

# Claudia Schwinghammer

Championing Mental Wellness at Work

**Claudia Schwinghammer**  
Founder & CEO,  
SPARK - ready  
to transform



**M**ental health in corporate environments is crucial for ensuring the emotional, psychological and social well-being of employees. It involves how employees handle stress, interact with colleagues or team members and maintain a healthy work-life balance. A positive environment develops fortitude, productivity and overall health, while poor mental health can lead to

burnout, decreased job satisfaction and lower performance. One such notable personality encouraging a culture where mental health can be openly discussed without fear of judgment or repercussions is **Claudia Schwinghammer**, the **Founder & CEO of SPARK - ready to transform**. She is at the forefront of reforming how mental health is integrated into corporate settings. Through her

innovative workplace coaching approach, Claudia is reconceptualizing mental wellness in the workplace by focusing on personal transformations and enhancing overall organizational health and productivity. Recognizing that leadership plays a critical role in shaping company culture, SPARK primarily works with leaders to foster an environment that prioritizes mental health. By equipping leaders with the tools and knowledge to address mental wellness, SPARK ensures that the positive changes resonate throughout the entire organization, ultimately leading to a healthier, more productive workplace. A distinguishing aspect of Claudia's approach lies in its focus on the subconscious mind, which governs 95% of our behaviors, beliefs and responses. Unlike conventional practices that concentrate on conscious thought processes, Claudia's approach integrates latest

know how and research of **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**, **Hypnotherapy**, **NLP** and **Neuroscience** to address deep-seated limiting beliefs. By realizing the potential of the subconscious, Claudia enables her clients to achieve their best selves, fostering not just incremental change but significant, lasting transformation. This tailored support addresses individual needs, leading to meaningful and lasting improvements in both professional and personal lives. **Compassionate Leadership in the Workplace** Claudia faced a deeply personal and challenging experience when her father contracted COVID-19, leading to his passing in August 2021. During his time in a coma, Claudia, drawing from her expertise as a Hypnotherapist, created an audio recording for him to listen to. Remarkably, after listening to the audio,



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her father's lung function began to improve, leaving the doctors astonished by this unexpected development.

This moment reinforced Claudia's belief in the efficacy of her approach, which she had previously employed with private clients. It was this profound experience that gave her the courage to establish SPARK, a company dedicated to supporting leaders in making a meaningful impact on the world by addressing and overcoming their limiting beliefs.

Inspired by her journey and a challenging experience with her leader at the time, she recognized a critical need in the world for more empathy and authenticity. Through SPARK, she aims to help leaders break free from inner emptiness and foster a deeper connection with themselves and others, ultimately contributing to a more compassionate and effective leadership style.

**Embracing Change in Uncertain Times**

In June 2021, Claudia found

herself sitting on her loggia, overwhelmed with emotion. Her father was in the hospital, enduring severe suffering from the COVID-19 virus and fighting for his life.

At the same time, she was balancing the demands of home-schooling her daughter as a single mother while managing a full-time job under a non-empathic manager. It was during this difficult moment that she made a life-changing decision to start her own business, driven by a commitment to act on

human values and create positive change in the world.

This realization brought a moment of profound clarity, akin to a turning point in a relationship when everything suddenly falls into place. It became undeniable that it was time to let go and embark on a new beginning.

Claudia's tears of sadness transformed into tears of optimism and joy as she envisioned her future. The thought of pursuing this new path brought her a deep sense of freedom and

relief, solidifying her resolve to embark on this journey and make a meaningful impact.

**Techniques for Balancing Passion and Productivity**

Claudia acknowledges that maintaining balance can be challenging. Despite her best efforts to stay organized, there are days when her life feels like a roller coaster. This is an area where she recognizes

the need for improvement, even though she is deeply passionate about the work she does.

