

Foreword

For any of us who have ever dealt with joblessness, or are currently going through it, there is one difficult and obvious fact we need to confront: The search process sucks. It is tedious, and it grinds down the spirit. There are many other things we would prefer to be doing with our time. Furthermore, it is pervasive.

Before me is an issue of *Time* magazine whose cover story is “*What Ever Happened to the Great American Job.*” This article is an unsettling amalgam of material that is bound to depress the reader. Typical of such pieces, it contains the usual anecdotes of fruitless searches by people who were swiftly and unexpectedly jettisoned by major corporations after decades of service. The article also includes data gleaned from both public and government agencies. For example, a telephone-based poll of adult Americans reveals that two-thirds believe that job security is worse for Americans now than in the two previous years. Of those who described the situation as “worse,” 53 percent say the situation will be bad over the long haul, for many years to come. Fifty-eight percent say they have friends who have lost jobs since the economic recovery began.

A sidebar to the article cites a U.S. Labor Department study that shows how a full 30 percent of new graduates will be underutilized over the next 12 years. Also, these graduates are likely to earn less in inflation-adjusted dollars than their graduating predecessors did a generation ago. This includes graduates of many top colleges. Labor analysts describe the bleak future of job market and suggest ways to deal with it:

- Don't count on big companies for employment, because they have learned that it's more efficient and profitable to operate as contracting centers and outsource the talent they need. Instead, turn to small- and medium-sized companies.
- Be prepared to work for a foreign company, as many corporations outside the U.S. are investing in this country's manufacturing. (The flip side to that? Many American companies are outsourcing their services to operations outside of our borders.)
- Get as much training and education as possible and keep upgrading your skills. Workers can expect to change their *careers* (not simply their jobs) three or four times during their working lives.

But the most interesting point about this article is that it was published in 1993. This informs us that for decades we have been dealing with the same attitudes and fears: *Big companies are not reliable employers. A college education doesn't guarantee anybody anything. We will all need to keep getting educations. Yes, things are bad, and they will keep getting worse.*

This is a sea change from what many Americans remember as a time of easy employment and regularly rising incomes. Another large part of the frustration in finding a job is the psychological toll. The time it takes between the moment you submit your job application and finally get a response seems interminable — and that is if you get a response at all.

I recently received a desperate, nearly tearful call for advice from a middle-aged mother. She had submitted an application to a local university for an administrative position in a first attempt to re-enter the job market after many years. She never heard back, yet the position was still posted on the local job board. “Pat, what’s the protocol for following up on an application?” she asked. “They haven’t called me, yet the position is still open.” I have so much to tell her about the new realities that are sobering: That she could call but not to expect an answer even if she got through. That the job may have already been filled, but the posting existed to fulfill the university’s EEO requirements. And to begin with, answering an ad is like tossing your resume into a black hole, when you are much more likely to get a job through networking.

These are the agonizing conditions of job hunting today, but we have to ignore them and plow ahead with our searches. If we continue focusing only on the negative, we will trap ourselves in a never-ending cycle of despair. John W. Gardner, the social philosopher and founder of Common Cause, once wrote that individuals cannot achieve renewal if they do not believe in its possibility. That is the reason that I wrote this book — to restore a sense of hope to job hunting. Let me advise you now that *C.R.A.F.T.I.N.G. a New Job Search* is not another “how-to” manual on finding a job. There are already many books that cover that topic, and frankly, I don’t believe I can improve on the work of many of those fine authors. Instead, *C.R.A.F.T.I.N.G. a New Job Search* is about how to lift your spirits in the face of a potentially demoralizing search and how to arm yourself with the optimism that will help lead you to success.

Like my previous book, *The Six P’s of Change*, this one began as a professional speech. I often give *pro bono* presentations on dealing with change to folks who are seeking employment. One day, I received a new request. A friend who is the manager of an outplacement office contacted me after the year-end holidays. In the New Year, she asked me if I could speak to their current crop of “candidates” (their term for clients who are receiving outplacement services). However she did not want me to cover the topic of change with them. She had something else in mind. “We have many people here who have been at a search for so long that they feel discouraged,” she explained. “Now we have been through the holidays, and they are not conducting their campaign with the same energy that they did before. On the other hand, you have always been so optimistic here, and you were able to move on and form your own company. Do you have a speech that addresses how to charge up their job search?”

I thought about her request. “No, I don’t,” I replied. “But let’s set a date six weeks from now, and I will have a speech by then.”

