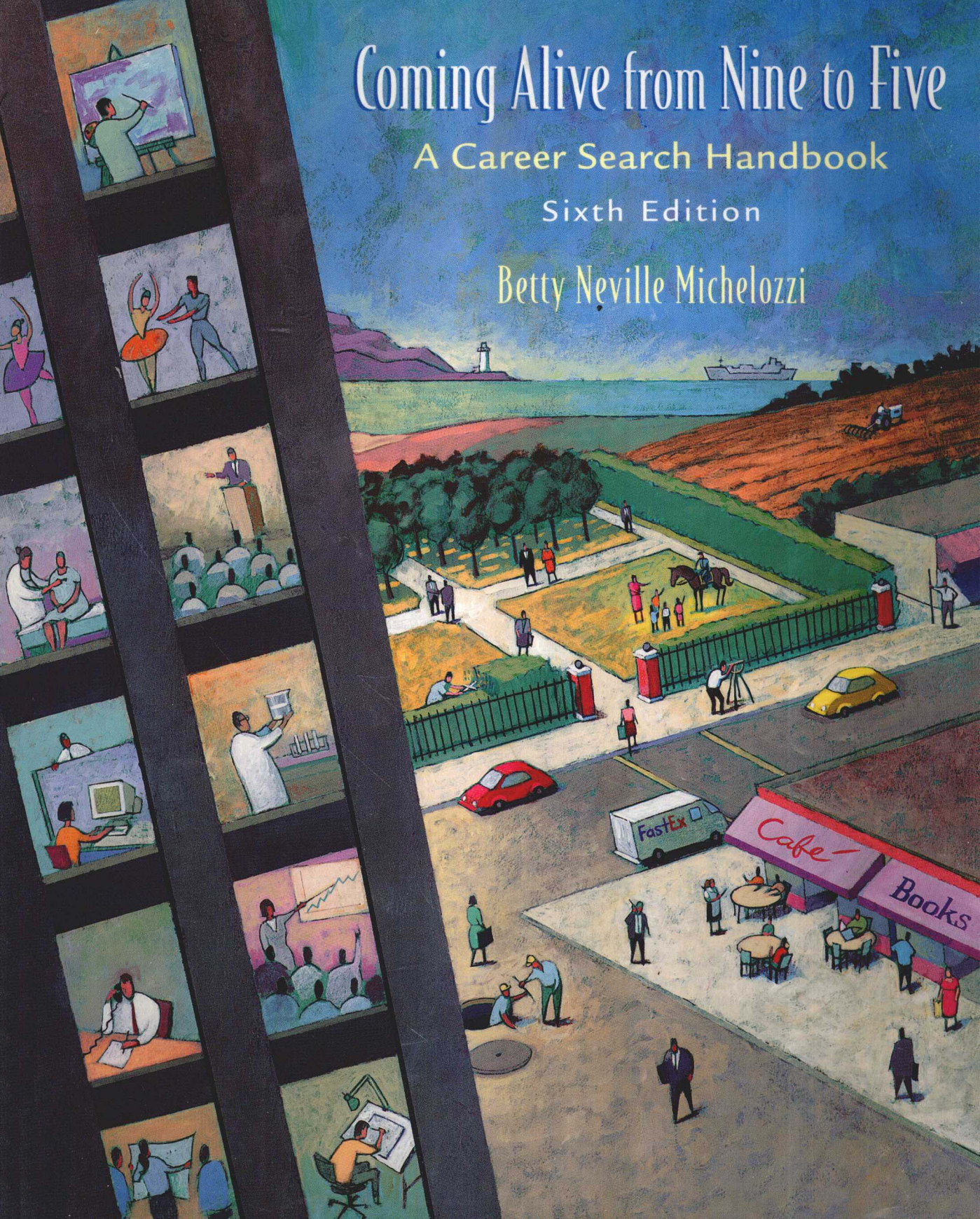


Coming Alive from Nine to Five

A Career Search Handbook

Sixth Edition

Betty Neville Michelozzi



Coming Alive from Nine to Five

THE CAREER SEARCH HANDBOOK

Sixth Edition

Betty Neville Michelozzi

Corralitos, California



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Preface

Coming Alive from Nine to Five is a unique handbook that develops, demystifies, and integrates the various facets of career/lifestyle search and choice. A handy reference book, it draws together into one comprehensive, practical, easily usable and reusable source the essentials of career/life decision making. Flexible enough to be adopted in whole or in part by individuals or groups, previous editions have been used in semester-long courses, workshops, individual counseling sessions, colleges and high schools, and industry and business. In short, *Coming Alive from Nine to Five* is intended for anyone searching for meaningful life activities—from students to retirees, from managers of households to managers of corporations, from job trainees to career-changing professionals.

