

HOW TO START
A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS
— WITHOUT —
QUITTING YOUR JOB (YET)

FROM EMPLOYMENT TO
WORKING FREEDOM IN 120 DAYS



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Three stories to set the mood

From law firm to kindergarten

Marc was frustrated. He was a lawyer and ran a small office for social law in a hot spot of Berlin. Marc had built up the firm six years ago on his own and had more than enough clients. Business was good. Nevertheless, he was dissatisfied and kept questioning his life: Why had he actually become a lawyer? He had always loved creative tasks and was always trying out new things. Was the law firm just another attempt at which he had now lost interest? Had he perhaps only become a lawyer because his father was a judge and had consciously or unconsciously guided him to do so?

Actually, he had everything that "one needs": a fixed income, a woman he loves, with two healthy children and a secure job. You don't throw away such a position once you have built it up! Doesn't he have an obligation to his clients? What would the joy and the family say if he dropped everything at 40 and started something new again?

In June 2016, against all rational reasons, he decided to quit his lawyer's job and hand over his law firm to a successor. Instead, he wanted to support his wife in setting up a daycare center. They now had noticeably less money, but he had much more time for himself and his family and was happier and more relaxed. Little by little he grew more and more into the role of managing director of the kindergarten and took great pleasure in taking care of the staff. It makes him proud to see how obviously the children enjoyed "his" day care. This year, 2020, he and his wife will open their fourth daycare center and today he employs 25 staff members who are responsible for 80 children. In his new role, he can use his creativity and the two of them are currently working on a children's book in their own publishing house and on an xxx project.

Would he do it again the same way? Yes, by all means! But next time he wouldn't wait so long to listen to his feelings.

From consultant to delivery cook

Johannes was about to take the biggest career step of his life. For 10 years he worked for one of the most renowned auditing companies and was about to become a partner.

He had worked hard and hard for it and he knew that his job would become much more intense and responsible when he entered the top tier of partners. But didn't everyone work towards this goal?

But just before the time came, he began to sleep worse and worse, got inexplicable stomach aches and felt miserable. Although he tried to continue his workload, at some point his body let him down: he was forced to take a 6-month break.

He rested, learned relaxation techniques and was determined to get back into his old role and finally become a partner. When he came back to work, he understandably needed some rest, which he was granted. However, he clearly felt that he had already been written off by the leadership and he had to make a double effort if he still wanted to become a partner. [Here comes another significant event.]

Finally, he decided to do something completely different. He reflects on what actually motivated him and where his strengths lie, which he had not used before. He loved to cook and was also in contact with customers. Maybe something with food? He was deterred by the working hours, because he had vowed never to be away from home so much again, because he wanted to spend more time with his children.

He had missed the first six years almost completely, because he always came home from work when the children were already asleep. But how could he work (i.e. cook) from home and still meet customers? Then he finally had a brilliant idea: He would cook dishes at home, package them practically and deliver them to customers in his city. He would accept the order via the Internet and by telephone and deliver the meals personally to the customer.

He initially limited the supply to one day per week (Tuesdays) and used the other days for shopping, cooking and for himself and his

family. But if he only sells individual dishes to customers, the cost per soup including delivery would be too high or the customers would have to purchase a minimum quantity. To do this, the dishes would have to be made durable for several days, so that one delivery per week would be enough.

To solve these problems, he packed the hot dishes in preserving jars and set the minimum order quantity at five dishes. The preserving jars also had the advantage of being reusable, which met his need for environmental protection. The preserving jars could be heated directly in the microwave or in a water bath and soon his selection of dishes enjoyed great popularity in smaller offices and companies that did not have their own canteen.

Today Johannes has been running his delivery service "Fresh-Food" for more than two years. Has he ever regretted that step? When I asked him this question he replied: "No, not at all! I have a lot of fun cooking, I don't have to run around in a suit all day, I'm at home when my kids come home from school at one o'clock and I can talk to my customers in their kitchens like I'm talking to you right now. I earn much less, but it's definitely worth it: my quality of life is much, much higher today."

