

iteeWeeti

Registered
Unemployed

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English translation of the original Finnish version.

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Book Cover

This book tells about the experiences of a young engineering student during and after graduation. University studies were completed mostly with excellent grades, and during the studies also work had been conducted diligently in the field, both in one of Finland's most profitable engineering firms and on global projects with an internationally respected consulting company. The plan after graduation was to export an engineer equipped with a Finnish "sisu" and conscientiousness to the world of global engineering. However, as you're now viewing this book, you might guess that things didn't go exactly as planned. Instead of a smooth transition, post-graduation brought unemployment and a sense of complete failure. All the effort put into studies and work during that time began to feel futile. Initially, the blame for the situation was found in the mirror, then on the Finnish state, and finally on the Universe itself.

The purpose of writing this book was to express personal thoughts and act as a form of therapy in dealing with the feelings of failure and constant rejection. Additionally, one reason for writing was to have access to my own thoughts during a challenging life situation. On the other hand, the goal of publishing the book is to depict one version of how unemployment feels like when one wants to advance in their career and not waste time filling out job applications. Another hope for the publication is that the emotions conveyed would provide some form of peer support for those possibly in a similar situation, perhaps for my future self.

The intention of the book is not to complain about how difficult or unfair my life is but to open up about how challenging unemployment occasionally felt for me. In addressing these and other difficult issues in my life, I have come to understand that the most important aspect of overcoming challenges is to remember that no matter how unfair life may seem at a certain moment, and when everything you try seems to fail, eventually successes will come, and joy will arrive, as long as one doesn't give up in the middle of the process.

Even the days begin in darkness, but then comes the light.

Forewords

I loved reading and writing as a child, but in my youth, I came to hate both hobbies. As I transitioned from elementary school to middle school, reading started to fade. At that time, it felt like there was not enough time for reading, and it was challenging to find books that would captivate a young mind. The hormonal changes in the body were probably the root cause; Harry Potter and Famous Five books no longer had enough edge, chicks didn't find reading particularly hot hobby for a young stud, and self-education didn't appeal either. However, in middle school Finnish language lessons, I still got to write my own stories, which I enjoyed a lot. Then came the transition to high school, and in Finnish language class, I couldn't write my own stories anymore; instead, I had to analyze some fucking paintings like Hugo Simberg's Scream. My motivation plummeted. In the matriculation exams, I initially got an A in Finnish (the worst passing grade), then retook it and got a B (the second worst passing grade). By then, I had decided that Finnish language, reading, and writing were for hipsters and not for me.

However, there is one funny writing-related memory from high school. We had a young woman as a substitute teacher for a while, who was beautiful, smart, and nice. I crushed hard for her. Since substitutes substitute, this substitute's last day arrived too. On that final day, there was some kind of spelling test. The correct answer to the last question of the test was "... *olet todella raskas.*" ("... you are really burdensome.") In that moment, the young romantic in me woke up, and I wrote "... *olet todella rakas.*" "... you are really dear." To my disappointment, I realized that I got a perfect score on the test. It was disappointing because a perfect score meant that my expression of love had gone unnoticed. Story of my life. 😊

Now, six years after that decision to hate reading and writing, I have rediscovered the joy of both. The fun came when I realized that no one is forcing me to do these in a certain way anymore, and I can write just for my own amusement. It's cool that I can punctuate sentences however I want, there are no grades for writing style, and I don't have to worry about whether anyone will even check these. However, in big picture the book has been written in a proper manner so that the grammatical errors wouldn't disturb the reading experience too much, and the story is enjoyable to follow. Of course, it's also possible that the enjoyment of these hobbies has come from the fact that I've become a hipster.

The original idea was to publish a physical book, but then it started to feel like this would be a more disruptive and modern way to publish a book. It was important to me that this way I could publish the book for free, easily accessible, and without unnecessary intermediaries. Of course, the costs and the complexity of publishing also influenced the choice of the publishing method. With the sales of a physical book, I would have tried to raise a small profit after covering the costs, and then I would have donated the profits to children's charities. The book would have cost 5–25 € per copy, depending on the printing deal and sales volume.

Now that the book is free, my hope is that even one reader would do some good with a small amount, for example, with the price of a physical book. However, I don't want to pressure anyone because I haven't donated much money to charity myself. I believe that with one's own actions and behavior, you can achieve much more good than with money. For me, your act of kindness for someone unknown or close is just as valuable as a few bucks here or there. But if you think this book is completely rubbish, I still hope that you wouldn't grimace at anyone you encounter.

Welcome to the book!

Chapter 1: Taide mokaa komediat

Greetings!

I've been taught since childhood that it's polite to greet others whenever you meet, so it felt like the only right way to also start this book. I've also assumed that greeting each other when meeting is a universally understood and a cornerstone of good manners. However, in adulthood, I've noticed that for many, greeting is not an automatic way of behaving. Did you just greet back?

Now, let's take a moment together to wonder how strange it would be to say hello to the narrator of a book, but let's not dwell too much on that and lets crack the story itself open.

June 2023.

I currently live at my brother's place in Hervanta, Tampere and am working on my thesis for the Faculty of Built Environment at Tampere University. The plan is to finish the work within the next couple of months and move away from Tampere. I definitely want to graduate by September 2023 at the latest. On the other hand, my original wish was to graduate by the end of June, but there were some challenges with the start of the thesis, and the company I'm doing my thesis for started layoffs during the spring. Then, in early May, it started to feel like it might be better to prolong the completion of the thesis, so maybe the layoffs would be over and there wouldn't be too much stress about finishing the thesis. I thought that by prolonging the completion of the thesis and graduation, I would ensure that the layoffs wouldn't affect my future in this company, and I would be relatively fresh to transition to the working life.

