** LLP Grundtvig MISSIONGATE  **

**Never work again: the search for inspiration in your job**

Research on existing methods “How to find your mission in life” by Raoul Knobbout, trainee PCT. April 2012

**1. Title**: “Nooit meer werken – op zoek naar bezieling in je werk” (“*Never work again - the search for inspiration in your job”*)

**Author**: Marjan van Lier

Language: Dutch

Published in: 1998

Publisher: Het Spectrum, Utrecht

**2. Content description**

The book presents a guideline towards ‘finding your mission in life’. The search for finding your mission in life is in this book described as a pilgrimage along various substations, in the end arriving at an ideal life situation. This situation represents a life in which “working does not feel like working anymore” (p. 207). According to the book, happiness and fulfillment in life are found when you can design your life around your passions, personality and potentials (p.121).

According to the author, finding a job (or other activities) that feels not like a job is essential. In order to do this, you need to identify your own traits first. This book focuses on this process. The next step would be to match your job, volunteer work, sports and hobbies to your newly discovered traits. However, the book does not aid the reader in doing this. The reader has to do this himself.

The book is centered along identifying your mission in life. Out of the nine chapters in the book, eight are clearly connected to finding your mission in life. The last one is about energy and gives more practical advise on how to cope with stress and temporary lack of motivation.

Overall, the book uses various metaphors, creating a vivid story and giving a powerful message to the reader. This is a method that will be easily understood for most people, making the book acceptable for a broad audience.

**3. Summary of the method, introduction**

The method is centered at the reader himself. Readers –or trainees- that are using the method are sometimes given the advice to counsel an external advisor. External advisors, like psychologists and therapists, are considered to be useful in discovering some of the answers in the book and therefore beneficial in finding your mission in life. More on this can be found in section 6 of this report, on trainers.

The method itself is a discovery of the reader’s personality, potential and passion. Using the method, the reader will go on a discovery ‘journey’, searching for a hassle-free life. In the words of the author: “ the quest for the land that is called Never Work Again” (p. 12), meaning that once the reader has discovered his personality, passion and potential and he is able to design his (working) life according to it, working no longer feels like working anymore. The author considers this to be ideal and links this to a strong intrinsic motivation. In section 7 of this report, the method used in this book is further elaborated upon.

**4. Basic Assumptions**

One primary assumption in the method is that mission in life is similar to passion. This link to passion means that finding your mission in life in the same as developing or discovering passion. It is assumed that people perceive a mission in life the same as passion. Another assumption is that passion can be developed for any activity. The key of the book is “want whatever you can”, assuming that a person can actively develop passion.

A third assumption is that professional help can sometimes be used in the process, but that the process can also be completed individually.

**5. What is meant in the book or method by ‘finding your mission in life’?**

Although the book does not specifically define a ‘mission in life’, it possible to extract one. According to the author, mission in life is similar to passion. Discovering passion for a person, a religious entity or a job is considered the most important ‘quest’ in someone’s life.

**6. Trainer profile**

In this book, references to professional trainers are often made. However, these advises are not very specific, often just referring to “psychologists”, “therapists” (p. 203) or “philosophers” (ibid.). These external advisors both have a counseling role and a development role. Counselors will encourage self-knowledge. Interesting also is the role philosophers might fulfill, as this is not very common. Philosophers can, through a general deeper understanding, a critical attitude and by asking the right questions, alter the perception of trainees. In the second role, trainers teach or encourage necessary skills to trainees. This will help trainees to achieve a ‘fit’ between personal talents and required skills (more on this in section 7)

In general, through following the method and by obtaining advise from counselors, trainees are taught to follow their internal passion. This is, however, mainly an individual task. The book roughly stipulates the framework for this and persuades the reader to follow it. Sometimes, an external advisor can indeed provide aid in this process, but preferred methods or details of these trainers are not given.

**6.1. Skills** (of trainers) to support (un)employed persons in ‘finding your mission in life’:

As mentioned before, required trainer skills are not explicitly mentioned in the book. A few things can however still be mentioned about the subject.

Motivation to find their new mission in life:

Not explicitly described, but can be extracted from p. 203: External advisors can enhance motivation by asking the right questions and by altering the perception of the trainee. By asking critical questions, the trainee’s believes are likely to be changed. The trainee is then able to continue searching for his mission in life. Motivation results from the feeling that this process is already yielding some results; the trainee comes closer to finding his mission in life.

