

TOBIAS BECK

UNBOX

YOUR LIFE!

BEWOHNERFREI®

Das Geheimnis
für deinen Erfolg
im Leben

GABAL

Tobias Beck

UNBOX YOUR LIFE

A Liberated Life:
The Secret to Success



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Tobias Beck

UNBOX YOUR LIFE

A liberated Life: The Secret to Success

— A Letter from Tobias —

I really thought I had it all.

From a young age, I had somehow found it hard to fit in. Even during kindergarten, Ms. Zenker had called my mother and instructed her to “*pick her son up immediately!*”.

You might be wondering what on earth a little boy could do to have his parents called to take him home.

The answer is that I did what all kids did. We were sledging. The only difference was that I tweaked the design. Every other child slid down the mountain, took their sledge and pulled it up again. I also slid down the mountain. However, afterwards, I had it pulled back up again by five girls from my class.

That was the reason for my first expulsion. This was followed by primary school, five different high schools and a certified learning disability. My official certificate - and my permission to be stupid. This was the story of my life that was told to me so often by others that I began to believe it myself.

The system didn't want me. It chewed me up and spit me out again.

After achieving poor results in my school leaving exams, I became a flight attendant and later found myself, via a rather circuitous route, with a place to study psychology. I wanted to find out what was wrong with me.

Thanks to an apparent coincidence of life, I ended up with a position in a telesales company at the same time. I did the only thing I could do: I became my own guarantor of success, and built up relationships with over 1000 sales partners. Talking was my thing. The system had never made that clear to me, but I found it out by myself – albeit after more than 20 years.

Eventually, I became vice president of the company. I had a penthouse with pool on the roof, a model girlfriend at my side and drove my customised Mercedes through the streets as if I were the king of Wuppertal.

I had everything - at least so I thought ...

After arriving at its peak, the company collapsed within a week. Mistakes were made, and everything I had built was gone. It wasn't only my monthly salary and my sales partners who were gone. My money was gone. My car was gone. My penthouse was gone. And, you guessed it, my model girlfriend was also gone.

"Was that it?" I asked, sobbing, sitting on the loft bed of my childhood bedroom. Above me hung the David Hasselhoff poster I had hung there as a child.

I slowly got to my feet and embarked on a personal journey to gain happiness and find out what success really means. I had life-changing conversations with the giants of personality development: Tony Robbins, T. Harv Ekert, Les Brown and many more.

With new-found modesty, I put myself to work. I did my training and put in the hours. I realised that we fight the way we do because we equate success with material goods.

"Moments in life, not luxury goods" became my new motto. Changing lives instead of making money became my new mission. Giving back to society instead of taking became my new passion. From all the adventures, experiences and conversations I gathered, I derived my personal life principles. As I did so, I found that more and more people approached me and wanted to hear about it.

A number of people encouraged me – or, more accurately, kicked my ass for weeks - until I sat down and finally put Liberated® on paper. In my "normal" life, I am a speaker, not a writer. As such, this book is authored in a rather cheeky, unconventional and entertaining style. It is as far as you can get from literary perfection. Marcel Reich-Ranicki is probably turning in his grace.

The book is based solely on 15 years of personal experience in the field of personality development and behavioural psychology. Under no circumstances does it claim to be technically correct. Liberated® is polarising, provocative and exaggerated. I am very much aware of how much polemic and generalisation it contains.

It is intended to wake you up, scare you and sensitise you.

For me, chronic complainers – the people from whom we aim to liberate ourselves - are those who cower in their boxes and moan, despite having it relatively good. I have made it my mission to make as many people as happy and successful as possible. No matter your culture, skin colour or creed: Do not let the chronic complainer in you gain the upper hand. Help those who are truly in need.

For me, this is what **"Unbox Your Life"** really means.

ABOUT THE BOOK

You're bound to know a few chronic complainers: people who moan the whole day long, people for whom nothing ever goes right, people who are always the victim. The weather is miserable, it's Monday, the neighbour has overshot their parking space again and to top it all off, the doughnut has a hole! People like this can overwhelm your environment with their ill-tempered nature.

