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Mentoring at Scale

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A FREE WORKBOOK

Finding Your Work

What should I be doing with my life?

A practitioner's method for answering the question.

Most people look for a job by looking at job listings. That is backwards. The surest way to find work that fits is to first take an honest inventory of who you are — your skills, your interests, the people and places that bring you alive — and only then go looking. This workbook walks you through that method, one step and one exercise at a time.

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Before You Begin

If you have ever sat at your desk on a Sunday night with a quiet, nagging sense that you are in the wrong life — that you are good at your job but not *made* for it, or that you are drifting without knowing toward what — this workbook is for you. So is the person just starting out who has no idea where to point themselves, and the person in their fifties wondering whether it is too late to do the thing they always meant to do. It is not too late. The question "what should I be doing with my life?" has a method behind it, and the method is learnable.

For more than fifty years, the most trusted guide to that method has been a book called *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, written by Richard Nelson Bolles and updated almost every year since 1970. Its central insight is simple and a little subversive: **the job hunt is not really about jobs. It is about you.** Before you can find work that fits, you have to know your own shape — what you are good at, what you care about, the conditions under which you come alive. This workbook stands on Bolles's shoulders. It distills the heart of his approach, adds a few tools from the people he learned from, and turns the whole thing into something you can sit down and actually *do*.

How this workbook works

This is a workbook, not a book. The reading is short on purpose; the doing is the point. You will find worksheets throughout — lined spaces, grids, and checklists. It's designed to be printed and filled by hand, filled on screen, or simply worked alongside a notebook — whatever gets you writing. And writing it down, by whatever means, matters more than it sounds: it slows you down enough to be honest.

Each petal in Part One also comes with a **word bank** — a long, tickable list of possibilities. This is on purpose. The hardest part of self-inventory is rarely judgment; it is *memory*. Asked to name your skills from a blank page, most people freeze and produce three. Handed a list of seventy, they recognize their own at a glance — and stumble onto ones they'd never have thought to claim. Use the banks freely. Tick anything that sparks, then carry it into the worksheet.

Work through it in order. The first half builds a portrait of you; the second half takes that portrait into the world. Do not skip to the job-search tactics at the back. The tactics only work once you know what you are searching *for*. Plan on a few weeks, not a few hours.

And if part of you is quietly afraid — afraid of what you might find, afraid it's too late, afraid of being seen trying and falling short — know that this is normal, nearly universal, and not a reason to stop. The fear is loudest at the blank page and quieter with every line you fill. You do not have to feel ready. You only have to begin.

Start small, and start today. Don't wait until you "have time to do this properly." The smallest useful first step takes ten minutes, right now: write down one thing you once did that you were genuinely proud of *and* enjoyed. That single memory is the seed of the entire method — and momentum, once started, beats good intentions every time.

What this is built to do. Done honestly — all of it, in writing — this method is designed to leave you with two things most people never have: a clear, specific description of the work that fits you, and a concrete way to go find it that leans less on luck and connections than the usual scramble. No workbook can promise an outcome. But this is the approach that has helped people find their footing for half a century, and it works far more often than firing résumés into the void.

A note on the source. The seven-part self-inventory at the center of this workbook — often called the "Flower Exercise" — was developed by Richard N. Bolles. The skills-from-stories approach traces to Bernard Haldane; the people-environment framework is the work of psychologist John Holland. We name them throughout and list their work at the end. Everything here is our own expression of their ideas, written to be given away. If this method speaks to you, buy the book.

MINDSET

The Two Job Hunts

There are two completely different ways to look for work, and most people only know the first one. Understanding why the first one fails — and it fails most of the time — is the thing that frees you to try the second.

The hunt almost everyone uses

It goes like this. You wait until you need a job. You polish a résumé. You scroll the listings, fire applications into online portals, and wait. You treat the search as a numbers game: more applications, better odds. And then you sit with the silence, because the overwhelming majority of those applications vanish without a reply.

This approach feels productive because it is busy. But it has two deep flaws. First, it starts from the *employer's* question ("who can fill this opening?") instead of *your* question ("what work is right for me?"). You end up shaping yourself to fit whatever happens to be posted. Second, it only searches the small, visible slice of the job market — the openings advertised publicly, where you compete against the largest possible crowd, often against software that screens you out before a human ever reads your name.

