

# Be patient!



## **Those who are patient are often rewarded later in life - and can even compensate for talent-deficits through perseverance.**

The experiment is a classic: Two children sit in front of a bag of gummy bears and have 15 minutes to decide whether they will eat the bag right away or wait until the next day and get a second one in return. How will they decide? The experiment is based on the research on delay of gratification by the psychologist Walter Mischel (1958).

German-Austrian behavioral economist Matthias Sutter picks up on delay of gratification and relates it to patience: «People who learned to wait in their early childhood, who learned to be patient toward something, are more likely to be more successful as adults, better educated, to have the more interesting jobs, to earn more, and to be less prone to addictions.» Sutter, director at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Common Good, is not a psychologist. Therefore he's not offering tips on how patience can be learned. But he assumes that patience and perseverance can even compensate for a deficit in talent.

Educational researchers are convinced that patience as a basis for life success is not only a matter of biology and heredity, but that parent-child interaction and early childhood socialization are

crucial. The results of the study «Determinanten kindlicher Geduld: Ergebnisse einer Experimentaltstudie im Haushaltskontext» (2010) indicate that «a more patient mother as well as a longer duration of breastfeeding in infancy increases the probability of being patient». It is important to note: This is a correlation, so there is no causal relationship. Behavioral economic studies also show that the expression of patience preferences is also related to factors such as empathy, affection and emotional attachment to the mother.