From investment banker to organic winemaker

Georg was spoiled by success. Rather by chance he had landed in investment banking after his studies of ... and has been earning a lot of money for 10 years now and every year it became more and more. Actually, he didn't want to work in this industry at all, but year after year passed without him making the leap.

In 2016 he realized that without a clear plan he would never be able to get out. He decided to work for xx more years and started to prepare his exit. [more details] When he finally handed in his employee card and enjoyed the new peace and quiet at home, he became ill.

For over a year he was tormented by the strangest symptoms and the doctor diagnosed a burnout. Often overworked people only become ill when they take a break. This is quite understandable, because the body tries to give everything as long as possible, as

long as the pressure is there and a failure "doesn't fit in". But as soon as peace comes (often also during a longer holiday or in the Christmas season), the body finally allows itself to relax.

Georg was desperate and thought about how he would ever be able to work "normally" again. He began to think about what he had enjoyed and driven him in the past. He came from a farming family and remembered the good times he had when he helped his parents out in the fields and with the animals. It was so different from life, which was all about money, stocks, Excel, meetings, business trips and status symbols. He had never cared about expensive cars or luxury vacations but preferred to be out in nature alone or with his family. Could he possibly earn his money that way? Maybe as a tour guide? Or as a farmer?

He decided to talk to his wife about it and to make a cash check of his finances in order to calculate how much money he had to earn in order to be able to lead a decent life. If they do without expensive jokes, a low income per month would be enough for him.

A friend of his ran an organic vineyard and Georg had a lot of pleasure in helping him. That's how he got the idea to do an internship with a winemaker. The organic winemaker recommended that he first go to a larger winemaker, but when he presented himself there, he was initially disappointed. A 3-6 month winemaker internship makes no sense, as you have to experience the course of a whole year. But he offered him an apprenticeship.

Georg decided for the adventure and finished his apprenticeship after 1 year and got half a job with the organic winemaker. Now he spends half a day relaxing in nature and, in order to be able to use his head a little, he volunteers to advise an organization that grants microcredits worldwide.

How satisfied is he with it? "It was the best decision of my life. It was of course an advantage that I was initially in investment banking, because that gave me the financial cushion. In retrospect, however, even without such a financial cushion, I would follow my heart and do a job that would give me enough time to live".

Are you crazy or all of them?

For a long time, I thought I wasn't normal. I was professionally successful, worked in a great company, with a positive corporate culture and was a valued employee. Nevertheless, I somehow had the feeling that I wasn't good enough and I worked more and more intensively. At the beginning of 2018, I went to Hong Kong with my family to set up a branch there and was promoted to partner this year. In Hong Kong I was the only manager and at the same time responsible for a large banking project as project manager. Within one year we grew to 20 employees, who all enthusiastically helped to build up the new company. But I had been so exhausted by the year that I hardly slept at night, got depressed and anxious and could no longer work. I was in a burnout.

I asked myself: Why is it hitting me? When I look at my friends and acquaintances, they also work a lot, but they don't seem to mind. What's wrong with me?

I decided to deal openly with my illness, talked to others about my experience and was shocked: Almost every man I told about my problems told me in return, either how badly he had already fared or still was doing from work. Some of them asked me quite shyly what the symptoms are, because they were afraid that it is similar to you and they just haven't been able to talk to anyone about it yet. Good friends of mine - CEOs of large companies - admitted that their doctor had diagnosed burnout years ago, but they didn't dare to get off the hamster wheel. Another friend told me that he suffered from depression and suicidal thoughts for 3 years due to work. And that was at a time when I already knew him! I realized: It's not me that's abnormal - it's all of us, so we all tear ourselves apart in our jobs to... Yeah, what's it all about?

Why the midlife crisis makes sense

In our childhood and youth, we learn from our parents and our environment what is important and right and what is not. If, like me, you grew up in an industrialized country, the ideal is to have a good education, to be able to do a job that is as prestigious and well-paid as possible, and then retire at some point in your mid

60s and enjoy retirement. We get an idea of what it means to live a happy life. We know that there are some difficulties, hurdles and dry spells to overcome on the way there, but the promise is clear: follow this path and then you will (eventually) feel really good.