The conventional job hunt asks, "**What's available?**" The method in this workbook asks, "**What's right — and who needs it?**" The first question makes you a supplicant. The second makes you a candidate with a point of view.

The hunt that actually works

The better way reverses the order of operations. Instead of starting with the market and working backward to yourself, you start with yourself and work outward to the market. It has three movements:

1. **Know yourself, concretely.** Not "I'm a people person" but a specific, written inventory: your strongest transferable skills, the subjects you already know and love, the kind of people you want around you, the values that give work meaning, the conditions you need, the level you want, the place you want to live. That inventory is the Flower you will build in Part One.
2. **Name the work that fits.** Translate that self-portrait into a handful of specific fields and roles — then research them by talking to people who already do them, before you ever apply.
3. **Go in through the side door.** Reach the work through people and conversations rather than portals and applications — which is, as it happens, how most jobs are actually filled.

This is slower at the start and far faster at the end. It also does something the numbers game never can: it tends to land you in work you are actually suited for, because suitability was the search criterion from the first day.

Why this is worth the effort. Doing it the second way takes more courage and more weeks than firing off applications. But people who do it report a different kind of result — not just "a job," but the right job, found through a door no algorithm was guarding. The rest of this workbook is simply that method, broken into steps.

PART ONE · THE SELF-INVENTORY

The Flower

Bolles drew his self-inventory — the exercise he called the Flower — as an actual flower, and the picture is worth keeping. A flower has a center and petals. The **center** is who you are. Each **petal** is one dimension of that self — one way of describing what you need from your work. Build all seven petals and you have something most people never make for themselves: a single, honest page that says, "this is the work I am for."

The seven petals are:

1. **Your Skills** — the transferable abilities you most enjoy using.
2. **Your Knowledges** — the fields, subjects, and worlds you already know and care about.
3. **Your People** — the kinds of people and working cultures that fit you.
4. **Your Purpose** — the values and the difference you want your work to make.
5. **Your Conditions** — the physical and practical settings where you do your best work.
6. **Your Level & Reward** — how much responsibility you want and what you need to earn.
7. **Your Place** — where in the world you want to live and work.

We will build them one at a time. Resist the urge to rush to the "useful-sounding" petals (skills, level) and skip the "soft" ones (purpose, people). In practice it is often the soft petals that explain why someone with a perfectly good résumé is miserable. All seven matter. Take them in order; let your answers in the early petals jog your memory for the later ones. And lean on the word banks — if a petal leaves you staring at a blank line, the list is there to break the freeze.

One rule before you start: write what is *true*, not what sounds impressive or what you think you *should* want. No one grades this page. Its entire value is its honesty. A self-portrait drawn to flatter is useless for finding real work.

WARM-UP

Three quick prompts

Before the formal petals, loosen up. Don't overthink — first answers are often the truest.

When I lose track of time, I am usually...

As a child, I wanted to be... (and what appealed about it)

If money were handled and no one would judge me, I would spend my days...

PETAL ONE

Your Skills

The most important petal, and the one people get most wrong, is skills. Ask someone their skills and they will list job titles ("I was an accountant") or credentials ("I have an MBA"). Those are not skills. A **transferable skill** is a verb — something you *do* — that you can carry from one job, one field, even one life, into another. Organizing. Persuading. Diagnosing. Teaching. Building. Negotiating. Writing. Designing. These travel with you everywhere, and they are the true currency of a career.

The best way to find your strongest transferable skills is not to stare at a list and guess. It is to tell stories — specific stories of times you did something you enjoyed and did well — and then mine those stories for the skills hiding inside them. This is the **Seven Stories exercise**, an idea developed by Bernard Haldane and carried into Bolles's work. It is the single most valuable exercise in this workbook. Give it real time.

Step one — write seven stories

Think back across your whole life, not just your jobs. A time you made something, solved something, organized something, won something, fixed something, helped someone — *and you enjoyed doing it*. It does not need to look impressive to anyone else. "I planned the family reunion for forty people and it ran perfectly" is a better story than a vague big-sounding one. For each, write what the situation was, what *you specifically* did, and how it turned out.

