



## Laura Winterling

Most leadership development assumes conditions that rarely exist when it matters. Knowing what a good decision looks like and making one under real pressure, with incomplete information and real consequences, are two different skills. Organisations rarely train the difference.

A former European Space Agency astronaut instructor and commercial helicopter pilot who helps organisations build the decision-making, communication, and team performance systems that hold up when conditions become genuinely difficult.

### Laura Winterling's 2026 Biography

#### Why organisations work with Laura Winterling

- Her reference point for high-stakes team performance is not a business school case study. She trained more than 80 international astronauts at ESA's European Astronaut Centre in conditions where errors carry mission-critical consequences.
- A master's in Physics and a second in Organisational Psychology (UCL) let her diagnose both the structural and human causes of team failure simultaneously. Most leadership consultants address one or the other.
- She is a certified Crew Resource Management instructor. CRM is the human-factors methodology aviation uses to systematically reduce error in complex operations, and it is mandatory recurrent training for working pilots. Organisations working with her receive a framework tested in environments far more demanding than their own.
- She authored the on-console handbook for Mission Control Europe: her understanding of how multinational teams coordinate under live operational pressure comes from having written the procedures that govern it.
- She is an active commercial helicopter pilot and helicopter flight instructor. The CRM principles she teaches in leadership rooms are her own working discipline in the air.

#### Biography highlights

- Astronaut Instructor, European Space Agency (European Astronaut Centre, Cologne); trained more than 80 international astronauts – including crews from NASA, ESA, and Roscosmos – on spacecraft systems for ISS modules
- Authored the on-console handbook for Mission Control Europe
- Commercial helicopter pilot and helicopter flight instructor
- Certified Crew Resource Management (CRM) instructor and licensed MBTI practitioner
- MSc in Physics, University of Bayreuth; MSc in Organisational

#### AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Moderating and Emcee
- Speaking

#### LAURA'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Change Management
- Cultural Intelligence
- Leadership
- Peak Performance
- Resilience & Stress Management

#### LANGUAGES: English, German

Psychology, University College London

- Three TEDx talks, including “From Perfection to Excellence” (TEDxUniMannheim), published on TED.com
- Founder and CEO, Space Time Concepts GmbH; clients include Mercedes-Benz, SAP, and Boston Consulting Group

## Biography

Laura Winterling spent nearly a decade as an Astronaut Instructor at the European Space Agency’s European Astronaut Centre in Cologne. She trained more than 80 international astronauts from NASA, ESA, and Roscosmos on the spacecraft systems they would rely on during missions to the International Space Station. In that environment, how a team communicates, decides, and recovers from error determines whether a mission succeeds.

Her responsibilities extended beyond the classroom at EAC. She worked across mission control centres in Toulouse, Houston, and Moscow, sat console during live ISS operations, and observed three Soyuz launch campaigns in Kazakhstan. She also authored the on-console handbook for Mission Control Europe, which specifies how multinational teams coordinate under live operational pressure.

She holds master’s degrees in Physics (University of Bayreuth) and Organisational Psychology (University College London), and is also a commercial helicopter pilot, helicopter flight instructor, and certified Crew Resource Management instructor. CRM is the human-factors methodology aviation uses to systematically reduce error in complex operations, and it is mandatory training for working pilots. Her teaching of these principles in leadership rooms is grounded in her own active practice of them in flight.

Since founding Space Time Concepts GmbH in 2016, she has taken these frameworks into leadership sessions at organisations including Mercedes-Benz, SAP, and Boston Consulting Group. Three TEDx talks make her central argument publicly available – that excellence under pressure can be designed and trained. “From Perfection to Excellence” (TEDxUniMannheim) and “Why Astronauts Don’t Need Telepathy” (TEDxHHL) are available on TED.com and YouTube.