In the middle of my life, when I was 45, many people realize: "Well, now I've been doing this for half a lifetime and the promised happiness hasn't come about yet. If it does not work in this way so far, how great is the probability that it will suddenly work in the second half of life with the same means, if I continue to do the same as before? The doubts are justified and therefore many people in this phase of life question their life plan and think about what they should really do with their life.

Early on in my career, I had the feeling that this salary (it was 50,000 €/year in Germany) was enough for me to live well. Everything else is luxury, not necessary and will bring more responsibility and burden.

But of course, my responsibilities and salary continued to increase and to my surprise my *dissatisfaction* with the salary grew with increasing income. More and more often I had the feeling that colleagues in comparable positions earn more than I do, and I must fight to be paid fairly. The more I had, the more I wanted. How absurd!

Rich is not who has much, but who needs little

After my two sons were born and we bought a property, the responsibility and pressure increased. Now time became my scarcest resource and yet I invested more and more energy in my work and at the same time tried to be a good father and a good partner for my wife. The first thing that fell by the wayside was time for me, time to relax and time to think about life.

Through my burnout, my body forced me to *finally* think about these issues again and I am grateful to it today. Looking back, I realized that I had packed more and more into my life and at the same time had high expectations of myself and my results. This life crisis lasted 1.5 years and included a stay in hospital, therapy and medication, which ultimately helped me well. Since I was on

sick leave, I had a lot of time to think and feel what was really important to me, what was good for me and what was not.

I decided to streamline and simplify my life. The first decision was that I didn't want to go back to my old job for a while, although I really appreciated the company and my colleagues! This was one of the most difficult and lengthy decisions of my life. I also resigned from the Lions Club where I had been a member for 7 years and had made many friends. I stopped constantly reading or listening to the news, deactivated emails on my mobile phone and read it at home if possible when I went out. I started to do sports regularly and changed my diet. I drank less, only met friends who were good for me and used the time I gained to recover, to deal with my children and to think about my future. It was clear to me that I wanted to build up my own company again in order to be more independent. But now it was no longer important to me to do something great that everyone is talking about, but it was enough for me to find something that could take care of me and my family and be managed with a few hours a day. Because I also learned this during this time: It is so nice to spend more time with my children and to really be "there". This also made our relationship much deeper and more intense. It makes such a big difference whether I walk with my 2-year-old son to the nursery in peace and quiet and without any pressure and we watch a beetle together for 5 minutes on the way, or whether I stand there and only pretend to have the time and moan inwardly: "Hurry up, little man, I want to go to work!

But I am also learning a lot about our society in this crisis: In our affluent society we are educated to subordinate everything to earning (as much) money without having a measure of when enough is enough and what we actually want to do when we have "enough". The great luck is always in the future and is supposedly only a purchase away. This is also plausible, because our affluent society depends on us constantly creating new needs to keep consuming and keep the economy running. If suddenly many people were to remember that they don't need much at all, then the companies, the economy and ultimately also the employees would feel much "worse", because there is not so much to produce and sell. So we are all part of the problem.

So I decided not to participate in this cycle in the old intensity. But how could I escape my personal hamster wheel and build something new when my family depends on my salary? So, I had to find a solution to combine the two: My employment with a fixed salary and the freedom to develop and implement new ideas. I spoke to my employer and managed to get a sabbatical. This gave me a year to create something new without quitting.

And now I am sitting here and writing this book, which has been a matter close to my heart for many years. Of course, I only had a fraction of my original income, but I was willing to accept cuts for my new freedom. So, I gave up my car to do more cycling and car sharing. Everything has its price! This is a very profane but elementary insight that became very clear to me in my crisis.

What exactly is "wealth"?

For this book, I would like to redefine "wealth" in reference to Timothy Ferriss:¹ Wealth is composed of three things:

- **Time** to do the things with the people that make you happy,
- to decide **independently** about oneself and - last but not least -
- **Income** to finance his lifestyle.

