

HOW TO FIND

YOUR LIFE'S WORK

STAYING
OUT OF
TRAPS AND

TAKING CONTROL
OF YOUR
CAREER

by RICHARD J. PILDER, Ph.D.
& WILLIAM F. PILDER, Ph.D.
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MAINSTREAM
ACCESS, INC.

S-849 \$4.95



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and William F. Pilder, Ph.D.,**
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PRENTICE-HALL, INC., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

PILDER, RICHARD J.

How to find your life's work.

(Job finder series) (A Spectrum Book)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

I. Vocational guidance. 2. Job hunting. I. Pilder, William. II. Title. III. Series.

HF5381.P54 650.1'4 81-7297

ISBN 0-13-406710-X AACR2

ISBN 0-13-406702-9 (pbk.)

This Spectrum Book can be made available to businesses and organizations at a special discount when ordered in large quantities. For more information, contact: Prentice-Hall, Inc., General Book Marketing, Special Sales Division, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632.

Editorial/production supervision by Carol Smith

Interior design by Christine Gehring Wolf

Cover design by Honi Werner

Manufacturing buyer: Barbara A. Frick

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A SPECTRUM BOOK

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

PRENTICE-HALL INTERNATIONAL, INC., *London*

PRENTICE-HALL OF AUSTRALIA PTY. LIMITED, *Sydney*

PRENTICE-HALL OF CANADA, LTD., *Toronto*

PRENTICE-HALL OF INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED, *New Delhi*

PRENTICE-HALL OF JAPAN, INC., *Tokyo*

PRENTICE-HALL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA PTE. LTD., *Singapore*

WHITEHALL BOOKS LIMITED, *Wellington, New Zealand*

“. . . the fundamental criterion for comparing social, economic and political systems is not and cannot be the criterion of hegemony and imperialism.

It can be—and indeed it must be—the humanistic criterion, namely the measure in which each system is really capable of reducing, restraining and eliminating, as far as possible, the various forms of exploitation of man, and of insuring for him through work not only the just distribution of the indispensable material goods, but also a participation, in keeping with his dignity, in the whole process of production and in the social life that grows up around that process.

Disturbing factors are frequently present in the form of the frightful disparities between excessively rich individuals and groups on the one hand and, on the other hand, the majority made up of the poor or, indeed, of the destitute, who lack food and opportunities for work and education, and are in great numbers condemned to hunger and disease.

And concern is also caused at time by the radical separation of work from property, by immense indifference to the production enterprise to which he is linked only by work obligation without feeling that he's working for a good that will be his or for himself.

It is no secret that the abyss separating the minority of the excessively rich from the multitude of the destitute is a very grave symptom in the life of any society. This also must be said—with even greater insistence—with regard to the abyss separating countries and regions of the earth.”

Pope John Paul II
Address before the United Nations
2 October 1979

The nonaligned countries stress the fact that it is imperative to do away with the enormous inequality that separates the developed from the developing countries. We are struggling for an eradication of poverty, of hunger, disease and illiteracy from which hundreds of millions of human beings still suffer. We aspire to a new world order—one based on justice, on equity and peace, one that will replace the unjust and unequal system which prevails today in which, as proclaimed in the final declaration at Havana, “wealth is still concentrated in the hands of a few powers whose wasteful economies are maintained by the exploitation of the labor as well as the transfer and the plunder of the national and other resources of the peoples of Africa, Latin America, Asia and other regions of the world.”

According to statistical information, the world is making an annual investment in military expenditures of more than \$300 billion. With \$300 billion you could in one year build 600,000 schools with a capacity for 400 million children, or you could build 60 million comfortable homes for 300 million people, or you could build 30,000 hospitals with 18 million beds, or you could build 20,000 factories with jobs for more than 20 million workers, or you could build irrigation systems to water 150 million hectares of land, which with the appropriate technology, could feed a billion people.

