

Be not afraid of growing slowly,

Be afraid only of standing still.

Chinese proverb

A personal return on experience from over 30 years strength sports experience.

By Mark Notschaele

3. My sideshow passion



Loud rock music and the sound of weights hitting the floor in our home gym hollering through our house. My 16 year old twin sons and their friends groaning and yelling at each other "one more rep, it's only one set, only 1 set, come on, come on." I absorb the sounds of them working hard, without being forced by anybody but themselves. It takes me back in time to when I started out, reliving the last decades since with a smile on my face. I love working out with weights. The pursuit of the "glupb! – We are growing" look has been a major passion in my life during the last 30 years – which keeps surviving next to all of life's other challenges, passions and formal obligations. The bottom line is that I have a passion to do it – and keep doing it. This despite it was clear to me that there was no money to make, no professional career to pursue.

Pursuing such a "sideshow passion" is indeed a challenge. Following your heart – part-time - and with a sense of real life realism takes indeed a lot of discipline and mental maturity. But I loved and keep loving it.

What is passion? A splendid definition I heard recently from a good friend and business relation is: "the burning willingness to succeed". For me it is the ability of intrinsic self-motivation, further combined with the ability to stick with striving for a desired, ever higher set personal achievement for a very long time. The ability to fully focus, sacrifice, overcome problems, carefully plan, adapt, adopt, learn and experiment. To freely share and motivate others and find overall satisfaction in the journey as such. Setting realistic but ambitious goals based on the talent and time available and comparing the result with my personal best, not necessarily the absolute best on the planet, and not constantly comparing to others. It is also about avoiding, dealing with and blending out negative influence.

Since my boys started to work out seriously they have been confronting me with the question what the best way is to work out to get strong and muscular fast, and avoid injuries. This triggered a lot of reflections in me. I started to dig out my training logs and notes from the years of working out. In hindsight starting to consolidate and realizing what worked, what did not work, what was crazy, what was good. What held me back, what motivated me.



I have been working with them for over a year now. Since I have been able to avoid the pitfalls for them, it is obvious that they made significant more progress in that year vs. me "back then" in my first years in the 1980's. Moreover I started to apply my own learning's much more diligently in my personal training, resulting in breaking my personal bests in many exercises at the age of 50, 32 years after starting the Iron Passion.

I am writing this booklet because I feel the urge to - it is that simple. I have no scientific or pseudo- scientific objective with the material I write, nor do I have the pretention it will add anything dramatically new to the slew of training books that exist on working out with weights. I am not a world champion with fame. So why write it then? I believe there are many more people like myself out there. And my story is probably typical for those other die-hards out there with a passion.

The motivation comes intrinsically out of myself. I do not do it to please others. Do not do it because it is particularly useful. Do not do it because others ask me to do it. I do not stop doing it because others tell me to. I do not care what others think about me writing this booklet. I do not do it because I have a superb talent in writing books. I do it because I it makes me feel good. The process of writing structures my thoughts, and helps me be a more effective coach for my sons. It is the same emotion of motivation and drive that has made me start lifting weights and stick with it for over 30 years.

If this booklet helps my wife Anke and my children Steffen, Tanja and Timo to understand what drives their husband and father just a bit more and helps them to recognize the principle of passion(s) as an important element of their own lives - I would be ultimately pleased. If it helps others to discover, stick with their existing or developing passion, or just pick up a few things about weightlifting and get them to become better at it - I would be delighted.

If you are looking for any sort of intended message in this booklet it is probably about the role of passion, the transferable nature of it towards other aspects of your life, the motivating influence it has on people around you, the way it changes how you observe the world and select which people you want to have around you and be with.

The other straightforward way to perceive the content of this booklet is just to take it as my personal log of why I started lifting weights combined with personal return of a lengthy "bottom up" experience of bodybuilding and strength training. I describe what I found to work well and does not work in terms of training routines, but also elaborate on further real world aspects I got confronted with living the life of a person with a passion for a sports which is not so socially accepted and not so mainstream.

