A TRADER’S TALE
BY NIKOS MERMIGAS
AN OLD PROBLEM

I remember like it was yesterday…All spotlights on me and the rest of the 12 head band on this massive stage. Over 30 thousand fans attended the concert at the theatre right in the center of Nicosia in Cyprus… and there they were all around us; looking up at us; waving lighters in their hands, (smart phones didn’t exist back in 2003), and singing with passion Annas’ most recent summer hit…

Suddenly a pause. (All part of the show of course).

Lights out!

Music stopped!

Silence…

No movement…

Then, suddenly one huge spotlight directed towards the center of the stage, and out of the “fog” appeared a shape.

There she was!

Anna Vissi!

The Greek Madonna super star!

People went nuts, shouting and screaming her name with such exhilaration, excitement, enthusiasm and adoration for their singing idol.
I had been working as a musician for about 8 years at that point, but this night was something else. I had never ever experienced anything like that before.

This crazy, unique energy and awesome aura coming from over 30 thousand people, literally worshipping one talent and beautiful singer like a goddess. I felt great, honored and proud, being part of this band. but I had to ask myself how long would it last? How long would this season last? Have you ever been to a concert like that, just getting lost in that incredible amazing atmosphere?
As I mentioned, I felt great, honored and proud, being part of this band. But how long would this season last?

Now, I want to emphasize the word season which was a serious problem, and it was my problem, and not for the first time, no this problem was always there! This ‘season’ problem.

When you are a musician you seldom have a long-term contract, nor any other “safety” insurance.

You might stay with a group or a band for a few months, a year or maybe even longer if you get lucky. But when the Company, or the Star you are working with changes his or her plans, no matter how good you are, how nice you are, or how long you are in the team, if things change and you are not part of that new plan, you are simply out. The season has come to an end. You are then kind of doomed to look for the next job or opportunity.

That was all fine in my early and late twenties and not an issue at all. But when I was reaching my thirties, despite all the passion I had for my music and all I had achieved professionally, I knew something had to change.

When I was younger, the only thing I wanted to do was play music. Over the years I began to understand that all the big names in the music business were actually doing much more than just playing music.

THEY WERE LIVING THEIR DREAMS and I, like most others were just hired by those guys to do a job. As much as I enjoyed all of that, I wanted more for myself.

I began to worry about my future more and more, and that, after devoting more than 10 years to this business!

I had this never-ending desire to make my own plans, to create a happy and wealthy life for my future wife, my future family and for me!

Yes. This is what I wanted more than anything. But (for crying out loud) I had this one simple, gnawing question constantly spinning in my head!
So, in a nutshell; the musician plays the music, so the singer (Star) stands out and looks good, which is great for his or her goals and career, but none of this had anything to do with my dreams and goals? Not at all! Not for one second!

All I knew was sleepless nights worrying and hoping to receive a paycheck, so I could pay my bills!

To keep it simple and to the point; no matter if I was a musician or an employee in some company, I realized that, as long as I worked for someone else, I would never be able to focus a 100% on my own desires and make my dreams come true!

I did not like that at all.

I knew that 2004 would be my last year as a professional musician. I had already started a different journey, and I knew that I had to let go of what I was doing for once and for all.

A few years prior to this, something happened that started changing my life. It all began with a simple idea, but for that story, we go back, unfortunately, (just kidding) to the year 1999!
MEETING THE DOCTOR

I was living for six years in Athens and working for about 4 years as a musician. Already back then I started to feel that no matter how hard I worked in this business, it would have an expiration date and with age it would become harder and harder to get the good jobs and survive financially. Truth is that I did not care much about the money at this point, but I was not that ignorant. I knew that I would have to care about it at some point. Simply, because money was and is a great tool, and I knew that with this tool it would be much easier and faster to achieve almost everything.

I really wanted to do so many things like marry my girlfriend, have kids, travel around the world, build my own house. I had so many hobbies like breeding parakeets, aquarium fish and others. But how could I do all that without enough of the shiny little tool called money?

