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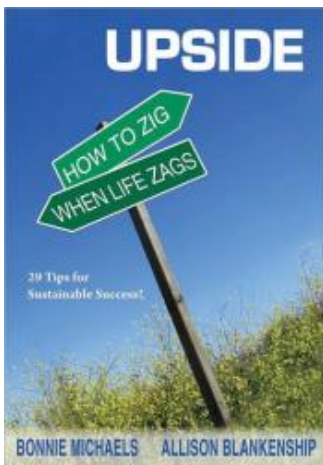
BY PHILIP K. JASON Special to Florida Weekly

“Upside: How to Zig When Life

Zags,” by Bonnie Michaels and Allison

Blankenship. Collage Books. 214 pages.

\$15.95



Bonnie Michaels, a Naples parttimer who founded the consulting firm Managing Work & Family in 1987, has put her expertise to work to help people navigate the special challenges of today’s depressed and unstable economy. For this new book, her third, she has partnered with another Naples part-timer, Allison Blankenship, a communications specialist and corporate entrepreneur whose background and skills compliment those of Ms. Michaels. Together, they’ve fashioned a timely self-help book that is responsive to several new challenges in lifestyle and career dynamics.

One of these is that the conventional notion of career building, one that includes a vision of two-way loyalties cementing decades of employer employee bonds, is no longer operative. Old habits of expectation and entitlement in the workplace are mind-set handicaps that have to be eliminated. Imagining that you are owed something (for your skills, your past performance or your credentials) doesn’t get you anywhere when the future is essentially not known. It’s also a path to bitterness and stasis.



Blankenship and Michaels Dealing with the “not known” is one concern of “Upside” to which the authors give extended attention. People adjusting to meet new — yet not predictable — financial, personal and professional conditions need to develop resilience and the ability to transform their patterns of thought and action.

They must learn how to flourish in an epoch for which the traditional American Dream is a not a healthy goal.

They must also learn how to find the potentially positive outcome lurking beneath each upheaval of expectation. Through numerous instructive cases and exercises, readers are encouraged to discover the “Upside” of disappointing and disorienting situations.

“Upside” is essentially a new kind of 10-step program for life-path rejuvenation in chaotic times. Readers are encouraged to inventory and assess their experiences, values and goals. After interpreting these inventories, they are encouraged to design new and highly personal paths to viable, sustainable satisfaction.

For Ms. Michaels and Ms. Blankenship, change begins with an attitudinal transformation that eventually triggers new perceptions and actions. The topics they cover in this lively manual include developing cash consciousness, fostering spiritual growth, simplifying one’s life at every level and learning how to form productive networks and partnerships.

The key points in “Upside” are repeated in almost every chapter. While this repetition might disturb to some readers, it is the way effective education works: reinforcing, elaborating, connecting and exemplifying central concepts.

At once inspiring and realistic, “Upside” features 29 tips for sustainable success, a useful bibliography and resources section, engaging use of graphics and valuable interactive challenges.

“Upside” can be ordered from www.collagebooks.com and from major online and traditional booksellers. †