The practical value of money multiplies with the number of W questions you can control in your life: **What** you do, **when** you do it, **where** you do it and with **whom** you do it. Here's an example:

Imagine you have a high income but neither the time nor the independence to answer the above W questions to your liking. This applies to just about all the people we call "successful" today: They may eat the best food and drink exquisite wines, but they do so during business lunches with people they may not like personally, where they are under pressure to achieve a certain goal, only to come home late when their partner and children are already asleep.

Now compare this to a life where you have only an average income but the time to do the things that make you happy in the here and now, alone or together with other people. While others "enjoy"

the above business dinner, you might be sitting on a park bench with your partner on a balmy summer evening, eating a fresh baguette with a glass of red wine, holding each other in your arms and chatting about your lives in a relaxed manner. Or you can fool around with your children in the autumn forest, throwing leaves at each other and tickling them until they quiver with laughter and then enjoy a hot cocoa.

Who do you think is happier in that moment? And what moments do you want to look back on when you reach the end of life: the business dinner or the time with your loved ones?

Are you now thinking: well, that all sounds good, but why do so many people around me manage to be happy AND do a demanding and time-consuming job? Do they really?

Why does everybody get their life together but me?

For this I would like to share with you another insight that I have only gained through my burnout: As soon as I showed myself with my weaknesses (in this case my illness), other people opened up to me in a whole new way. Showing my weakness was just *not* seen as *weakness*, but by many people as a great *strength*. And because I showed myself, the others opened up and I was allowed to see behind their scenes. And what did I discover with astonishment and fright? That almost all of my interlocutors invest a lot of time and energy in giving others (and thus probably especially themselves) the impression that they are doing well: we constantly send selfies where we are standing radiant in beautiful places, we put much more effort into cleaning up and cooking when guests are there and then tell them at dinner how good our house/child/car is, we put a good face on the bad game at work so that nobody notices how frustrated we actually are etc. What's the point? Because we are ashamed that we cannot manage to be what we think we have to be. We are not great at our jobs, great parents, great partners and great friends. We expect far too much from ourselves if we all want to fill these roles perfectly. And why? Because we have the feeling that others can do it too, and we are therefore not normal if we do not succeed. What we do not recognize: The others don't really make it either, but like us, they invest

a lot of time in creating this impression in their surroundings. That's why dealing openly with a crisis is so helpful: it allows others to (finally) show that they are not as well off as they seem. And that is very relieving for all parties involved.

You know where the word "sympathy" comes from? From the Latin and it means compassion. When someone opens up to me, I can sympathize with her/him and that makes us like each other. Give it a try. But believe me, there are few things that require so much courage! And that is why showing weakness is an absolute strength.

Do the following thought experiment: A man is highly appreciated by all people; he is successful and popular. But: He is the only one who does not like himself. Another man is not particularly appreciated by anyone and he is not successful by the usual social standards. But he likes himself and is satisfied with himself. Which of them is happier?

Why am I telling you all this? Because I know you have good reasons for wanting to go into business for yourself. These reasons are probably related to unpleasant experiences with your working life, which you cannot talk about openly with the environment without (supposedly) harming yourself. It is also probable that many people will critically question you when you report your ideas and thoughts: "Don't do something like that, you have a secure job!", "The risk is much too high!", "you have invested so much, you can't throw it all away!".

These are the above-mentioned voices of the social norm. And it is probably also the fear of the others that someone is jolting this picture and they feel that they are affected themselves, but that they themselves would not have the courage to take such a step. Count on many well-meant defensive reflexes in your environment. It's also good to listen to the arguments, because there may be good clues in them that will improve your plan. But don't let this dissuade you, because the subject will come up again and again and again until you face it - even if it is through an illness.

But I don't advise you to rush blindly into the adventure and quit right away. For some, this is the right way, or perhaps the only way. However, it is much wiser to use your employment as a "launch pad" and only quit when you are convinced that your new path is the right one for you. I will show you how to do this step by step later.

