

Fourth Edition

COMING *Alive* FROM NINE TO FIVE

The Career Search Handbook



BETTY NEVILLE MICHELOZZI

COMING ALIVE FROM NINE TO FIVE

THE CAREER SEARCH HANDBOOK

FOURTH EDITION

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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, in workshops and individual counseling sessions, in colleges and high schools, and in 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 and expanded version of *Coming Alive from Nine to Five* focuses on career preparation not only for the last years of the twentieth century but also for the twenty-first century as well. Using the same personal approach as earlier texts, the fourth edition expands awareness of the career search process as it relates to a person's whole life.

Writing yet another edition has provided an opportunity to develop new material, integrate overlapping exercises, eliminate what seemed less helpful, and update innumerable bits of data. Suggestions from those who have used the first three editions have been especially useful in the revision process.

The book begins with an upbeat discussion of success and moves quickly into self-assessment activities. It then considers the interrelationship between people's roles and their career choices. Because vast social changes are happening very rapidly, a greatly revised Chapter 5 looks at the future in terms of challenges, options, and opportunities. There is little doubt that the twenty-first century will be different from the present.

Additions to the leader/instructor's manual include discussion of study skills especially useful in a career course; sample student reports; new exercises; some background on Chapter 5, *Work: Challenges, Options, and Opportunities*; an introduction to career infusion for use in college settings; and 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 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. 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 desires. 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, play golf at the country club, and do yoga? How fully can all your interests and desires 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 thoughtful 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, 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 from nineteen to ninety-nine.

Because it is so important, some people approach a career decision 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-about 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. Uncle Jim the firefighter is a family hero, and a new crop of firefighters is born. If they 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 a glamorous life. They may try one job, move from here to there, get married, have a family, and move again, trying different 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?”

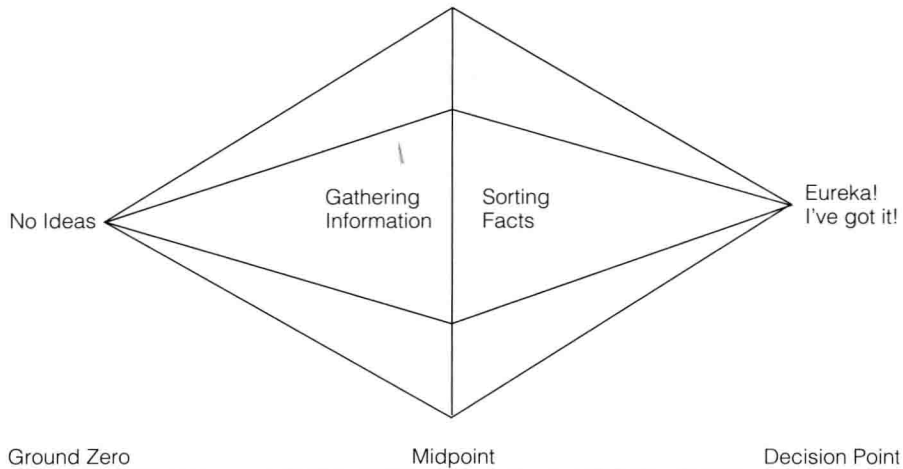
Some folks make very early decisions: “I knew when I was two that I wanted to be a chimney sweep.” While such early decisions may work out well and satisfy the need to firm up choices, in some cases it means the person has closed off options that might have been more satisfying. Career choice is sometimes treated as trivial. Adults ask six-year-olds what they want to be when they grow up. Are they going to sell shoes at Kinney’s or invade the corporate complex of IBM? Will plumbing be their outlet or travel tours their bag? Yet 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, Alfie?” 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

The Career Choice Continuum



Where are you on the Career Choice Continuum?

