



MODULE 5

I decide to start a green business

Learning outcomes

You will learn here:

- How information and knowledge can reduce uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.
- How to find examples of making the most of ideas and opportunities.
- How to anticipate the feeling of achieving goals.



Figure 1: Facing a decision,

Basic information



You familiarise yourself with the SWOT analysis, 3-Zone Model, and mental training.



This module contains three exercises.



You will need 15 h to finish the module.



You need 66% correct answers to pass this module.



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Welcome to Module 5!

In this last module of the first part of the training course, you will learn how to use the SWOT-Analysis to improve your business idea, find examples of making the most of ideas and opportunities and anticipate the feeling of achieving goals. This module completes the first third of the training course in which you developed your green business idea. It shall also serve as a booster for the step to the next part of the training course, in which you will undertake the first concrete steps in starting your business.

How information and knowledge can reduce uncertainty, ambiguity and risk?



Figure 2: Figure 3: risk management

You want to start a green business. You certainly want to make the most of your ideas and opportunities! We want to introduce you to a tool that will give you a good overview of the opportunities and risks: The SWOT analysis.

The SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis was developed in the 1960s at the Harvard Business School for use in companies.

The SWOT analysis is a valuable tool to identify your entrepreneurial activity's strengths and weaknesses and analyse the opportunities and threats.

With the SWOT analysis, you can plan strategically. In doing so, you objectively measure and evaluate your business idea. And you can compare your idea with what your competitors are offering. The overall goal is to strengthen your competitiveness.

The SWOT analysis is an elementary part of your business plan if you want to start a business. You can analyse your business model and convince investors about you and your offers. The abbreviation SWOT refers to the four categories that are examined.

These are:

- Strengths are those features of your business-idea that are an advantage in competition or better than the competition.

Strengths



- Weaknesses are all characteristics of the business idea that are a disadvantage in competition and can have a negative impact on success.

Weaknesses



- Opportunities are external factors in the environment or market that can be an advantage for the business.

Opportunities



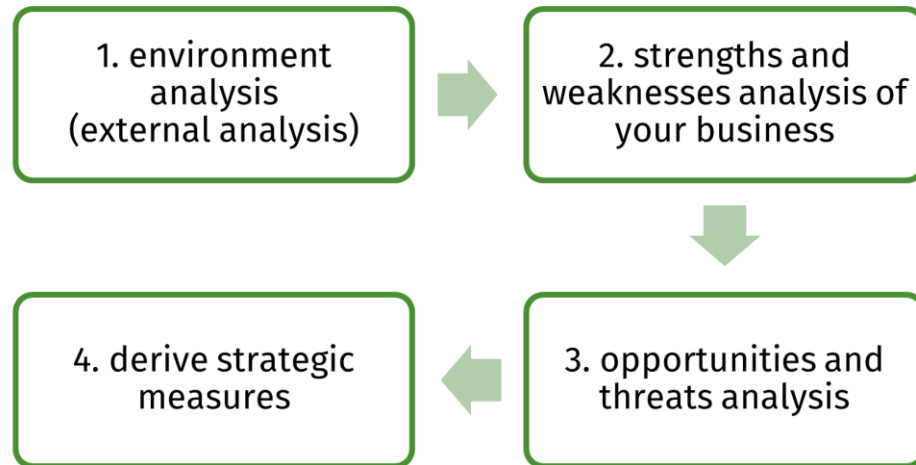
- Threats are external factors in the environment or in the market activities of your business idea from which disadvantages or dangers can arise.

Threats



How do you conduct a SWOT analysis?

To create a SWOT analysis, you should carry out the following steps:



1. Environment analysis (external analysis)

To carry out a SWOT analysis, you start by analysing the environment of your planned business. Here, you take into account opportunities and risks and consider the competition. The environment analysis explores the trends in your sector, customers, and competitors.

You can ask yourself the following questions:

Which competitors are there on the market and which of them offer similar services or products?

What laws and regulations are there that are important for my planned business?

What are the big trends in the market?

Which external factors influence customer behaviour?

Which political factors have an influence on my planned business?

Are there economic changes or factors that influence the market environment or the green economy positively or negatively?