The best idea is simply not to bother with such acquaintances at all, advises Tobias Beck in this humorous, thought-provoking book about how we can successfully steer our own lives instead of having them determined by others. In a pithy, to-the-point style, he shows – using a number of inspiring examples – how we can liberate ourselves from chronic complainers and, in doing so, avoid mutating into one ourselves. After all, we are, ultimately, the people with whom we surround ourselves.

Living a liberated life* means accepting the world as it is and putting an end to all the complaints. It means taking responsibility for yourself and others and surrounding yourself with people who take action instead of lamenting what's wrong. The Liberated® philosophy shows people that true happiness and success comes when they do good for others and always act in their best conscience. In short: Liberated® is a guide to a self-determined life.

Tobias Beck will inspire you, provide you with actionable advice and show you how to free yourself from all that oppresses you and keeps you small. You'll learn how to think in terms of chances and opportunities rather than in terms of problems and risks. You'll learn to forge your own path and let yourself be guided by your dreams and vision. Above all, you'll learn to seek out people who support you, let you grow and move forward - to live your own life successfully and authentically under the LIBERATED® philosophy.

Inspirational stories to encourage you to reflect and take action

Motivating, with actionable tips for a Liberated® life

A humorous book about how we can live in a successful and self-determined fashion

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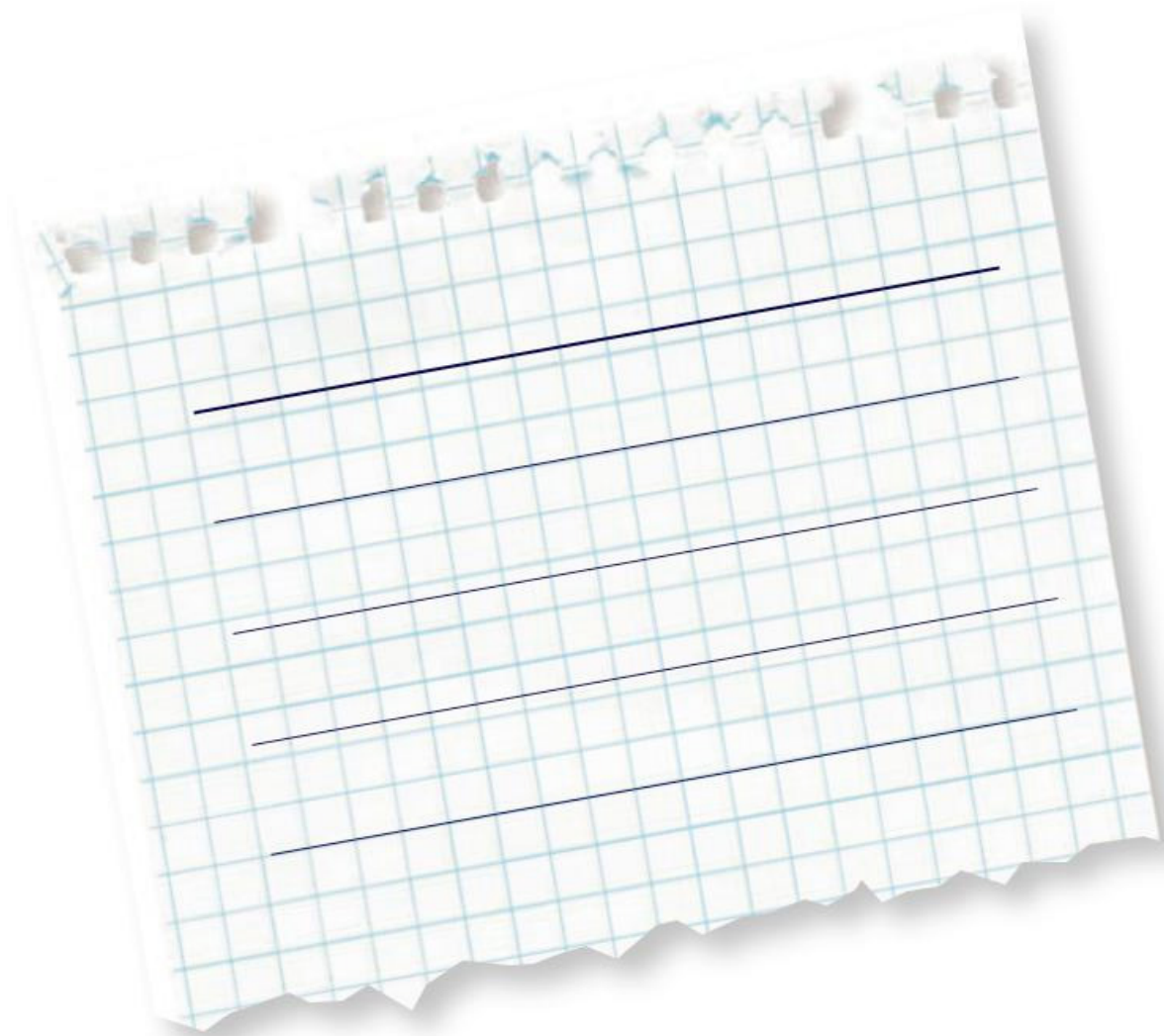
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EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Mirror Neurons

