

PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL LIFE MANAGEMENT

(personal, professional, social)

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TOMÁS DUROSKA

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Tomáš Ďuroška

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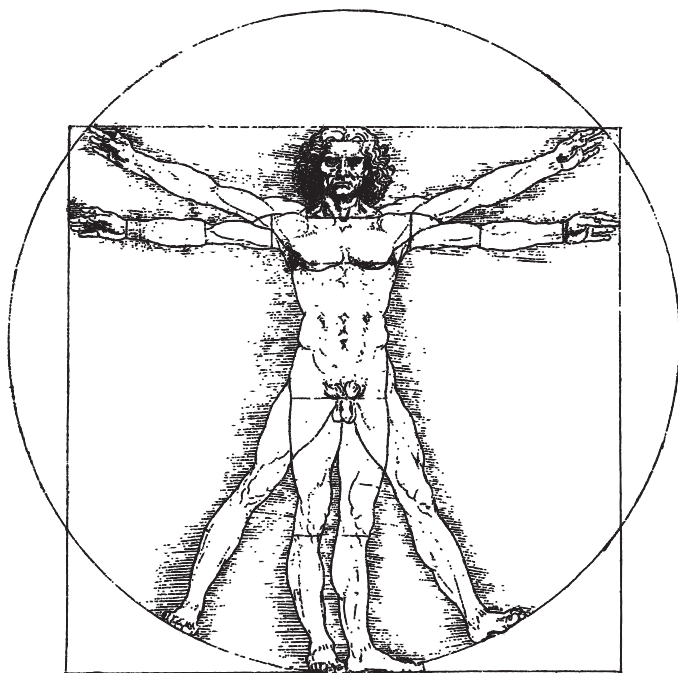
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I devote this book to the memory
of Leonardo da Vinci.
This great Renaissance thinker can be
an inspiration to us all.



MOTTO

“Even small changes bring big results.”
TOMÁŠ ĎUROŠKA

BIG IDEAS

“Unlike Man, Nature never breaks her own laws.”

LEONARDO DA VINCI

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“Find a job you love,
and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

KONFUCIUS

“If you want to increase your success rate,
double your failure rate.”

THOMAS WATSON

“Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.”

STEPHEN HAWKING

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book discusses ordinary things in an unordinary way. Its ambition is not to be a textbook or an academic guide. It narrates ordinary things from different points of view. This narration is supposed to reveal things in life in new, sometimes unexpected and unusual contexts. Readers will be able to understand certain important connections and relations which might help them in their personal or work life. The book also deals with wider-ranging topics which go beyond the borders of the individual world, because they are based on the assumption that the world and its elements are mutually indivisible and connected, and individuals and their surroundings cannot be separated or earmarked. Using the examples of ordinary people and top managers, beginning and well-known companies, various trends and published analyses, the author looks for and discovers new, interesting and discreet connections which may be hidden in the everyday “cycle and bustle” of life. The result of this search and revelation should be a discovery of important and essential principles (variables, factors) of success in one’s personal, professional and social life.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many books on the topic of how to be successful, how to gain friends, how to be happy, how to get rich and so on. These publications deal with the development of one part of our personal potential, and so can be of great help in many aspects.

In this book, I would like to help develop people's personal potential, and perhaps on a slightly wider scale summarise some facts and add my own observations and analysis of what has worked for me on this subject; this is what I would like to share with my readers.

Although this book deals with life management, it does not analyse management and its different fields as management is traditionally perceived. For example, it does not deal with the traditional division of methodological aspects of management and a description of individual management methods, technologies and tools. It primarily describes those principles of management which people use in their personal life. In doing so, it focuses on those management methods, technologies and tools which I believe to be the most essential and most important in order to build a successful work, personal and social life. My starting-point is the assumption that success can only be achieved if the condition of sustainability is met. The success of every corporate and personal activity, and those which have an impact on the whole of society, can thus be judged successful only if the premise of sustainable development is met. I was led to this idea by the fact that many traditional managerial concepts did not perceive the condition of sustainability as sufficiently important. However, if we define this very condition as a priority and key factor, then everything suddenly takes on

a different nature and dimension. This is because, for example, the winners are not those companies which produce the most products at the lowest price, in the shortest time. Those we perceive as most successful are those companies which produce such products that are not an environmental burden, yet do not exclude or degrade the human factor in their activities. However, I do not wish to give too much theory, and so in my reflections I always try to analyse the aspects in question using concrete corporate activities and examples of personal and social development. At the same time, I will try to uncover some interesting and new connections. I will also try to reveal the link between personal, work and social life, because I believe that only when these are in harmony and in balance with each other can they ensure a successful existence for our society.

PART I

LIFE MANAGEMENT

Elements of Life
Building a Personal Life
Building a Professional Life
Social Dimension
Principles of a Successful Life

LIFE MANAGEMENT

Elements of life

Every day we convince ourselves that life is one big struggle, in which we have to – whether we like it or not – fight for survival. There are many philosophical approaches which try to see the world as a better, more beautiful, more just and more tolerant place than it actually is. However, we can only believe in these illusions until our next “fight” which awaits us around every corner.