2. Strengths and weaknesses analysis of your business

In the first step of the SWOT analysis, you looked externally at environmental factors. Now, in the second step, you analyse the internal aspects of your business and how your business fits in this environment. This is important because your planned business will not exist in a vacuum. Your planned business will be influenced by customer behaviour, trends, politics, the economy and other factors. Please look closely at your business idea and examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

The strengths of a business idea can be:

- innovative products
- specific know-how
- your services, low fixed costs
- locational advantages
- qualified employees
- technological know-how
- well-established processes
- short decision-making processes

You can find out about your strengths with the following questions:

What are the competitive advantages of my business idea?

What makes my offer unique and valuable?

What attracts my customers?

What strong assets does my business have, i.e. intellectual property, stakeholders, buildings, etc.?

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are those characteristics of your business idea that are disadvantaged in your unique environment. Thus, weaknesses can have a negative impact on the success of your planned business.

The weaknesses of your business can be:

- lack of know-how
- lack of own distribution channels or premises
- low start-up capital
- low financial strength
- dependence on partners
- lack of know-how
- lack of patent protection
- low influence on suppliers.

With these questions, you can find out your weaknesses:

What could other competitors do better than I?

Which of my processes could be improved?

What is my business struggling with compared to others?

What assets is my planned business missing, from patents to financing to employee positions and more?

3. Opportunities and threats analysis

Based on your business idea's external factors, weaknesses, and strengths, you can now derive the risks and opportunities for your planned business.

Opportunities arise where an external factor meets the strength of your planned green business. On the other hand, threats occur when external factors threaten the success of your planned green business, and you cannot counteract this threat.

Opportunities

Opportunities are external influences, developments and factors in your planned business's environment and the market. These opportunities can have a beneficial effect on your business.

Opportunities often develop from changes in the market environment. You want to become a green entrepreneur! Please consider especially green aspects here! What legal frameworks are now promoting the green economy in particular?

Think about the following:

- new trends in society
- changes in customer behaviour
- product improvements
- increase in purchasing power
- technological developments
- product improvements
- exit of competitors from the market

With these questions, you can find opportunities for your business idea:

What are the actual needs for change?

What future opportunities are foreseeable?

Which trends are favourable?

What changes in the environment can be beneficial?

Threats

Threats are external developments, influences and factors that can negatively impact your planned business. These threats can endanger your planned business or can lead to disadvantages.

Potential risks include, among others:

- Inflation
- new competitors or alternative offers enter the market
- legal changes
- changes in exchange rates
- migration of important key customers
- termination of important know-how carriers in the business
- critical press reports
- loss of image

With these questions, you can find out the risks for your planned business:

Where are there dangers for my planned business model?

What developments in the environment could have an unfavourable impact on business development or competitiveness?

What activities can be expected from competitors?

Strengths and weaknesses will most likely be very individual, depending on your planned business. Opportunities and threats in the marketplace will affect your business as well as those of your competitors.

4. Results of the SWOT analysis

The researched information is brought together in an overview. In this way, the most important positive and negative influencing forces from the external and internal analysis are visible at a glance. In the positive column, all aspects that are advantageous, useful, and helpful are named and can contribute to success. In the negative column, all disadvantageous, harmful, and inhibiting elements are named and can endanger success.

	positive	negative
	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal analysis of your planned business	Here are the strengths of your planned green business (compared to competitors).	Weaknesses of the business (compared to competitors) are listed here.
	Opportunities	Threats
Environment analysis (external analysis)	Here are opportunities, possibilities, potentials, and chances that show up in the market and environment.	Threats, dangers, or risks that exist or could threaten your planned green business are listed here.

Derive strategic measures

After you have conducted the SWOT analysis, you can use the results to develop measures to exploit your opportunities and mitigate risks profitably. This is a process that you not only undertake at the beginning of your start-up. Ideally, it is repeated throughout the life of your business.

Example of a SWOT analysis

Let's do an example that shows how a SWOT analysis works in practice.

Let's say you are an artist and want to start your own business in jewellery design. And you want to pay special attention to the green aspects.