Contrary to what you might think, it's easy to be successful. What if I told you that the key is right in front of you -quite literally! Look at your surroundings. Who do you live with? Who do you work with? Is your environment filled with positive energy? With whom do you spend your free time? This is probably the most important point of all. Write down the names of the five people with whom you spend the majority of your time.

Who are these people? What are their special qualities?



This brings me neatly to my first important hypothesis, which is: I believe strongly that your goal and your quest for success are influenced more by these people than by anything else. It may seem improbable, but that's the truth. In a figurative sense, we are the sum of the five people with whom we spend the most time. But how can we explain this? Why is it? In that regard, our brain has a very interesting answer. Allow me to introduce: your mirror neurons.



These miraculous instruments sit right behind our eyes. And though I've never encountered your neurons personally, there's one thing I can guarantee: that they see everything! The scientific explanation for this is that mirror neurons are nerve cells. When they observe a situation happening, they trigger similar patterns of emotions and activity to the ones that would occur if you were experiencing it yourself. Isn't that incredible? Probably the simplest example of their existence is the famous "yawn phenomenon", which I'm sure is something you have experienced yourself. If someone next to you yawns on public transport or in the car, the same response will be triggered in you. You cannot help but yawn along with them. Some of you will feel the urge to yawn even as you read this. Know what I'm talking about? Then your mirror neurons are alive and well.



What implications does this have for your life? Do you look at worn-down colleagues every day, those who do nothing but bemoan the burden of holiday applications and the allocation of a non-ergonomic desk? Do you watch the resident complainer from your circle of friends, the one who needs three beers every evening to cope with the trials and tribulations of life? What happens in your brain? That's right! Your mirror neurons instinctively pick up the patterns they are observing and instantly feel the drive to drown themselves in your friend's fourth beer.

Our mirror neurons not only allow us to experience the behaviour (body language, facial expressions, etc.) of people in our environment as if it were our own; they are also responsible for us mimicking the people around us. We have no choice! Because of our mirror neurons, we emulate the behaviour from our immediate environment on a completely unconscious basis.

On the one hand, this has some clear advantages. Back in the Stone Age, it made perfect sense to follow the crowd; it was the key to survival. Anyone who behaved differently from the group would face almost certain death. What's more, though our existence has long since ceased to be one of "survive or die", scientists agree that our brains have changed little over the last few thousand years. The control centre in our head still has one primary task: to protect against danger! Ideally, our grey matter would like for everything to stay as it is. "You'd better not venture out of the cave," it warns, "because that's where danger lies." But what does this have to do with our life in the here and now? Be completely honest with yourself: how much would I be able to tell about you after meeting your five best friends? At the very least, I'd know something about your level of income, your hobbies and whether you read books (and if so, which ones). I'd know whether you prefer the "income-killing machine" - the television - or attending seminars to work on your self-development. You probably dress similarly to your friends and share a similar lifestyle. In a similar vein, I'd likely also be able to guess whether you drink or smoke.