Another thing is that I didn’t just want to make money. I wanted to enjoy making money, so I needed to find something that would actually give me that excitement, passion and thrill!

Another question popped up! How do I actually find something like that? The answer was simple. I just had to start doing my research and try out!

It was winter 1999 when I had caught a really bad cold, so I went to see a doctor. He called me into his office. I sat down and waited for him while he scribbled on some financial newspaper. It looked like he was making some notes or something like that.

Now I was coughing...

Time past and the guy would not even look at me, so I asked him directly; “what exactly are you doing there?” He then kind of lost his concentration and looked at me like I was a bad dream or something. For sure he was annoyed. I just wasn’t sure if it was my fault or something else, so he replied after a while. (kind of late I would say) “Um…I’m looking at all the volatile stocks here and making some notes, so I can buy a few shares later on today….. I guess!”
Then he looked at me and asked me with a very passionate expression on his face “Are you into stocks or any financial markets”?

To be honest and because I was a bit angry at him not paying attention to me in the first place, I replied a little bit too fast and without thinking much, "I don't like to gamble at all."

The expression on his face changed very fast on the 'happiness scale.' From 10 to 0 in no time! He examined me quickly and wrote the prescription down on his financial newspaper. I guess he ran out of his regular prescription pad. I am lucky he didn't use toilet paper!

Later on I was sitting on my couch and because I had nothing better to do, being sick and all, I took a closer look at that doctor's prescription, or better the newspaper with all the stocks and notes on it.

To be honest, I did not understand anything, so I started googling, still with dial up internet turtle speed, to figure out what this was all about. I must say, I felt attracted to something without knowing anything about it. But what made me more curious, was something that happened in our country, earlier that Summer.

There was a huge stock market crash, which was quite a drama, to say the least. People lost their homes, cars, all their money and much more.

Some investors committed suicide, jumping off from high buildings and more. It was topic No. 1 on TV for weeks and weeks, which made me, ask more questions; like, why would the doctor still buy stocks after the crash? Is it possible to still make money buying stocks, especially now? I remember days before the crash, regular folk made fortunes without any market experience. It was all on radio and TV.

Was my weird doctor making money with this now? I mean, I remembered his excited face when he asked me in his office if I was into financial markets!
A week later I went back to the doc for a simple checkup and when I entered his office, he actually smiled, (which I did not expect at all) and said; “Ahhh, the guy that does not gamble at all...how are you?” After my examination I asked him directly if he was able to make money trading stocks, especially now, where everybody else lost everything and he replied with a quirky smile, “of course my friend, now is the best time to buy!”

I must say, I didn’t get it. Why was now, the best time to buy any stocks? I mean thousands were still licking their wounds and everybody I knew who was into stocks before the crash, they were still whining!

To bring it to the point, I did not expect what would happen next. The Doc closed the door, and there were still patients to see him in the waiting room. He took out his new financial papers and started explaining all kind of details about stocks, prices, goals, targets etc.

I tried to digest as many details as possible and after about 30 minutes he looked surprised at his watch and said, "oh, time is passing fast and some patients are waiting. I still have work to do".

I greeted him and left. While passing through the waiting room, I could see angry patients glaring at me...

On my way home I felt different, kind of excited, but not that much because of what I had learned so far; no...it was more the passionate expression on the docs face, while he was talking to me about his investment that made me feel excited and so different that morning.

He gave me details about how much he invested in different stocks, about profits he made, about timing, about buying low and selling high, which of course I did not understand at all at this point. The only thing that really sold me was his excitement and passion for financial markets!

The next day I could not think about anything else. I visualized myself already sitting on a big couch with a Cuban cigar in my mouth (I am a non-smoker by the way) and counting big loads of money!
WITHIN 24 HOURS

I knew this was going to be easy. I mean just earlier this summer, before the crash, I remembered a story on TV, showing some old ladies who had made a fortune with their stocks, and they did not have a clue about trading at all. But now I met this doctor who was doing this for many years successfully and had obviously a lot of experience on the subject, so what could go wrong? I only had to contact him, ask him which stocks to invest in and see my account grow fast and stress free!