Example environment analysis:

If you look at the market trends in the environment analysis, you may notice an increased demand for personalised jewellery on the market. More and more customers are buying their jewellery online. However, when you analyse your competition, you will find that many suppliers and online shops on the market offer different types of jewellery. Furthermore, you may learn from your analysis: More and more customers want to buy jewellery from sustainable sources (GREEN ASPECT!) and appreciate a wide choice and designs. You attach particular importance to sustainability. That's why you purchase all the materials for your jewellery from ecologically sound sources.

Example Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis:

You can now use this information in the strengths and weaknesses analysis.



Strengths:

You may find that you already have a loyal fan base who love your art. And these people like to buy jewellery. You may also find that your designs are particularly innovative. And you only use materials from ecologically sound sources. And you also have a good amount of start-up capital. All of these are definitely strengths you bring to the start-up.

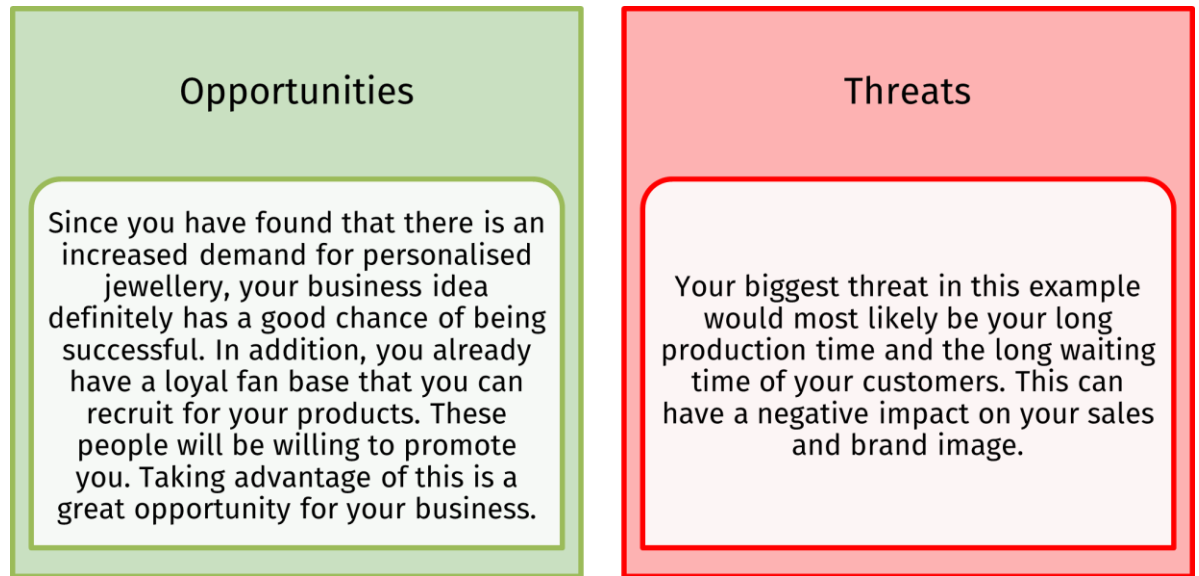


Weaknesses:

One of your weaknesses might be that you don't have your jewellery in stock. Instead you make it by hand after it has been ordered. Although this may be appreciated by some customers, this method of production also means: You cannot build up stock, it takes a long time to make your jewellery and therefore you have long delivery times.

Example of an opportunity-threats analysis:

When analysing your opportunities and threats, you can now look at where the market's needs meet your business's strengths and weaknesses.



Now create a transparent table:

	positive	negative
Internal analysis	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loyal fan base particularly innovative designs good seed capital materials from ecologically sound sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no jewellery stock
Environment analysis	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for personalised jewellery Increased demand for jewellery from sustainable sources Loyal fan base advertises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long production time long waiting time for customers less turnover negative brand image

Examples of strategic measures

After completing the SWOT analysis, you can think about strategic measures to exploit your opportunities and avoid risks profitably.



Consider creating an online shop to benefit from the online shopping trend. It will also save you rent for a retail shop.

Think about working with another jewellery designer who also offers jewellery made from sustainable raw materials. It will also help you to meet customer demand for jewellery made from sustainable sources.



And possibly consider the use of machines. This will help you to avoid long waiting times for production and shipping.