Why? Because of our mirror neurons! These nerve cells drive an unconscious process of imitation and adaptation. Have you ever heard the anecdote that most dogs look similar to their owners? And if so, who do you think has sought out whom?



I can only imagine you furrowing your brow as you read this, attempting feverishly to review the list of the five people you see most. At this point, I can only tell not to worry: you wouldn't be the first to ask yourself why no-one has alerted you to the connection before. As the saying so succinctly puts it, "Birds of a feather flock together". That that's how it's been since schooldays, when people were clearly divided into groups. There were the athletic ones, the musical ones, the academically gifted ones, and so on. Did you notice that all the members of these groups dressed similarly and exhibited similar behaviours? This applies to all groups who spend a lot of time together. And that brings me neatly back to the idea at the beginning of the chapter: that the people in your environment are largely responsible for your success or failure.

In this regard, it's important to have a realistic picture of what your environment looks like. Extreme variations are rare. It is probably not the case that all your friends are athletic, family-oriented, financially independent, great conversational partners, consistently balanced and self-reflective – and that's okay. I'd also hazard a guess that your "best five" are not "victim-playing" overweight smokers who get their worldview from tabloids and conspiracy websites. If that were the case, you probably wouldn't even be reading this book.

If one thing is certain, it's that people like those who are similar to them. Someone will have recommended or even given you this book. For this friend, you are probably one of the five people with whom they want to go forth and make their unique mark on this life. You should hold on to this friend dearly and, at the same time, make a clear decision regarding your life in general. My wife Rita and I did this some time ago: we chose only to let in people who would pull us up, not drag us down. Unfortunately, too often, the problem lies in our heads - sometimes even in bed next to us. This is something we'll get to in a moment.

What does all this mean in plain language? Well, if you really want to be successful, you need to find the right people to nourish your mind and your mirror neurons. If you want to lose weight, you need to find people for whom "sport" means more than "rolling cigarettes".

Chronic complainers: Bloodthirsty vampires with big appetites

It's an all-too-familiar scenario: you come into work on Monday morning full of energy and anticipation, but as soon as you see the bloodless faces of your chronic complainer colleagues, your mood and motivation spontaneously vanish. If you've had enough of this and are ready to start making a success of life, you need people for whom the light comes on - not off - when they enter a room. This is key to your self-improvement, since your mirror neurons mean that you'll inevitably end up sharing their traits. Your mirror neurons are your biggest assets and are extremely sensitive. Guard and protect them accordingly – otherwise, sooner or later, you'll become a chronic complainer yourself.

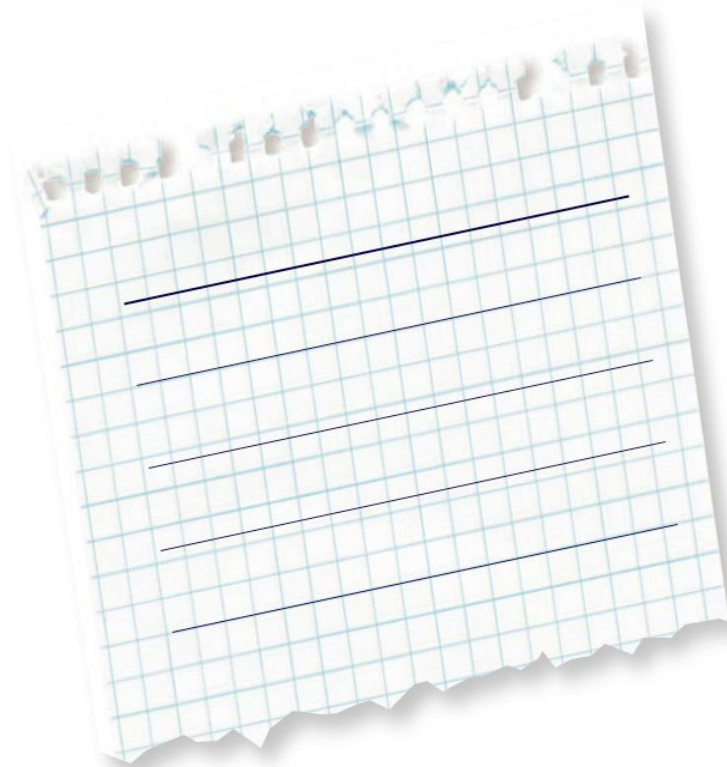
When I think of chronic complainers, I have a certain image in mind. They are the kind of person who is merely a physical presence. Internally, they are already dead – it's just that they've not toppled over yet. This suits them just fine, since it means that they get to keep complaining.

