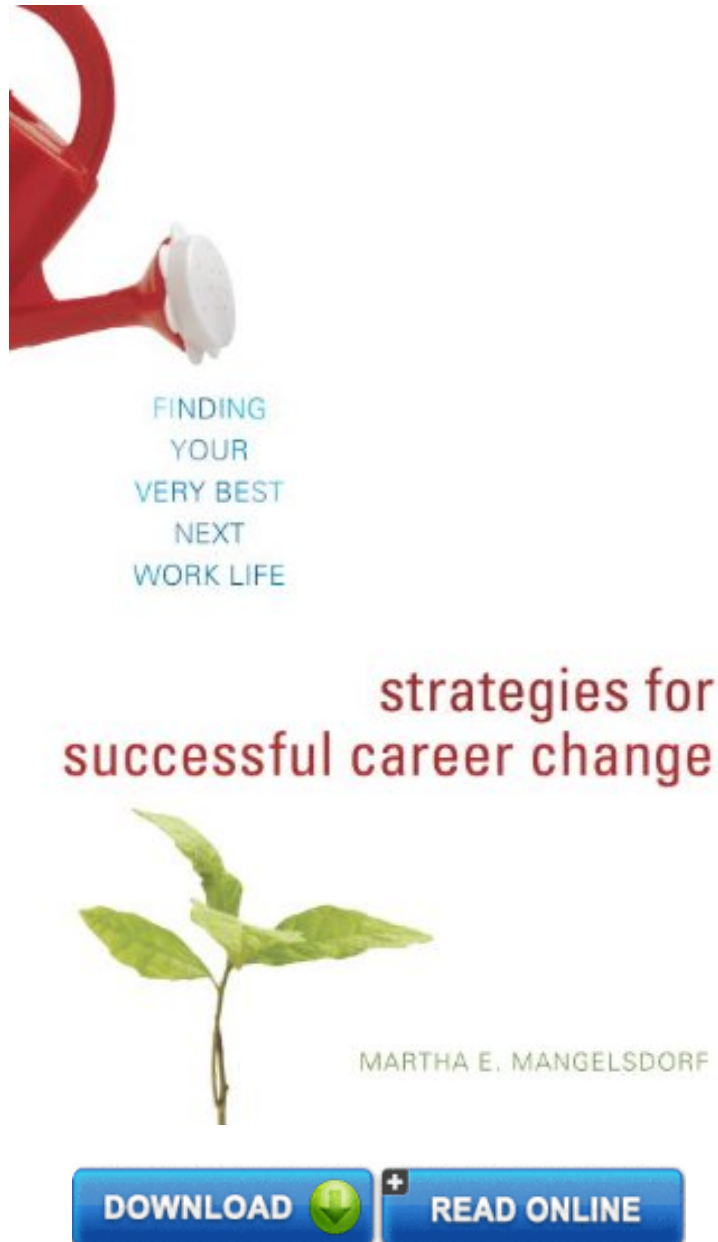


(Online library) Strategies for Successful Career Change: Finding Your Very Best Next Work Life

# Strategies for Successful Career Change: Finding Your Very Best Next Work Life

Martha E. Mangelsdorf

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**Martha E. Mangelsdorf : Strategies for Successful Career Change: Finding Your Very Best Next Work Life** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strategies for Successful Career Change: Finding Your Very Best Next Work Life:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Sensible advice for starting a new career from an experienced business writerBy T. BurrowsMangelsdorf, a former senior writer and editor for Inc. Magazine who specializes in career development, has turned in a useful and practical guide to looking for a new line of work. As someone who