Mankind wastes this much every year on its military spending. Moreover, consider further the enormous amount of human resources in full use of technicians, of scientists, as a squandering and wasting of fuel, raw materials and other items.

This is the fabulous price of preventing a true climate of confidence and peace from existing in the world. The United States alone will in the 1980's spend six times this much on military activities.

We are requesting less for 10 years of development than is spent in a single year by the ministries of war and much less than a tenth of what will be spent for military purposes in 10 years.

Fidel Castro
Address before the United Nations
12 October 1979

INTRODUCTION

This book begins a series. Its intent is to help you determine the direction you should take in choosing, establishing, and developing your career. Considerable work has been done in the last ten years to develop techniques that enable you to assess your capabilities, interests, and specific skills in order to develop effective strategies for doing a job search. This book and the series it begins are designed to complement this work in two ways. First, the self-assessment techniques of the past stop short of linking you to specific organizational functions. They also fail to connect you with the bigger issues that go beyond mere self-concern and affect the planet as a whole. The series starts by giving you a method for considering career planning within this larger context. It also provides a way of linking your interests to organizational functions as a first step to situating yourself within a particular industry.

Once you have an idea of the industry you are interested in, you need up-to-date industry-based information. That is where the rest of the books in the series come in: they are Guides to specific fields and industries. A great deal of information exists on different occupations, but it is widely scattered or buried in highly specialized sources that

are practically inaccessible and so unwieldy as to be almost useless to the general reader. Experience is necessary just to make sense out of the information that is around. The individual industry guides in our series are designed to solve this problem. They synthesize such information as: what the industry does, the various functions or specializations within the industry evaluated by task and salary, names of leading firms, consultants who specialize in that industry, leading professional associations, directories, examples of successful people, typical entry-level positions as well as opportunities for mid-career changers, latest developments, and trends that create career opportunities. All of this information will be updated as the need arises.

This makes the series, taken together, a package of value for graduating college students making the transition from school to work, or for college students early in their studies who wish to plan their courses around a specific career. Women seeking to enter the job market after some years of child rearing will find the series a good source of direction for their search. If you are considering a career change, you will find a special section in each Guide addressed to your needs. If you are retiring and seek a meaningful second career, the series will assist your transition. Finally, professionals within the industries surveyed by the Guides might appreciate the overview and synthesis of information provided.

Chapter 1 of this book talks about career development as it relates to personal change. It is based on the thesis that you can't have one without the other. Effective career development necessitates personal change of a fundamental kind. This change entails the art of reframing, which is explained in the first chapter. *Chapter 2* presents a method for career planning in the context of a bigger picture involving personal, organizational and global needs considered simultaneously. The perspective of this entire series is that the coming decade demands such holistic planning. The method enables you to see how you function in relation to the whole—the whole of you as well as the whole of the planet. This method is specifically related to the issues of adult development at mid-life when career shifts often occur or should occur. *Chapter 3* then presents a model of how organizations work, giving an overview of the functions in which career paths are situated. It will help you link your direction to a specific organizational function and assist your job search. *Chapter 4* explores the relation of individual styles of functioning to the basic changes occurring in organizations that make up our present culture. These are the changes that offer you the most significant career opportunities. *Chapter 5*, on networking, shows you how to use the information given in the Guides for doing successful job search.

At the heart of the entire series is the fundamental belief that

work ought to have personal meaning; that it should be more than merely something we do for eight hours a day to get money to exchange for needed goods and services. This rests on the added conviction that such meaning comes from being involved in something whose scope goes beyond the limits of one's own day-to-day satisfaction. In virtually every industry today there are developments and needs emerging that relate to the most important issues now facing the planet. You can build and design your career opportunities around these needs, thereby participating in the kind of planetary citizenship that has become an imperative of the present moment in history. The eighties are already being described as the "Dangerous Decade," given the nature of the world economy, the energy crisis, and the ever-present threat of superpower confrontation. Having a sense that your work is related to the larger issues can restore the concept of *vocation* to career planning. The word itself is not often used these days; it is derived from the Latin root *vocare*, which means to call. To be able to hear the call of these planetary issues and relate your own work to them can provide a sense of vocation. Without this sense, work and its various career expressions lack depth and genuine meaning.