However, there have been drawbacks to the decision to delay graduation and, consequently, the move away from Tampere. I've been sleeping on the couch this year, and my lower back is in crazy pain. But that's not the only issue; living in Tampere in general makes me feel anxious. My future could have been here, but now I can't imagine living here any longer than necessary. On the other hand, there have been good sides to delaying graduation, as I've met some really good new friends at the university gym, and going to the gym has been really enjoyable after a long time. At least one of these friends has become someone I'll be *comrats* with for the rest of my life. I've noticed that finding good friends in adulthood is rare for me, so I'm really grateful for this.

For the past couple of years, alongside my studies, I've been doing industrial structural engineering for the same company that is now funding this thesis. I feel like I've handled the tasks well and received praise for my proactive and diligent attitude, so I assume they would like to keep me in the team in the future too. I also feel that my diverse skills and interests are beneficial for projects and, through that, for the entire company. However, I've started to feel that this might not be the dream job for me, as I somehow long for more of a sense of teamwork, more opportunities for impact, and a more diverse job description. But if I were to get a permanent contract after graduation, I could then really think about what I want from my career. At the same time, I would also see if my role in this team would change, as I wouldn't just be an trainee anymore.

However, I know that industry is an environment that interests me a lot. Industrial projects are diverse, pleasantly challenging, and have a significant societal impact. I'm not saying that other fields of construction don't have this, but industry somehow feels like a very meaningful factor for the development of societal productivity to me. The development of societal productivity is one of the most significant factors for the development of gross domestic product, and thus, the development of the standard of living in society. So, I would gladly like to be involved in developing the productivity of Finland and other states. There is also a lot to improve and many opportunities to work even better in industrial construction, so it also feels like an interesting sector to work in. One big selfish reason to stay in industry comes from the book "*Kone's prince*" which I listened to in early winter 2022. From that book, one word stuck in my mind: *industrial magnate*. It stuck because I somehow felt that it's something I would like to strive for in my own career. Of course, you can't directly strive for it, but it would be an ideological goal for me to work towards. The term magnate gives the image of a versatile, experienced multitasker. However, I associate the term magnate with many negative connotations, such as lack of adaptability and greed. But what if I could change that perception? Magnate would become adaptable and fair, I think that would be pretty cool.

I'm aware that this requires a lot of hard work and luck, but I'm ready to work hard. The plan is to grind like crazy for at least the next 5–10 years and offer some company an employee who works passionately to achieve common goals. I don't really have much else going on in life right now, so it doesn't feel like I have to sacrifice much for this hustle. I also believe that I know myself and my body well enough to avoid burnout, but I'm aware that the possibility exists. Instead of burnout, I'm scared of ending up alone when I invest all my time in individual hobbies and work as a single

person under thirty. However, I don't believe in forcing or searching for love, so I'm willing to take that risk.

Chapter 2: Syöppöys

April 2023.

Dissertation work has now been submitted for review. Soon it should be ready to jump into the workforce and start to chart my own career path. Now, I just need to wait for the review process to be completed. At least I should have a good map for staying on the path for the next few years. If I manage to land a job as a project engineer after graduation and handle the tasks well, it should eventually be realistic to move on to the role of a project manager.

If someone happens to read this book and we don't know each other well or if it's unclear what I studied, I'm graduating as a Master of Science in Civil Engineering. Probably in 1998, when I was born in Jokiniemi, Vantaa, my parents would never have believed that their son would become a Master of Science in Engineering. This is because, my parents were just barely in their early twenties at the time, and in our family, there's only one person with a higher education degree, and that's just an engineer. Also, during high school, I rebelled against going to university. After the high school the plan was to go and study physiotherapy in Tampere. However, plans changed during the school break before matriculation exams when I binge-watched three seasons of "*Prison Break*" and realized it might be cool to be *Michael Scofield*.

Wait a minute, have I unwittingly become that jerk who feels a sense of superiority from their academic title?

During high school, I worked at a service counter in Näsijärvi, Porvoo. When I announced at work that I got into Tampere to study for a Master's in Civil engineering, my older colleagues teased me, wondering if I'd become that guy who always specifies that he is specifically a Master of Science in Engineering, not just a basic engineer. Well, apparently, they were right, even though at the time, I decided to fight against that stereotype. However, I clarify that to describe a couple more years of hard work, which I am proud of, not because I feel pride in the title itself. Titles mean nothing to me; we are all equally lost in this experiment which is called life. However, unintentionally, you end up in some kind of bubble among higher-educated people at university. The ability to write academically hard shit or understand niche calculations somehow temporarily blurs the picture of real-life challenges. Actually it's even enough that one gets into an university and one can already end up in that bubble, without even knowing how to write academic shit or calculate nichely.