About courage

When I talk to people who are dissatisfied with their lives and want to change something but can't, I usually hear the following reasons:

- I can't do it.
- I can't make it.
- I don't really know what I want.
- Through my childhood...
- I don't know how...

I am convinced that these people really lack only one characteristic and that is that:

Courage!

Somewhat more critically one could also say: It is convenience: "The situation I am in is very uncomfortable, but it is more comfortable (i.e. it demands less of me) to simply stay in the situation, endure it and let out the dissatisfaction with complaints and accusations.

Indeed, courage is the missing ingredient. This is also evident from the fact that people who show courage are admired by everyone, even if they do not achieve anything "great": the courage to talk about their illness, the courage to say "no", the courage to stand up for their opinion, etc.

What exactly is the frightening thing about showing yourself as you are, saying what you feel, admitting that you are suffering? The

answer: The fear of not (any longer) fitting into the norm! Why is that?

We grew up with constant reminders: "That's the way to be!" (speak well, a good child, obedient, strive for a socially highly respected profession, etc.) and "so you are wrong! (i.e. career aspirations that do not correspond to parents' ideas of having interests that are undesirable at school, etc.). The people who influenced and "formed" us in this way meant well: we should fit well into society in order to have it good later.

Unfortunately, the inner drives are suppressed, and we force ourselves at some point to live the way we were expected to live. We no longer have our parents and teachers around us, they are now in our heads as voices: "you have to do THIS!" and "MAN doesn't do that! The inner drives, however, remain there from birth to the end of life and constantly cause a pain that is supposed to tell you: "you are not living your life properly yet! Fortunately, this is so, even if it is painful, because your life constantly demands that you live it to the full. One of two things is bound to happen:

- you will cover the pain with an addiction (work, alcohol, "pleasure", medication, drugs, gambling, food, sports, etc.) and/or
- Your body will develop a chronic disease that will continue to increase (blood pressure, diabetes, rheumatism, ...) until you either come to your senses (collapse, burnout, ...) or die (heart attack, stroke, ...).

I am not claiming that all diseases are only due to the stress caused by a lifestyle that is wrong for us. But I would argue that it is the bulk of it and includes in particular the so-called diseases of civilisation. (Find another source here)

If you are reading this book, the pressure is probably already so great that you want to make a change, at least in your work. Then be clear that you must admit having lived "wrong" in some way in the last 3, 5, 10 or more years. Your change would mean openly admitting this to yourself and to everyone else. How embarrassing! You'd think. But this is not embarrassing at all; this is courageous and "grown-up"! But your change would also mean that in

the future you would no longer want to comply with some of the "standards" that you have been given along the way. How threatening! In this way you step out of "your" previous society a little bit. you are then different than now! How will that feel? Then what kind of person are you? This is new and uncertain: a so-called "risk", as "your" previous society has always taught you. That's why it looks so threatening! That is why it takes so much courage to take this step. Therefore you are so afraid of it and think that you cannot "can" or "manage" or "do not know what you want".

With courage you pay the price BEFORE and get the reward later. When you adapt, the reward comes first (= you fit in, pat on the back!) and you pay the price later: the dissatisfaction with yourself and your life that you feel today.

I'm sorry, but I must tell you: without courage it won't work. I know it's very scary. I know it feels like you can't. I know that it feels as if terrible and unknown things are happening, like the feeling of being outcast. It is intangible, diffuse but the danger feels very real to you. This is the force that wants to push you into your old norm, that fights against the pressure of your inner drive, which - fortunately - just doesn't want to give up.

Unfortunately, there is no way out and no shortcut: you will have to find the courage to take the step into the diffuse danger and trust what I am telling you now: Behind it, it no longer feels threatening at all. Behind this you will think: That was very easy! Behind it, you will be surprised how many people suddenly tell you how brave you are. Behind this, it turns out that the whole diffuse danger is just lukewarm air that has lived on being unknown and could thus build up in your head in any threatening way you like. Behind it lies peace, tranquility and yourself.