This updated version of *Coming Alive from Nine to Five* focuses on career preparation not only for the last shred of the twentieth century, but for the twenty-first century as well. Using the same personal approach as earlier texts, the sixth edition expands still further awareness of the career search process as it relates to a person's whole life.

Writing yet another edition has provided me an opportunity to develop new material, integrate overlapping exercises, eliminate what seemed less helpful, and update innumerable bits of data.

The book begins with an upbeat discussion of success and moves quickly into self-assessment activities. It then considers a variety of societal factors that influence work and workplaces. Because vast social changes are happening very rapidly and the next hundred years will no doubt be very different from the present, Chapter 4 enables us to look at the future in terms of challenges, options, and opportunities.

Chapters on workplaces and various styles of work follow. While reading about workplaces of interest is helpful, the book offers a guide for obtaining firsthand information from people in the field.

The leader/instructor's manual includes a discussion of study skills especially useful in a career course as well as other materials to facilitate the task of assisting students with this most important activity: reflection on life goals, including, specifically, career choice.

B. N. M.

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Introduction

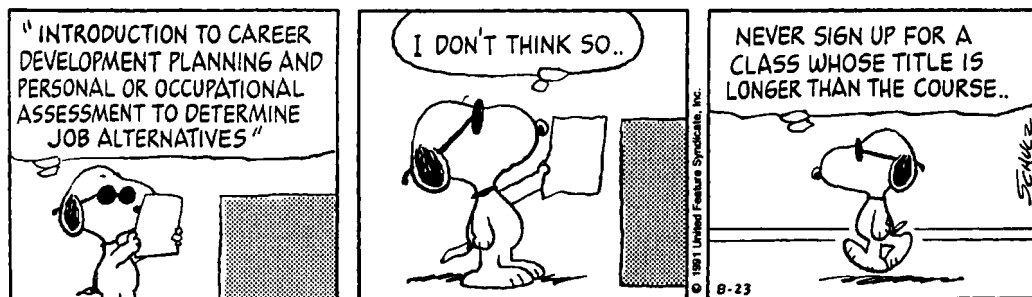
A Letter to You

Career search can be a special, very precious time to orient and organize your life. It can be a time when you look deeply at yourself and what you have been doing. It can lead you to question how you intend to spend your life for a time, or your time for the rest of your life: to keep or not to keep certain goals, to change or not to change certain behaviors, to aspire or not to aspire to certain positions—all with a view toward life enrichment.

Career search involves more than simply figuring out what job might suit you best. (That is the short-range view.) Your perspective expands when you ask yourself what you want that job to do for you. Once you ask this question, you may very quickly find yourself face to face with some of your deepest values. Do you want power, prestige, profit? Peace, harmony, love? Are some values incompatible with others? Can you have it all?

Can you work sixty hours a week moving up the corporate ladder, nurture loving relationships with family and friends, grow your own vegetables, recycle your cans on Saturday, jog daily, be a Scout leader, meditate, and play golf at the country club? How fully can all your interests and values be actualized in the real world? What is the purpose of work? What is the purpose of life? These questions lead to that all-important question, What do *you* want out of *your* life?

This text is written for those who are in transition and would like the opportunity to learn a “thought-full” career/life decision process: beginning college students, graduating seniors, parents whose children are grown, the newly divorced or widowed, job changers, the disabled, the unemployed,



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grandmothers and grandfathers kicking up their heels, corporate tycoons stopping to smell the flowers, people in mid-life crises, veterans, ex-clerics, people becoming parents and providers, people retiring, and all others willing to let go of behaviors that are no longer appropriate and risk new ones. A book about career choice is inevitably a book about life and all its stages for people from nineteen to ninety-nine.

