



## **TO ACHIEVE A GOAL, YOU MUST CHANGE THE WORLD**

Sergey Grinko, Director, Production Support, talks about “breaking the mould”, craving adventure, and the ability to be happy.

### **On choosing a profession**

I grew up in Nizhnevartovsk, where I went to kindergarten and school. During high school, on the advice of a teacher, I also attended and graduated from the school of physics and technology at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT). I regularly took part in and won maths and physics contests. But I did not have a strong passion for these subjects. Additionally, the idea of being a mechanics and mathematics student, wearing big glasses, and spending evenings buried in books, was not for me. But the idea of being a financial guy, wearing suits, owning cars and having success, was the opposite.

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When you are a schoolboy, it is difficult to know what you want to be, there is not much information about professions. When the time came to choose an educational institution, I realised that I wanted to become an economist, like my father. This was clear to me. At the same time, I had to be rational: we did not have any extra money, so it was necessary to stick to my student grant. I started to go to all the preparatory courses that were on offer in the city. When I began to think about studying in Moscow, I was led to believe it could not happen. And so, I ended up at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, with a modular education system, 30 km from my hometown. The classes were taught by teachers who came from Moscow on business trips. After three years of study, I passed the necessary academic requirements and using my student grant, I transferred to Moscow. I managed to escape to the capital.

### **About “breaking the mould”**

During my childhood, my friends dreamed of going to work for our local Nizhnevartovsk oil company, preferably land a job through connections, it offered the promise of a secure future, and a life arranged for you. On the one hand, I wanted to pull away from this trend, but on the other hand, I was worried about “breaking the mould”. As an ordinary child who lived with his parents in a small apartment, I did not understand what I really wanted. I had childish dreams: to have a lot of money, an apartment, and to build a house for my parents.

I'm not dreaming anymore. Rather, I'm making plans. For example, to go on a round the world trip on a yacht. At the current pace of life, this also sounds like "breaking the mould". But it is possible to do, you just have to put the plan into action and think carefully about the details.



*Sergey Grinko says that, to end up where you are supposed to be, you sometimes need to change direction.*

# Worldviews

The world is often unfair. But it is important to remember that, most likely, you yourself are biased. If you withdraw into yourself and stop trying, it will only get worse: self-pity drives you into an abyss of despair. The world does not care about your condition, and besides, no one likes people who are sulking. I have found solutions for myself. For example, emotionally rebooting and doing something in a different way. Or continue to grit your teeth. Or call for advice from those around you. Or sometimes wait calmly for the situation to change. This always works for me. Dark periods, whether short or long, will always end, I know this for sure.

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Moreover, at the back of my mind, I always expect the best developments to happen, I do not expect any hidden agenda. I think that everything will be fine. Of course, at the same time, I assess the risks with a level head, but I remain sure that in the end things will improve.

## Ambition

I understand ambition as the ability of a person to achieve what is important to them. I think all people are born with a purpose, but just everyone has their own goal, and different levels of ambition. In my opinion, the world is divided into two types of people: those who like doing things differently, and those who are comfortable living in a world which they understand and that they value very much. I believe that in order to achieve a goal, you must change the world. And the most basic rule for this is to leave your comfort zone.

My whole life and career have been a series of nontypical events and decisions that often threw my life in a different direction. As a result, I gained experience and became confident that my efforts were not in vain. If I were to think about it for a long time and weigh the risks, then I would act more conservatively. So it is necessary to use all the chances you get. A lot of young professionals miss out on opportunities because they are afraid to take risks, to end up in a struggle, but they lose out on personal growth and getting their career. They forget that you can take steps backwards, if things do not turn out well. This is the worst thing that can happen.



## Sport

Sports help to cope with emotions, and to reboot. I cannot imagine life without sport. During the pandemic, I went through a period when the gyms were closed and I could not bring myself to work out. Finally, before the New Year holidays, I managed to break out of that vicious cycle of “working a lot and eating a lot”. I have now rediscovered the gym and I am thoroughly enjoying it.