## Key speaking topics

- Leadership and decision-making under operational pressure
- Crew Resource Management and human factors in organisations
- Team communication and structured debriefing
- High-reliability operations and organisational resilience
- Cross-cultural team performance in international programmes
- Excellence vs. perfection in professional and team development
- Leadership and followership as interdependent disciplines

## Ideal for

- Senior leadership teams and C-suite executives building capability for decision-making under uncertainty
- CHROs and people development leads designing resilience and high-performance team programmes
- Engineering, operations, and technology organisations where system failure carries real consequences
- Organisations managing international, cross-cultural, or mission-critical

teams

## **Audience outcomes**

- A clear framework for distinguishing team performance in stable conditions from performance under genuine pressure
- Practical understanding of Crew Resource Management principles and how they apply in non-aviation organisational settings
- Specific protocols for communication clarity, structured debriefing, and error recovery drawn from ISS mission operations
- A reframe of mistakes as diagnosable, recoverable data – not indicators of individual inadequacy
- Concrete tools for moving teams from competent to reliably high-performing in complex, multinational environments

## **Laura Winterling's 2026 talks & topics**

### **From Perfection to Excellence**

Draws on astronaut selection criteria to argue that organisations optimising for perfection undermine the resilience and learning capacity that sustained excellence actually requires.

#### **Key takeaways:**

- Why high-performing teams under pressure are built around excellence criteria, not zero-error expectations
- How the astronaut selection process identifies the traits that hold under mission conditions – and how organisations can apply the same lens to team development
- A practical reframe of professional mistakes as necessary data in the development of high-performance individuals and teams

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### **Efficient Decision Making**

Translates the structured decision-making protocols used in astronaut training and mission control into a framework for leaders facing high-pressure, time-constrained situations.

#### **Key takeaways:**

- How astronaut training distinguishes between fast decisions and rushed ones, and why the difference matters
  - The role of pre-agreed decision frameworks in reducing error when information is incomplete and consequences are real
  - A practical model for improving decision quality in leadership settings where conditions are unpredictable
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## Leadership and Followership

Examines the interdependence between leading and following through the lens of human spaceflight, arguing that followership is a trained discipline as consequential as leadership.

### Key takeaways:

- Why high-reliability operations treat the leader-follower relationship as a mutual accountability, not a hierarchy
- How role clarity under pressure reduces team friction and error – and what that means for organisations where individuals regularly move between both positions
- Specific behaviours that make followership effective in mission-critical team contexts

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## Why Astronauts Don't Need Telepathy

Presented as a TEDx talk at TEDxHHL, this session examines the structured communication and debriefing practices used by astronaut teams and why explicit protocols outperform assumed understanding.

### Key takeaways:

- Why high-performing space crews rely on formal communication structure rather than individual communication talent
- How structured debriefing after operations accelerates team learning and reduces the recurrence of error
- A practical model for building communication discipline and feedback protocols into teams without depending on individual aptitude

## Laura Winterling's Videos



## Laura Winterling's 2026 speaking fees

Specific fees fall within the ranges shown. These are presented as a guide only and are subject to change without notice.

|                                 | <b>EUR</b>       | <b>GBP</b>        | <b>USD</b>        |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Home Country</b>             | €12000 to €40000 | £10,001 - £35,000 | \$15000 - \$50000 |
| <b>Asia Pacific</b>             | Please enquire   | Please enquire    | Please enquire    |
| <b>Europe</b>                   | €12000 to €40000 | £10,001 - £35,000 | \$15000 - \$50000 |
| <b>Middle East &amp; Africa</b> | Please enquire   | Please enquire    | Please enquire    |
| <b>South America</b>            | Please enquire   | Please enquire    | Please enquire    |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>           | Please enquire   | Please enquire    | Please enquire    |
| <b>US East Coast</b>            | €12000 to €40000 | £10,001 - £35,000 | \$15000 - \$50000 |
| <b>US West Coast</b>            | €12000 to €40000 | £10,001 - £35,000 | \$15000 - \$50000 |
| <b>Virtual</b>                  | Under €12000     | Under £10,000     | Under \$15000     |