Outplacement processes for persons, motivating them to find their new mission:

‘Finding your mission in life’ is mainly an individual task in this book. External advisors are not mandatory; they might be avoided if the trainee is able to go through the process herself. In this way, the process is outsourced to a large degree. Enhancement through therapists and counselors is still however a possibility, but it is the trainee’s primary responsibility. Therapists and other counselors get a role whenever the trainee himself is not capable of continuing the process.

Finding new (volunteer) work:

This is not specifically mentioned in the book. The emphasis lies on finding passion and your mission in life, not on finding new work or jobs. Albeit not specifically mentioned, this function can again be extracted from the book. The trainer should be capable of matching individual’s personality, passion and potential to a specific job or activity (p.120). This is in line with a major premise of the method: designing your (working) life according to your passions, personality and potentials will lead to an ideal situation.

**6.2 Knowledge** (of trainers) to support (un)employed persons in ‘finding your mission in life:

Like indicated in section 6.1, not much is mentioned about specific knowledge-requirements of trainers. The few references made refer to trainer skills instead of specific knowledge. A few items can however be inferred from the book.

Motivation to find their new mission in life:

Trainers must have knowledge about various extrinsic motivators (pp. 42-61). Knowledge about motivators helps trainers to teach trainees about these factors. Trainees will achieve a better understanding of what keeps them going and can be taught how to apply this knowledge in their personal life. According to the method, extrinsic motivators are ideally replaced by intrinsic motivation or passion for one’s job or other aspects in life (p.119).

Motivation to find their new mission in working life:

The same as mentioned above applies. The trainer knows how passion can be found and developed and knows how to design activities in life according to this passion. He is capable of matching personality, potential and passion to activities and jobs. This implies that he has knowledge of all these factors. He is able to classify personalities according to the Big Five framework (p. 84), is able to describe talents and potentials in an accurate way (pp. 102-123) and has knowledge about the various forms of passion (p.118).

Outplacement processes for persons, motivating them to find their new mission in life

This is not mentioned in the book

**7. Used method** of trainers to support (un)employed persons in:

7.1 Finding their mission in (working) life

The method is in great detail described in the book. In its essence, it is an individual’s discovery of his or her potential, personality and passion. After these three elements are identified, the reader is encouraged to design his (working) life according to them. This is mainly an individual task, albeit references to external advisors are sometimes made. In this section I will describe the method in detail and indicate were finding external help is advisable.

Like indicated before, the author uses a pilgrimage as metaphor for the process of finding your mission in life. She argues that, comparable to a pilgrimage in the traditional sense, it is not purely about the end station. The entire journey towards it is also of great value. According to this comparison, the process of finding your mission in life is also very important. By striving towards finding your mission and by striving for a match between your mission and activities in your life, you will also attain other goals in the process.

Starting point is your current situation. The reader is encouraged to think about his current motivations and to describe to which rewards he or she is striving in her daily life. These needs are in fact hygiene factors, or factors that will lead to dissatisfaction when not met (Herzberg, 1966). The hygiene factors listed in this book are (pp. 40-60):

* Rewards, both monetary and emotional
* Assurance, both material and social
* Individual needs: success and physical challenges
* Social needs: contact with others, collaboration and competition

Some of these concepts might require more explanation. Emotional rewards refer to compliments and feedback, while monetary (or material) rewards refer to fixed salary, bonuses or non-cash awards (e.g. stock options, company car, health insurance). Most people strive towards stable environments. Therefore, assurance is an important factor and can refer to both material (e.g. the certainty of a fixed income and a standard, hard-to-diminish contract compared to highly variable income without any assurance or contract) and social assurance. Social assurance is for example the feeling to be connected to a certain group. This provides a sense of security and commitment and is in a way also a social contract.

Individual needs elaborated upon are the need for success and the need for some form of physical challenges. Success is described as accomplishment of *intended* goals, or striving towards certain goals and as a result attaining them. Physical challenges are important for most people, as they need some form of daily physical exercise in order to feel good. Individual needs can be attained without interference from others.