They are vampires, so to speak.

Did a few names from your circle come to mind as you read this?

Write them down – because they are the **CHRONIC COMPLAINERS** in YOUR life!

[...]



Now, let's go through your list. Who's on it? Friends and acquaintances that leave you wondering whether you have less - not more - energy after each meeting? In these cases, you can act immediately. Cut those people out of your life, or at least limit contact massively. Who comes after that? Colleagues and managers? But of course! There are chronic complainers in almost every office. "But Tobi, I have to work with these people every day! I can hardly cut them off completely. What can I do instead?" In this case, you should look critically at your own behaviour: do you listen intently when your resident chronic complainer fiercely resists innovation and is fundamentally opposed to everything? Then you're to blame for the fact they keep coming back to you. How can you break this cycle? Consciously take the opposite stance – that is, give praise and positive feedback loudly instead of blaspheming the absent party in the tea kitchen. Never present yourself as a victim, since you were the one who chose the job (and thus also the colleagues). If you don't like it, change the department or company. Even better, make yourself independent of others by building your own business. This transforms you into a high potential person, one who isn't scared

Perhaps there are also some family members on your list. Here, the challenge is even greater, because it can be almost impossible to detach ourselves completely. In general, it's important to understand what chronic complainers are aiming to achieve – namely, attention and recognition. This in itself is not a bad thing: each and every one of us has this desire. The problem is that some people develop a somewhat questionable strategy for getting it. They consider it easier to use the pity factor than to be a worthwhile person to know. What could be more suitable than constant moaning as a means of establishing rapport with others? Personally, I find this approach incredibly stressful. I go a completely different way: I want attention for my positive stories and recognition for goals I have achieved. I don't want to build bridges with people who will moan with me - that's how I end up only knowing other chronic complainers. And that is a vicious circle.

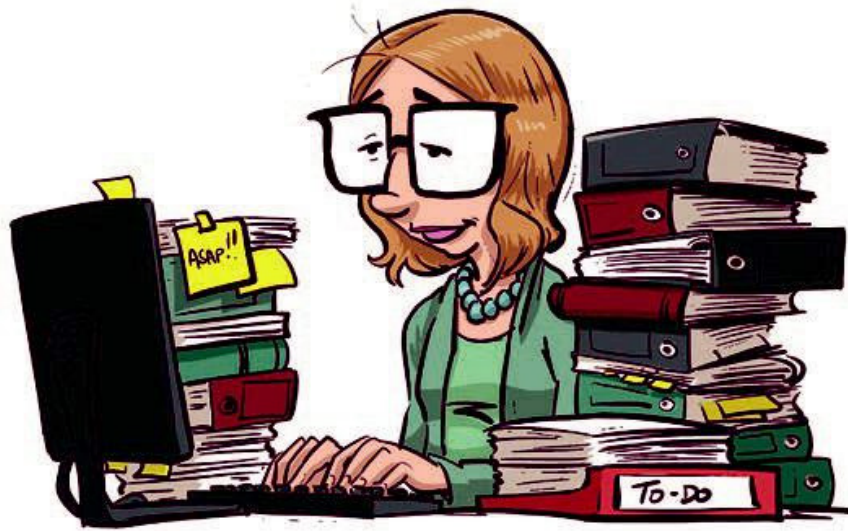
Ants: A lifelong march in the direction of mediocrity

Fortunately, the people of the world - and certainly your friends, colleagues and acquaintances – are not only made up of chronic complainers. Let's come to a much more pleasant type of contemporary: the ants. These hard-working little crawlers of the insect world are a very accurate metaphor for these types of people. Ants have just one goal, to do a good job. They do not reach for the stars; they do not aspire to an impressive career. Their passion lies in their free time. Whether at the bowling green, the allotment club or dog club – pursuing a hobby is where the ant is most at home. Often, they take on a senior volunteer position.