gave up a prestigious and demanding position to freelance, she has also walked the walk as well as talked the talk. The book is a conglomeration of practical advice, anecdotes, and suggestions, logically arranged. Mangelsdorf is especially good at providing references for future research and works by other authors. The author seems to understand that career change can be difficult and demanding, and books like hers can provide people with some useful support as they go about trying to change their lives. I certainly plan to use some of the tools she presents here in my own career journey. There is however one big problem here. This book was clearly written before the Great Recession began decimating the employment market. While there are mentions of dealing with problems, the approach here seems geared to more-or-less normal economic times, and lacks an awareness of this enormous, overarching problem. The timing of this release may not have been the best. But then again, maybe Mangelsdorf's thoughtful, practical job-seeking wisdom is just what many readers need, regardless of what the latest news reports say. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not great...there are better books out there By Sidai316 This book reminds me of my high school guidance counselor who really had no idea how to job hunt, and would ask circular questions over and over about my interests and life direction. This book talks entirely in the figurative about what you want, but never gets to the nitty gritty of actual job hunting. Things like how to use LinkedIn, or how to search internationally, or sample careers that are easy to switch into. This book really didn't help me at all. It's much too philosophical, I'm looking for something more pragmatic. Buy this book if you want to think deep thoughts about what you want in life, but not if you want practical tips for job hunting. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Helpful manual for smooth career change By Rolf Dobelli Some people decide to switch careers to pursue more gratifying work. Others have career change thrust upon them by company closings, downsizing or technological advancements. Whatever the reason, changing careers can be stressful and bewildering. Business writer Martha E. Mangelsdorf's common sense manual, while a bit simplistic, does a good job of breaking the process into manageable steps. The first is identifying what you want. That is never easy, but once you manage it, the rest of your transition will fall into place so you can focus on practicalities. Can you find opportunities in a related field or even within your current company? What are your strengths, weaknesses and "transferable skills"? Can you switch careers without additional training and education? Could you overlap careers or work two jobs to maintain your financial security? Mangelsdorf answers all these questions and more, using successful career change stories to punctuate her points. If you are at a career crossroads, get Abstract recommends this guide to help you navigate through the tumult.

Are you ready for a change? Whether you're seeking a more fulfilling job or rethinking your career goals after a layoff, the questions you face are crucial. In *Strategies for Successful Career Change*, seasoned business and career journalist Martha E. Mangelsdorf distills lessons from a diverse group of people who have made the leap and landed on their feet. To help you navigate the challenges, pitfalls, and rewards of career transition, this book will show you how to:

- Align your professional life with your personal goals
- Identify your transferable skills, strengths, and constraints
- Explore possible new careers in low-risk ways
- Change careers while still paying the bills

You'll assess your current work life and aspirations, while taking into account logistical realities such as finances, health insurance, and family obligations. Through exercises, resources, and inspiring stories from successful career-changers, this supportive and empowering guide will help you find your very best next work life. "If you're considering a career change, this book should be your go-to resource for insight, strategy, and practical advice. But even better, it serves up the inspiration we all need to do something great, thanks to real stories from people who've discovered their best life." --Keith Ferrazzi, author of *Never Eat Alone* and *Who's Got Your Back*

"The genius of this book is its integration of solid, tried-and-true principles of career change with practical, engaging real-life stories of people who used them. An essential resource for career-changers and those who love them." --Margaret Benefiel, PhD, author of *Soul at Work* and *The Soul of a Leader*

"If you're thinking about changing careers, Martha Mangelsdorf's book is a must-read. Even if you're not thinking about changing careers, it's a should-read. Her fascinating stories about successful career-changers will make you ask yourself vital questions that are all too easy to ignore." --Bo Burlingham, editor at large of *Inc.* magazine and author of *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big*

From the Trade Paperback edition.