Each Guide in this series has been carefully researched to assemble within its pages the most recent information available on each industry and relate it to the major issues now affecting careers in the field. As a whole, the series is a first step in the development of an information service designed to provide industry-based data on career opportunities and human resources planning. It is hoped that this volume and the accompanying series of industry Guides will help you and others to plan your own career in this larger perspective.

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1

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONAL CHANGE: REFRAMING

PURPOSE

When man was a hunter, he had personal control over his work. With survival as the motivating force, he provided for his family and himself as best he could and derived all the satisfactions—and agonies—of being involved in a process whose rewards were immediate and evident. Even through the Middle Ages, whether as a farmer or as a craftsman in the Guilds, he kept his involvement in the totality of his work and experienced the dignity that accompanies being master of what you do. Of course, the feudal system had its evils, by which groups and their labor were exploited, but it was only with the Industrial Revolution that man was violently deprived of control over his work. This revolution created the technological progress that has permitted entire societies to move beyond subsistence economies. That is, for the most part, people in the developed countries no longer worry about survival, yet something fundamental about life has been lost. Man no longer controls his work; he does not benefit directly from what he produces. Karl Marx, of course, saw this clearly, and the upheaval his thinking has created can be related

to the seriousness of man's being torn from control over his work. The dignity that goes with being master of our work is so fundamental that its loss can only create outrage. Unfortunately, the system is such that frequently the outrage can neither find an effective outlet nor be channeled into action that rectifies the situation, so it turns inward to create depression and despair. Studs Terkel's *Working* is a document describing how rampant this despair has become in the highly developed society of the United States.*

In our thumbnail sketch of the history of work, you can see the paradoxes facing anyone concerned with a meaningful career. Progress since the Industrial Revolution has enabled us to be free enough from the demands of survival to be able to think about our work. Yet that very progress has wrenched from us control of our work, and it is this control that gives it dignity. We can't reverse the trends that have created these problems; we can transform our lives by engaging in the effort to assume control over what we do. In the struggle to accomplish this, we can be free of the despair that clouds so much of our working lives today.

Over the last ten years some progress has been made in enabling us to take more control of our working lives at every stage. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss what is needed to achieve this control, especially the personal changes required for successful career development. The basic thesis of this chapter is that career development, specifically, acquiring more control over your work, requires fundamental personal change. A raft of data has appeared in the last decade revealing society's widespread dissatisfaction with work: its monotony, its stifling of creativity, its general deadening effects. However, most career handbooks merely offer techniques (sometimes merely gimmicks) for getting a better job. The fundamental issues of how to bring about changes on both personal and organizational levels are often overlooked. Without these basic changes, there can be no genuine career development and work continues to lack meaning.†

CHANGE AS REFRAMING, OR GETTING OUT OF BOXES

It is never easy to learn to see things differently and then to act in new ways related to the new perceptions. Basically, two changes are

* Studs Terkel, *Working* (New York: Avon, 1975).

† Richard Nelson Bolles, *What Color is Your Parachute?* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, revised, 1977). The work of John Crystal and Richard Bolles addresses the need for personal change in relation to career transitions. It stands out clearly among the raft of more gimmicky, superficial writing about careers. We will refer to it at various points in this chapter.

required in the effort to take control of your working life. First, the way in which you view yourself—the box you have put yourself in or have been put in—must change. Second, you must get out of the box of the employment system.*

Getting out of boxes is no easy matter. Only the creative minority are capable of acting outside the boxes in which the majority are trapped. In order to understand just what is involved in getting free of the various boxes that hem in creativity and individuality, it is worthwhile to consider the change process.