I am not really the shy guy, so I called the doctor and asked for an appointment. When I got into his office, I actually explained to him that I was feeling great and the only reason I showed up was because I needed his professional advice on investing in stocks!

I told him that I wanted to invest my savings to grow my account instead of it rotting in a classic bank account.

I told him that I was a musician and already swimming against the main stream here. I was not doing what most people do anyway, not working a “real” job (as they call it), so why not do something crazy!

We started talking for almost 2 hours and I was all pumped up, ready to agree with anything he would suggest. I mean he sounded so sure about the stocks he wanted to me to buy, that I agreed immediately to his proposal!

Next day we actually met downtown and he opened a stock account for me.

My first trading account people!! I was so proud!

A couple of days later and in agreement with the doctor, I gave my broker the order to buy the Stock.

Only one Stock actually, a company, according to the doc, with huge potential and a lot of volatility. He actually showed me his account and how he tripled his investment with this stock in a few weeks only. So, because it looked like such a great deal, I invested all my saving, all the money I actually had, which was about 15K in this one Stock.
Now, who still thinks that I am a smart guy? Somebody...anybody!? I definitely felt a bit worried but also excited. The doc assured me that in case the Stock loses momentum, we would have all the time in the world to get rid of the stocks again with a tiny loss or even a small profit!

I went home feeling like George Soros. The beginning of my powerful trading career had just begu...

**Now I give that to you the way I got it... fast and without mercy!**

The next day, I was actually waiting for the weather forecast on the news channel, when some special news popped up. The reporter was talking about some crook who had stolen millions of Euros from private investors and the government. I remember the scenes where they handcuffed him and dragged him into court with a lot of security guards surrounding him. It all looked a bit like some action Hollywood trailer and I first enjoyed the whole show until, yes, until they mentioned his name. When that happened I fell off, my already broken couch.

*They were talking about the owner of my stock investments company!! I actually thought that this could only have been a bad joke. This was my worst nightmare!*

I called my new friend the doctor at once and he picked up the phone. His voice sounded nothing like before. He sounded broken and tired, and before I could even ask him anything, he said..."Did you hear? The guy is going to jail; the company is dead, our money's gone. Everything is over!"

Could I have ever done worse? Can anyone top this? Is that even possible? I am talking about every trader’s worst nightmare here, and it happened to me on day 1 of my awesome (lol) trading career!

Everything I saved up over years, was gone. Everything I had worked for was nothing more than thin air, but my brain could not digest it yet. The number does not mean anything. For some people 15K might seem like a lot of money and for some not, but the point is; if it is all you had then it’s all you had! I was in such a state that it felt like I forgot how to breathe At this point there was no why or how, only pure darkness.
I had realized one thing. Everything I had done and worked for all those past years was gone, and I had to start literally from scratch!

And the worst part is that I had nobody to share this with, to release at least a bit of this awful pressure inside! I mean, who would I share this with? Who would understand? For sure, I could continue whining here, but I won’t do it, because I am sure you get the point.
THE HIDDEN MESSAGE

It took me about a month to recover, at least partly from my previous investment experience. I must admit that I really wanted to leave behind all that happened. I wanted to forget about my dreams to achieve financial freedom and happiness. I even tried to convince myself that it was not meant to be, just to make the pain disappear, so I could focus again on whatever I was doing.

But what was I really doing? I just got back to my “old Life”. Teaching and playing music, which I always enjoyed, yes, but again I faced my old problem, which was stuck inside me...the same questions again and again. Where was my freedom, my happiness and what about my financial goals?

As much as my head wanted to just forget, my soul did not agree with that option at all. I mean we all know that hiding is always easier than fighting.

The thing is; it lies in my nature to never give up when I still feel the spark. And again, I realized that all that happened was more than just about money. After my big loss I knew more than ever, that I just wanted to succeed. I understood what was going on.

I wanted to feel safe and blamed the doctor for my 15k loss. But the truth was that nobody forced me into it. It was all me. I asked for help and advice. I risked all my money on one stock, so I was a 100% responsible for my actions.