Now, with this self-imposed deadline, I was obligated to create a new presentation designed for job seekers. That is how this book was born. In looking over my own successful job searches (and I was out of work several times before I started my own consulting business), I devised these eight guiding principles that rejuvenated my own flagging job searches. To help make these points more memorable, I use the acronym C.R.A.F.T.I.N.G., advising my audiences to craft a new campaign:

#1 CELEBRATE the Possibilities of Every New Day — Every day with which we are blessed contains endless possibilities for achievement and success. We need to make the most of this wondrous gift.

#2 REVIEW Your Passion and Purpose — This is an interior journey rather than one to foreign lands or new vistas. It is an opportunity to learn again about your passions, your purpose, and the work you care most about.

#3 ACQUIRE a Mentor — Once you have determined the work you want to do, find someone who is successful in that field, regardless of age or other background, and learn from that person.

#4 FORM Measurable, Meaningful, and Achievable Goals — In the inimitable words of Yogi Berra, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you might end up some place else.” To direct your efforts during a job search, it is important to have a list of daily goals that will keep you focused on your ultimate objective of securing a position.

#5 TEND Your Time to Accomplish Your Goals — While everyone gets 24 hours in a day, not everyone can maximize them. Basic time management is essential during a search.

#6 INCENTIVIZE Yourself — They say when there’s no risk, there’s no reward. But when there are no rewards, our endeavors becomes meaningless. Learn to give yourself gifts and other positive reinforcement to keep you motivated through this process.

#7 NURTURE All of Your Needs — Tend to all of your essential needs, including the physical, emotional, and spiritual.

#8 GIVE BACK After You’ve Succeeded — In the course of your job-search campaign, you will find not only that you have far more friends than you had realized, but that you are connected to many kind and charitable people. I believe that once the door to employment has reopened for you because of the support you have received, you have a moral obligation to help others find their next opportunities.

When our jobs have been eliminated, we face two choices: Don't deal with it, and stay unemployed. Or learn to manage your through the situation and get your career back in motion. It is not negative to accept that this process is long and difficult; that is simply reality. Author Louisa May Alcott put it this way: "I'm no longer afraid of the storm for I am learning how to sail my own ship." That is what this book is about — optimizing both your skills and your attitude to maximize your job search. If you see yourself as a victim of circumstances, you will get stuck in the past. So let's get ready to sail on.

NOTE: The end of every chapter contains a section that helps you ***Reflect on Your Recrafting*** — exercises based on the information you have just read that will guide you toward your action steps. These exercises will help bolster your search plan with a positive energy that will propel you forward, even when the road ahead looks dark.

Let's start with a celebration.

Step # 1: CELEBRATE the Possibilities of Every New Day

Each new day is a blank page in the diary of your life. The secret of success is in turning that diary into the best story you possibly can.

– Douglas Pagels, *A Wonderful Resolution For The New Year!*

You have been given a gift. That’s right; believe it or not, your current circumstances have resulted in a gift: 24 hours to devote to your goals. And your *primary* goal at this moment is to complete your job search.

I know you must be thinking, “Some gift. Thanks a lot!” Yes, you have received a hard knock, but that is in the past. Everything that has happened before means nothing. The hurdles you faced as you race down the track are behind you, so they have no real bearing on what you face ahead.

Shakespeare was right: The past is only prologue, just an introduction to what is to come. It can be true that history repeats itself, so think of that adage in the most positive way possible. Your own personal past is now the pathway to your future success, a success built not only upon every skill you have developed and every life you have touched or connected, but also built upon what you are going to accomplish from this moment on.

John W. Gardner, founder of Common Cause, architect of Medicare, and author and social philosopher, said in his book *Self-Renewal*, “Most of us have potentialities that have never been developed simply because the circumstances of our lives never called them forth.” Think of this unique time in your life as *your* circumstances that will bring to the fore many qualities you have either sublimated or perhaps never even recognized. This is the time to use the lessons of your history to influence a better tomorrow. I once read that a victim is defined as “a person to whom life happens.” This is your time not to let life simply “happen” to you. Instead, seize each of your moments and make the best of them every day.

Each of us, all women and men, have natural powers. As you read and practice what is in this book, together we will work to uncover those powers and learn to use them for your own benefits. Over the course of using your days, you will learn what you already possess to reach your own level of greatness.

Yes, You Can Choose to Be Happy, Even Now

I urge you to accept the concept that your daily happiness is an achievable goal. It is something to pursue actively. Then, when you achieve it, you must acknowledge, relish, and appreciate it, because by its very nature, happiness is ephemeral.