As an personal example of how real-life struggles can get blurry, the master's thesis was the most challenging experience in my life so far, even though, compared to many other things, it's just a string of words written in a certain order. Before the thesis, I thought there was nothing more difficult than finding an apartment in Bologna, where I was on exchange in the fall of 2022. I had been looking for a place since spring and even got to know one local through the internet, but I couldn't find anything legit and suitable. So, I went there without accommodation. Quickly, I realized that there really were no available apartments, and a week's hotel reservation became risky, as the hotels started filling up, and daily rates were three-digit figures. For a week, I ran through all the real estate agents and asked local students if they had a moment to talk about available apartments, but I found nothing. Desperation started to really kick in. Then, by chance, I met some random Turkish architecture student who had somehow obtained the contact information of a certain Mr. Alessandro, who happened to have a couple of vacant apartments. Through that, I eventually managed to get an apartment, even though there were some interesting twists involving the Turkish guy and Alessandro. And while that apartment wasn't the cheapest or the highest quality, at least I didn't have to come back home by milk train, and Alessandro turned out to be a decent realtor.

Overall, the exchange was a cool experience, even though I went there to grind courses, and the departure felt like I had to go because I didn't really know what else to do with my life. At that time, I was at the lowest point of my life, as a long-term relationship had just ended, and it was challenging to find a purpose for life or even answer the question of why do I exist. However, it helped a lot to get to new environment and escape Tampere. That's probably also why I forced myself to find an apartment by any means, as I couldn't have handle another big failure.

The end of that relationship was very dark time, but it didn't feel as challenging. I was so broken that I went into some kind of a survival mode. I still remember how terrible my body felt back then, with all the muscles tensed, feeling like I could puke at any moment, and at the same time, being scared and crying a lot. I had never experienced that kind of feeling in my body, and I hope I never have to feel that way again. That really bad feeling lasted probably about a week, but then I decided that I couldn't continue like this, and this was the moment to show myself what I'm capable of. If I couldn't lead myself, seek help, make good decisions, or treat other people well in this situation, there was no point in thinking about any leadership role or fatherhood in the future. I get annoyed by managers who work in high positions and who can't control themselves or admit that they can't lead themselves. I don't want to be one of them.

I also want you to understand that this was my way of dealing with a bad feeling and moving forward. You don't have to act the same way, and you're in no rush.

During that time, I discovered Lex Fridman's podcast and YouTube channel. Lex's content helped me rediscover myself and a curiosity for life. That's why Lex is a very dear content creator to me. Even though I feel that I successfully navigated my life back on track with Lex's help from the middle of nowhere, losing direction in life has left a permanent disturbance in my compass. I have tried to recalibrate my compass, and for a while, the north always points in the right direction, but then it takes a moment, and the north has shifted to the northeast. I never thought that I would have to navigate life without my best friend, as I thought we would find markers together even on the most challenging routes, and while collecting markers together, we would meet and help orienteers like us, but younger, to find their paths. But then the shared map and compass got lost in the middle of everything. It felt strange that suddenly a very familiar and beloved orienteering pair became stranger. I don't mean that the behavior of the other person or myself changed unrecognizably or that we couldn't get along, but rather that suddenly we weren't in contact anymore, collecting common markers. Did we really invest so much time and effort just to become strangers again? Orienteers are weird, and orienteering sucks.

That was the first time I had been in a relationship, and I always thought it would be the only relationship I would ever have. Even now, I don't know if I will ever date again. I would like to, and I claim not to have become cynical, but I just don't know if I will find someone with whom I want to be in a relationship and who wants to be in a relationship with me. If I'm in a relationship, I'm serious about it, not because being alone bothers me or the other person. To some, this may sound like a strange mindset, but I am one of the galaxy's peculiar orienteers.

Let's return from the orbit of love to the planet M.Sc thesis. It felt like I might have needed more support or, well, I don't know, more enthusiasm and encouragement from the outside to conquer this planet. On the other hand, I chose the conquest plan based on my own interests, and I knew that I was entirely responsible for the implementation and success of the conquest. Maybe my assumption about the final boss of studies was also overly exciting, and when it didn't match the imagined battle, I was disappointed. Anyway, it felt like something more was needed from the outside. But yet, the work has been submitted, I did my best, learned a lot, and I'm satisfied with the result, so there's no need to complain. In the end, I have also come to the realization that if I really wanted something more, I should have been able to demand it myself.

I also started looking for jobs now since graduation is just pending signatures. It's a moment in my life where it would be cool to work abroad, as there's nothing holding me back in Finland either. Especially going to work in Canada interests me a lot. I have found interesting open positions for project engineers all around North America, and it feels like I genuinely have a chance to be selected for those positions, given my good grades in school and good work experience for my age. But if it doesn't work out, luckily, there's this company where I've been for over two years, and now that I did a good thesis, they probably even more want to keep me on board. I also checked that there are quite a few interesting job openings in Finland, where I believe I should at least be selected, as few in Finland at this age and educational background have such extensive experience in industrial construction. And those with more experience are unlikely to apply for the same positions at the same time.

Chapter 3: Suuruus

Early September 2023.

The thesis has now been evaluated, and only the graduation request needs to be sent for graduation. The conclusion of studies is somewhat anticlimactic as there are no seminars or events, but it is what it is. Of course I could organize something myself, but I need to see if I have time, especially since I have to move and start a job. I arranged a meeting with the boss at the office for Friday to discuss face-to-face, and the response seemed positive, so I assume a contract extension is likely.

The Friday:

I am leaving from home to train from Tampere to the office in Vantaa, and I'm wondering how much I dare to ask for a salary. In my opinion, I should get a better salary than the table salary, as I have been with this company for a couple of years and, in my view, proven my value to the team and the company. I think suggesting €4,700/month is too bold. I decided to start negotiations with €4,500/month, and €4,300/month is the limit for a good deal. I need to think about lower offers, as it feels like they don't see any value in me other than affordability.