**Transforming Leadership Culture**

Claudia has dedicated 20 years in business with 15 of those years spent in the pharmaceutical industry, where she gained invaluable experience. In June, she released her first book as a co-author, focusing on the



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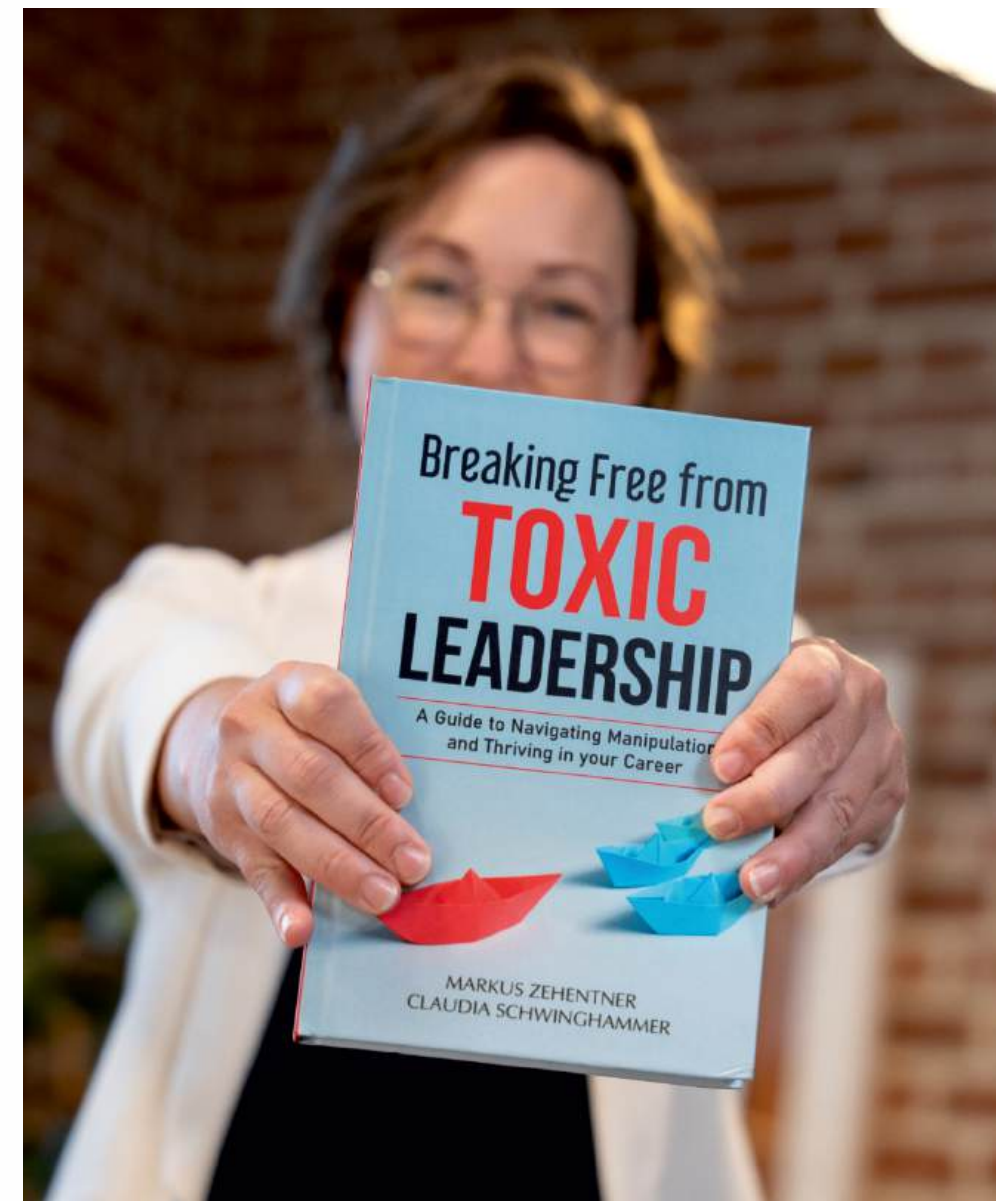
critical issue of toxic leadership.

In addition to her leadership expertise, she has a strong background in mental health. In Austria, becoming a psychotherapist requires six years of rigorous training, which includes extensive practical experience in hospitals and social institutions. This comprehensive training has equipped her with a deep understanding of mental health, further enriching her professional journey.