Some valuable work on change as a process has come out of the Brief Therapy Center connected with the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California.† The Center was established in 1966 to investigate the phenomena of human change. At the heart of this work is the idea of *reframing*, which is referred to as “the gentle art.” This notion is most relevant to career development and a convenient method for summarizing the personal changes required. Reframing is what enables anyone to jump free of boxes—in this context, the box of the employment system and the “single career imperative.”‡

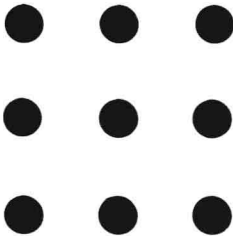


FIGURE 1 The Nine-Dot Problem.

To begin to understand what reframing means, consider Figure 1, the Nine-Dot Problem. Study the arrangement of dots in the problem, then see if you can connect the nine dots using only four straight lines. Once you begin, do not lift your pencil from the paper. Before reading further, try to solve the problem. The solution will mean much more if you have struggled to discover it.

Many people bring a self-imposed box to this problem that prevents its solution. No matter what is tried in the way of connected lines inside the box, no solution is found. Only by allowing yourself to go outside the box of the nine-dot configuration is the solution possible. The solu-

* Richard Nelson Bolles, *The Three Boxes of Life and How to Get Out of Them* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1978).

† Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland, and Richard Fisch, *Change* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974).

‡ Seymour B. Sarason, *Work, Aging and Social Change: Professionals and the One Life—One Career Imperative* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

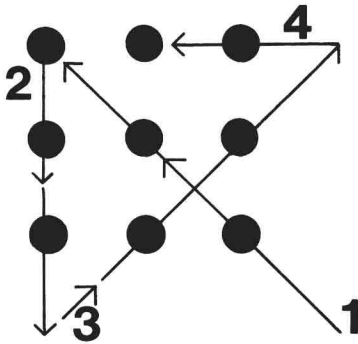


FIGURE 2 Solution of the Nine-Dot Problem.

tion requires a reframing of the standard approach to drawing the connecting lines. Specifically, the length of the lines must extend beyond the box.

REFRAMING AND CAREER

If the notion of reframing is applied to the problem of developing your career or even the issue of job hunting, it is possible to examine the old frames that are debilitating as well as the new frameworks that make possible the changes which lead to controlling your career. Throughout this section, you may find Figure 3 a helpful aid. Most people impose a box on themselves in relation to their career. The box has the basic characteristics shown in the illustration.

The Old Frames

1. *You are limited to past experience.* Experience here is usually defined as having been formally employed in a particular area. Want ads, classifieds, employment agency announcements, executive search talk, etc., strongly reinforce this framework. A person new to the job market or unemployed for a while is especially limited. The same is true for students looking for their first career opportunity after leaving school.

2. *You must follow established procedures* to secure employment. Read ads, send résumés, fill out applications, use “contacts,” or go to agencies—these procedures create a passivity and lack of control over the whole process that proves to be demoralizing.

3. *Passivity.* Wait for responses, submit to procedures, be interviewed.

	YOU	EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM
OLD FRAME	Limited to past experience Limited to following established procedures of employment system Lacking "contacts" Passive	Publicly announces available positions Received applicants through personnel department procedures, otherwise impenetrable and inaccessible Single career imperative.
NEW FRAME	In possession of skills that transfer to a number of fields Capable of deciding independently what to do, where, and able to make it happen Skilled at networking and the research that goes with it Active/in control	80% of opportunities are hidden Positions are often created A network of persons who are accessible directly, especially the decision-making in regard to hiring.

FIGURE 3 Reframing As Applied to You and the Employment System.

Parallel to this box for the self is the *employment system box*, which has these characteristics.

1. *Single career imperative.* There is something suspicious about anyone who changes careers. "By all means, keep on that track," is the command built into the employment system judgments.
2. *Available positions are publicly announced* in newspapers, journals, etc. They are also registered with employment agencies of various kinds or placed with executive search firms.
3. *Applications made directly to companies.* These are made through the personnel department and its established hiring procedures.
4. *The employment system is impenetrable.* Beyond the open door of personnel departments, employment systems are impenetrable and largely inaccessible.

