

DR. FRANZISKA FRANK

24 KARAT SUCCESS



GOLDEN RULES FOR A
FULFILLED AND SUCCESSFUL
LIFE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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fulfilled life in the digital age*

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek. Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar
Bibliographic information of the German National Library. The German National Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data can be found on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>

ISBN: 978-3-9820888-6-0
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Herausgeber/Publisher: Dr. Franziska Frank, Fuggerstraße 35, 10777 Berlin
Umschlag/Design: Waheduzzaman Manik
Lektorat/Editor: Jane Simms

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To KaHaNo who always delight my heart

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A preface

Are you feeling bad? Probably not. We humans are excellent at settling happily into where and how we are at this very moment. Work is sort of okay, friends are fine, your partner might be a bit weird, but other people are even stranger. And you are quite used to yourself by now. The future, with all its digitalization and artificial intelligence is unclear, but things will work out.

Then why a book like this?

Three reasons.

1. The world is changing fundamentally. Machines are already much better than humans at playing chess or Go, at making error-free diagnoses, at rationally weighing risks, at dealing with huge amounts of data and at learning more and more as they go along. And what does the human being do? They oscillate between fear and euphoria, not knowing what their role will be in the future. Which human characteristics will be relevant at all? Will there be room for emotions, for human creativity, for rough edges? Nobody knows. What is certain, however, is that for the foreseeable future artificial intelligence will struggle to replicate leadership, free thinking, humor, creativity and, of course, emotions. These are just some of the things that we humans are naturally good at – if we focus on what we are doing and if we use our skills properly.

It is only in times of crisis that most people suspect that they could be living this one and only life they've been given more

self-sufficiently and more successfully. That they could nudge themselves more decisively toward where they actually want to be. And that they could win over other people – and soon, perhaps, even machines – more effectively to their own ideas and wishes. To achieve this, it is helpful to have a general compendium of knowledge about human beings that goes beyond purely personal experience – particularly as this personal experience often sends us the wrong signals. Just because a conversation with our boss, a negotiation at a car dealership, an encouraging chat with one of our family, has gone well, that doesn't mean that we have used the right approach. It could have been pure luck. The same applies if something went wrong. Maybe we did use the right approach – after all, it's been shown to work in 99 percent of cases – but we just happened to be dealing with a member of the sad and lonely one percent. So we can all benefit from learning about rules that, according to extensive research, generally lead to a more fulfilling and successful life.

2. Once people have decided to develop more options for themselves, to change their surroundings and to do a few things better, they tend to get a life coach, or go for counseling – maybe family therapy – or buy some clever books. This book, for example, *24 Karat Success* is designed to help people understand themselves and others better and to act differently as a result. Its purpose is to support people in recognizing what is immutable in each of us and what we can change. It presents options for becoming fitter for both professional and private life. But this might not be what you want! And here you need to apply free will – whatever of it the neuroscientists have left us with! So do not feel that you have to apply – or even agree with – every 'helpful' behavioral option that either I or the research has propagated.
3. Almost all people in our latitude are plagued by lack of time. Who has time to read hundreds of books and studies and discover through dialogue with hundreds of adults which 24 rules of psychology, neuroscience and economics might actually help us to live happier and more successful lives? And

prepare us for the times of digital change. So, in the spirit of the sharing economy, I'm presenting here my findings from a decade of applied research and teaching.

Why 24 Karats?

24 Karats denominate gold with a purity of 99.99 percent. The 'fineness' of gold is measured in Karats, which means 'little horn'. The word is translated from Arabic and refers to the carob, the locust-bean tree, whose fruit grows in elegant croissant shapes. The seeds of this fruit were used by the Ancient Greeks as a unit of measurement, because they allegedly all have a similar weight. Since then, however, scientists have discovered that the individual seeds differ from each other in the same way as other seed types.¹ However, and this is what distinguishes the carob from other seeds, scientists have also recognized that every human being is able to assemble from a handful of seeds those that have the same weight. And this is, of course, the decisive factor for measuring.

The same applies to this book. Each rule represents a seed that, step by step, increases the 'gold content' of the reader. Nevertheless, every reader will find some Karats that are noticeably heavier or lighter than others – for them at least. Here everyone should make their own personal weighting.

How is every Karat served?

It begins with a story. A filmmaker is given the task of winning the First World War for the Austrians; the Chinese government invents a special lottery; a NASA probe flies the wrong way; everyone ignores Napoleon. These stories are taken from life. Some gladden the heart, others sadden it, some fill the purse of the protagonists, others empty it. But every story is accompanied by an explanation as to why it happened exactly as it did, backed up by scientific evidence.

From the scientific evidence tips grow for practical use. You can distil how best to apply the rule a) for yourself, b) in your relationships with partners, children and friends, and c) in interaction with bosses, colleagues, employees and customers. Practical examples help to illustrate how you might do this.

Taboo topic – manipulation

Throughout the book I will demonstrate again and again how we can influence and change not only ourselves but also others. That means it is all about manipulation. And we encounter manipulation every day and everywhere. After all, every person we meet influences and manipulates us, as does every system in which we move. And we manipulate others. Constantly. Manipulation is nothing more than acting on others to achieve a goal. Babies do it when they cry, children do it by whining or – a little more wisely – by telling you about good marks at school, the government does it through taxes on alcohol and tax incentives for married couples, parents do it by praising or criticizing their offspring, partners do it by smiling or frowning at each other, managers do it by promoting their employees or withdrawing bonuses. Given the powerful effects of manipulation, surely it is better that we manipulate consciously and not purely by mistake?

In addition to the 24 Karat stories in this book, there are of course hundreds of other stories that can illustrate the point as well or even better. If you have such a story, please email: stories@franzisKarat.com

With best wishes for an even more successful and fulfilled life!

Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "F. Franz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.