EXERCISE 1A

Seven Stories — accomplishments you enjoyed

One line each here; expand the best ones on your own paper. Aim for variety across your life — childhood, school, work, home, hobbies.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Step two — mine the stories for skills

Now go back through each story and ask: *what was I actually doing?* Use verbs. In the reunion story you might find: planned, coordinated, persuaded, anticipated problems, kept calm, followed up. The same verbs will surface again and again across different stories — those repeaters are your core. If the verbs don't come easily, the word bank below will jog them loose.

NEED IDEAS?

Skills word bank

Don't hunt for the perfect word — just tick any that sound like you, then bring them back to the exercise. Recognizing a skill is far easier than recalling it from nothing.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leading | <input type="checkbox"/> Mediating | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating | <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persuading | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting | <input type="checkbox"/> Serving customers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selling | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking | |

WORKING WITH DATA & IDEAS

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Troubleshooting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researching | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculating | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Classifying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forecasting | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating | <input type="checkbox"/> Fact-checking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auditing | <input type="checkbox"/> Synthesizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Simplifying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solving | <input type="checkbox"/> Programming | |

WORKING WITH WORDS & CREATIVITY

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Designing | <input type="checkbox"/> Branding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Composing | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Translating | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizing | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographing | <input type="checkbox"/> Imagining |

WORKING WITH HANDS & THINGS

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repairing | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assembling | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Installing | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving | <input type="checkbox"/> Wiring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Operating machines | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining | <input type="checkbox"/> Tinkering |

MANAGING YOURSELF

- Prioritizing
- Managing time
- Attention to detail
- Following through
- Staying calm
- Adapting
- Learning quickly
- Taking initiative
- Persevering
- Staying organized

EXERCISE 1B

Skills found in the stories

For each story, list the action verbs — what you did. Circle any skill that shows up in more than one story.

Story #	Skills (verbs) I used
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Step three — rank your top skills

From all the verbs you circled, choose the ones you most *enjoy* using — not merely the ones you are competent at. There is a world of difference between a skill you are good at and a skill you love; building a life around the second is the whole game. Rank your top six. These are the heart of your Flower.

EXERCISE 1C

My top six transferable skills, ranked

In order, the skills you most love using. Write them as verbs ("building relationships," "untangling problems," "making complex things simple").

1

2

3

4

5

6

PETAL TWO

Your Knowledges

Skills are the verbs; knowledges are the nouns. A skill is *analyzing*; a knowledge is the *subject* you analyze — medicine, music, real estate, baseball, software, small business, classic cars, child development. Everyone is a walking library of fields they already understand, accumulated through work, study, hobbies, and plain curiosity. Most people badly undercount theirs, because the knowledge that comes easily feels like it "doesn't count." It counts. The work that fits you usually sits where a skill you love meets a subject you already know.

Pull from four wells: things you studied, things you did at work, things you do for fun, and things you simply find yourself reading about or talking about without being asked. The hobby and curiosity wells are where the surprising, energizing answers live — don't skip them because they feel unserious. The bank below is a memory-jogger; the real list is whatever it reminds you of.

NEED IDEAS?

Knowledges word bank — fields and subjects

Tick the worlds you know even a little, from any source. A subject from a hobby counts every bit as much as one from a job.

BUSINESS & MONEY

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Supply chain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Investing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking |

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Software | <input type="checkbox"/> Biology | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Cybersecurity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> AI | <input type="checkbox"/> Robotics |

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Social work | <input type="checkbox"/> Public policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Sociology | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy |

HEALTH & THE BODY

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Aging & elder care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness | <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching |

MAKING & DOING

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical | <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Culinary | <input type="checkbox"/> Fashion | <input type="checkbox"/> Trades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive | <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics | <input type="checkbox"/> Repair |

ARTS, MEDIA & THE OUTDOORS

- Music
- Design
- Theater
- Gardening
- Film
- Photography
- Journalism
- Travel
- Writing
- Gaming
- Animals
- Conservation

HOME & EVERYDAY LIFE

- Parenting
- Personal finance
- Event planning
- Genealogy
- Cooking
- Organizing
- DIY / home repair
- Collecting

EXERCISE 2A

Inventory of what I know

Fill each column with fields, subjects, tools, industries, or worlds you understand — even a little. Be generous; you can prune later.