I arrive at the office, exchange greetings with the boss, and express my interest in a contract extension.

Wait, what is he saying now? Oh, there is no job available; seems like I stressed about the salary expectation for no reason. Oh fuck, how did this happen? Wasn't I the employee I expected myself to be? How can I have such a deluded view of my skills?

Well, the layoffs are not over, and the company cannot make new contracts.

It was difficult for me in that situation to accept that there was nothing to blame, which usually can be found in the mirror. However, It felt wrong to blame myself when I couldn't do anything about the situation. I gave my all, or at least it feels like I gave more than enough, and even if I had worked even harder, it wouldn't have helped. Well, a shitty situation; I guess I need to forget about dreams of working abroad and start to apply for more secure positions in Finland. As, it feels easier to find employment in Finland. I have to play it safe now to avoid being unemployed. I really don't want to be unemployed; I want to contribute to this society and not be a burden. But let's not dwell on it now; I've been diligent during my studies, studied extensively, and surely there will be some job for an enthusiastic young professional.

I must also mention that my boss was the best supervisor I've had, and I look up to him both as a person and as an expert.

<I lied a little earlier; of course, I blamed myself for going on exchange. I could have easily graduated six months earlier if I hadn't gone on exchange. However, I realized later that if I hadn't gone on exchange, I would have been really unhappy, as the exchange was the only bright spot in my life at that time. So, would a permanent employment contract have brought any consolation? Probably not.>

Chapter 4: Itsetesti

Mid September 2023.

I've started applying for jobs as seriously as I can now, but it seems there aren't too many suitable positions available anymore. Fortunately, I found some opportunities and even got a couple of interviews, so I'm sure I'll be selected for something. However, up to this point, whenever I've gotten an interview, I've also received a job offer. During this job search, I've come to the realization that the culprit for my current situation is the Finnish state and Finnish work culture. We aim so much for average performance, and when you genuinely invest in something, the reward is often lacking. So, is it really surprising that Finland drops in PISA rankings? In my opinion, the explanation for the decline in results is not in teaching methods or phone usage but in our failure as a society to create motivation for studying well.

In high school, I thought that for those who dedicated themselves to their studies, life would be somehow easy, and everything would come for free. Later on, I learned that this is far from the truth. Often, if you even get a reward for your hard work, it's something like a one-year subscription to a chemistry magazine. Then you have to fight for the place in university in the field where everyone is nerdy and studyaholic. After that, if you happen to get in or find some other study line that interests you, you have to work even harder to be selected as a research assistant, doing some repetitive and dull tasks with a poor salary. I respect everyone who has the internal motivation for that path. During my exchange, I learned that in Italy, things are quite different. If you perform well in your studies, it's almost an automatic entry into a prestigious company, such as Ferrari. Why can't Finland be like this? It would have been the same to just pass the courses with minimal effort and spend the last five years partying.

Late September 2023.

It's been just under a month since I graduated, damn, still no job. How is it possible not to find work? I've applied to 50 positions, and I feel qualified for all of them, but for most, there's even no response at all. In the work listings contact information for the recruiting manager is rarely provided, making it challenging to find out ways to stand out. I have started to wonder if my phone number and email is written wrong, or if I'm giving off an annoying impression. I checked, and they were written correctly, and the last part is probably so subjective that it's hard to say whether I seem as annoying on paper or not; I guess it becomes clear when discussing with the interviewer. But I guess all I can do for now is keep trying and hope for the best. It just

feels difficult because not many new job openings are appearing, which makes it even harder to try harder to find work.

Hmm, what if I created my own job, a.k.a. started my own business?

But I don't really have a brilliant idea, and it would be nice if I would have a more secure financial situation to venture into entrepreneurship. However, I posted on Instagram that if I don't get a job within a month, I'll start my own business. Somehow, that kind of social pressure works for me; it makes me accountable to others, not just for myself in keeping promises.

It's also stressful because my brother is urging me to move out of the couch, and my back is in bad shape from sleeping on this sofa, so I would gladly want to sleep in a proper bed. It's just somehow daunting to think of moving somewhere without a job, and then getting a million dollar job offer and having to reject it just because I've moved somewhere. This situation could have happened this September if I had already moved. My former boss called, saying there was an opportunity for an abroad commission, but it didn't work out in the end. That would have been a perfect job at this stage in my life, and I'm sure I would have been a good fit for it.

But my brother is right; we were supposed to live together only for spring, and now it's already been a one human pregnancy, so it's my time to give birth to my own life somewhere else.

Chapter 5: Syys-iäisyys

Early October 2023.

I took an apartment in Tikkurila, Vantaa. I chose Tikkurila because it's easy to move around in various directions from here, and there were quite a few empty new apartments, so I had options and could negotiate the terms of the rent to my advantage. But now I'm stuck with this apartment for 6 months, and I hope I won't get any billion dollar job offers. I have to also say that the real estate agent was 5/5, and Mr. Alessandro lost to this guy 100-0.

I also had to give in and officially register as unemployed and apply for unemployment benefits. Now I'm officially a burden on society. It wasn't supposed to go like this. I can't stand dealing with the employment office anymore; it feels like annoying bureaucracy. I just want to work, not fill out benefit and job applications. Why did I even go to university? I could have worked these five years and simultaneously thought about some business stuff. I surely would have come up with something functional during these five years. If I hadn't gone to university, I would probably be more enthusiastic, have a better financial situation, and overall, I might be happier. It somehow feels cheated when everyone always emphasized the necessity of studying. I put so much effort into my studies, and now it doesn't even bear any fruit. So, why bother studying? My dad did say that education is never wasted, that it has given me something. I reluctantly have to admit that he is right. At the moment, it just feels like I became too analytical and lost some sparkle in my eye during my studies. On the other hand, maybe it's not the studies to blame, but rather the process of growing up and past life experiences over these five years. Growing up is lame.