Think about how you can use marketing and email marketing to interact with your loyal fan base. You may want to create a newsletter, or set up a forum to connect with your fans. Social media posts are also a great way to reach a wide audience and attract new customers.



EXERCISE 1



M 5_E 1: SWOT Analysis of my planned green business

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Carry out a SWOT analysis for your business idea.

In doing so, answer all the questions you find in this script on the points of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Create a clear table that contains both an internal analysis and an environment analysis.

Derive strategic measures for your business idea.

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 5! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.

How to find examples of making the most of ideas and opportunities

You are in the process of setting up your own green business. It takes courage, determination and drives! But how do you deal with uncertainty? Sure, you will plan everything as well as possible. Nevertheless, only some risks can be eliminated! Some things remain unclear for the time being.

You must be able to deal with these challenges if you want to be successful!

But how not to lose heart with all these things? How can you make the most of ideas and opportunities? How have other business owners managed to be successful? How have they taken advantage of opportunities and successfully implemented their idea?

We are convinced that all these people have one thing in common: courage.

Courage helps us to face challenges. Courage enables us to seize opportunities. Courage enables us to make the best of our ideas.

The true story of Mr Andoura

At this point, we would like to tell the story of Mr Andoura:

Nabil Andoura was a respected businessman in Syria. Mr Andoura successfully produced soaps in his home country. Shortly before the war, his company employed around 75 workers in Syria. He exported his products to countries like South Korea, China and Germany.

Immediately after the war began, Mr Andoura was expropriated.

During the war, his company in Syria was destroyed. He lost everything and had to flee.

But Mr Andoura did not let it get him down. He wanted to return to his old profession in his new home country of Austria. And that is exactly what he did.

In Vienna, Nabil Andoura and his son Ahmad Andoura reopened their company headquarters in cooperation with their former production employees in the south of Turkey. They also run two retail shops for their organic soap products in Vienna. And father and son are working on setting up a new trading and distribution office in London.

They both lost everything and started entirely from scratch again in Vienna. Mr Nabil Andoura says: "When political stability returns, we will start again in Syria. We will not give up our dream of Aleppo soap." And he says, "There is a Syrian proverb. It says a company doesn't need a home."

What can we learn from this story?

Mr Andoura and his son had indeed experienced a lot of terrible things. They lost everything. They had an uncertain future ahead of them. They had to struggle with insecurities. They had to start anew. They needed a lot of courage and strength. And they made it.

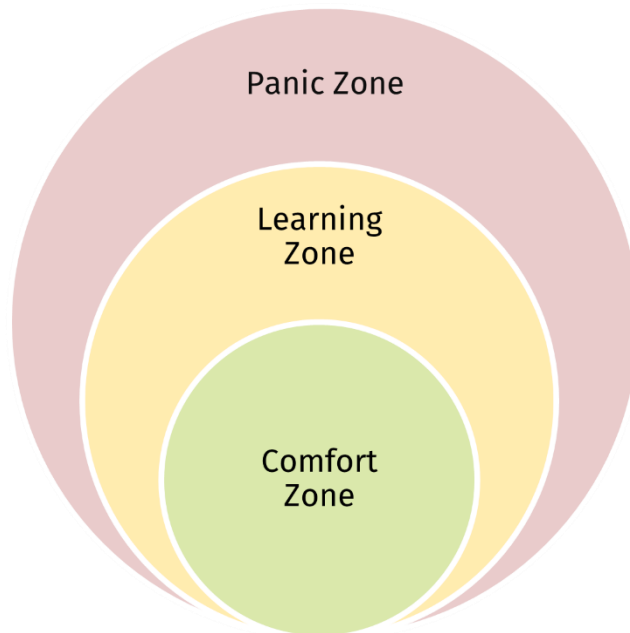
How can you do it? How can you overcome insecurities? What can strengthen you personally?

So, the big question is: **How can you become an example of how to overcome insecurities?**

How can you yourself become an example of how someone makes the most of his or her ideas and opportunities?!

Three Zone Model

We want to present a model that helps you deal with uncertainty. This model also lets you understand that uncertainties and ambiguities are simply part of starting something new.



It is called the 3-Zone-Model and was initially developed by Yerkes and Dodson. As the name suggests, this model describes three areas within which humans move when facing significant challenges.