Learned in school / training	Learned on the job
Learned from hobbies / life	Things I'm drawn to read & talk about

Look for the overlaps. The most promising directions often appear where two of your knowledges combine in a way few other people can offer — "construction *and* accounting," "nursing *and* software," "Spanish *and* finance." Circle any pair on your list that almost nobody else would have together. That intersection may be your edge.

EXERCISE 2B

My favorite knowledges, ranked

From the inventory above, the five fields you most enjoy working inside — the subjects you'd happily spend your days near.

1

2

3

4

5

PETAL THREE

Your People

You can have the right skills aimed at the right subject and still be miserable, because you are surrounded by the wrong people in the wrong kind of culture. Who you work *among* shapes a working life as much as what you work *on*. The most useful tool here comes from the psychologist John Holland, who found that both people and work environments tend to cluster into six types. Find the two or three that describe you, seek environments that match, and the daily experience of work changes.

Holland's six types are often remembered by the letters **RIASEC**:

- **R — Realistic.** Hands-on, practical, tools and machines, the physical world. Builders, makers, fixers, growers.
- **I — Investigative.** Analytical, curious, problem-solving, ideas and research. Scientists, analysts, diagnosticians.
- **A — Artistic.** Creative, expressive, original, unstructured. Writers, designers, performers, builders of new things.
- **S — Social.** Helping, teaching, healing, serving people directly. Teachers, nurses, counselors, coaches.
- **E — Enterprising.** Leading, persuading, selling, starting things, taking risks. Founders, salespeople, managers, dealmakers.
- **C — Conventional.** Organizing, ordering, detail and accuracy, systems and data. Accountants, administrators, planners.

Almost no one is a single letter. Most people are a blend — a top two or three — and the blend is what matters. An "ESC" thrives in a different room than an "AIR." Score yourself below.

EXERCISE 3A

Score your six types

For each type, rate how much it sounds like you from 0 (not at all) to 5 (that's me). Be honest about who you are, not who you wish you were.

Type	Score (0–5)
R — Realistic (hands-on, practical, physical)	
I — Investigative (analytical, curious, research)	
A — Artistic (creative, expressive, original)	
S — Social (helping, teaching, serving)	
E — Enterprising (leading, persuading, starting)	
C — Conventional (organizing, ordering, detail)	

My top three letters, highest first: _ _ _ _ _

Beyond the letters — the human texture

The code is a start; now get specific about people. Think back over every place you have worked, studied, or volunteered. When were you happiest among the people around you, and when did you dread walking in the door? The bank below gives you the vocabulary; the answers point to the culture you need.

NEED IDEAS?

Culture & people word bank

Tick the words that describe a place you'd thrive — and, separately, circle any that describe a place you'd dread. Both lists are useful.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative | <input type="checkbox"/> Structured | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Big organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurial | <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Small team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formal | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse | <input type="checkbox"/> Startup energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Casual | <input type="checkbox"/> Demanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Close-knit | <input type="checkbox"/> Established |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mission-driven | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast-growing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hierarchical | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Results-driven | <input type="checkbox"/> Stable | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat / few layers | <input type="checkbox"/> No-nonsense |

EXERCISE 3B

The people and culture that fit me

People I most enjoyed working alongside were like this...

The kind of culture where I do my best work (size, pace, formality, competition vs. collaboration)...

People and cultures I should avoid (be specific — this is just as useful)...

PETAL FOUR

Your Purpose

This is the petal people are tempted to skip, and it is often the one that explains everything. Two people can have identical skills, the same field, and the same nice office, and one is fulfilled while the other is hollow. The difference is usually **purpose** — whether the work serves something the person actually cares about. You do not need a grand cosmic mission. You need to know what you want your effort, at the end of a day, to have been *for*.

Two questions get you there: what do you *value* (the things you won't trade away), and which corner of the world would you most like to make a little better? The banks below give you language for both. Tick freely, then narrow.

NEED IDEAS?