In order to reach your goal, you will have to courageously contradict your previous society in your head: "You say that's what you do SO? But I'm doing it differently." And "You say you won't do that? But I'm doing it anyway because I'm doing it for me and not for you (anymore)."

In order to live a self-determined life, you have to decide for yourself. This means that you can no longer fall back on the norms of how to be. This also means that you must leave this comfort zone. So, we will also practice courage in the 120 Day Challenge to prepare you for it.

How can courage be distinguished from recklessness? Decisions can of course be courageous and yet wrong. In my opinion, it would be cocky to carry all your money to the casino to bet it on red in roulette. This can go well, and from one moment to the next the money is doubled. Or lost everything.

A good approach is: If you want to do something for a long time but just don't dare to do it, this is a good indicator that you should do it. It starts with the woman (or man) you don't dare to approach and goes through the course you've always wanted to take, to the job you've always wanted to do, but which doesn't suit your parents or your career so far. Remember the lawyer, the investment banker and the auditor from the first chapter, who have now become kindergarten teachers, organic winemakers and cooks. Everyone brooded over this decision for months or years, sweating blood and water before they gathered all their courage to make such a great change. But they have done it, managed it and are today very happy to live so self-determined and independent.

The seven steps to professional freedom

The path I propose to you comprises seven areas to which we will devote ourselves intensively together in 120 working days (6 months). In this way you will get closer to your goal step by step. Each working day contains a task for you, which will initially require you to work for a maximum of one hour. Later it will sometimes take more time, but by then you will have improved your productivity on your current work to such an extent that you will have enough time.

In the following you will first get an overview of the seven areas:

Step 1: Create time for your business idea

This is probably the biggest question mark with you: How am I supposed to find *additional* time for my business idea with all my

stress? Don't worry, it'll work. In this chapter we will lay down some basics about effective work that will help you to have more time for the important things in other areas of your life. On the one hand, this is about you becoming more effective in your current work and doing many things you just *don't* do anymore. On the other hand, we look at what things you can "sacrifice" in your private life with a clear conscience to work on your project. It's important to me that it's about things like watching TV, surfing the Internet, playing around on my cell phone. We do not want to reduce the time with your loved ones or hobbies. Our goal is to have *more* time for this, so we certainly don't want to save money here in order to shift life back into the future.

To free up time, we will examine your working methods, learn important principles for effectiveness and set the right priorities. It is about working "smarter", i.e. ideally you will have more time *and* even better results than before.

Step 2: Identify your original motivation

As the introduction should have made clear, it is immensely important that you are sure why you want to be independent at all. What do you hope to gain from this? What problems do you want to solve today? Is it about more freedom and flexibility? If so, what do you want to use them for? For your children, for your hobbies, for other people? Or is it about self-fulfillment, about creating something of your own that you have long dreamed of, like a yoga school or a soup kitchen? Or are you hoping for more money? What would you do with the money? Are you sure it's about purchases that make you personally *really* happy? Or is it just about representing success (e.g. with a fancy car), i.e. continuing the spectacle and just suggesting your luck?

So, the question is what motivates you. What gives you the strength to take the path to independence? In the future, what will motivate you to get out of bed in the morning? Your motivation is fundamental to our goal of developing the willpower, stamina and discipline to achieve your goal. If your motivation is not clear, you do not (yet) need to start the next steps. Because you will fail.

If you look at the literature on the topic of "starting a business", the only motivation of people seems to be to get rich as quickly as possible: "How to get rich fast", "Laptop Millionaire", ... Maybe it even works for some of them. However, these books do not promise you that you will be satisfied or even happy. They just promise you that you can get rich.

My goal is that you become permanently satisfied and balanced with your new job, not necessarily rich. Because being rich does not make you happy from experience, but rather unhappy (you only have more things to show off, to hide your inner unhappiness behind. You can send smiling selfies from exotic countries. You can hide your misfortune behind the tinted windows of your expensive SUV, etc.) So, if you are convinced that the only way to happiness is to get rich quickly, then go for one of the other books. But before you do, please consider the five things that dying people regret the most:ⁱⁱ

- *"I wish I had the courage to live my own life"*
- *"I wish I hadn't worked so much"*
- *"I wish I had had the courage to express my feelings"*
- *"I wish I had kept in touch with my friends"*
- *"I wish I had allowed myself to be happier"*

Does it say anything about me wishing I had more money, worked more or bought more? No. So don't make the same mistake.

