



1 Preface - Why This Book?

This book is the result of an unplanned 10-year project. Yes, you read right... unplanned. It just happened. It is a myth to believe that everything in life can be perfectly planned. Sometimes, things just happen. Working so intensively in the field of life management coaching was not planned when I started my career after graduation. However, in my first people manager role, I realized how important people management (I distinguish between *people management* and *business management*) actually is to create an environment of trust. I argue that only if a certain level of trust exists between you and your team members, a fruitful and successful long-term relationship can be established. Quick wins are easy to achieve for a manager, but anything beyond quick wins is much harder to accomplish. A mutually trusted *Manager* ↔ *Team Member* relationship usually lasts longer than the actual work relationship between a team member and his or her manager - if the people management part is done well. That is one way to grow your network over time.

Having a high level of trust between a superior and the team is one way to distinguish between a manager and a leader. My personal, simplified differentiation is the following: managers just want to achieve quarterly targets to get the bonus, period. A truly long-term component does not exist in a manager's behavior and thinking. A leader, however, truly cares about people and the company's long-term goals, and therefore wisely balances the sometimes conflicting interests between short-term and long-term objectives as well as between team and business goals. As a result, a leader creates a true bi-directional relationship and a high level of trust which is an earned, deserved, and meaningful extension of someone's personal network – and one that you can count on also in the future. Based on my own people management experiences across different countries and cultures, I strongly believe that



helping team members manage and align private and business life better is a veritable trust booster. In other words: supporting your team members with their development makes you truly stand out as a leader.

In this book, I will talk about the Swiss PDP Approach[®], PDP standing for Personal Development Plan. I have been applying the Swiss PDP Approach[®] for many years working for Dell, Google and Evernote trying to help people combine and align private and business life in an effective and meaningful manner. I was happy to see that an actually very simple approach worked so well. I was asked by more and more Google managers around the globe to hold people development training sessions for their teams. For many reasons, Google is a wonderful company to work for, one of them being the fact that the company has a strong and real focus on developing their staff. However, there was a moment when I could not handle the training requests any more as I still had a full-time job - so I had to say “no, sorry”. It was hard and kind of like against my inner believe to say “no, sorry” to something meaningful that I actually would love to do. The first person I had to say “no, sorry” to encouraged me to write a book in order to share and spread the Swiss PDP Approach[®]. There we go!

Acknowledgement

A big THANK YOU goes to all the people who have helped me develop and fine-tune the Swiss PDP Approach[®]. A special THANK YOU goes to Frank Kohl-Boas (Lead HR Business Partner, Google EMEA) and Matt Brittin (Vice-President, Google EMEA). They both truly live the values they talk about, one of their values being their genuine interest in people development. Matt’s and Frank’s support served as door-opener as well as an international catalyst for my people development framework within Google, finally leading to the creation of this book. Thank you both.



2 Introduction

You may argue that ‘stuck’ and ‘unhappy’ are not nice words to be the very beginning of a book title. I take that. However, it was done on purpose. The intention of this book is not to make you look at life through rose-colored glasses, but to help people make real progress. Sometimes, the truth can be brutal, but there is nothing more valuable and precious than the truth in order to make progress. In other words, the truth may often hurt¹, but it is exactly this pain that unhappy and stuck people need to wake up, to face the reality and then to finally start their improvement process. So to speak, pain is a bit like medicine. I still remember my mother when I was a preschool boy. When I was not feeling well, she gave me cod-liver oil. Those who know what cod-liver oil is know what I mean. The younger audience may potentially not know it any more thanks to the pharmaceutical industry’s progress. Cod-liver oil tastes awful (first), but it helps (later)... so you choose ☺. For the more economically minded people: To make progress, the initially required pain can be seen as an investment. So let’s invest and then look forward to a great return-on-investment (ROI). Therefore, I am a huge advocate and proponent of the hurt-and-rescue principle².

2.1 Hurt and Rescue

John Stuart Mill (1859, p. 7 ff) argued in his book “On Liberty” about a certain usefulness of the harm principle. However, as my book is supposed to be a practical handbook and not a research paper, I refrain from discussing all kinds of philosophical aspects as to the words hurt and harm. I would like to keep it

¹ *In this context, hurting does not mean physical harm*

² http://changingminds.org/principles/hurt_rescue.htm



simple: Facing the truth that a person is currently not happy with his or her life, often self-inflicted, hurts, but it gratefully often leads to a new appetite for change - that is the rescue part. This is the understanding of the hurt-and-rescue principle being applied in this book – nothing else.

2.2 What the Book Is and What It Is Not

This book and the Swiss PDP Approach[®] do not make a claim to be the best or the only right way to successfully manage your life or to do your life planning - but it is in the very least one possible way to do it. I argue that it is at least better than doing nothing ☺. Furthermore, it has been developed, applied, tested, further developed and fine-tuned over a period of more than ten years, in more than twelve countries around the globe and with numerous people having various cultural backgrounds. Therefore, I can say with a clear conscience it is worth a try.

The intent of this book is twofold:

- a) to be an eye-opener regarding the very often heavily underestimated importance of having at least any kind of a simple life planning
and
- b) to offer people a semi-structured value finding & life planning approach that does contain some theory, but not too much. It is an applied science kind of thing that gives just the minimum instructions needed to succeed, but still leaves enough freedom to personalize the life planning according to the users' needs.

Doing so puts you in the driver's seat, and you will finally become the CEO of your own life. Far too many people are strongly influenced by others or by some societal trends, too often unwanted and unnoticed. They just go with the flow



and do what is à la mode. However, it is never too late to take the driver's seat. Welcome, Ms. or Mr. CEO of your own life!

2.3 What If You Do Not Do Anything at All?

Well, you may be one of the few super-lucky people on planet earth where everything is perfectly fine, you have no tough challenges in life at all, no problems, no stress, no crises etc. Great. If you are one of these people, you can stop reading now. If not, I kindly invite you to continue.

So, enough talking... let's start now. And before I forget it... ENJOY this journey, this adventure of becoming the CEO of your own life. Do not give up, it is not even 80 pages!