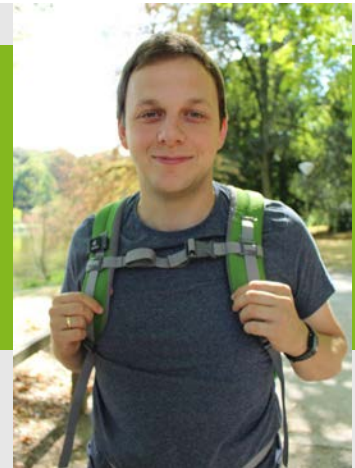


Frank Kuhardt (*1986) is currently studying mathematics to become a teacher at the TU Dortmund. Suitably He also works as a research assistant at IIEEM and as a mathematics tutor for engineering students. Son Mattis was born in the fall of 2016.



Source:
private

Narrator with high cuddle factor

I meet Frank Kuhardt in the parents' café of the Family Service together with his wife Julia and son Mattis and tell him about our father brochure. He spontaneously agrees to be interviewed by me. Just a few days later, we meet in my office, where we quickly start chatting about his situation as a father over a cup of tea. You can't miss his enthusiasm.

Kids are great!

If Frank Kuhardt had to choose a father type that he considers suitable for himself, he would most likely consider himself a mixture of storyteller and cuddly bear. He tells

just like to, he grins. He tries to combine storytelling and education. Although he is not sure how much of the content of his stories his son, who is only 7 months old, can already understand, he says with a smile, the only thing he is sure of is that his little boy feels good about it. He himself enjoys the closeness to his son, which is why he also likes the description as a cuddly bear: "Well, I just like to cuddle!" Frank Kuhardt radiates complete contentment. When Mattis was finally home shortly after birth, he says, he was overflowing with happiness: "I couldn't understand at that moment why anyone would want to wait any longer."

The little one is still his favorite distraction. He takes a step back and tells the well-known story among students that during exam periods, the room in the shared apartment or the apartment on the

cleanest, and what is actually unpleasant becomes a welcome change. He laughs heartily and doesn't seem to resent his son's distraction at all, saying that in times of stress his son always has the cleanest diapers. It is simply very difficult to tear himself away from Mattis to go to the university or to work in the next room,

he smiles guiltily. At the moment, he is the breadwinner of the family, so to speak, with his job as a research assistant, but he cannot identify with this role. He wants to
le doesn't like to have a "stamp," as he calls it, imposed on his role.

"I just love to
cuddle!"

For him, there was no fixed plan, for example, to become a father by the time he was 30. However, it was always clear to him that being a father was part of his life plan. Of course, you look for "the right moment," but it's hard to say whether that moment really exists. For him and his small family, however, the timing was really right. "Children are great," he adds warmly and with conviction.

The study as a guarantor of flexibility

When Mattis was born, he was in the middle of correcting exams. "Then some work was left undone and everyone knew about it right away. But it wasn't bad at all, everything was great," he says with a smile. His colleagues at the university were very understanding about his new situation. That has

since birth, so he often gets tasks that he can do in the home office. He very much appreciates the accommodating working atmosphere. Perhaps that's why he doesn't feel the need to feeling that he had to take a back seat because of his fatherhood.

The fact that the birth fell during the semester break was also very fortunate. This meant that the young couple could first concentrate on the little one and then plan the winter semester in peace. He himself still has a few exams to take and is at the end of his studies. His wife, who is also studying to be a teacher, handed in her master's thesis two weeks before the birth. Perfect timing. She has just had to take two more exams, and then she will be starting her traineeship in May 2018, he reports approvingly. During her traineeship, the student father will mainly take care of his son. He is already looking forward to it, he smiles happily.



"I really appreciate the accommodating work environment."

The couple tries not to be in the traineeship at the same time, as this means additional stress. So it was also perfectly fine for him to study a little longer. Being in his studies and also his

For him, his job as a research assistant means above all being flexible and having time for his son, and being able to take him to daycare or a childminder and pick him up again from May without any problems. That's why it's not only "practical" that his wife will finish her studies earlier anyway, but also a good arrangement that he feels very comfortable with.

In general, Frank Kuhardt also sees his marriage since Mattis' birth as a kind of "project partnership. He emphatically emphasizes that he does not mean this in a negative way. Nevertheless, he smiles at his formulation. Parenthood also means coordination, sharing of time and many agreements between the parents.

Career does not suit him

A concept such as career is not in the foreground for him. It is certainly important to have a personal project, something you can realize yourself with. He emphasizes that he definitely wants to get ahead professionally. However, he is clearly against climbing a career ladder or compulsively reaching a certain position. That doesn't suit him and was clear to him from a very early age. This is also because interpersonal relationships have always been more important to him. Mattis' birth has not changed that much.

After another follow-up, what the little one.

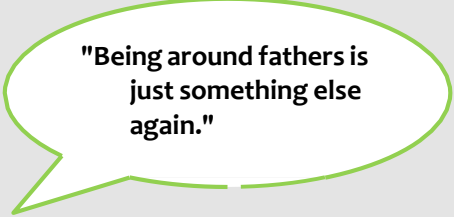
then changed with a concrete view to studies and current gainful employment, Frank Kuhardt explains with a laugh that he used to be most productive in the evening hours. That avoids But now he wants to be home by the afternoon at the latest to spend time with Mattis.

Father meeting as support

He describes the visit to a fathers' meeting at the Dorstfeld Mothers' Center as supportive and encouraging for his fatherhood. His wife came across this offer at a breakfast with other mothers. As a father, he is not excluded from the toddler groups that his wife attends with Mattis, but it still feels good to go to an event that is clearly aimed at fathers. Being among fathers is something else again. Before attending the fathers' meeting and at the beginning, he was still unsure whether he could really take care of his son on his own. Thanks to these meetings, that quickly disappeared. The little boy also benefits from doing something alone with his father.

At first, it was difficult for the little one to be separated from his mother for a few hours, but now he is completely relaxed with his father. That's great for all the family members, he says, because his wife can also do something for herself during this time: study for her exams. or their hobby, swimming,

pursue. Precisely because his wife is the If there was a "water rat" in the family, she would also come along to the baby swim. For other parents, this is usually more of a father thing, explains Frank Kuhardt with a shrug, but with them it's just an undertaking for them all together.



"Being around fathers is just something else again."

Sometimes it is not so easy to break through such quasi-prescribed father and mother roles. Often this is not necessarily due to a lack of awareness on the part of the couple. Since his wife is breastfeeding, for example, it is obvious and easier in some situations that she then takes care of the baby.

Mattis cared, although that was not necessarily the only viable solution at that moment. That's why he thinks it's important to critically question the divisions and roles assigned to the sexes. It helps a lot that he and his wife often talk and reflect about their relationship and parenthood. He emphasizes that this is especially important to them because neither parent feels comfortable with the classic gender roles. He is happy to put up with surprised looks from strangers, for example, when he is out alone with the little one in everyday life. The fact that these actually exist still exist, but he is quite surprised.

Future prospects

Frank Kuhardt almost gets a little melancholy as he refers to the future: "Well, I don't think we'll ever have as much time as we have now during our studies."

He suspects it would be much more difficult to spend as much time with the little one if they both worked full time one day. At the same time, an older Mattis could of course mean more freedom for him and his wife. At the moment, however, Frank Kuhardt wants to enjoy the here and now and the time in which he mainly takes care of his son, and he is beaming up to both ears.

The interview was conducted by Stefanie Raible in early 2017.

Likes to put up with surprised looks from strangers when he's alone with his little one in everyday life: Frank Kuhardt with his son Mattis.



Source:
Private