When is the right time to put this insight into practice and change your life so that you can look back satisfied in the end? The timing is never right! There are always "good" reasons why it is not possible right now: *"I don't have enough money to dare! Once the kids are out of the house! I must solve my problems in my current job first! When I have a partner! If I had no partner!"* Etc. etc.

The right time never *comes*, it's *now*.

Shall I chance it? Or would you rather not? Uncertainty and the possibility of "failure" are very frightening, although in reality the horror scenarios that one likes to imagine (or that others tell one) almost never occur. Most people therefore prefer being unhappy

to being insecure and persist in their unpleasant but familiar status quo.

The uncertainty is a monster because it is unknown and foggy. What could be hiding behind that? Which worst-case scenarios are conceivable? This openness to all sorts of things is filled with all the horror stories that come to our minds or the minds of others without checking them for their truth and probability.

And that's exactly how we solve the problem: we make ourselves aware with all the details of what the worst-case scenario of this step could be. Nail your nightmare! Write everything down until you are sure: So, it can't get any worse than this. And then at each point you think about how you can react to it, so that the scenario becomes quite acceptable. Because you're not helpless! You can and will take precautions, react to developments, get support, find alternatives, etc.

You have already taken one step: you didn't just quit your job and see what happens. Instead, you became aware of your needs ("I want to change something."), looked for solution ideas and got this book to systematically and step by step follow your path.

Step 3: Become aware of your strengths

After you have clarified what really motivates you, it is important to find out which strengths and competences you have and can use. Your weaknesses will also play a role in this chapter. But they will not keep you from your goal, because I will show you how to compensate your weaknesses elegantly. Focus on your strengths and build on them instead of working on your weaknesses. This is more effective and gives more pleasure.

To identify your strengths, we will look into your past, consider why you ended up in your last job, interview your family and friends and clarify what you find particularly easy. If you feel that you do not have any particular strengths, consider the following: Most people are not even aware of their own strengths because they take them for granted: "What do you mean, I'm so good with people? It's only natural, right?" You know what I mean?

Step 4: Find the business idea that suits you

After you know what you want to work for ("motivation") and on which strengths you can build, the time has come to define the business idea that suits you best.

Once the core idea is found, we will discuss all other relevant aspects of a business model together, e.g. what the revenue model looks like, what price you can achieve, which suppliers and partners you need, which channels you use to reach and serve your customers, etc. This is also about determining what costs and revenues can be expected and how well the business idea will pay off for you. It may be that you would like to further examine 2-3 business ideas at first, in order to decide a little later which one is the right one for you.

We all know the incredible variety of promising business ideas on the Internet. Therefore, I have dedicated a separate subchapter to this section to explain the possibilities, the advantages and disadvantages so that you can decide if there is something for you.

Step 5: Test your business idea fast, cheap and clever

Our goal is to waste as little as possible: No time, because you have very little of it, and no money either, so that you can cope with the construction financially and without risk. Therefore, we want to find out as early as possible whether your idea is viable enough, i.e. whether enough customers are willing to buy your product or service for the price you want.

To find this out there are several clever methods that we will use together. This not only gives you a better feeling whether your idea will be accepted in the market. You also get to know many important facets of your brand and your customers in order to better adapt your offer to their needs. We'll keep doing this until you're sure you can flip the switch to really get going. As soon as the turnover expectations are met, the time has come to say goodbye to your old life as an employee and - if you wish - to hand in your notice. This is a moment of excitement, freedom and courage that we should celebrate.

Step 6: Do what you like and outsource the rest

To make a business idea successful in part-time work, it is essential that you concentrate exclusively on the few aspects of the work that a) only you can do and/or b) you want to do.