As we learned earlier, attention and recognition are two very basic human needs, and in a voluntary position, a balanced person like the ant gets both. This makes them a very pleasant contemporary - both privately and on the job. Do you remember the party I described earlier? The ant is a party guest of the straightforward kind. They would never lead the polonaise, but they'll happily throw their rock and foot to the beat as the chronic complainer bemoans the awful music in a corner. In a similar vein, the ant has effortlessly mastered the dance over the "parquet of everyday".

While the chronic complainer laments the early start on a Monday morning, the ant joins the stream of people marching into the office. They tidy up a spreadsheet, affix a whole-body bandage to the yawning chronic complainer and find solutions for problems. The well-behaved ant is accustomed to carrying heavy loads and shouldering multiple tasks at once - and all this without complaining! Do you know any "ants" yourself? Wonderful! Then start a new list for them. You should spend more time with these people, especially in the office. The ant is a group animal and needs companions to haul the big loads together. Unfortunately, if an ant encounters too many chronic complainers, it can become dangerous. When placed among the comic book villains of "Thinks-Nothing", "Does-Nothing", "Knows-Nothing" and "Can't -Do", the ant will lose their motivation faster than you can imagine.

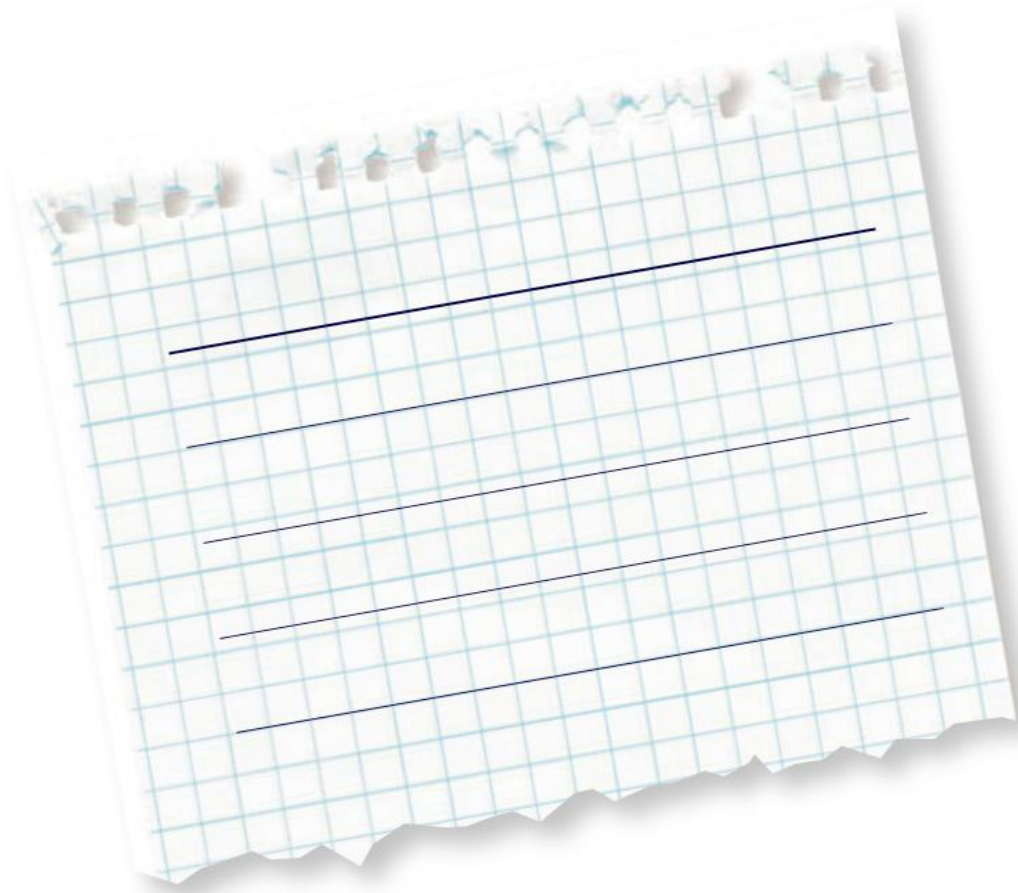


Purely statistically, how long do you think it takes until an ant in the wrong environment jumps ship to the chronic complainer team? Well, I'll tell you. It's four days!