"a practical approach to job satisfaction.... Boston-based business writer Martha E. Mangelsdorf systematically addresses a host of issues, shares inspiring stories, and offers a set of best practices for career changers." --Boston Globe's Sunday book section

"Shelf Life" Mangel'sdorf provides a number of very helpful references and resources as well as a bit of inspiration... She's a good writer, too...her anecdotes are vivid and relatable." --Richard Pachter, *Miami Herald*

"Named one of 5 Books That Will Help Your Career." Said: "The real-person interviews are inspiring and show you that even though it's hard work, finding the right career can improve your happiness." --CareerBuilder.com

"If you're considering a career change, this book should be your go-to resource for insight, strategy, and practical advice. But even better, it serves up the inspiration we all need to do something great, thanks to real stories from people who've discovered their best life." --Keith Ferrazzi, author of *Never Eat Alone* and *Who's Got*

Your Backldquo;The genius of this book is its integration of solid, tried-and-true principles of career change with practical, engaging real-life stories of people who used them. An essential resource for career-changers and those who love them.rdqquo;ndash;Margaret Benefiel, PhD, author of *Soul at Work* and *The Soul of a Leader*ldquo;If yoursquo;re thinking about changing careers, Martha Mangelsdorfrsquo;s book is a must-read. Even if yoursquo;re not thinking about changing careers, itrsquo;s a should-read. Her fascinating stories about successful career-changers will make you ask yourself vital questions that are all too easy to ignore.rdqquo;ndash;Bo Burlingham, editor at large of *Inc. mag...*

About the AuthorMartha E. Mangelsdorf is an experienced business and careers writer. She is a former senior editor and senior writer for *Inc. magazine*, and her work has appeared in a diverse range of publicationsmdash;from *Family Circle* magazine to the *Wall Street Journal*. While a freelance journalist, Mangelsdorf for four years wrote a monthly feature on career change, called ldquo;Transitions,rdqquo; for the *Boston Globe*.Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

### CHAPTER 1: WHY DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE CAREERS?

Congratulations! Many--perhaps most--people in contemporary society think about changing careers sometimes, and lots of people really wish they could but don't know how. Others feel forced by changing economic or personal circumstances to consider a new career. But even when you feel you might benefit from doing a different kind of work, career change can seem hard, impractical, or downright overwhelming--simply too intimidating a project to undertake.That's why I congratulate you. By reading this book you're doing two important things:1. You're exploring some interest you have in career change, rather than just feeling stuck.2. By gathering more information, you're also taking a very practical, low-risk step toward investigating the topic of possible career change.As you'll discover in this book, one smart strategy for career-changers is to start with low-risk research and small steps that give you more information. As you read this book and consider the topics it raises, you're starting that kind of gradual, thoughtful exploration process.

### WHY PEOPLE CHANGE CAREERS

If you're thinking about changing careers, you're not alone. There are all kinds of reasons people start a new career, and career change has become increasingly accepted in our society. For one thing, ours is a society built on rapid technological change, and both organizations and the markets they serve come and go in response to economic, technological, and societal changes. Then, too, an increasingly global economy has led to the loss of many jobs to foreign competition, as once-secure jobs have been offshored or outsourced, or both. Unfortunately, when such sweeping changes occur, many individual workers find themselves adrift--cut off from the organizations and careers in which they once worked, and needing to reinvent themselves.What's more, work today is often unsatisfying. The world of work--particularly in the 24-7, always-on global economy--has not always adjusted well to fit the needs of families with both parents working outside the home--or, for that matter, the needs of the single person who wants to have a meaningful life beyond work. As a result, many people want to create new careers that better suit their lifestyles. Still others decide to try another kind of work because they really long to do something different from their first career, or they just, for whatever reason, feel frustrated or unhappy with their existing jobs. Finally, many people in our society are living longer and healthier lives--and many older adults, for a variety of reasons, would prefer to start new careers rather than either completely retire or remain in their current jobs.Whatever the factors behind your interest in exploring career change, there are a number of questions you should consider; this book is organized around eighteen such questions. And you can gain many insights from a wide variety of people who've successfully changed careers--which is why lessons from such people are an integral part of this book.