Our aim is therefore to delegate as many other tasks as possible to others. This is much easier and cheaper through the Internet than you can imagine. (e.g. ...). Your future job, especially in the initial phase, will therefore consist largely of deciding what needs to be done next, distributing and coordinating these tasks. In all of this, this book will guide and support you step by step.

Step 7: Do not make your business too big

I strongly recommend you consider how much money you need at least to live but also how much you need at most. This idea is unusual in our society and therefore unusual, as it is all about gathering as *much as possible* together. But experience shows that more money does not make you happier at a certain point, it just makes life more complicated and stressful.

A nice story about this (source):

An investment banker urgently needed a holiday and was recovering in a small Mexican coastal village when a small boat with only one fisherman moored. The boat had several large, fresh fish in the boat.

The investment banker was impressed by the quality of the fish and asked the Mexican how long it took him to catch them. The Mexican replied, "Just a little while." The banker then asked why he hadn't stayed outside any longer and caught more fish.

The Mexican fisherman replied that he had enough to feed his family.

The American then asked, "But what are you going to do with the rest of the time?"

The Mexican fisherman replied: "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siestas with my wife, stroll to the village every

evening where I drink wine and play guitar with my amigos: I have a full and busy life, señor".

The investment banker mocked: "I'm an Ivy League MBA, and I could help you. You could spend more time fishing and use the proceeds to buy a bigger boat, and with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats until you finally have a whole fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to the middleman, you could sell it directly to the processor and eventually open your own cannery. They could control the product, processing and distribution'.

Then he added: "Of course, you would have to leave this small fishing village on the coast and move to Mexico City, where you would manage your growing business.

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, señor, how long will all this take?

To which the American replied: "15-20 years".

"But then what?" asked the Mexican.

The investment banker laughed and said, "This is the best part. When the time is right, you would announce an IPO, sell your shares and become very rich. You could make millions."

"Millions, señor? And then what?"

To which the investment banker replied: "Then you could retire. You could move to a small fishing village on the coast, where you could sleep in, do some fishing, play with your children, take a siesta with your wife, walk to the village in the evening, where you could drink wine and play guitar with your amigos..."

Do you now understand why it makes sense to set a ceiling on your income yourself? We're not all as smart as this fisherman. Once your business idea is successful - and it will be if you do what you really want to do - there are often further opportunities for growth. Be careful not to become greedy for money and "success" and forget about your satisfaction and happiness. Instead, let others earn the income they need to live and be happy.

The 120-Day-Challenge: Step by step to success

The 120-Days-Challenge is a corner piece of this book. You will get a task for every workday (5 days a week) that are simple to understand, easy to execute and move you towards your goal step by step. It is like a personal coach that guides you. It is structured in such a way that you can do every task even though you have a full time job. Some tasks help you to free up time at work by becoming more productive and at home by eliminating time wasters.

The 120-Days-Challenge frees you from knowing and worrying about which step to take when and where to set the priorities. This is very liberating and you can focus on the single task at hand and your life without worrying about tomorrow.

Where do we go from here?

In the concluding chapter I would like to share a few thoughts with you on how your independence and your life could go on. You will find that after the initial success you will set yourself new goals. Be careful not to let the old patterns run away with you again, but to remember your original motivation. You wanted to spend more time with your kids? Then do so, even if it means that sales may increase less than possible. You wanted more time for your hobbies? Take it and do not succumb to the temptation to chase after money with your new good idea. As I said before: Everything has its price. And if you want to be rich and famous, the price is that you can spend much less quiet and relaxed time with your loved ones, just to be in the now. And if you enjoy the time with your family or your hobbies in peace and quiet, the price is that you have less income. But I'm pretty sure it's worth it.

So, are you ready to go? Then a very exciting time lies ahead of you, and I am very much looking forward to it. Let's go together!

ⁱ Ferriss, Timothy (2009): The 4-Hour Work Week. Vermillion.

ⁱⁱ Ware, Bonnie (2011): The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing. Balboa Press International.