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SPORTS HELP TO COPE WITH EMOTIONS AND TO REBOOT. I CANNOT IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT SPORT

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During my childhood I swam a lot, but I always dreamed of playing volleyball. Swimming is an individual sport, but I wanted to be part of a team, and have that sense of togetherness. Following my move to Moscow, I developed an interest in weightlifting and finally managed to realise my childhood dream of playing volleyball. I still enjoy doing both. When I worked at SIBUR-BSC, we had an amateur volleyball team and competed in events. When in Moscow, we sometimes manage to gather together at the weekend and play beach volleyball. It is a great opportunity to chat and let off some steam through the excitement of the game.

I also really love snowboarding, especially freeboarding. But for the last four years I haven't had any luck, there has been no snow whenever I try to go. Now I even joke that I'll just nail the board to the wall. I plan to try cross-country skiing. The irony is that I grew up in the North, but I have only tried cross-country skiing a couple of times in gym class.

## Fishing

My grandfather taught me to love fishing during my childhood. My grandparents live in Pinsk, in the Brest Region of Belarus. There are two rivers there, and I would spend every holiday with them. I even managed to save up from grants for a telescopic fishing rod. My priorities then changed for some time, and I did not go fishing. But thanks to some chance occurrence, I was invited to a Taiga river to go fishing, and I again returned to my old hobby. And so it began, I bought fishing rods and started fishing regularly.

After moving to Moscow, I thought going fishing would end. But, fortunately, there are many places close to the capital where you can fish. I go fishing almost every weekend, even during winter. My sons share my passion. My six-year-old has already caught some fish, but my two-year-old just plays around. In my opinion, it is an excellent alternative to walking in the park.

I also have a large boat, and during summer, my eldest son and I sometimes go camping for a few days. The year before last, for example, we went to Kamchatka.



*Fishing in Kamchatka has a real romantic feel.*

It is worth saying that for me the actual process of fishing itself is important, I do not like eating fish. I usually catch the fish and then let it go free. This has been something I have been doing for the last eight to ten years. It is something of a ritual.

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Generally, cooking on an open fire is very important to me, it's a similar magical ritual. It triggers the feeling of rest and calm. I could light a fire for a few hours, read a book nearby or talk with friends and family. For someone who lives in a megacity, such activities are akin to a primitive ritual. It is very stimulating!

## **Rest**

Normal holiday destinations like Turkey are good, but I prefer places like the Kola Peninsula or Kamchatka. Preferably where there is no coverage. I used to go to the sea during winter, but now I prefer ski resorts. I see travelling as an adventure, with an end goal. Several years ago, I bought a powerboat, and next I want to buy a sailboat in Croatia.

My ideal day in a new country or city would be to leave all my things in the hotel, and then walk wherever and for however long I want. Either with a map or not. It depends only on you and your desires at that very moment. And I really do not like tourist guides, I find they are constraining.

## Music

I'm easy about music. We never had a record player or a tape recorder in the house. If something is playing in the car, it is just background noise, I do not pay any attention to it. Several years ago, I visited my parents in Belarus and found an old turntable and a lot of records in the attic. I was inspired to restore it to working order, so I found specialists in Moscow who fixed it. I then sent the vinyl player back to my parents house. We finally turned it on, and... I was entranced by the sound it made! It made such an impression that I immediately bought home an already restored vintage Japanese record player from the forties and I now collect vinyls. In four years I have collected more than one thousand records. I really like their smell, and it is most noticeable in specialist record shops. The coolest shop I managed to visit was in the Port of San Francisco. It covered thousands of square meters, and some of the records were not even sorted, they were just lying in boxes. You could spend days looking through everything.

I sometimes buy vinyls without knowing what is on them. While working in Nizhny Novgorod, I was able to get a few colleagues into vinyls. I think that they have replaced stamps now. Before we would boast about stamps, now it's about vinyls.



*That very record player.*

## Happiness

At work, in my personal life, and in my hobbies, I want to be able to do what I believe in, and preferably do it together with like-minded people. When you find yourself where you are meant to be, you get feeling of being whole. Happiness to me means being close to family, and everyone being healthy.

And I've, fortunately, always managed to find a work-life balance. The ability to communicate, take risks and love adventures is what makes life complete, and makes the world around you interesting and full of energy.