Late October 2023.

I had job interviews for three consecutive days, and I felt they all went really well. It feels likely that I'll get an job offer from at least one of them. All the places promised to get back to me by the end of this week, so I feel like by the weekend, I might finally have a job. The first interview stood out because it felt like I immediately clicked with the manager, and even though they grilled me quite hard, it was fun. During that interview, they asked about my proudest achievement in life so far. I answered that it has to be my university studies, even though I didn't immediately land a job, and in that sense, the outcome might not be what I'm most satisfied with. Yet, I feel proud that I genuinely tried, and in just a few moments, I could have studied more seriously.

Now, in hindsight, I've realized that's not what I'm proudest of. I'm proudest of being my authentic self, not pretending to be something I'm not, and always striving to be fair to others. I don't mean that I've always been completely at peace with myself or that I haven't done unkind things, but overall, those are the aspects I'm proudest of in my life so far. I want to hold onto these values in the future as well.

In my Instagram bio, it says, *"staying loyal to things I value"* and a version of that has been there for several years. However, I've never really opened up to anyone, not even to myself, about what those values are that I want to remain loyal to. I'm gonna open them now here:

- **Authenticity and honesty.** I want to be honestly me. I don't want to offend anyone, but everyone should have the right to be themselves and make their own decisions. I don't want to be blunt or rude, but I still want to form and express my own opinions.
- **Loyalty and caring.** I want to be reliable and caring. I also want to trust others and feel cared for. If I promise something, I stick to it, and if someone needs help, I want to be available, even if we're not best friends.
- **Independent fairness and kindness.** It's easy to be kind and fair to people who treat you nicely, but in my opinion, it's also important to see how people treat others around them. In some situations, you might be receiving special treatment due to your position, skills, or some other reason, but how these individuals (including myself and you) treat others in their surroundings can reveal their (our) true character.
- **Curiosity and bravery.** I want to hold onto curiosity and keep learning diversely. Additionally, I want to be brave, so if something interests me or I see an opportunity to make a difference, I want to take action to improve things. I also want to be brave enough to ask for help and admit my mistakes.

So, those are the values I want to remain loyal to, and that's what my Instagram bio means to me. It's also important to me that people remain loyal to their values, and not everyone needs to have the same values. I understand that people change over time, and sometimes their value system may change as well. However, these are values for myself that I don't want to sacrifice without good reason. Additionally, I'm aware that I can't adhere to these things perfectly, but they serve as good goals for myself.

Now, let's get back to the story and job search. Good news!!! But not from the job front :(Just when I was about to give up on Tinder, thinking it's too superficial and

deleting it, I met a really amazing person there. We're going on a date on Saturday, and I can't wait! What if this week is the turning point in my life, where I get a job on Friday and meet my future partner on Saturday? Sheesh, that would be cool! It's scary to even think about it. It scares me because it feels so utopian, as I've been dwelling in dark thoughts about work for the past couple of months, and in terms of relationships, the past couple of years have been in the mindset that it's not possible to find someone authentic that I genuinely like, and vice versa.

A month has also passed since I posted on Instagram about starting a business, so now I really have to establish a company someday. I will now seriously start to scout opportunities for starting a business. It might take a long time to come up with a viable idea, as IMO it doesn't make sense to rush into it and realize that the company is bankrupt before even getting started. Through my studies, I've learned that good planning is crucial for success, so I want to take my time. For me, entrepreneurship also means that I'm serious about it and that I'm married to that company, so I don't want to get married to a business idea that I don't truly want to say yes.

Friday afternoon 5 PM:

Oh, well, none of those job interviewers didn't come back. Maybe luck and, especially, jobs aren't meant for me. Why is the Universe treating me like this? What have I done wrong to go through all this? Life is just disappointments after disappointments. In the past couple of years, I've lost a relationship, job, and my financial situation is deteriorating. When does this game become fun again?

Saturday morning:

Awful pressure about the date. This woman feels right in so many ways, but what if things don't click in person? I haven't slept in the past few nights because I'm so stressed. What if I'm not enough, or what if there are those awkward silent moments, and neither of us dares to be ourselves? And what does she think about me being unemployed? Last night, I woke up from four different nightmares. First, I missed a flight, then the fridge broke, leaking water on the floor. After that, I had the worst job interview of my life in which I got roasted hard, and on top of it all, a family argument ensued.

Saturday evening:

The date went really well, and this woman is pretty much the kind of person I've been hoping to find! We share a lot of similarities, but at the same time, we're quite different. Lol, is that even possible. I'm a bit nervous, though, wondering if it's the right time to meet her since I'm currently focused on my fitness project, and I want to

give it my all. I aim to complete this project with honor because it's the only thing that's truly my own in a long time. It shouldn't affect dating too much, but, for example, on our first date, I had to leave in the middle of everything to eat and meet my daily calorie goals :D. It was a bit embarrassing because we could have talked about so much more for a more extended period. However, I've decided that nothing will come between this project, and once I finish it, I'll have my whole life to not worry about workouts and calories. Nevertheless, I'm looking forward to when we'll see each other again and get to talk more about all sorts of interesting things.