Whether you're changing careers in your twenties or your fifties, with a high school diploma or with a graduate degree, while raising a family or while on your own as a single adult, you can learn from others who have done something similar.However, changing careers is usually not easy; in fact, doing so often takes a lot of work. It also can be risky; there's no guarantee of success. So as you start exploring your questions about career change, it's helpful to begin by thinking through the factors driving your interest in the subject, as well as any alternatives to career change that might meet your needs.Although there are elements common to different types of career changes, there are also differences--depending on the reasons you're considering a new career. That's why one of the first questions to think about is what is driving your interest in changing the kind of work you do. Which of the following statements are true for you? Choose as many as apply; for many people, there are multiple factors contributing to their interest in a new career.

A. There are changes happening right now in my industry or at the organization where I work or have worked--and the changes aren't good, from my perspective. I am concerned about future opportunities in my field. I may have been laid off, or perhaps I worry that if I stay in this job I may get laid off in the coming years.

B. I am really not happy with my current work and/or some aspect of the lifestyle that accompanies it (such as hours, pressure, risk of injury, or wages). I may or may not have enjoyed this work in the past, but I don't want to keep doing it now.

C. There is some other kind of work I'd really like to do; I'd like to pursue a dream of mine.

D. I feel that if I could only get more education and training--or switch into a higher-paying field--I could earn a better income. That's an important goal for me and would improve my quality of life.

E. I used to like my work reasonably well, but the work no longer suits me because of some change in my own life. (The particular circumstances could vary, from needing to leave a physically demanding job after an injury, to wanting to work fewer hours while caring for small children--or, on the other hand, needing to earn more because of a need to support children financially.)

F. I've accomplished all I wanted to in my current career--and now, after many years in this line of work, I want to try something different. I'm getting older, and I'd like to spend my

remaining years working at something satisfying, whether on a part-time or full-time basis.

### WHAT YOUR ANSWERS INDICATE

What do your answers to this mini-quiz signify? Well, different issues and questions may be more or less important to explore as you consider changing the kind of work you do--depending on what is motivating you. For example, people for whom statement A is true are Responding to Change in the Economy. If, on the other hand, you answered yes to statement B, you are Ready to Move On. What if you answered yes to statement C? In that case, you are Exploring a Dream. If you answered yes to statement D, you are Eager to Move Up. For those who answered yes to statement E, Things Have Changed for you. And, if you answered yes to statement F, you are Looking for a Later-Stage Career. If you're thinking about a career change and one or more of these statements apply, here are some of the issues that may affect you.

#### STATEMENT A: RESPONDING TO CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY

The good news is: If statement A is true for you, you're not being blind to the change occurring around you. You're proactively evaluating your options, which is smart. Also, you have probably developed skills in your current career that you can transfer to whatever work you do next. And if you've been happy and successful in the past doing one type of work, you may well find that you can be happy and successful in the future doing some other type of work, as well. You may also find that you don't need to make a dramatic career change; you may be able to apply your existing skill set to another industry or a closely related type of work.

**Special challenges you may face:** If you have been laid off or are leaving an industry because you fear for your future career prospects in that field, you may feel real grief, disorientation, or anger. It is a genuine loss to leave work you've enjoyed and that's given you an identity, and that sense of loss shouldn't be minimized--or rushed through. And if you've been working for the same company for many years, change may be particularly frightening. You may feel out of practice at the skills associated with career transition, such as networking. Also, if career change is something you're considering because of external factors--rather than because this is a good or easy time in your life to change careers--you may face real financial issues. For example, your industry may be downsizing due to technological changes or international competition--at a time when you have young children to support. Or perhaps you're currently fully employed but thinking about changing careers because you think opportunities ahead don't look good in your field; if so, finding the time to research or prepare for an alternative career may be challenging. And if you're changing careers because of external changes--rather than because you are drawn to some particular type of new career--you may need time to explore various options.