Suddenly I felt good about what happened in a funny way. What if this sudden financial death experience was a Message? What if this was actually a quick and powerful wakeup call, like somebody saying; “hey Nik, this is not how things work, let’s save you some time here, let’s just think this through. You have no money, so you cannot do anything dumb. Sit down, clear your head, invest some time, do your own research and learn how markets really work.”

This is like every other topic in life. If you have passion for something, you will just go for it and do it, right? You don’t just try a little bit, you take action!

As our wise Guru Joda once said...
I just needed to remember how I managed different aspects in my life before. When I wanted in, I usually did not analyze it too much. I jumped right in. I tried it out and often made huge mistakes. When I figured out that I did not have enough passion for what I was doing, I stopped, but when I felt those sparks and tickling in my stomach (like when you fall in love), I would just push and push until the job was done and I saw the results I was looking for. Unfortunately I just forgot this about me. I got sucked back into the “routine” of life again! What a drag!!!

I mean I remember days when I was still studying music and living for a few months on the top of a 7th floor building, in a small 20 sqm flat, without heating. I was coughing all the time, because parts of my flat walls were actually green] not my color choice, no! The green came from the damp and the mildew oozing through the walls!

I remember weeks where I did not have enough money to pay my rent and buy food at the same time. So I would cook up a pot of bean soup and eat this every day for a week to save money.

Sometimes I would walk about 10 Km every day to work, so I could save money from the bus or metro tickets.

But here is the big question? Did it bother me back then? Not for a second, because the only thing I wanted to do was play and study music, so I would be able to make my dream come true and play with some big names in this industry.
My passion was music – not money

What did this teach me? I had to find and follow my passion again, not just chasing money. Money would be a byproduct. The result of taking action and following my passion!

I had a simple but most powerful idea that struck me at this point!

I wanted to find out how strong my new passion for trading financial markets would be. I already received my hidden message when losing my 15K, so I would make sure to listen very carefully in future...
THE IDEA

It is obvious that we can’t make money if we don’t have money so I needed to save some Euros, to be able to invest again, but this time with some good foundations. I worked like always as a musician, and started to save money. My goal was to save about 3K euros, before trading again. I bought 3 trading books. The first one was about strategies, the second book about basic chart analysis and the third one about fundamental analysis.

The content was great and I learned a lot of basics. Another great part was the fact that a good friend of mine shared my interest, so I was not alone anymore. We supported each other and paper traded our stock charts according to our new knowledge about the markets. We believed that trading would be much easier now that we got it all figured out together.

The truth is that both of us had different opinions on how, where and when a stock would move, and in which direction. We had to realize that there were many grey zones when it comes to trading. It was not just black and white. So what to do? We bought more books, studied more and even asked some brokers for advice (big mistake by the way).

Instead of feeling better and confident, we started to actually feel a bit discouraged. It wasn’t only that we did not agree which stocks to trade, we also disagreed more and more on what strategies to use...... live!

Yes we traded live!! There were no demo accounts, everything we did would be for real! It was 2001 now and we had both saved some money to trade with, so we agreed; enough with this theory talk, let’s go live! I funded my account with 3500 euros (which I had saved). The plan was to split that money into different stocks, for long and short term investment.

I felt great, so we went live!

Things did not work out well. Despite our new found knowledge and passion, we messed up. Some Stocks gave some buy signals according to our analysis but we risked way too much money and did not have patience at all. We also started listening to the brokers’ advice and bought all kinds of little company stocks that were supposed to take off like crazy.
We forgot about our fresh knowledge and ignored simple risk management rules. Every decision we made was mostly out of impulse and fear of loss. Nothing to do with real trading.

Long story short, I lost about 500 euros, closed all positions and quickly withdraw my remaining 3K. My friend did the same. At least we did not kill our whole accounts again.

So what did we learn here? I had the feeling that all the studying and talking, the analyzing and discussing was for nothing. I said; “it cannot be that people make millions here and we are not able to at least grow our accounts a bit”. We were not stupid. One thing we understood. Trading success would not be gained by reading technical or fundamental strategy books or by making fearful trading decisions!