The Comfort Zone Model consists of three zones. It describes a change process:

the zones are called the comfort zone, learning zone and panic zone. Every person has a comfort zone in which they feel comfortable. In your comfort zone, you complete tasks confidently and routinely. And you know your strengths and abilities.

Outside this comfort zone, the unknown begins. The new task area lies beyond the previously known boundaries. That is why leaving the comfort zone usually triggers a feeling of unease.

Where the learning zone and the panic zone begin for you depends on your personality and how you perceive events in your life. One thing is sure: we cannot avoid the three zones if we want to learn, develop professionally or grow beyond ourselves.

But this also has its advantages. Not for nothing does the saying go:

Who dares, wins!

But let's take a closer look at these zones:

Comfort Zone

This first zone marks the area in which a person feels comfortable and safe. He/she can assess what is coming up and knows his/her way around. It is easy for him/her to cope with tasks or to communicate with his/her environment. Competence, routines and habits provide the necessary self-confidence. However, external constraints or personal initiative can lead to having to leave the comfort zone.

Learning Zone

This second zone is also called the "growth or risk zone". Here a person enters new territory. Old rules no longer work. Instead, we have to face new challenges. This creates uncertainty. We are aware of possible risks and move cautiously accordingly. If the experiment and the plan work out and we were able to expand our knowledge or skills, this way we expand our comfort zone.

Panic Zone

The third zone is the area panic zone. Here lies everything that cannot be managed and controlled in the well-known way. This happens, for example, when you not only enter new terrain, but are completely fishing in the dark. Risk and danger become overwhelming, no more learning can take place. When actual failure is experienced in this area, most people retreat back into their comfort zone and even reinforce its limits. It then becomes increasingly difficult to move on to a new attempt.

From the comfort zone to the growth zone (learning zone)

Remaining in the comfort zone prevents personal growth. Of course, everyone wants to feel in control of their lives. But those who become sluggish when thinking outside the box and expanding their (mental) horizons close themselves off to life. Success, happiness, career, and (new) friends always require a step outside.

Life begins at the end of the comfort zone. There, it becomes exciting, and we leave self-imposed boundaries. We can only develop personally if we regularly set ourselves new tasks. We are not made to be comfortable, as lovely as that may feel. The body and mind hunger for new stimuli, training, for development. This is the only way we can live and not just let it happen.

Leaving the comfort zone can have different effects. What is desirable is that learning processes are set in motion that also have positive results elsewhere. We first gather new experiences, possibly make mistakes, learn from them and thus expand our spectrum, knowledge and abilities. In short: we exploit our potential.

Growth takes place in stages—piece by piece, step by step. Pushing boundaries always requires endurance, strength and courage. Nevertheless, one can "comfortably" move forward. This is even important to better deal with feelings of powerlessness or being overwhelmed. These must not become permanent conditions. Permanent stress makes you ill and can lead to burnout.

Therefore, make sure you take regular breaks and relax. Continue to allow yourself places of retreat. These are just as essential for well-being as a sense of achievement.

Why is it hard to leave the comfort zone

Some of us find it very difficult to leave our comfort zone; others find it boring to stay there. With the following arguments, you can motivate yourself to try something new and your future customers.

Missing reasons

Often there is a lack of reasons or incentives. People are willing to leave their comfort zone without attractive incentives or intense pressure. We humans need goals for which it is worth taking a risk. If we lack these goals, we stay in our comfort zone.

Protecting our beliefs

It takes work to overturn one's convictions. And brain research confirms it: Changing beliefs means changing many neuronal connections.

That's why we protect our beliefs. We avoid counter-evidence and specifically seek confirmation for our version of the truth.

We stay in our comfort zone to protect our beliefs.