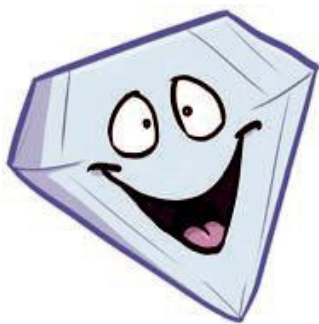
Why so fast? Well, because of mirror neurons, of course. In these four days, the ant learns that it is much easier to get attention and recognition through whining. Just like that, one more chronic complainer is made. This has catastrophic consequences for a company. Imagine an office full of chronic complainers spending half the day complaining and smoking on the steps. Unfortunately, there are even chronic complainer managers, whose negative aura quickly takes motivated, dedicated employees and infects them with the complainer attitude. As a result, they have little desire for their job. Of course, this sub-par leadership is of course not without consequences; in fact, the economic damage is enormous. In 2016, the Gallup Institute calculated that bad management caused up to 105 billion euros of economic damage in Germany alone - and that's before we even get onto the topic of personal damage.



When you think about the following day at work, how does it make you feel? Do you sigh at the thought? This is where it gets dangerous. If “Monday” is your definition of personal drama and the coffee machine is your only reason for turning up at the office, you should consider whether it’s because you spend too much time with chronic complainer colleagues on different levels. My recommendation is to pay more attention to the ants in your company. If a single ant can carry 100 times its body weight, what can happen when they get together? Now make a list of five ants you know (and don’t worry, these ones are allowed to stay in your life):



Diamonds: On Pressure and Radiance



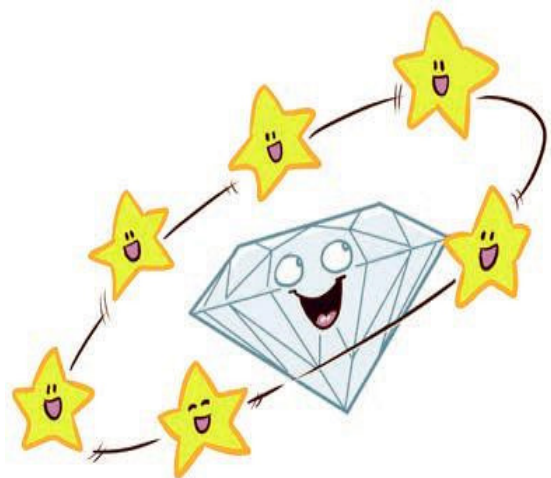
Let’s come to the kind of human I can already tell you are: the diamond. How do I know this? If you weren’t, you wouldn’t be reading this book at all. When we talked about the chronic complainers, I mentioned that there are people for whom the light turns on when they enter a room. Diamonds belong in this category. Have you ever met someone who shines from within? Someone who stands confidently in the midst of the fray, absorbs everything around them and radiates it out again?

Someone who recognise possibilities on every corner, who grabs them with both hands and can always be found with a sparkle in their eyes? This sparkle is not a Morse code message from their mirror neurons – it’s simply the sign of a person who knows one important thing. Life has rough edges, but we all have a choice: either to complain about these perceived obstacles and allow ourselves to be hurt by them, or instead allow ourselves to be shaped and sanded like a diamond

in a jeweller's workshop. It doesn't matter if this precious stone falls on the ground or gets dirty - a diamond will always remain a diamond. While the chronic complainer belongs to the category of "I don't know the solution, but I love talking about the problem", diamonds are problem solvers. Like ants, diamonds do not shy away from tackling problems. But while the ant prefers companions for the bigger tasks, the diamond can handle them alone.



They don't waste time complaining. They continue to educate themselves; they read a lot. They get to the heart of things. Every particle, every atom, is in its right place, and contributes to the stone's strength. Diamonds are people who dare!