*It was much more ... much, much more!*
THE “MAGIC” SIGN

Almost another year past since I closed my stock trading account. My friend and I were still looking for other opportunities and different ways to trade financial markets.

We started reading more books and bought DVDs about trading mindset and psychology. We knew already that chart analysis alone would not do the trick! There were no trading schools or seminars to go to! Let alone webinars. We did not even have broadband internet connections in my area.

That’s when we heard about Forex for the first time. It was brand new here in the beginning of the new millennium and looked very sexy and promising. All this leverage and so much volatility on the charts. So for both of us it was love at first sight!

We met a few people and got more information. Everybody was talking about the biggest market in the world, with unlimited liquidity and enough money for everybody. It was about making easy pips and quick daily profits.

I mean who can’t blame us right? It just sounded like heaven, so we both opened our new Forex account. I want to save you a lot of details here, but one part is really interesting. In the early 2000’s I still had to call my broker in the UK to open a Forex position and call again to close it as well. I guess you can imagine how crazy that was. When I saw profits on my account, I called my Broker to close a position, but by the time the guy picked up and logged into my account the trade often turned against me and it was closed with losses. It was only a matter of time before I closed my first Forex account with a bleeding heart.

A few months later, we could trade online with a slow broadband, so I got my confidence back. I opened a trading account in the USA and in the UK, just to have more options. I tried out all kind of day trading and scalping strategies that I found in Forex forums and discussed those with my friend.

We were back on track and we made profits...at first!
I made some money and lost money, depending on the market behavior. On longer terms I lost more than I made and after losing my patience, I risked too much and killed my trading account again literally overnight.

All I had learnt seemed again useless to me. The same happened to my friend. We lost again and again and again.

We changed our strategies almost daily, because we focused too much on the money and I realized that we did not have enough patience to test a strategy long enough.

Ok, money was gone again, but at least we still had our jobs as musicians to keep us from stealing food..... It was like hitting this solid unbreakable wall again and again. I still had faith. It was fading but it was still there. One incident made my faith literally grow to unknown dimensions. I was meeting with my trading buddy at a Chinese restaurant and we were analyzing our previous trading failures.

It was again on how close we were to master trading for good, when something really amazing happened. You know how it is in those Chinese restaurants, right? After paying the bill they serve you those so called "Fortune cookies", right! I opened mine to find this little piece of paper. It's supposed to give you some advice in life or something like that. I usually ignored those, but this time it was different. I took the little scroll in my hands and started to read the one sentence that changed my life forever....I actually scanned it here to see for yourself....
We looked at each other and could not believe what just had happened. That’s great timing I said to my friend. We had so much fun that night. Call it whatever you like, for me it was more than just a little scroll, it was also more than just a powerful booster that would give me unlimited confidence, it was a sign from the universe, telling me exactly what would happen if I would just continue focusing and working with passion for my goals!

*Since then I keep this gigantic, humongous, enormous universal message in a little box next to my PC!*  

Did you ever think about asking yourself for a sign? If not, please don’t be afraid to do so. Open up and ask with passion, while you are working towards your goals. You will never know when your sign will appear, but I can assure you, it will reveal itself to you eventually!
A few weeks later I visited a small money show exhibition which was new in town. I was excited because those shows were kind of rare around my place. I was surprised to see so many likeminded people in one place. Different brokers and companies offered their services, books, DVD’s and all kinds of online courses and programs. It was easy to spot all the newbies which would stand in line to sign up for some free Stock or Forex courses. I was looking for something more advanced. I wanted to talk to someone with real experience and sound advice, but this seemed like a doomed quest.

After spending about 2 hours in this place, I decided to go home. There was nothing that would help me in any way. Close to the exit, there was an elderly man, in his early 80’s, sitting in a corner, who had his own exhibit booth with only 2 chairs and a very old coffee machine. I did not see any company banners, logos or a book he was promoting, which I thought was weird.