Sunday:

I tried out PTV Gym in Roihupelto. It was typical good PTV gym, meaning a really good fitness facility. It's cool how Vatanen has managed to build such a concept; the first time you visit PTV is an experience, and it's not just your typical dull gym. I remember when I used to work out in high school at Porvoo Fitness Club, and Creatine Keijo & Testo-Timo trained there. Both of them stood out clearly from most other visitors; besides muscle mass, they had passion and attitude. Even back then, you could see that they were going to do cool things, but it's surprising how far both of them have come. I wonder if they still have the passion to push further, or if both of them are at a point where they've achieved everything, and a bit more than they dared to even dream. That remains to be seen. Nowadays, I see the same passion and attitude in Elmer Stucki and Nuutti Kurola; I wonder where they'll end up. That too, remains to be seen.

I wonder if I could have found happiness and financial success if I had decided to become an entrepreneur in the fitness industry. It's probably pointless to think about since I made the decision back in high school that I wanted to keep this whole sport as a hobby and do something completely different for my job. I still enjoy practicing the sport, so maybe I made the right decision. But I wonder where I'll end up. That remains to be experienced.

Monday evening:

Yey! That Saturday date partner asked if I wanted to meet on Thursday, absolutely I want to! But then we were thinking about where to meet, and when I asked if she wanted to come to my place, and I'd cook something, she then messaged saying that she wants me to understand that if she comes to my place, it doesn't mean anything. And I completely understand, especially as a woman, she wants to make that clear. But it left me feeling a bit disappointed, like haven't I given the impression that I'm serious about this? Hasn't she realized that I haven't even held a woman's hand in a

year and a half because of the fear of girl germs and that I don't want anything short-term, I want either to start a relationship at some point or just stay friends. I blame other guys for this.

I haven't heard anything about job opportunities, which is frustrating and annoying. Why does the job search have to be so unfair to the job seeker? I applied for a new position and got an interview invitation, but it feels like they don't have anything to offer right now but want to interview for the future to see if I could fit into their team someday. But it's pointless to ponder that in advance; it will become clear when I get to talk to them.

Early November 2023.

I went to the interview mentioned above, and it felt like it went really well. It was also cool that they offered cola to drink, so I didn't have to come up with excuses to turn down coffee or tea offers. Overall, it seemed like a dream place. Hopefully, there will be a positive decision from there, or at least a quick notification if it wasn't enough, so I don't have to live in vain hope. They also mentioned that they were opening a new position anyway, so for once, the stars were aligned, and I applied at the right time. In many other places, applications have been closed due to uncertainty about jobs. In a few locations, layoffs have started, and recruitments have been suspended for that reason. In quite a few places, someone from within the company or someone with more experience has been selected. You can't control these situations, but it still brings about a feeling of inadequacy.

Chapter 6: Pirtu-trip

Mid November 2023.

Now, I really could use some rhythm in my days, and overall life feels challenging. It seems like I don't really control my own life and myself. I don't mean that I've started indulging in alcohol or messing around in any other way. I just can't seem to get myself out of bed even relatively early in the morning when there's nothing forcing me to. I've tried to come up with artificial reasons why I should have to get up in the morning, but they just haven't worked, as it's somehow too easy to deviate from them. Because of this, my sleep schedule is terrible, and I don't have a productive feeling. Maybe I should join the 5 AM club and start posting on social media about how superior I am because I'm awake while others are sleeping.

My parents gave me a TV and a PlayStation for my place, and *Sly Cooper: Thieves in Time* has now been replayed after years. However, gaming feels somewhat pointless if it becomes the main part of life, especially when the goal is not to become a pro gamer. I've also read a couple of fiction books, and like gaming, they seem unnecessary when they are the main thing in life. I probably need to find some enlightening or thought-provoking books so hopefully they don't feel like a waste of time, or well on the other hand, it would be nice to just get a job.

Dealing with Kela (Social Insurance Institution of Finland) is also a struggle since they refused to pay me basic daily allowance when I received my severance pay in October from my last job, which mainly consisted of holiday bonuses that shouldn't affect the basic daily allowance. Now, the argument revolves around these issues. Currently, the situation is such that my savings are depleting rapidly, and interest is piling up on top of my student loan at a staggering rate, so it would be fair to receive these benefits on time – the time value of money respected. I'm not interested in receiving benefits; I want a job. That's why it's frustrating to see my time and effort go into such clarifications. Even during my studies, the worst opponent was often Kela and not the courses, as, in my opinion, sending unnecessary notifications is more troublesome than solving two-page-long partial integrals.

Currently, no new job opportunities have opened up in the last couple of weeks, and I don't know how I should even try to get employed. At the same time, the government urges people to work and complains about unemployment being a problem in Finland. Don't you nutheads understand, that it's quite challenging to get a job if there are no jobs in this country to get employed in? Frustrating. At least I got into a one phone interview. I applied for it already in September, and this pretty much

reflects the situation – you apply for a job two months earlier, and now they only start making phone interview calls. It's also disheartening because I don't believe I made it to the next real interviews from that phone interview. The interviewer said I should be very proud to have reached this stage, meaning the job is going to someone else.

I've also started to think about why my self-esteem is so tied to having a job. It probably stems from childhood and upbringing, like many other things. I don't necessarily want to change that, but in this situation, it has started to feel that life would be so much easier if my sense of self-worth didn't rely so much on working and being useful. It would be cool to be able to see value in just existing because it must inherently have some value.

