

INTRODUCTION

MOVING WITH CHANGING TIMES

Most Americans have been affected by the zigs and zags of the economy and global change over the last few years. They have experienced dramatic changes that bristle with contradictions. The stock market boasted historic highs while employment rates plummeted. Internet startups crashed in a technology bubble, only to flourish again. Oil prices skyrocketed, dropped, and continue to confound the world. Turmoil in the banking and real estate sectors dramatically destabilized our economy. Against all odds, Americans elected this country's first minority president. These highs and lows have created an atmosphere of chaos and confusion. What used to be a sure thing is no longer; the rules are changing.

This book will help you set a course for the future as you navigate a continually shifting world. As your life moves into this uncharted territory, it is time to analyze past choices and plan ahead. Most important will be your ability to identify the “**UPSIDE**,” or positive opportunity in any given situation, for it is this ability that will empower you to harness the dynamic energy of change.

As professional work-life consultants, speakers and thought leaders, the authors have conducted workshops, focus groups and keynote presentations for years. Recently, we've heard several people say, “I'm just holding on until life gets back to normal.” But we believe that things will not go back exactly to the way they used to be, and that we need new life skills and flexible success models that can withstand the test of a new



time. Sharing our ideas, strategies and activities with workshop participants, we saw hope rekindle and energy soar as people began to build sustainable and happy lives.

To help them, we started with what we thought our own families might need. We began to craft a set of options to help individuals like you to move beyond the disappointment, despair and grief over the loss of a way of life and create a more stable and successful future, one that follows your authentic life path. We believe sustainable careers and lifestyles are possible. It will take changing your mind set and expectations, as well as your definition of success and happiness. It means changing the model of your work and personal life.

We can't make jobs magically appear, but we can provide strategies, resources and models for creating a satisfying life in a changing world economy. Ours is a holistic approach. It is not enough to recreate your professional life without reshaping your personal life as well; the reverse is also true. Most importantly, we aspire to help you explore career and personal life possibilities based on a long-term point of view.

Be assured that this is not a book crammed with economic equations. We are spouses, parents, grandparents, friends and lovers, just like you—not economists. It is important, however, to give you a comprehensive picture and to inspire, encourage and empower you, based upon our expertise in the fields of balance, change, problem solving, leadership and transition. Our country was founded on the pursuit of a better life, and our citizens have always seen the possibilities and pulled together in difficult times. It is said that we are at our best when challenged, and now is the time to summon our collective strength as a

people. The spirit of America is hope; we encourage and support you in your journey.

THE PAST IS PAST

A crucial premise we are presenting is that our way of life will not return to the way it was. The American Dream, defined as “having it all,” is in jeopardy. Many economists, futurists, researchers, environmentalists and social anthropologists claim that this downturn was inevitable. It has been suggested that this period is a time for the correction of a system that was based on speculation, overspending, overbuilding and record debt.

As we move forward, our economy must be based on responsible practices and sound principles—not flipping real estate, making loans that can’t be repaid, over-the-top credit card spending, exaggerated consumerism and natural resource depletion. In a new, restructured economy, workers must plan for and live in a world of revised reality. This book addresses that challenge and provides solid solutions. Every chapter contains a series of stimulating and thought-provoking questions, personal stories and activities to guide the reader.

THE CHAPTERS

Many of you have experienced personal change and loss. **Chapter 1** offers the tools to accept these transitions and begin to move beyond them, understanding the need to create career and personal life models that will sustain you over the long term.

In **Chapter 2**, you take inventory of your current situation and analyze how and why you made decisions in the past. You will examine your underlying expectations of a successful life and

identify factors that may be sabotaging your best efforts. You'll find tools to help you cope with the discomfort of living in an environment of constant change.

Elasticity and resilience are critical skills for long-term success. **Chapter 3** focuses on creating the mindset to adapt and develop a positive approach in times of change and uncertainty. Your goal is to rediscover purposeful meaning in your life and work. This process includes reclaiming your inner strength, passion and purpose.

Success and happiness is an elusive subject that is unique to each of us. In **Chapter 4**, you address the genesis of the American Dream and its significance for defining your own expectations and goals. This process lays the foundation for creating a sustainable and fulfilling life, based on the new reality.

Chapter 5 outlines the steps for long-term, satisfying work. You are challenged to use your creativity to uncover strengths and passions, and then apply them to find a fulfilling and sustainable career that is realistic in the changing world.

The relationship between money, happiness and success is a pivotal part of a changing work-life model. **Chapter 6** promotes a healthy attitude toward money, encouraging new ideas about your spending habits and uncovering your genuine identity beyond your financial self. The goal is for you to adapt and create new habits that integrate your career and personal life models, reflecting the reality of today's changing world.

Chapter 7 explains the importance of self-awareness as a source of focus and centering in times of chaos, in order to make good

decisions about your career and personal life. Strengthening your inner life is an invaluable practice for dealing with a changing world. You will complete a series of exercises to assist with maintaining focus and commitment in the face of chaos or turmoil.

A holistic approach is key to create a successful and prosperous life that is sustainable. In **Chapter 8**, you are asked to look beyond your career model to all your lifestyle choices. The goal is to provide you with a set of options that reflects the new reality and allows you to thrive with less financial stress.

Chapter 9 addresses the isolation that many solopreneurs and individuals in transition experience. In this chapter, you identify how co-workers, friends and family may either support or derail your efforts to change, and how to remain resilient and focused while maintaining these relationships. Ideas are also provided for building a support community by reaching out through interest groups and online encouragement.

Chapter 10 provides the building blocks for holistic change by integrating the basic concepts provided throughout the book. The assessments, exercises and reflections completed from previous chapters assemble to provide you with a living, flexible whole-life plan.

As experts in the field, we recognize that altering the work-life paradigm isn't easy, but it is a must if we are all going to survive in this rapidly changing world. We encourage you to revisit the exercises often and utilize the resources listed in each chapter. You will need a journal or notebook to record your own thoughts, observations and exercise answers.

Ultimately, we are optimists at heart, and reiterate these facts: Our lives will be different in the future, as we join in the **UPSIDE** of change. Happiness and success can be ours with a life model that works in the new norm.