He was sitting there in his corner, calm and silent, just ignoring the party that was going on around him. He did not shout and scream like many of the guys that were selling their books or products. No, he was just sitting there and looked like a guy from those old black and white movies. He also had this aura, like he knew something that nobody else was aware of. That made him interesting for me. To be honest I was not sure if he was actually selling anything, or if he was just the caretaker. I had the feeling I knew him from somewhere because he really looked familiar.

I was about to leave. I had nothing to lose. As I got close to him, he looked at me and I greeted him. I asked him kindly what service he exactly was offering, but he only raised his left eyebrow and said; “Don’t you have a name son?” Oops… he was right, no manners on my end.

I apologized, introduced myself to him, and then I asked the same question again; “could you please tell me what exactly are you offering?” After a few seconds he just replied; “sorry no, I can’t, because you didn’t explain to me what exactly you are looking for!”
At this point I knew this conversation would take longer than expected, but instinctively I knew that this man would play a special role in my life, so I took the chair next to him and sat down....

I could write about this man for days and weeks, but for this I’d probably have to write a whole novel. I have to tell you that this man was not only inspiring me but he also opened my eyes in many different ways. He was a trader for over 60 years, but not the kind of trader you would think.

He did not know anything about PC’s or online Forex trading. He traded crude oil and wood. He exported both physically with ships all around the world and was acquainted with all the big names that ruled the financial world between the 1950’s up to the early 1980’s worldwide. The reason he was giving advice to guys like me, was simply because he wanted to give something back, and felt also kind of lonely, now that he was slowing down. This was a man who had survived 3 wars. He started with no shoes on his feet and no food in his belly to 8 and 9 figure incomes with businesses and hundreds of employees around the globe. This was a man who had lost his parents during WW2 and had to raise and feed his 4 sisters at age 12. A man who did not go to school but learnt to read and write from a cook on a fishing boat...And I thought I had problems. LOL!

Now, this was a man whose advice I would take seriously!

It will take forever to give you all details but let me give you some...

He told me to surround myself with positive and joyful people, which was easy for me. He also helped me remember the true meaning of friendship and loyalty. He helped me to plan, but at the same time to live and enjoy the moment. He shared his life experiences and stories with me which always gave me unbelievable mental strength.

He shared his unique view of focusing and goals and about how the universe, or the gods in whatever religion, would take care of you when you start taking action. For example; when I was playing my music, I did not care much about the money, but only about my main goal, which was simply to start from nothing and play with the big guys in the music industry, no matter how long it would take me to get there. And here lies the key to goals, focus and passion which I unfortunately forgot at some point.
My Mentor never talked to me about any trading or investment strategies, but only about mindset. For him it was vitally important to reveal what is really hidden deep inside all of us. He did not care about what markets I wanted to get involved with. He always said to me; “it does not matter what you trade; only how much you really want it!” He helped me understand the importance of clear decision making. He told me;

“We either make decisions out of fear or out of love for our passion and goals. It is all emotional and there is nothing in between”.

So I figured when I trade I have to make choices and pull the trigger when a trading signal appears, right? So I created my basic trading rule and applied it right away. That rule, which is imprinted on my DNA still today goes like this;

*I will take a trade out of love for my passion when a clean signal appears according to my own rules, and manage it without fear but only with joy and happiness.*

This and more excellent details changed the whole game for me, step by step!
MY FIRST RESULTS

Forex Brokers started to allow paper trading on DEMO accounts. That sounded great and would give me an opportunity to test strategies more and understand results better!

I was right on it, keeping always in mind my mentor and my little fortune cookie. I started to filter out my mistakes, things I did wrong over and over again. I tried to keep trading habits that worked well for me in past and added some basic rules to my entries and stops and targets.

I trained my eye more and more by looking at live charts for endless hours every day. I even set alerts on my cellphone to make sure I would not miss out any action during the night. I would wake up to check my charts and trade also during Asian open hours. I started hating weekends, because most markets were closed over Saturday and Sunday. I just wanted to be there all day and all night. Longing to trade, to learn and take advantage of every single movement on the screen!