**Some questions to consider as you contemplate career change:**

1. Is a new position--rather than an entirely new career--an option for you?
2. Would relocation be an option in your case, or help the situation?
3. If you really like your industry, profession, or both, are there any firms or sectors of your industry or profession that are growing? Are there variations on the kind of work you do--in other words, related kinds of work--that might have good growth prospects? (You'll learn more about identifying growth markets in chapter 9.)
4. If you like your work and are good at it, are there skills you use in it that you would like to use in other work? (This topic will be covered further in chapters 4, 7, and 10.)
5. Can you give yourself time--and permission--to deal with your sense of loss? Leaving a kind of work you have enjoyed can entail real grief, and it may help to acknowledge that.
6. What kind of financial flexibility do you have to make a career transition? (This question will be discussed further in chapter 6.)

#### STATEMENT B: READY TO MOVE ON

The good news is: If statement B is true for you, you may have more control over the timing and nature of your career-change process than if it's driven by external changes. Even though you do not like your current job (at least not anymore) and very much want to do something else, there's a good chance you have the option of starting to explore potential new careers gradually, while continuing to work at your current job. It may even be possible to try out a potential new career (or preparation for it) on a part-time basis--either in conjunction with your current full-time work, or by pursuing two careers at once, both part-time. (You'll learn more about the two-career option in chapter 14.)

**Special challenges you may face:** If you are primarily driven by a desire to leave your current career but are not sure what you want to do next, one challenge you face may be finding or making enough time to figure out your next move. You need to find time in your schedule to start to explore options and chart a new course for your career. You may also need to evaluate further the question of whether it's your career you dislike or just your current job.

**Some questions to consider as you contemplate career change:**

1. Is it possible you are unhappy with your current job or work arrangement more than with your career? Are there any circumstances in which you might be happy in your current occupation or field?
2. What is it you really don't like about your current work? What is dissatisfying about it?
3. What are some characteristics you'd like your next work arrangement to have?
4. How can you create some time to learn about other possible career options in a low-risk way? (You'll learn more about this kind of research in several of the other chapters, particularly chapters 11, 12, and 13.)

#### STATEMENT C: EXPLORING A DREAM

The good news is: If statement C is true for you, you already have a goal (or perhaps several possible goals you're deciding among). And because your goal represents something that really interests and intrigues you, that will probably make it easier to research; people tend to be naturally drawn to things that really interest them. You'll gain energy for your career explorations from your desire to do the kind of work you want to.

**Special challenges you may face:** Because you're enthusiastic about this goal, you need to take care to also research it thoughtfully before you go ahead--so that you don't later find yourself disappointed by some aspect of your new career that you had overlooked. If this is a dream you've had for a while, there may be some reason you haven't pursued it earlier. It may be you just didn't have the

opportunity before, but if there are real obstacles to fulfilling your dream, you need to understand and confront them. Perhaps your ideal career involves a field in which it's hard to make the kind of living you want, or perhaps the training you need to enter the career that interests you seems daunting. If you face significant hurdles in achieving your dream, you need to explore and evaluate them carefully and thoughtfully. Some questions to consider as you contemplate career change:

1. What exactly does your ideal work consist of? What are the important elements of your dream?
2. What are the unknowns about this career--what do you need to know about what it's like to work in this occupation that you don't know yet? (Part II of this book will be of special interest to you, as it addresses different aspects of learning about careers.)
3. If your dream doesn't seem practical (for example, the training is too long, or the wages are too low), what aspects of it are most important to you? Is there a variation of your dream, or a related occupation, that might give you the elements of your dream that are most important to you? (This topic will be discussed in chapter 8.)
4. Where is there intersection between what you want to do and what people will pay you adequately for? (Chapter 8 also addresses this topic.)
5. If pursuing your dream might mean lowering your income--either temporarily, while in transition, or long-term--is that a trade-off that you (and your spouse, if you are married) are willing to consider? (Chapter 6 will help you think through that question.)