Social needs, on the other hand, are dependent of other people. Described needs are contact with other, collaboration towards a common goal and competition with peers.

All humans have these hygiene factors to a greater or lesser extent. What is important at this stage is to identify to what extent these factors influence you in your daily life and how these are met in your daily activities.

Since every person has an unique mix of motivating factors, what motivates somebody is part of his personality. Personality is further defined through the Big Five model. Because of the widespread knowledge about this framework I will not elaborate further on this taxonomy of personalities (p.85).

Being aware of your own personality is the first phase in the method. The second phase is being aware of your potentials. This is partially defined as intelligence. All persons are to some extent intelligent in both a cognitive and an emotional way (pp.66-83). Similar to intelligence, every person has talents too. According to the author, talents can be divided into five broad groups. Every person has all five talents, again in a greater or lesser extent. She describes talents metaphorically as trees.

From the beginning, a tree is only a seed. It needs water, care and nourishment to grow to great heights. At the same time, its potential is not limitless. Its dimensions are limited by the species, the quality of the soil, and more. Therefore, a tree cannot grow taller, wider or have more branches than its limits allow it. The same holds for talents. Without appropriate care and nourishment, they will remain useless seeds, while at the same time they are limited to a certain extent. People should strive to develop their talents, but should also be aware of these limits.

Talents can be divided into 5 categories (pp. 102-105):

* Nurturing talents, or talents that enable others to fully develop themselves,
* Entrepreneurial talents, enabling persons to accept risks and initiate things,
* Intellectual talents, enabling people to think abstractly,
* Social talents, enabling people to communicate effectively, and
* Creative talents, the talent to develop new things

Knowledge of the extent to which your talents already are developed, the limits to which they can be developed and the activities necessary to develop them is essential to complete the second phase of the method.

The third dimension that awaits discovery is passion. Passion, or intrinsic motivation, is similar to mission in life. Tasks still need to be done, but when somebody is passionate about tasks they do not feel like a burden anymore. They just happen; they do not feel like ‘working’ anymore (p.120). The search for passion is essential in this book.

Discovering passion needs inspiration. This is mainly an individual process; a form of self-diagnosis in which a person needs to find out for himself what truly keeps him going. Some people already know what their passion is, but others need to find out. They need inspiration for this. Inspiration often emerges from music, arts, nature, spirituality, and other people (p.161).

Albeit inspiration is essential for discovering passion, passion can be developed for any activity. By realizing that passion emerges from specific factors, every activity can be turned into a passionate activity. By developing passion, a person will start to (intrinsically) like an activity. Passion for activities is linked to these factors:

* Mastery of a task. Passion is often linked to great skill. In fact, this is the most important determinant of passion.
* Perfectionism. This refers to the incentive to fully complete a task and try to perfection its outcome
* Love for a job. By simply loving an activity, passion emerges. This is not in any way developed in a scientific way; it mostly just happens
* Concentration on a task

Thus, passion can also be developed. It emerges from discovery (through inspiration), but also needs to be nurtured. Passion needs to be maintained; it does not simply emerge. Finding your mission in life is not a passive activity; you will need to actively develop it.

This is a shift from the ‘American Dream – paradigm’, which states that anybody can do whatever he wants. In this vision, with enough effort anybody can become anything. It is the vision of the paperboy wanting to become a millionaire: with enough hard work he will in the end achieve his aim.

This method gives a different alternative. It argues not to do whatever you want, but rather want whatever you can. The clear link of passion and mastery means that in the search for your mission in life and passion, one should strive towards mastery. Therefore, knowledge about talents is critical. First, find what you can (and cannot), and than try to like this. For in the end, mastery of a task is only possible if the task lies within your potential. If you are not talented for a job, or it requires more intelligence –both cognitive and emotional- than you are capable of, you will not consider this activity to be your mission in life. Thus instead, consider your talents and limits and match your job and activities with it. You are much more likely to consider these activities to be your mission in life: you have discovered and developed passion and found your mission in life!

Thus, the process of finding your mission in life is linked to passion and mastery. However, this is not a straightforward process. Inspiration and endurance are needed to develop passion and mastery. It is likely to last a long time before the end result is attained (i.e., your mission is found and your job and activities are matched to it). The length of this process, however, does not matter. Recalling the resemblance to a pilgrimage, it is good to note that the journey (or process) itself is also important. This is further elaborated in section 8, on motivation.