There was a lot of volatility in the Forex market back then, so I would always be ready to study every reaction on my charts.

Sometimes I was so exhausted that I did not want to talk to anyone about anything else other than trading. My whole world was only trading, and most non related conversations I had with family and friends seemed very boring, pointless and a waste of time to me.

The markets captivated me a 100%. It was all I could see, breathe and live for at this point. My demo accounts helped me to focus again, and to create my own strategies over months.

I also traveled and invested in several Trading seminars and webinars to check out what others were doing in the UK, the USA, South Africa and even Australia! I learned all kinds of different approaches, but nothing that promising. Those coaches used different tools and indicators. Everybody was so convinced that there trading system was the best.
I always had a great time during those courses, and met great people, but I thought I would never find this missing piece of the puzzle that would solve everything for me! I actually had found it already but I was not aware of it at this stage. 

I always thought there must be more. It cannot be that simple! I listened carefully during those seminars and kept the information I found useful to me, the rest I just ignored. I had the feeling that some of those so called Gurus had probably never traded, not once. However, I added the parts I needed to my strategies and improved my trading very slowly.

To be honest, it was not easy, because discipline and patience were my enemies, but I knew it was part of the whole successful trading package deal!

I managed to grow my demo account by 200% in a few weeks, using a lot of scalping and day trading strategies. I started to also use much better risk management at this point and would never expose my account to more than about 10% at all times, which was still way too much, but nobody had told me that so far...lol

I was close, so close I could feel it, so I opened another live account. I had gotten used to trading demo so trading live now confronted me again with my old fears, my old baggage. I remembered my huge losses and also the way I felt back then. What annoying memories, I thought. Never the less, the show had to go on!

Over the past months I realized that 'less was more' in trading, so my charts looked simple and my main strategy, that I still use today did not require a lot of indicators on my charts. Price action was the king and it always told the truth. It took me about three months to almost double my live trading account from 3 k to almost 6 K. I can tell you that it was damn hard. I always had to fight my little inner demons to avoid what I called the bad greed. I then started trading different products like options on Forex, Metals and a few volatile Stocks.

I will always remember an option trade I took on USD/CAD that almost doubled my account during NFP day. This was up till now, my best trade ever. I felt so excited, awesome and happy! It is impossible for me to describe how great I felt that day. I just knew this was my reward for insisting and following my passion.
I knew that no matter how much money I would make in future trading; I would never again feel that excited about one single trade again, but that was fine. I also messed up many times again, but never as bad as in the beginning. Remembering my fortune cookie message in combination with my Mentor’s advice always brought me back to reality. Even when things didn’t work out great, I was able to get on track much faster.

I also knew with 100% certainty, that I crossed my personal point of no return. Do you know what that means? It means that my habits, my thoughts and my mindset changed over the past months.

It meant that there was no way that I could or would be able to return to my old habits. I treated life differently. I was smarter. I approached and managed everything differently and enjoyed it a lot. Sometimes it made me feel like I was waking up from a long and deep coma, and that I was breathing real deep for the first time after many years.

It did not surprise me at all that my trading accounts grew faster and stronger. I had managed to combine my mindset and emotions with my technical experience and skills on the charts. I knew now that every trader had to earn the right to make money from financial markets first.

I wrote my trading plans and journals all on paper, because it took me too much time writing on the PC back then. I also wrote mostly in English (more or less), which was and is the trading language anyway.

Here are some images from my old trading journal/plan in 2004 and 2005. You need to consider that when I am excited about something, my writing becomes really bad and looks mostly like a modern art painting...
I also kept my old pencil which I was chewing on when I got nervous...A great reminder!

I knew that we all have to invest in ourselves first. We have to understand, to connect and to feel what is really going on first. The markets are literally alive, not just some moving candles on the chart on your screen. We are talking about millions of human beings fighting to make money and the ones who know their game would never hand over their cash to you without a good fight. I still have to laugh sometimes for my behavior as a new trader. How could I have ever expected to make millions in a few weeks, when others dedicated their whole lives to this, over decades of years?
FAST GROWTH

I started comparing my trading styles more often and looked for easier and simpler ways to trade. I figured out that trading less, but focusing on longer term trades would make more profits with much less effort, and that was absolutely amazing.