On top of unemployment, I've also been feeling sick lately, and through that, my sleep schedule is even more messed up. One day I went to get *Skyrim: Elder Scrolls V* for the PS3, thinking I would fix my sleep schedule by pulling all-nighter in Skyrim. However, that plan kind of failed when it felt like battling dragons and adventuring in a virtual world for 36 hours straight with sleep deprivation and fever almost led to a psychosis, as reality and Skyrim started blending. Besides, I couldn't fix my sleep schedule with that, and the next day, I woke up at 1 PM after 18 hours of sleep. At the latest, my sleep schedule went completely haywire from that point. If only there were jobs to give some rhythm to life.

Chapter 7: Nollakääpiö söi päälakkon

Late November 2023.

Now, Finally, some new suitable positions have opened up, and I sent applications to all of them right away. Hopefully, I'll hear back from them quickly. It's annoying how these job openings suddenly come in batches – a lot at once, and then nothing for a while. Even when several positions open up, you can still prepare yourself for the fact that only about a third will respond within a reasonable time. It's especially frustrating when multiple positions open up in the same company, and you have to fill out a different applications for each position, and then the same HR person reviews them. Or I don't know if it's the same HR person, but I could imagine that it's at least possible.

However, unexpectedly, I advanced from the previously mentioned phone interview to a real interview. Still, there's a feeling that they're interviewing me out of pity, as I'm young, and it feels like they want to give me the chance to learn from interview situations, and they already have someone selected for the job. Nevertheless, I plan to do my best and show that I'm the right fit for the job.

The interview went really well, surprisingly. It was easily the most natural interview I've ever had. I also received positive feedback after the interview, which is quite rare. They also mentioned that my CV and cover letter were good, which made me think that maybe that's why I get interview invitations – that I've been able to create good applications. However, it feels like they gave positive feedback because they already had someone selected for the job, and they wanted to improve my feelings about it.

Lately, I've been getting annoyed on LinkedIn with how many people justify a problem and its solution as the most important and beneficial thing for the survival of people or the environment. Bro, your paycheck is based on that; would you even care about the whole issue if it didn't bring bread to your table? But on the other hand, those people have jobs, so maybe they're doing things right, and I'm just jealous. Perhaps I should also sacrifice my objective thinking ability and come up with some personal thing to start promoting on LinkedIn.

There's nothing inherently wrong with that kind of posting because we need different solutions and people who believe in their own thing. But what has started to annoy me is that someone criticizes an opposing solution as stupid, and when you question why that other solution is considered stupid, you don't even get an explanation but rather a secretly mocking and patronizing response. LinkedIn is easily the most toxic social media I know, and I feel like just deleting it.

Early December 2023.

Say WHAAAAAT?!? Like, what the heck. That interview I thought was arranged out of pity – now they offered me the job! Oh darn!!! I'm definitely taking the job! Oh heck, I really wouldn't have believed it. I had already given up hope of getting any responses this year and thought I'd have to wait even longer into next year. Now I feel great. The job is pretty much what I've studied and where I really see value.

The only downsides are that the commute is a bit long, I won't get to work much in English, and the salary is significantly lower than I expected. But those are the only small drawbacks. Damn, it feels so cool to finally relax! I did mention on the phone when they called about this that I still have one job interview next week, but it doesn't matter, let's move forward with this, as I doubt anything will come out of that interview.

After getting that information, such a huge weight was lifted off my chest, and the end of the stress felt so liberating! The job starts at the beginning of next year, so I have time to enjoy Christmas peacefully. I just have that one last interview to go, and then all the obligations for this year will be taken care of.

Now, with this final interview, there's a bit of a feeling of whether it even makes sense to go since there's a job that I'm really happy about, and even if something better comes from this interview, you still have to wait for that decision. By that time, I would have already signed the other contract and committed to that job. Since I'm going to the interview anyway, I want to give it my all, so I won't regret it later.

Okay, what the heck! Now the positions of the stars have completely changed. I got an even better job offer from that last interview. This was clearly a better contract, half the commute, and the job is even more interesting and versatile, so it was an easy decision. Phew, I didn't expect this kind of ending to the story. Let this be proof that when you don't give up halfway, you can achieve even more than you dare to hope for. Now, I won't be going abroad since the projects will be in Finland, but that doesn't bother me at all right now, as it was crucial to just get a job. Now I might never pursue an international career, which I think is fine, but let's see where life takes me.

In total, I applied for 78 jobs. I feel that I met the criteria for all the positions I applied to and was a viable candidate for the roles. However, approximately 20 applications received no response at all. Most of the negative decisions were conveyed through mass emails without any specific reasons for not being selected. Eventually, I secured

9 job interviews, all of which, in my opinion, went well or very well. However, it took a long time to receive negative decisions for most, and some never provided any response. I believe that the job application process is unfair to the applicants, and I think it should be made more transparent and fairer to job seekers. I don't have a clear solution on how to make it fairer, but initially, I would focus more on individual encounters.

I have always thought that I would never become unemployed because I consider myself hardworking, quick to learn, and good at getting along with people in work-related social interactions. Despite what I had thought, I experienced unemployment. I genuinely hope that as few people as possible have to experience unemployment because days easily become monotonous, and it's challenging to find activities. However, the experience taught me a lot, and in some ways, I am grateful that I experienced unemployment in a situation where my main concern was taking care of myself, and the only ongoing costs were rent, food, and a gym membership.