Your New Frames

It is these old boxes or frameworks that you must become conscious of in order to enable you to create new frames. For you the new frame

provides the following characteristics which relate to how you see yourself in relation to career and employment.

1. Your skills can be identified along with specific accomplishments that are transferable to a variety of work settings.
2. You have the power to decide what you want to do, where you want to do it, and the ability to act toward the decision makers in any particular organization.
3. You can be skilled in researching the field of your interest and capable of networking professionals in that field in preparation for employment.
4. In short, the new frame enables you to be *active* and *in control* of your working life.

One of the basic tools for accomplishing this particular reframing is the work/life autobiographical statement used extensively by John Crystal and referred to by Bolles. In *Where Do I Go from Here with My Life?** the two collaborate in presenting a systematic method of developing the autobiographical statement and using it for skill identification as well as accomplishment listings. They suggest preparing an extensive autobiographical statement, two hundred or more pages, where you tell in great detail all you have accomplished so far. This lengthy statement should then be broken down and analyzed so as to identify the specific skills which you have used successfully over time. There is significant power in such storytelling, and the possibility of reframing your view of yourself is greatly enhanced. Ira Progoff's Journal method is another powerful tool that in some ways complements Crystal in its appreciation for deeper forces that influence life.† The writings of Crystal and Bolles, as well as many others, contain various exercises and techniques directed at self-assessment. They are all designed to assist you in creating a new view of yourself as you plan your career.

First-Order Change versus Second-Order Change

It should be noted here that the mere doing of these exercises, the use of these tools, does not guarantee a way out of the old framework.

* John C. Crystal and Richard N. Bolles, *Where Do I Go from Here with My Life?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974).

† Ira Progoff, *At a Journal Workshop* (New York: Dialogue House Library, 45 West 10th Street, 1975).

In the work on change as a process mentioned earlier, the authors distinguish between *first-order* and *second-order* change. They call first-order change doing “more of the same.” It’s when you try a lot of things, but stay in the original box. Second-order change occurs when there is actual reframing. The old box is truly gone and you begin acting in new ways. What enables you to move from first-order change to second-order is still very much a mystery. Science does not have the exact explanation. Reframing is an art that comes out of a process which is greatly enhanced by careful telling of your story. The method for doing this telling can vary, depending on how much you are aware of yourself, but the autobiographical statement has proven to be a definite help for many toward the necessary reframing. Such exercises aid the move from first- to second-order change. They do not, however, connect you with meaning in your work. That only comes when you see how your personal endeavors relate to a larger context. The tools that will be presented here are specifically designed to complement self-assessment techniques by providing methods for considering how your work relates to the whole. Then meaning is possible which further supports second-order change, a kind of change that is never easy. Without the support of meaning it is impossible to experience second-order change. Meaning leads you through all the forces resistant to change, both within yourself and within the organizations that make up the employment system. These forces that work against your getting out of the old boxes are indeed formidable. As you saw in the beginning of this chapter, industrialization and specialization have torn most people from work that has dignity.

True craftsmanship and quality work in any human endeavor depends upon your being in control of what you produce, not being merely a means to production. Productivity and quality of working life—those much talked about issues—depend upon the empowering of the individual in regard to career. In the seventies, a growing number of people began considering their careers and how to get out of their own boxes. The eighties will require the large organizations that make up the global workplace to provide opportunity for their workers to have more say over their careers. Fewer and fewer people are content with the old boxes. Recent surveys on the changing attitudes of workers confirm this discontent, and observers are now talking about the emerging new breed of worker.*

It appears that this reevaluation is global in scope and is affecting the workplace in every nation. Management must be aware of this move-

* Michael R. Cooper, Brian S. Morgan, Patricia M. Foley, and Leon B. Kaplan, “Changing Employee Values: Deepening Discontent?” *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1979), 117-125.