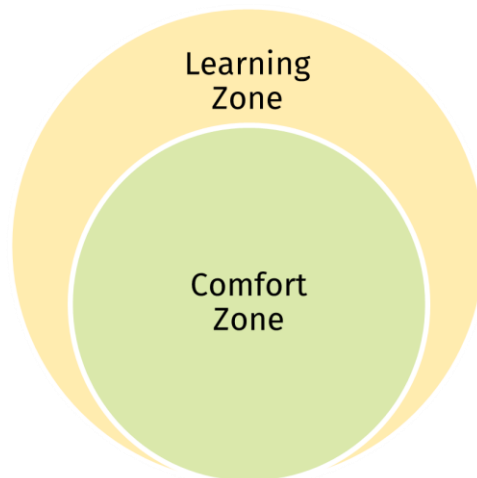
Fear of making mistakes

At school, we were often punished when we made a mistake. Because of this, we have learned to be afraid of making mistakes. And that is why we want to avoid mistakes. Outside the comfort zone, however, the danger of making mistakes is great. Out of self-protection, we, therefore, often stay in our comfort zone.

Fear of fear

Being a little afraid and uncomfortable when doing new things is entirely normal. Men, in particular, learned as children that fear is not good. Many men prefer to stay in their comfort zone and thus protect their masculinity.

How to get out of the Comfort Zone and into the Learning Zone



These suggestions will help you to leave your comfort zone and dare to try something new: because it is worth leaving your comfort zone and entering the learning zone! Why?

While you are in the learning zone, you expand your comfort zone. You learn to achieve more with less effort.

The following exercises will help you enter the learning zone:

Do activating exercises

When we are motivated, it is easy for us to become active.

When we feel motivated, our body prepares to become active: Our heart beats faster, and our blood pressure rises. In this way, our body provides us more energy for the activity ahead. If we lack motivation, our bodies will not become active either. And that means that even if we think it's good from a mental point of view but are not motivated, we will not become active.

So, what to do? Prepare your body to enter the learning zone through light physical activity.

Learn to deal with fears

Many people tense up when fears and anxieties arise. However, it is pretty normal for these feelings to occur when we enter the learning zone.

Allow and accept these unpleasant feelings! Because: The more you try to avoid unpleasant emotions, the more powerful the negative feelings become.

We live in a society where people do not like to show their weaknesses. This creates the impression that people have to hide their fears and that other people don't have worries.

But the truth is that all people have fears. And it is perfectly okay to be afraid if you don't get stuck in it. Because it provides exactly the energy, you need to expand.

Plan small steps

Even the long way to the top of a mountain begins with the first step. And many small steps ultimately lead to the goal. And it often makes sense to divide your project into small individual steps.

For example, if you are afraid to contact financial backers for your business, start with something other than this: research funding opportunities on the internet. You can wait to get anyone. But you have taken the first step!

Generate motivation

Great goals activate us! And when we are started, it is also easier for us to leave our comfort zone and enter the learning zone. It is essential to have realistic expectations that you can also believe in.

Often, we don't take action because overly negative reports from the media put us off. This is because we often need to develop our expectations based on personal experience.

Therefore, avoid negative media reports if you want to enter the learning zone more often.

Describe your intention positively.

It takes good reasons for us to take action. The more specific you can be about what you want to learn, the more willing you are to enter the learning zone. Think of all the benefits of starting something new. This will motivate you!

Find people to accompany you into the learning zone

It is easier to enter the learning zone when you are not alone.

It is very motivating when we notice that other people have made it. Then we can also overcome ourselves more easily.

And it is not at all necessary that these people are there in person! Read books by or about successful people, go to lectures, or watch an article on the internet.

Question your fears

Often, we don't get going because we imagine the worst. You can do something about that! Just answer these three questions in order:

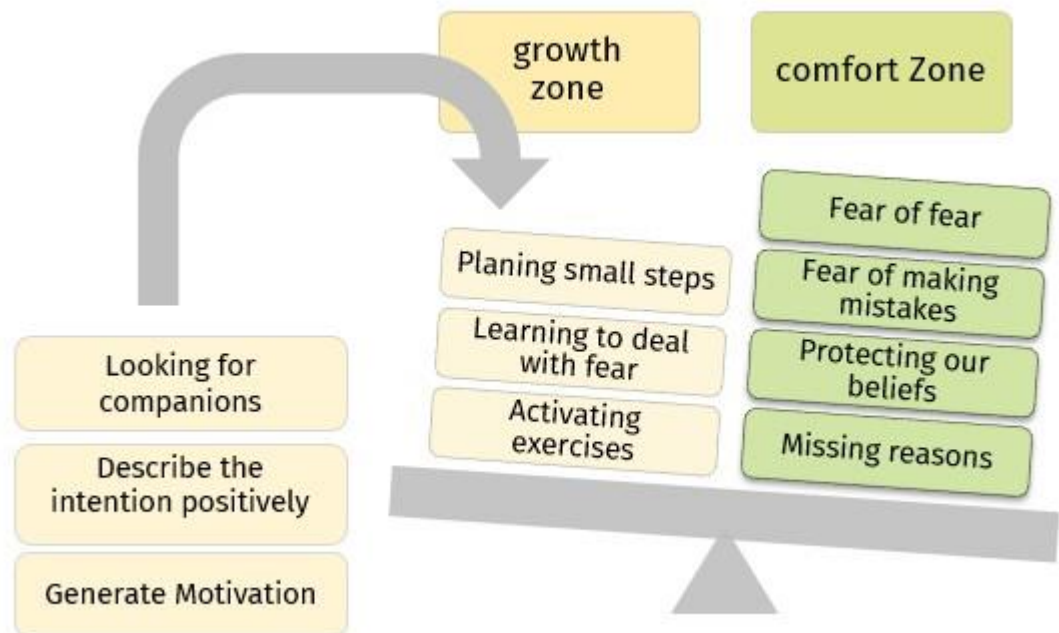
What is the worst that could happen? (What would be so bad about it?)

What is most likely to happen? (How do I know it is the most likely case?)

What could happen at best? (What can I do to make this case more likely?)

Be mindful!

Live the change! And do it consciously. Then it will become easier. Therefore, pay close attention to your feelings and fears as soon as you leave familiar terrain. Try to understand what you are afraid of and WHY you want to change!



EXERCISE 2



M 5_E 2: From the Comfort Zone into the Learning Zone

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Comment in detail in writing on the following points!

Learning Zone

- Describe 3 situations where you have left your comfort zone and moved directly into the learning zone.
- Which of your competences did you activate to do so?
- What challenges did you face?
- What did you learn? What can you do now that you could not do before?

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 5! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.

How to anticipate the feeling of achieving goals.

This last chapter is about mental training. What is mental training? Today we know we can achieve much with how we think about certain things. So, it's all about very conscious thinking. Mental training makes use of the power of thoughts. Through mental training, you can achieve goals more quickly. And mental training needs some practice. It is vital to concentrate on the essentials. If you keep at it and practise it⁶, this will support you in achieving your goals!

If you do these exercises regularly, you can train your mind to tune into the feeling of achieving goals:

Visualise your goal and experience it with all your senses.

What do you want to achieve? What exactly does your goal look like? Try to imagine your plan as precisely as possible. Many athletes work with exactly this method. For example, racers picture themselves going down the track, finishing first, and the crowd is excited.

So, you see! Visualising something to achieve a goal works! It motivates you and helps you succeed!

EXERCISE 3



M 5_E 3: I visualise myself as a winner

Take five minutes to visualise your goal in your mind's eye. See yourself succeeding in your green business. Visualise yourself as you have achieved it. What do you see and feel? Can you feel how proud you are? Try to feel this in your mind and also in your body. Let your breath expand your lungs and your upper body. Anticipate the feeling of personal growth. Focus on the positive things you see and say to yourself, "I can do this!"

If you repeat this exercise often, you will eventually feel very close to your goal and be well-prepared for it!

Autosuggestion

With this method, you can train your subconscious to support you. This makes it easier for you to reach your goal. And this method is straightforward! Fire yourself up with simple and affirming sentences!

"I can do this; I can do this, I can do this...". The more often you consciously say these sentences to yourself, the more motivated you will become!

Keep a success diary

In the evening, consciously think about what you have achieved on this day. These can be small things. Have you had a good conversation today? Or did you help someone? Did you find out something that will help you? The more you consciously remember small (and big) successes daily, the stronger you will become!

Find supportive people

Good friends or family members can encourage us to keep going and not give up. Surround yourself with people who are supportive of you!
Surround yourself with people who make you feel good and believe in you!
This will give you extra strength to achieve your goals!



Congratulations! With this module, you completed the first part of the training course! At this point, you have developed your green business idea and learned a lot of necessary tools for your green business. As a next step, you can start with the second part of the course: Plan your green business!

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