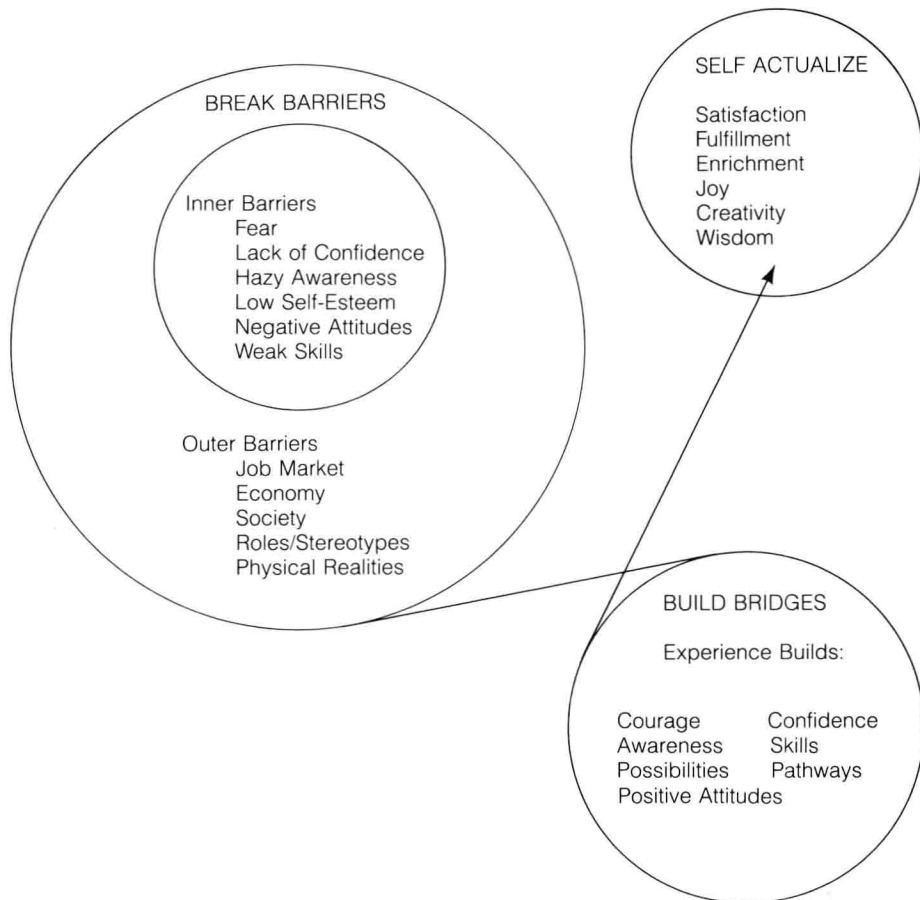
- ___ Ground zero: You have no idea what career to choose.
- ___ You are gathering information about yourself, the work world, and the issues that affect work.
- ___ You have gathered as much information as you can. Now you need to sort it out.
- ___ You are sorting out the facts by talking to people 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.

where you seem to be engulfed by too many ideas. In other words, things may get worse before they get better: Eventually you must begin to lighten 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 will probably 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.

You *will* find blanks to fill in as part of the step-by-step process of getting to know yourself and the job world. You *will* explore your needs, wants, and values. You *will* discover your personality orientation. You *will* examine your past and



select the activities you've enjoyed as well as skills you've developed over the years. A job group chart will help you to put *you* and *work* together in a meaningful way. A final inventory will collect all this "you" data and help you to see it as a unified whole.

This book also touches on some of the heavier issues of life. How can you fulfill your potential? Be happy? Be content? It deals with such issues lightly—sometimes whimsically—because life is meant to be joyful. After a good chuckle, you will get serious and *think* again because your life is also serious and sometimes even sad. Career search, then, is really a time to stop out to see who you are and where you're *growing*.

This handbook works best when the searcher approaches it in a relaxed, lighthearted manner. But a serious career search also calls for commitment and motivation. Those who get thoroughly involved will experience new confidence in themselves and greater clarity about their lives. Their goals will be easier to recognize and reach. Besides providing a living, a career can satisfy some of your deepest longings. The career search, then, will become a profound journey of personal growth on the path toward self-actualization.

❖ The Career Search Guide

Most people base career decisions on incomplete information. As you begin your career search, it may help to focus on some important questions.

1. Gather information about yourself
 - a. Needs, wants, and shoulds
What do you *need* to survive? What do you *want* to enrich your life? Do your *shoulds* help you or hold you back?
 - b. Interests and values
The choices you've made over your lifetime have developed into a strong pattern of interests. These reflect what you value most in life. Are your values clear?

- c. Skills
Analyze your most enjoyable activities. Through repeated choices in your areas of interest, you have developed many skills. Of all the skills you have, which do you enjoy using the most?
- 2. Become informed about social issues that affect your career
 - a. Roles
What roles do you play now? What expectations do you and others have about these roles? Do you wish to change or adapt these roles?
 - b. Challenges, options, and opportunities for the twenty-first century
What are the major challenges that face the world today? What are the many positive and viable options already being taken to meet these challenges?
- 3. Job market exploration: Where to start
 - a. Explore the job market
Interest and skill inventories lead you to an overview of the entire job market. What jobs fit your self-image?
 - b. Research workplaces
What are the important characteristics of various workplaces? How do you find out which will work for you?
 - c. Research job market opportunities
Check the job market outlook and relate it to needs and wants in society. Will there be a need for people to do the job you'd like? What workplaces will you choose? Do you have alternatives?
 - d. Information interview
Have you talked to people in careers that interest you? Have you surveyed and evaluated possible workplaces? Does the survey show that you need to re-evaluate your choices?
 - e. Tools for the job hunt
Do you know how to network, portray yourself effectively through résumés, applications, interviews, letters? Can you talk fluently about yourself?
- 4. The final analysis: Wrap-up
 - a. Decisions: Finalize your decision
 - b. Goals: Set realistic goals with time lines
 - c. Strategy: Develop a strategy for action
 - d. Values/Philosophy: Review the whole picture to make sure it fits your value system, your philosophy of life and work

1

NEEDS, WANTS, AND VALUES:

Spotlighting You



FOCUS

Define success in terms of needs, wants, and goals.

Examine important values in your personal and work life.

Identify steps to begin making desired changes in your life.