Finding Your Ideal Job

By Barbara Kleppinger

BOOK REVIEW

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE

A Practical Guide for Job-Hunters and Career Changers, 2018 Edition

by Richard N. Bolles, Ten Speed Press

1 You are out of work. You hate your job. You aren't satisfied with your **career**. You are looking for your first job. Where do you start?

2 If you are like most Americans, you'll probably email your **résumé** to a lot of companies. You might search for job **postings** on the Internet or spend hours and hours working on your LinkedIn[1] page. But experts[2] say you won't have much luck. People find jobs only 5 to 10 percent of the time when they look for jobs in these ways. So what can you do?

3 One thing you can do is read Richard Bolles's *What Color Is Your Parachute*[3]? Bolles was an expert in job hunting. He died in 2017, but his advice lives on in his book. His book has helped thousands of people find jobs and careers. It is different from other job-hunting manuals. Bolles doesn't help you to find just another job. Instead, he helps you find your **ideal** job: a job that fits you, a job that makes you happy. What kind of job is ideal for you? If you don't know the answer, Bolles says, you can't find your ideal job. You need to have a clear picture in your mind of the job you want. The book has many exercises to help you draw this picture.

4 Bolles says that you must think about three things before you can find your ideal job:

(1) YOUR SKILLS. What do you like to do? What do you do well? Are you good at talking to groups? Growing vegetables? Teaching? Drawing on the computer? Bolles asks you to think about all your skills, not only "work skills." For example, a mother of four children is probably good at managing people (children!). This woman may be a good **manager**.

(2) JOB SETTING. Where do you like to work? Do you like to work outside? At home? In an office? Alone or with others? What kinds of people do you like to work with?

(3) JOB REWARDS. How much money do you need? How much money do you want? Do you need a lot of vacation time? What else do you want from a job? What makes you feel good about a job?

5 After Bolles helps you decide on your ideal job, he gives you specific **advice** on how to find that job. One of his favorite tools for finding a job is networking. He suggests using every person you know either to give you information about a company or career or to introduce you to someone else who can give you this information. Bolles asks everyone he meets how they got their job. Nine times out of ten, they got their job because a friend knew someone at the company who hired them. Social media can help you, but you have to be active and thoughtful. You need to contact individuals. You can't just wait for people to find you on social media. So once you know the kind of job you want, Bolles says you must use your network—everyone you know—to help you meet the one person who will help you get the job.

6 Bolles's chapter on job **interviews** is full of useful information and suggestions. For example, most people go to interviews asking themselves the question, "How do I get the company to **hire** me?" Bolles thinks this is the wrong question. Instead, he wants you to ask yourself, "Do I want to work here or not?"

7 Some people think that Bolles writes far too much and repeats himself. True, his book could be 100 pages instead of 368. But his writing style makes the book very easy to read, and a reader doesn't have to read the parts that seem less important. Other readers say that there is not enough space to write the answers to the exercises. But these are very small problems. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* is the best job-hunting manual you can buy.

8 *What Color Is Your Parachute?* was first written in 1970. Over 10 million copies have been sold since then. The information is updated[4] every year. So, if you are looking for a job, or if you have a job but want a new one, remember: Don't just email your résumé out to every company. Don't just answer Internet job postings. And don't wait for friends to give you a job. Instead, buy this book and do a job hunt the right way.

[1] **LinkedIn:** an online professional social media networking site
[2] **experts:** people who know a lot about something
[3] **parachute:** something you wear when you jump out of a plane. When you jump, it opens up, and it stops you from hitting the ground very hard.
[4] **updated:** changed to show new information

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