**The Importance of Detail in a Visionary Career**

Claudia faced numerous challenges throughout her career. One of her challenges was paying close attention to details, such as legal requirements. As a visionary with a strong focus on the big picture, she sometimes found it difficult to avoid overlooking details or not giving them enough attention.

She also learned that people she worked with could be full of surprises—some pleasantly so, others less so. This experience made her more cautious about whom she trusted, as there were





situations where, upon reflection, she realized she had been too trusting.

Despite these challenges, she views them as opportunities for growth. The process of overcoming these obstacles, though sometimes hurtful, has contributed significantly to

her personal and professional development.

**Overcoming Local Challenges and Embracing Global Impact**

Despite SPARK's international success, Claudia faced significant challenges in gaining

recognition within Austria. The country's tendency to be slow to acknowledge innovation was a hurdle she encountered.

As Falco famously said, *"In Vienna, you have to die first before they celebrate you, but then you have a long life."* This quote

encapsulates Claudia's experience with the Austrian mindset and condenses the difficulties she faced in her home country.

Undeterred, Claudia's ambition to make a global impact drove her to focus on international expansion.



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solutions, such as 1:1 transformational coaching. The positive impact of this approach often forms the foundation for long-term partnerships.

Notably, all clients who engaged with Claudia's services in 2023 have continued their partnerships into 2024, a strong indicator of the success and value of her work.

**Embracing Neurodiversity**

Claudia describes herself as a true enthusiast when it comes to learning—it's something she feels is in her blood.

Over the years, her passion for learning has only grown stronger. Once she began studying subjects she truly loved, she became fully immersed in them. There isn't a day that goes by without Claudia listening to an audiobook or watching international experts in their fields. She is particularly inspired by Gabor Maté, whom she regards as a brilliant and invaluable source for learning and development.

Recently, she became the first Neurodiversity Facilitator and Trainer in Austria, a milestone that reflects her commitment to staying at the forefront of her field. She prides herself on having a keen sense of what needs to be done today to ensure success tomorrow.

**Achieving Recognition for Mental Health Services**

Claudia envisions SPARK becoming a leading authority in mental health across Europe and eventually on a global scale.

A key goal for her is to raise awareness about the crucial connection between mental health, performance and productivity. Claudia believes that achieving these objectives requires a commitment to continuous personal and team growth, both nationally and internationally.

Recently, SPARK was recognized as one of the top 10 mental health services in Europe, making it the only Austrian company on the list. She hopes that her home country will come to appreciate their dedication and work with the same recognition and respect afforded by the international community.

**A Guide to Personal Growth**

Claudia advises finding a niche, pursuing something unique and special and having the courage to forge your path despite external pressures. She emphasizes the importance of stepping out of one's comfort zone to pursue what you truly love. Additionally, she believes in surrounding oneself with people who are supportive of your growth, as well as incorporating critical voices that ensure thorough consideration and preparation for success and fulfillment.

SPARK's approach, with its network of top-qualified coaches and services offered in 17 languages, quickly gained recognition abroad. This global perspective and commitment to excellence have become the foundation of SPARK's mission, driving its continued success and influence worldwide.

**Building Respect Among Stakeholders**

Claudia often found herself missing certain values during her time as an employee in the business world. Integrity, growth through innovation and respect for all stakeholders—including suppliers, coaches and partners—were values she believed were essential yet sometimes lacking in her previous work environments. These principles have since become foundational in her professional endeavors.

**Understanding the Dynamics of Quality and Compliance**

Having spent many years in the industry, Claudia gained

a deep understanding of quality standards, rules and compliance. Her experience also provided her with valuable insights into the inner workings of large organizations and the decision-making processes within them.

This extensive background has enabled her to approach challenges from a different perspective, allowing her to see things through a more informed and nuanced lens.

**Measuring the Impact of Mental Health Initiatives**

Claudia believes that the first step for companies is to recognize the importance of mental health within their teams and the costs associated with inaction. To address this, her company offers workshops and keynotes designed to raise internal awareness. These initial engagements often generate overwhelming interest from teams.

Once companies see the effectiveness of Claudia's approach and the value of what her team offers, they become more open to exploring deeper