Values word bank

Tick what genuinely matters to you in a working life — then go back and star the three you'd protect above all others.

- | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Building something lasting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service to others | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family time | <input type="checkbox"/> Craftsmanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness | <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty | |

NEED IDEAS?

"A corner of the world to improve" word bank

Bolles framed purpose as choosing a part of life you'd like to help heal. Which of these pulls at you?

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Small business | <input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness | <input type="checkbox"/> Animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> The arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice & fairness | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> My local community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty & hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> The elderly | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People's finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith & meaning | <input type="checkbox"/> Children & youth | |

EXERCISE 4A

What I want my work to be for

The values I'm not willing to trade away for a paycheck (from the bank, or your own)...

If my work made one corner of the world a little better, I'd want it to be...

A test worth applying. Imagine you're at the end of a working life, and someone asks what your work added up to. The answer you'd be proud to give is pointing at your purpose. You don't have to reach it in your next job — but knowing the direction keeps you from climbing a ladder that's leaning on the wrong wall.

EXERCISE 4B

My purpose, in one sentence

Draft it rough; you'll refine it for years. Try: "I want to use [my skills] to help [these people / this field] with [this problem]."

PETAL FIVE

Your Conditions

The fifth petal is the most practical and the most overlooked: the physical and structural **conditions** under which you do good work and stay sane. People accept jobs over big questions like title and salary, then quit over small ones — a brutal commute, a windowless room, rigid hours, constant travel, an open floor with no quiet. These conditions are not trivial; they are the texture of every single day. Name the ones you need before someone else's defaults are chosen for you.

Each line of the bank below is a slider with two ends. Mark where you fall on the ones that matter — and don't be shy about the deal-breakers, which are often the most clarifying part of the whole petal.

NEED IDEAS?

Conditions word bank

Tick the end of each pair that fits you. Blanks are fine — only mark what you actually have a preference about.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indoors · Outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast-paced · Steady pace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet · Lively / busy | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadline-driven · Self-paced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work alone · Work on a team | <input type="checkbox"/> Lots of structure · Lots of freedom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Own office · Open / shared space | <input type="checkbox"/> Close supervision · Full autonomy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed hours · Flexible hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Big organization · Small one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9-to-5 · Shift / nights | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / active · At a desk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predictable · Always varied | <input type="checkbox"/> One project at a time · Many at once |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No travel · Frequent travel | <input type="checkbox"/> Dress code · Casual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remote · In person | <input type="checkbox"/> Same place daily · Always moving |

EXERCISE 5A

The conditions I need — and the ones I can't abide

Two columns. The right-hand "deal-breakers" column is often the more useful one.

I do my best work when... (need)	I can't stand... (deal-breaker)
Space & setting	
Schedule & hours	
Freedom vs. structure	
Pace & pressure	
Commute / remote / travel	

Turn complaints into criteria. The fastest way to fill this petal is to list everything you've disliked about past jobs and flip each one into its opposite. "Hated being micromanaged" becomes "need autonomy." "Hated the silence" becomes "need a lively room." Your past frustrations are a precise map of the conditions you require.

PETAL SIX

Your Level & Reward

Two honest questions make up the sixth petal: how much **responsibility** do you actually want, and how much do you need to **earn**? Both deserve a truthful answer rather than a reflexive one. Not everyone wants to manage people or run the show; some of the most contented working lives belong to people who are masters of a craft and have no desire to supervise anyone. There is no virtue in climbing a ladder you don't want to be on.

Level of responsibility

Be honest about where you want to sit. Do you want to be the hands that do the work, the lead who guides a few others, the manager who runs a team, or the owner who carries the whole thing? Each is a legitimate and respectable answer, and each implies a very different daily life.

EXERCISE 6A

The level I want

Mark the one that fits — and note why.

- Skilled individual — I want to master the work itself, not manage others.
 - Team lead — I want to guide a small group while still doing the work.
 - Manager / director — I want to run a team or function.
 - Owner / founder — I want to carry the whole enterprise and its risk.
-

Reward

Now the money. Set two numbers honestly: the **floor** you need to live the life you've chosen (run your real budget, don't guess), and the **target** you're genuinely aiming for. Naming both frees you from two traps — chasing money you don't need into work you'll hate, and underselling yourself out of vagueness. Money is one petal among seven, neither the only thing nor nothing.