A good friend of mine got me into trading for clients with not too much success in 2007 and 2008, but that was because I was not used to trade other people’s money. At first I could not grow the clients’ accounts, because I started making decision out of fear again instead of passion and skills! I had to again, connect my heart to my chart, to make it work.

I also changed my risk management policy as well and started exposing my accounts to less than 2%. I applied the same for my clients a year later, and the fund management became a part of my trading life. I did not have to fund huge trading accounts in order to make good returns. A few big client accounts were enough to receive a great commission. The transformation was complete. Making money became a habit, a great habit of mine. Over the years and with more experience I changed my trading style to 80% swing and position trading. This gave me the opportunity to spend more free time with my family. One great part of becoming a better trader for me was teaching others to trade. I was already a music teacher and I loved seeing others succeed in the music industry, so why not try the same in trading?

I started to teach my old trading buddy who at this point was still busy with other projects. He then introduced me to a friend of his who wanted to trade as well, and things went kind of viral quick. I started teaching via skype and Facebook and shared all my life trades with the world. One reason I did that was actually to remind myself consistently of my own trading rules, especially when I was trading bigger client accounts. This was just great. What better way to eliminate recurring trading mistakes. In a matter of weeks I had hundreds of students following my trades and listening to my advice and trading rules in Forex.
I felt a new passion was born, especially when I saw other traders with awesome results during or after our FB sessions. The feedback was just mind blowing and I felt so great about giving something back from my own experience. So now that we are talking about Forex especially... I realized that the affect I had on others was and is still my most valuable currency!

I realized that my purpose is not only to trade, but also to help free others from their struggle and concerns in trading and give them all they need to transform into great, passionate and successful traders.

Combining trading and teaching made the puzzle for me complete! Time is flying, which is one more reason to embrace your own destiny and chase your dreams with passion. I always followed my dreams and it was never easy until I started to understand how things work. I had nothing and lived in a small one room flat for a while.

Now I have a great wife, two amazing kids and I live in a huge house with a big garden and a swimming pool. I have four dogs, about 200 parakeets, and a lot of free range chickens...lol! I travel the world and I have the time and money to do whatever and whenever I like! I always have new goals and follow my passion! I know now that everyone can do this as well!
X WORTH REMEMBERING

Traders think out of the box and they are not part of the main stream and I guess that makes you a weird person in most people’s eyes, probably as weird as me, or worse. But I think this is great!

If trading is what you love to do then decide and go for it. Allow me to give you a few tips. I know my kids always remember things better in the negative, so try to remember my 4 “not to do” steps!

1. Don’t do anything just because you can
2. Don’t do anything you don’t love
3. Don’t do anything because other people think you should
4. Don’t do anything because you are too afraid to do something else

The reason why over 90% of new traders fail consistently is because they make their trading decision based on their worst fears and because their deepest dreams seem always so freaking far and impossible to reach. Your deepest dreams are not impossible. Walk this path. Do not walk the path of least resistance. It is always easier to quit.

My trading success puzzle came together after years of struggle and hard research, and yes, I wish I had someone back then to help me put all those pieces together at once, but to be honest, I do not regret one second of it. This has been pure adventure. I have met beautiful people on my trading journey and have experienced so many different stages on this path.

I transformed in many ways, and not easy to describe. All this time I had and still have 100% support from my awesome wife, my kids and family, who never stopped, for a second, believing in my crazy projects, dreams and goals!

One last tip; You might fail the rest of your life at something you don’t want to do, so you might as well take your chance on doing what you actually love. Dream about the great life you deserve, take action and go for it. Remember that your soul and your real passion cannot be contained! Don’t hope for anything, find your strength and just do what feels great!

Nikos Mermigas
Old times: Me and my little, ugly flat in my early twenties...
I loved it!

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