But this is natural, if we want to be optimistic and believe in a better world. However, this belief also contains a challenge to strive for this world, meaning we too must participate in its improvement.

Many important business people and entrepreneurs successful in their field are the proof of one rule: they never strove too hard or took too much interest in their business success, profit and prosperity. They were mainly driven by the need to solve certain problems in this world, so their services and actions might lead to its improvement. This was then reflected in their business success.

We don't all have to be business people. We can also find a similar sense of fulfilment for our life in serving others as regular employees, officials, doctors and so on. We can find satisfaction and a meaning for our life in various things. However, most of them have one common denominator, which is doing good for the benefit of the wider community. But in order for someone to spread good, they also need to draw it from their surroundings. Many people have to draw it simply from the feeling they have made other people happy. In this case, each one of us can provide a source of positive energy and the meaning of life.

Bread and games

The basic functions and tasks of human life were revealed as early as in the Middle Ages. In order to survive and succeed, a person needs two basic processes to fulfil the fundamental objective of their existence. The first is work; today this includes doing business. This process provides us with bread, which nourishes us. The second is entertainment, relaxation, or in the spirit of the ancient Romans, we could say this these are games. It is a process used to draw energy and replenish it.

According to this idea, the basis of a meaningful and successful life is work and fun. In addition to providing us with the means to survive, working for the benefit of the wider community also gives us joy and positive energy. Such work is both bread and games for us.

Even so, people should also find another source of joy and positive energy alongside their work. If you want to be completely outgoing and connected, you need relaxation, fun and rest as well as work.

These two spheres, work and fun, are the two basic spheres of life for each of us, namely our personal and our professional life. However, we must add another element to these two basic spheres, which expresses the social dimension of how our civilisation works, and that is society.

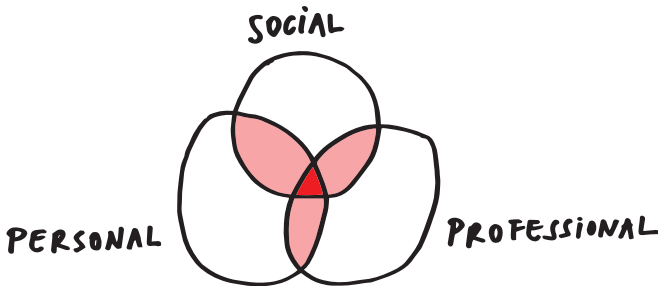


Figure 1:
Elements of life: personal, professional, social (basic life entities)

Figure 1 shows all the elements of life. They are in effect our basic life entities, the levels at which we act in this world, in the same way as the world affects us via these elements. These elements of life are never isolated, but they always work in interaction with other elements and with the surrounding world. This diagram is a simplified model which expresses how the personal, professional and social elements of each individual are all mutually related.

Building a personal life

Just as you need to know how to work properly (or do business), you also need to know how to manage your personal life properly, namely forming close relationships, fun, hobbies, cultural and social life, relaxation. A well-functioning personal life is a good quality foundation for the other life elements to function well.

Let's try and take a closer look at one of the important parts of personal life, which is relaxation. Relaxing means releasing tension. When we work, we have a certain tension; we need to focus on our work. When relaxing, the essence lies in the fact that we don't need to force ourselves to do anything, we only do what we currently enjoy.

Relaxation is compensation for the phase of performance. This means that if someone works mainly with their mind, the best method of relaxation for them will be manual and physical activity. On the contrary, if someone works mainly manually and physically, the best method of relaxation for them will be a mental activity. However, this rule, like all rules, does not apply in a completely general and dogmatic way. It might be the case that someone who works physically may prefer a different form of physical relaxation. But even in this case, the compensation rule generally applies. This means that if someone works physically, by using one of the muscle systems, then a form of physical relaxation which uses a different body system will suit them. In the case of someone working with their mind, it can be the case that they prefer a mental form of relaxation. However, if they work with calculations, numbers and precise data, for example, they will probably relax with a creative activity. In this way, they can support that part of their mental life which they use less at work, and for this reason they will prefer it for their relaxation.

As far as relaxation time is concerned, we can state the following: the time for relaxation should be approximately the same as the time spent working (we do not include sleep in this time). This applies from the perspective of short-term phases of relaxation. As far as the long-term perspective on alternating work and relaxation phases is concerned, the situation is slightly different. In this case, we should have a longer, uninterrupted period of relaxation approximately after

every four months of work. We should allow ourselves seven to ten days of uninterrupted rest.

The specific means of relaxation depends on the person's personality. People who prefer social contact to solitude will presumably prefer a holiday in places where it is busier, where they can meet and get to know new people. On the contrary, people who prefer solitude will look for calmer places to relax, without large, mass events.

Play as social training and relaxation

Play is a natural human activity from birth. During the process of play, people relax while also learning and preparing for real life. Thus, play has two basic roles for people. The first role is that of relaxation, rest, used to regenerate physical and mental capacities. The second role is that of training, when during play people learn and prepare for dealing with new roles in real life.