EXERCISE 6B

My numbers

The floor — what I genuinely need to cover my chosen life: \$_____ / **year**

The target — what I'm realistically aiming for: \$_____ / **year**

What I'm willing — and not willing — to trade for more money (time, location, values)...

PETAL SEVEN

Your Place

Work happens somewhere, and where you live shapes your whole life — the people near you, the cost of everything, the weather you wake up to, the distance to family. Bolles insisted geography belonged in the self-inventory because so many people quietly sacrifice the place they'd love to live for a job, then wonder why the job never makes them happy. Decide on purpose. Sometimes the place comes first and the work follows; that is a perfectly good way to build a life.

The rise of remote and hybrid work has widened this petal for many fields — for some people, place is now nearly a free choice. For others it remains tightly bound to where the work physically is. The bank below lists the factors people most often weigh; tick the ones that matter to you.

NEED IDEAS?

Place word bank — what to weigh

Tick the factors that genuinely matter to where you live, then rank your top few in the worksheet.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm climate | <input type="checkbox"/> Near the ocean | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural amenities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold / four seasons | <input type="checkbox"/> Near mountains | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Near family | <input type="checkbox"/> Near lakes / rivers | <input type="checkbox"/> Close-knit community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Near friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Low cost of living | <input type="checkbox"/> Near my industry's hub |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Big city | <input type="checkbox"/> Low taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Near an airport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburb | <input type="checkbox"/> Walkable | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe / low crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small town / rural | <input type="checkbox"/> Good schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Slower pace of life |

EXERCISE 7A

Where I want to live and work

My top place factors, from the bank or my own (ranked)...

Non-negotiables about place (near family? a certain climate? a city vs. country? a specific region?)...

Does my desired work require a location, allow remote, or not care? requires remote ok flexible

PART ONE · BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Assembling the Flower

Now gather the seven petals onto a single page. This is the payoff of all that work — your self-portrait in one view. Pull the top answers from each exercise and copy them here. Keep this page where you can see it; you will measure every opportunity against it, and you will revise it as you learn. When a job is offered, you won't ask only "do they want me?" — you'll ask "does this match my Flower?"

MASTER WORKSHEET

My Flower — the work I am for

Petal	My top answers
1. Skills I love using	
2. Knowledges I enjoy	
3. People & culture (RIASEC + texture)	
4. Purpose / values	
5. Conditions I need	
6. Level & reward	
7. Place	

Read your completed Flower out loud. It should sound like a real person — specific, a little surprising, unmistakably *you*. If it reads like a generic job posting, you've been writing what you think you should want. Go back and tell the truth. The honest version is the one that works.

PART ONE · A WORKED EXAMPLE

What a Finished Flower Looks Like

It is one thing to be handed blank worksheets and told to fill them in. It is another to see a finished one. So here is a complete example, start to finish — a made-up person, but a realistic one — so you can see how scattered scraps of a life become a single, pointed answer. The person is fictional; the path from stuck to specific is exactly the one the exercises are designed to produce.

Meet Dana. Dana is 38 and has run the front office of a busy dental practice for ten years. She is good at her job and quietly restless — competent, but not sure this is the work she's *for*. She has never been able to answer "what should I be doing?" because she could never get past the blank page. Here is what happened when she worked the petals.

Step one — a few of her Seven Stories

Dana wrote seven; three of them were these:

- **The schedule fix.** The practice's booking system was chaos and patients waited 40 minutes. She redesigned it over a month; average wait dropped by half and no-shows fell.
- **The frightened patient.** A terrified man nearly walked out before a root canal. She sat with him, explained each step calmly, and stayed nearby. He finished — and later sent his whole family to the practice.
- **The wedding.** She planned her sister's 120-person wedding on a shoestring, juggling vendors, family drama, and a tight budget — and it came off beautifully.