Are you ready to change your life according to the shampoo bottle principle? Simply, this states that if you turn everything upside down, more will come out! Once you've got to grips with this, the only thing left is the finishing touch: the thing that makes every diamond unique. And this is no small undertaking! A stone loses up to 54 percent of its weight during the final stage of processing. This weight represents the ballast in your life. You know what I'm talking about, right? Yes – the chronic complainers. Do you know how diamonds are cut; what is used to grind the hardest substance in the world? That's right: other diamonds or diamond powder, and that on a microscopic level. With 2000 revolutions per minute, it can get dizzy on the way to the top. Incidentally, there are no shortage of rough diamonds in the world, but in order to become valuable, they must be "properly" honed. Only then will they acquire the right shape and colour. Some people are willing to spend huge sums of money of this. Are you a stone with potential; are you ready to submit yourself to high pressure, even when it gets uncomfortable or painful? Diamonds are often purchased for 7,000 euros in the diamond exchange, then cut and subsequently sold for more than 30,000 euros. It's quite incredible what a particular cut can do for a diamond's value. As such, I advise you to let as many diamonds as possible into your life. There's another force that can grind the diamond, too: superhuman powers; in other words, superstars!

Superstars: Born to conquer the world

Now, let's complete the list of people who will see you on your way to personal happiness and success: the superstars. By this, I don't mean rock stars or public figures. Superstars are completely normal people, but are united by a special quality.

Superstars are people who change the lives of others. They often do so unconsciously, simply by living their passion. They are people for whom work is not work, because they are doing exactly what they love; they are giving something back with their whole being and their whole heart. For me personally, this is exactly what makes a successful person. Success is not what's in your bank account. It's not holding an important position, one where you can hide behind titles or behind your parents' success. In my world, success is what comes from you. Success is when you are passionate for a cause and become deaf to the negativity in your environment. Success is when you enjoy every breath of life, because you wake up and realise that you can be the cog in the history of many other people. Most wonderfully of all, you can do this by doing what you love. In the following pages, I'll tell you how to pursue this path.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tobias Beck

International Speaker, Consultant, Lecturer

"Tobias starts unknown, leaves unforgettable."

Tobias Beck started as a flight attendant with learning difficulties and is now one of Europe's best-loved speakers. German magazine FOCUS has honoured his work with several awards and he reaches an audience of millions online, with his Bewohnerfrei® ("Liberated") podcast hitting # 1 on the iTunes download charts as soon as it was released. He has trained hundreds of thousands of people at his seminars and is a personal consultant to well-known CEOs. As a university lecturer, he explains, in a humorous fashion, how the principles of success and motivational psychology can work for others too.

Tobias learned early that life isn't easy, especially if you lose sight of your strengths. Compared to children, adults need to learn how to find their strengths and to trust them again. That's why Tobias decided to work at Disney World in his early twenties. Where else, when not at Disney, do adults learn to see the world with the excitement of children? In his host family, in one of the most socially difficult areas of Florida, Tobias learned about one thing: Life. With all of its bright and dark sides. Since then travelling became the best teacher in life for Tobias, which is why he decided to never stop doing it. Up to now he travels as a purser around the world with a big German company and gets to know new cultures and people who inspire him. He studied psychology at the universities of Duisburg-Essen and Frankfurt in Germany, has built a direct distribution company with over 1900 sales partners from eight different countries and after that he ultimately found his passion: to motivate and inspire people to go after their dreams. For his seminars, Tobias was trained by some of the best trainers of the world e.g. Anthony Robbins, Blair Singer, George Zalucki und T. Harv Eker. More than 200,000 people attended his over 2,000 days of seminars; Tobias helps them to get out of their comfort zone and face their fears of being their true self. Because he has the firm belief that life IS beautiful, as soon as you know how to focus on the right things.

"His mixture of craziness and analytical insights into human nature is what makes his advice so valuable." Gregor Gerlach, Co-Founder of Vapiano

"Tobias has an incredible ability to address taboos humorously yet with great effect."

Kai Schäffner, President of Vorwerk USA

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