Some years ago, over 76 million digital “Tamagotchi” eggs were sold around the world, which owners “kept alive” using three buttons. These enabled them to feed, play games and clean up after the “animal”. At the same time, they were checking its feelings of hunger, happiness, its education and age. According to recent reports from Tokyo, the legend has come back to life. Bandai has relaunched its once popular “Tamagotchi” toy.¹

At the turn of the millennium, this electronic toy was the favourite toy of the “Millennials”, that is the generation born after 1995. Its manufacturer hopes that a wave of nostalgia will bring it the same success, for example, as the return of Pokemons, another popular toy from this era.

1 TASR: The popular Tamagotchi toy is back on the market, thanks to the Japanese. Available at: <https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/20507835/popularna-hracka-tamagoci-je-opat-na-trhu-postarali-sa-o-to-japonci.html#ixzz4eFTzSngp> (12. 4. 2017).

The Bandai company brought the brand back to life, but the “2017” version was around half as small as the original Tamagotchi and achieved exceptional commercial success, like the mobile application “Pokemon Go”, which was based on the once-popular cartoon. The toy grossed 206.5 million USD (194.52 million euros) and just in the first month from its launch in July 2016 it was downloaded by one hundred million users.

These statistics, as well as the hundreds and even thousands of other games, not only for children but also for adults sold around the world, show people’s very strong need to play. This applies both to traditional toys such as Lego, as well as whole new types of computer games and consoles.

In the case of the Tamagotchi game, their designers combined functions which meet children’s two strong mental needs: the need to play and the need to take care of someone. Mattel’s successful product – the Barbie doll – is based on a similar principle. In the case of this doll, its attractive appearance also plays a role, which takes on the function of an image model for girls. Of course, our role is not to judge the suitability of such perfect models for healthy psychological development; we merely want to point out the principles on which the toy industry is built.

Building a professional life

Alongside play, work is one of the two basic activities for people which allow them to survive. Since the beginning of humanity, people have had to perform targeted activities which increased their chance of survival. Over time and evolution, these activities turned into work as a person's deliberate activity used to provide resources for survival. In a modern society, these resources are mainly financial, but there still exist forms of remuneration for work "in kind". This can be in the form of fruit, natural resources, goods or services. It is a form of exchange trade.

However, work does not only fulfil the role of ensuring survival in the form of nutrition. For contemporary people, it has also become an important source of meaning in life. Work has become an activity which gives people positive emotions and is a source of joy for them. In order to survive successfully, people had to learn to live in a complicated social system. Evolutionarily, we thus developed traits which help us live in social communities. These traits include, for example, altruism (mutual help), affiliation (friendliness), empathy. If someone acts in harmony with these traits, they experience pleasant feelings. This also explains why our work serves not only to provide food, but is also a meaning in our life. When we help someone through our work, it has a great emotional benefit for us.

Work shapes a person, helping them develop their skills and talent. Through our work activity, we create values appreciated by society. However, many people say that when they stop working, they will finally start doing something! This statement appears to be a great paradox, but above all it expresses a state where people have long been repressing their dreams and ambitions and remaining in their jobs only out of comfort or fear of losing a low but stable financial income. In this way, they try to wait until their retirement, when they wish to start up something "big" and finally make their dreams come true. Unfortunately, when retirement comes, it's often too late, because people don't have enough vigour, mental or physical strength to carry out their great plans. So it is better to carry out the latter at a younger age, when we still have enough strength and flexibility.

Business is a specific type of work. It is work for those who want to manage a whole project on their own and want to have things under control. It is work for the brave and for those who are not afraid of taking certain risks.

If we look at doing business from the perspective of the opportunities which exist for people, it is not quite true that they are unlimited always and everywhere. Business is different in Europe from the USA, just as it is different in South America or South-East Asia. And doing business in the Near and Middle East or Africa is something completely different. The basic premise of successful business is in fact political stability. We cannot be successful in places where there are no basic trade rules, where state administration and legal enforceability do not work.

There is an interesting assumption, or theory, which is called unambiguously the Golden Arches theory. The name of the theory is taken from the logo of the world's biggest fast-food retailer, McDonald's. Its logo has an arched letter "M" which is easy to identify even at a distance and looks like two golden arches. This theory states that it is highly unlikely that a war would break out between countries where the golden arches are present (i.e. a McDonald restaurant). This hypothesis is based on the assumption that a country where this company is present must have good political stability, otherwise it would not be able to be successfully active there in the long term. And there is only a very low probability that a military conflict might break out between countries with a guarantee of such political stability.

People in Europe often uncritically admire all that is American, and it is true that the East likes admiring the West. Yet we do not realise that America was built by immigrants from Europe itself. The gigantic shopping centres with wide walkways under one roof was first designed and built by a salesman from Europe. In America, this immigrant from Europe missed the shop arcades built alongside roads and so decided to build them there. In addition to being