional

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thinking challenges us to rethink our relationship with nature.



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