Because a career decision is so important, some people approach it with fear and trembling lest they make a mistake. Others avoid the process altogether, certain it will nail them down to a lifelong commitment they can never change. Still others feel that any job will do just to get them started on something! And then there are those who feel that even if they did a thorough career search, it would turn up absolutely nothing. In reality, a careful career search can help everyone. It can help *you* to see many possibilities, develop flexibility, and gain a great deal of confidence. It can even help people who have already made a career decision better understand themselves and their connection to the work world. The result can be greater career/life satisfaction.

The Process

What process should you use in making a thoughtful career decision? Many people choose their first career using the “muddle-around method.” They consider subjects they’ve liked in school: if it’s math, then they’ll be mathematicians; if it’s history, they’ll be historians. They consider the careers of people they know and ask the advice of friends—a good beginning, but not always a broad-enough perspective. If Uncle Jim the firefighter is a family hero, a new crop of firefighters is launched. If the career seekers fry hamburgers for a time, they’re tempted to judge the whole world of business through the sizzle of french fries. If models and airline pilots capture their attention, they long for the glamorous life those people seem to have. They may try one job, move from here to there, get married, have a family, and move again, trying differ-



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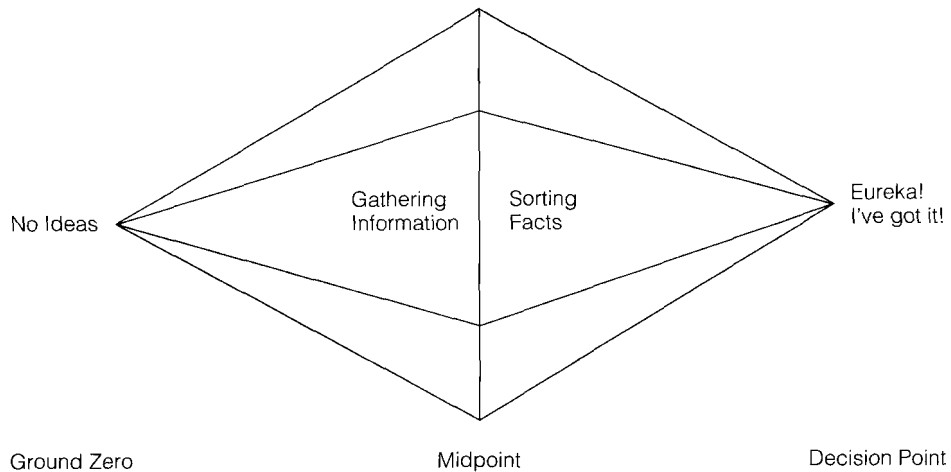
ent positions, grabbing different opportunities. Then one day, they aren't sure just how it all happened, but there they are: spouse, children, house, job—"the whole catastrophe," as Zorba the Greek said. And they may wonder, "Is this all there is?"

Some folks make very early decisions: "I knew when I was two that I wanted to be a chimney sweep." Although deciding early may work out well and satisfy the need some people have to firm up choices, in other cases it means the person has closed off options that might have been more satisfying. Career choice is sometimes treated as trivial. Adults ask six-year-olds what they want to be when they grow up. Are they going to sell shoes at Penney's or invade the corporate complex of Microsoft? Will plumbing be their outlet or travel tours their bag? Even while quizzing the children, many adults aren't always sure what their next career would be if they had to choose.

At least occasionally, however, the image of life's wholeness will flash before you and you will catch a glimpse of the time and energy that you will invest in work. You see that work will affect your life in many ways. But unless you keep a tight lid on it, the ultimate question will eventually present itself: "What's it all about?" If you deal in depth with career choice, you are bound to slip into philosophic questioning of life's meaning. To do otherwise is to trivialize a profound experience.

Stages and Steps

Because you are reading this book, you're indicating that "muddling around" is not the way you want to approach your career decision. There are stages and steps in the career search process. For many people, the journey begins at ground zero with not an idea in sight. As you gather career information, you may reach a point where you seem to be engulfed by too many ideas; things seem to get worse before they get better. Eventually you must begin to lighten



Where are you on the Career Search Continuum?

