

# We need it, we look for it, we fear it: the power of leisure

ULRICH SCHNABEL

muße



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**Leisure**

[Muße]

The science of doing nothing

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Vom Glück des Nichtstuns

Blessing

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288 pages

15 b/w illustrations

Format 13,5 x 21,5 cm

December 2010

**Ulrich Schnabel**, born in 1962, studied physics and journalism and is a science editor at *Die Zeit*. He has written highly acclaimed articles on religion and the research into awareness in *Die Zeit* and *GEO*. He was awarded the Georg von Holtzbrinck Prize for Scientific Journalism in 2006. Two years later his *Measuring Faith* was published which was named the "Science Book of the year 2010" by *Bild der Wissenschaft*. Ulrich Schnabel was also awarded the Werner and Inge Grüter Prize for Knowledge Transfer 2010.

Pressure of work and our fascination for new communication technologies have made us forget how to relax. "More time for myself" is the answer people regularly give when asked by opinion pollsters what they miss most, only then immediately to go straight back to the never-ending exposure to the drumfire of communications and to boldly plunge into the flood of information. Yet brain researchers and neurologists have long since discovered how important phases of doing nothing and planning nothing are, when the circuits in the brain and the nerves can regenerate and renew their strength.

Great ideas need time and leisure, as can be seen from untold examples: it was not at his desk while bending over formulae that Isaac Newton had his brilliant idea about gravity, but out in the orchard while he was serenely looking at an apple. The structure of the benzene ring came to the chemist Friedrich Kekulé in a dream.

Ulrich Schnabel demonstrates how valuable leisure is and how we can manage to escape the general quickening of the speed of life, at least for a while.

**Also available:**

Die Vermessung des Glaubens [Measuring Faith], 2008

**Sold to:** Korea (Chackbose Publishing Company), Serbia (Cigoja Stampa)