Step two — the skills hiding inside the stories

Reading her seven stories for verbs, the same ones kept reappearing — the repeaters are the tell:

DANA'S REPEATING VERBS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing complex logistics | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solving on the fly | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuading gently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calming anxious people | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning ahead | <input type="checkbox"/> Following through |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinating many parties | <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipating problems | |

Her ranked top four: **(1)** organizing complex logistics, **(2)** putting anxious people at ease, **(3)** coordinating many moving parts, **(4)** solving problems calmly under pressure.

Step three — her assembled Flower

With the other petals filled the same way, here is Dana's one-page self-portrait. Notice it does not name a job. It describes the *shape* of the work she's for — which is exactly what makes the next step possible.

DANA'S COMPLETED MASTER WORKSHEET

Her Flower — the work she is for

Petal	Dana's answers
1. Skills	<i>Organizing complex logistics; putting anxious people at ease; coordinating many parties; calm problem-solving.</i>
2. Knowledges	<i>Dental / healthcare office operations; small-business operations; scheduling systems; event planning.</i>
3. People & culture	<i>Social + Conventional, a touch Enterprising. A small, warm, close-knit team — not a cold corporate floor.</i>
4. Purpose / values	<i>Helping people through stressful moments; service; stability for her family; honest dealing.</i>
5. Conditions	<i>Lively but not chaotic; predictable hours; real autonomy; in-person and near home; little to no travel.</i>
6. Level & reward	<i>Team lead — guide a small group while still doing the work. Floor she needs, with a clear target above it.</i>
7. Place	<i>Stay in her current metro, near family. In-person is fine; relocation is not on the table.</i>

What it pointed to

Dana's Flower didn't hand her a job title — it handed her a *direction*, which is better. The shape pointed clearly toward **healthcare practice management and patient-experience operations**: running the business side of a larger specialty group, or a patient-experience role for a clinic network. She generated a list, then tested the top three with informational interviews before applying to anything. Two of the three turned out nothing like she imagined; the third lit her up.

The lesson isn't Dana's specific answer. It's the **transformation**: a vague, demoralizing "I'm stuck and I don't know what I want" became a specific, searchable, testable direction — built entirely from

ordinary pieces of her own life. That is what your seven petals are for. Yours will look nothing like Dana's, and that's exactly the point.

PART TWO · FROM PORTRAIT TO REAL WORK

Naming the Work

A Flower is a portrait of you, not a job title. The next move is translation: turning that portrait into a handful of specific fields and roles you can actually go investigate. The mistake is to do this alone in your head — you only know the careers you happen to have heard of, which is a tiny fraction of what exists. The work is to *generate options*, then *research* them before committing.

Generate the list

Take your top skills, your favorite knowledges, and your purpose, and ask people — lots of people — one question: "*Given someone who loves doing these things, with these interests, what kinds of work should I look into?*" Friends, former colleagues, anyone who knows many fields. They will name jobs you have never considered. Write them all down without judging; the goal now is a long list, not a short one.

EXERCISE 8A

Careers and fields to investigate

Every possibility, however unlikely. You'll narrow by researching, not by guessing.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

If there's no straight line, circle the field

Here is one of the most freeing moves in this whole method, and it rescues people who feel stuck for a particular reason: they've found the *field* they love but can't see a path to the obvious *job* in it. The petals point clearly at a world — cars, books, the ocean, fashion, food, sports, music, horses, wine — but the headline job (pro athlete, famous chef, marine biologist) is a narrow, crowded door with no straight line you can find. Don't aim at that one door. **Circle the whole field.** Around anything a person is passionate about

sits an entire ecosystem of work — dozens of roles, services, and small businesses that touch it — and most of them are wide-open doors nobody is fighting over.

Say you love cycling but you're never going to race in the Tour. Look at everything that touches the sport: someone sells the bikes, and someone resells used ones online; someone imports the parts, repairs the frames, and fits the riders; someone guides cycling tours, organizes the races, and coaches beginners; someone writes the newsletter everyone in the scene actually reads, keeps the shop's books, reps a component brand, or runs the local advocacy nonprofit. That's a dozen ways to spend your days inside the thing you love — and only one of them was the "obvious" job everybody else was chasing.