In my short work career, I have noticed how some employees dig trenches for themselves and become critical of the process or organization. I believe that the depression of the 90s has influenced this behavior, as people fear being laid off or fired. I now better understand this protective mindset through experiencing unemployment, but I want to promise for myself and somewhat publicly declare that I won't become one of them. I want to act fairly and offer opportunities to others in my career.

I learned while writing several job applications and attending a few interviews that grades or any other single factor do not inherently determine whether you get a specific job or not. It mostly depends on how well you fit into what the other side is looking for in the big picture. In one interview, I was even told directly that they weren't interested in my grades at all and that they didn't indicate anything. I was a bit stunned in that situation because I had long thought that, since everyone hadn't had a very long career after graduation, academic success would be the only way to stand out. However, I later understood what the interviewer meant; it is mostly about how much you want that particular position and whether you have genuine enthusiasm for the job, not what you have done in the past.

Although I got a job, I didn't find a partner. I greatly appreciate the woman I went on a date with and hope she finds someone wonderful for herself. It ended when we didn't talk as much anymore, and both of us started feeling like there wasn't enough in common, and there wasn't that deep sense of connection. Maybe the reason was

my fitness project, but it's probably futile to dwell on it too much; tomorrow is leg day, and Christmas is just around the corner!

Chapter 8: Siestat seis

Early January 2024.

Now the work begins, phew, this has been eagerly awaited for a long time! Actually, ever since the beginning of my studies, I've been just waiting to finish school as quickly as possible and get to work. From this, you can deduce that I didn't live a very extravagant student life, let alone enjoy it. It feels a bit sad that I couldn't enjoy the student life when there was somehow immense pressure to embrace freedom and be actively involved in everything. It just didn't feel like my thing. Even the student overalls caused anxiety from the start because, with them, it seemed like good people forgot how to be fair, and overalls somehow gave permission to attribute all the chaos to youth and student life. It confused me a lot, as I just wanted a family and an interesting job. But now, after a little over 5 years of anticipation, I finally get to enter that awaited hamster's wheel!

Despite eagerly anticipating entering the workforce for a long time, it's nerve-wracking, really nerve-wracking. And it's not just good nervousness, but a kind of anxious. Somehow, during this period of unemployment, my self-image has gotten mixed up, and I worry if I even know how to work anymore. Due to this anxiety and stress, I haven't been sleeping well in recent nights. On the night preceding this first workday, I barely slept, and I got out of bed at 6 AM, even though I only need to be at the office after 8 AM. After breakfast, I just sat on the couch for an hour twiddling my thumbs and thoughts in my head. What kind of people will be there at the office? Will they like me? How should I introduce myself? Should I have gone to the barber? Why am I twiddling my thumbs in this direction and not the other?

The first two days were really exhausting. I didn't sleep at all in the first two nights, and there was a constant tense feeling in my body. Too many things happened in a short time, and my brain was working overtime. Just the fact that suddenly, after four months of unemployment and very limited social life, so many new faces and names to remember. That was already very exhausting. In addition, starting didn't make it any easier, the jump to a completely new place, transitioning to a new industry, and the internal pressure of having to know everything immediately. I never thought I would want to be unemployed, but during those first two days, I felt that way. But I guess whenever life changes significantly, you start longing for a return to the old.

Now, after a couple of weeks of working, it's starting to feel like things are falling into place, and for the first time in several years, I'm getting into a weekly rhythm. It feels

like there's a routine, and the days don't drag on. Of course, there's still pressure to learn new things faster and more, but I've also learned to approach it in a way that I don't have to know everything immediately, and I have time to learn. I've also realized the answer to one of those questions I pondered on the first day; I should have gone to the barber.

The start of work and the sudden influx of everything new were not helped by going ice skating with a nice person. So, we went ice skating on a purely friendly basis because, as mentioned earlier, I have this gym project going on, and I want to give it my all now. It confused me, though, how easy it was to be in the company of someone for the first time and talk about everything, even challenging things. A rare and strange feeling, and it added more processing load, but I'm still really happy that we went ice skating.

As I told you at the beginning of the book, I have been taught that it's polite to greet when meeting someone. In the same way, I have also been taught that it's polite to thank if someone gives me something, so:

Thank you for giving your time to this book; it really means a lot to me!

Taide mokaa komediaT

-iteeWeeti-

Loppusanat

Lately, in my own bubble, I've noticed a growing emphasis, especially for high school students, on teaching financial matters. I'm not saying that understanding the time value of money and cash flow analysis isn't useful, but ultimately, they are quite simple and quickly graspable concepts if one is interested. Because of this, I've been thinking, is it necessary to emphasize them so much in school? In my opinion, young people are being misled by illusions when financially well-off individuals, dressed in neat clothes, talk about the importance of wealth without having any passion in their lives. If I could offer young people some advice, it would be to try to find their own things, something they want to develop in and that brings them joy, regardless of whether they can make money from them. It is rarer to find a person with a burning passion for something than a person with money. The wealth will follow passionate individuals. I also believe that, on a societal level, this would be more profitable than trying to increase the investment rate of Finns.

Finnish youth: Don't let the comments from boomers about Finland's declining PISA results or similar things negatively affect you; you will do quite well as long as you trust yourself and find your own supportive community.

<This book is unlikely to be read by many young people, and the above-written is not intended for the youth, although it may seem that way. It is targeted at you, or the future you, who bemoans where today's youth is heading—they are sharp individuals going further than you, fucking boomer.>