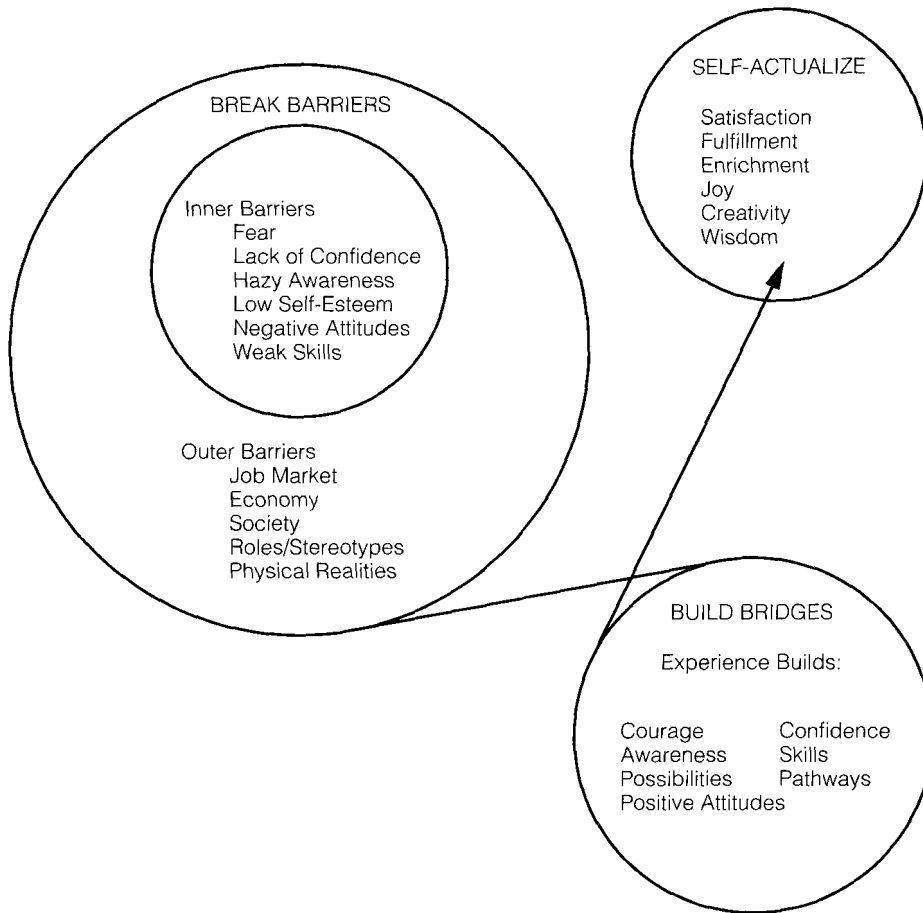
- _____ Ground zero: You have no idea what career to choose.
- _____ You are gathering information about yourself, the work world, and the issues that affect work.
- _____ You have gathered as much information as you can. Now you need to sort it out.
- _____ You are sorting out the facts by talking to people and visiting workplaces in your areas of interest. You are reviewing the information and weighing the pluses and minuses.
- _____ Eureka! You have decided exactly what you would like to do and where! You know it is possible.

The Career Search Continuum

the burden by choosing. You simply can't follow every career in one lifetime. The calmer you stay, the more easily you will arrive at your decision point.

The steps you need to take to reach a career/life decision must be part of a clear, understandable, and reusable *system*, one that

1. helps you articulate who you are and what you do well.
2. describes the work world as simply and completely as possible.
3. helps you see where your personal characteristics fit into the work world.
4. empowers you to secure the job you have chosen by improving your job-hunting skills.
5. sharpens your decision-making skills, for you probably will make many decisions, and each choice leads to others.



Career Planning: Breaks Barriers, Builds Bridges

6. raises your consciousness about work as only one part of your personal journey, one aspect of your total lifestyle.
7. addresses issues of global concern, showing how work is part of the world picture with its many challenges and how the solutions are provided by your work. Career planning breaks barriers and builds bridges.

In *Coming Alive from Nine to Five*, you will find such a system. It is based on identifying clear values that lead to good decisions. At first glance, this book may look like a conventional careers manual. Read the book, fill in the blanks, and (even if you're already over forty) you'll know what you want to be when you grow up.