External help can be beneficial at various stages. It can be useful when discovering talents, it can be inevitable when determining intelligence and can be inspiring and beneficial when discovering passion. A conversation with a therapist can be very inspiring and can keep a person ‘on the right track’ during her mission-finding process. It can also be helpful to find professional help when trying to match your mission to your activities, as the extent to which certain activities match with your mission might not be known by yourself.

Thus, finding your mission in life is a long and rather individual process. It is about identifying talents, limits and personality-factors in the first phase. After identifying what you can, it is time to develop passion: begin to like what you are capable of. Doing this will result in mastery: really learning ‘the tricks of the trade’ and will lead to passion in your life. Passion is similar to mission: develop passion for activities you are capable is the key to finding your mission in life.

**8. Motivation**

Essentially, the method is about discovering intrinsic motivation. Passion for an activity means that a person has no needs for extrinsic motivators. The factors described in section 7 are no longer the reason that a person is working, but rather the job itself.

Passion is essentially the upper tier of Maslow’s pyramid, self-actualization. Whenever a person is motivated by this factor, he is no longer primarily motivated by all the lower tiers of the pyramid. Extrinsic motivation is no longer necessary. The author (p. 218) takes a non-traditional point regarding Maslow’s pyramid. Instead of working your way up, she argues that it is perhaps more suitable to work your way down the tiers. By instantly striving toward self-actualization (passion), all other extrinsic needs (as described in the first part of section 7) are met in the process. Social and esteem needs (tiers 3 and 4) are fulfilled while striving for self-actualization (tier 5). Meanwhile, physical and security needs are in countries like the Netherlands guaranteed by the government through social welfare policies. This results in a situation in which people are no longer motivated by these factors since the government guarantees them.

**8.1. Definitions of motivation**

Motivation is defined as “the start engine that powers the machinery of our potential and personality” (p.168). It emerges from four factors:

* A long-term goal (vision)
* A specific problem (task)
* Things necessary for accomplishment (means)
* A perceived (causal) relation between vision and task (insight)

**8.2. Definitions of motivational factors**

Motivational factors are divided into extrinsic and intrinsic factors. These are not specifically defined in the book. Motivational factors are already described in section seven of this report

**8.3. Models of motivation used or referred to**

The method explicitly refers to Maslow’s pyramid. The part about motivators is very similar to Herzberg. This too in already mentioned in section seven.

**8.4. What motivates (un)employed persons to find a new mission in life**

Apart from the extrinsic and intrinsic factors already described in this book, the method also offers an alternative. When facing a lack of motivation, it is also possible to search for a motivating work environment. This is often the result of a skillful manager who is capable of designing a job in such a way, that the employee is motivated. A manager should, in order to achieve this, make sure that in the perception of the employee, tasks are linked to the long-term goal that a person is trying to achieve. Whenever somebody perceives a task a beneficial for himself, motivation will increase. Managers can also apply other techniques in order to increase motivation

**8.5. How does the trainer handle this kind of motivation**

This is not mentioned in the book. The trainer has an advisory role, not a motivating. Motivation should arise from the individual.

**9. Target Group**

The book is not specifically aimed at a certain public. An interpretation can however be made from the examples from the book and the language used.

-Aimed at higher vocational/general qualified people

-Aimed at age 40-49

-Aimed at employed people

**10. European Context**

The book is written from a Dutch perspective. However, it can probably be generalized to a broader European context. Most of its assumptions will hold for the entire European Union. One key assumption however limits it generalizability to countries with a social welfare system. As mentioned before, the author assumes that people are no longer motivated to achieve the two lower tiers of Maslow’s pyramid. Security and physical needs are to a great extent guaranteed by the government. Whenever somebody losses his or her job, the government provides nourishment and a home through the social welfare system. Therefore, people can safely strive for self-actualization from the start. The two essential motivators are already guaranteed, meaning that people no longer derive their motivation from them. In some European countries however, this does not hold because the government does not guarantee a certain income to the same extent as the Dutch government. As this important assumption no longer holds, the applicability of the book is limited.

**11. Literature references**

Herzberg, F. (1966) *Work and the Nature of Man*. Cleveland: World Publishing,