Notice the pattern: a **field** plus a **verb** is a job description waiting to be claimed. And which verb is *yours* is decided by your skills. The same field looks completely different to an organizer, a teacher, a salesperson, a fixer, and a writer. So lay your top skills from Petal One beside the field you love, run down the list below, and watch the right doors light up. And here is the encouraging part: most of these doors open with skills you *already have* — not years of new schooling. You don't need a degree in the field to keep an outfitter's books, fit riders, run the events, or rep the brand.

NEED IDEAS?

Ways to work near a field — the verbs around it

Pick a field you love and run down this list. Each verb is a different door, and most aren't the one obvious job everyone competes for.

MAKE & SUPPLY

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make or produce it | <input type="checkbox"/> Build / assemble it | <input type="checkbox"/> Supply the tools & materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design it | <input type="checkbox"/> Grow it | <input type="checkbox"/> Source / import it |

SELL & MOVE

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell it (retail) | <input type="checkbox"/> Broker & deal | <input type="checkbox"/> Run a marketplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resell used ones | <input type="checkbox"/> Import & export | <input type="checkbox"/> Rep a brand |

FIX & SERVICE

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repair it | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain / service it | <input type="checkbox"/> Customize it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restore it | <input type="checkbox"/> Install it | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect & certify it |

TEACH & TELL

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach or train | <input type="checkbox"/> Publish a guide or book | <input type="checkbox"/> Give talks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coach one-on-one | <input type="checkbox"/> Make videos / a podcast | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a newsletter / blog | <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph or film it | |

GATHER & EXPERIENCE

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give guided tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Lead trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Curate a collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Run events / tournaments | <input type="checkbox"/> Build a club / community | |

RUN & SUPPORT

- Manage a business in it
- Market it
- Finance or insure it
- Keep the books / admin
- Recruit for it
- Consult / advise

EXERCISE 8B

Circle the field — twenty ways in

Write a field you love at the top. Then, using the verbs above, list as many ways to work near it as you can — push for twenty. Circle the three that best fit your Flower.

The field I'm drawn to: _____

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____
- 11 _____
- 12 _____

The point: "I love this field but can't be the one famous thing in it" is not a dead end — it's a list you haven't written yet. The obvious job has the most competition and the fewest openings; the doors around it are where real, reachable work lives. Many of those doors are ordinary **salaried jobs** — selling, fitting, administering, managing — and getting *hired* in the field is often the smartest, lowest-risk first step. If one could become a business of your own, wonderful — but test it as a **side project** before it has to pay the rent. (That newsletter "everyone reads"? That is exactly how this Institute began — on the side, first.)

Try them on before you buy

Here is the step almost everyone skips, and it is the one that prevents expensive mistakes: before you chase a role, **talk to people who already do it**. Find two or three people in each field that interests you and ask them what the work is really like — the daily reality, what they love, what they'd warn you about, how they got in. This is called an informational interview, and it is the engine of the whole second half of this method. It turns a fantasy of a job into a clear-eyed picture, and it quietly builds the relationships that lead to the job itself. The next chapter is entirely about how to do it.

Narrow to a short list. After a handful of these conversations, most of your long list will fall away on its own — "I thought I'd love that, but it's nothing like I imagined" — and two or three real targets will rise to the top. Those are what you pursue.

PART TWO · HOW WORK IS ACTUALLY FOUND

The Hidden Job Market

Here is an idea that reshapes the whole search once you absorb it: a great many jobs are never publicly advertised at all. They are filled before a listing is ever posted — through someone the employer already knows, or someone who came recommended, or someone who simply walked in and impressed them. No one knows the exact share, and the figures people quote are soft, but the direction is not in doubt: a large slice of hiring happens off the board entirely. The visible job market — the listings everyone scrolls — is the crowded front door. The **hidden job market** is every other way in, and it is where the better odds live.

Why are so many jobs filled quietly? Because hiring is risky and expensive, and employers strongly prefer someone who comes recommended, or who walked in the door and impressed them, over an unknown résumé in a stack of hundreds. This is not unfair so much as human. And it is good news for you, because it means the most effective job search is not "apply to more postings" — it is "become known, by the right people, as the person who fits."

The crowded path: polish a résumé, answer ads, compete with hundreds, wait.

The hidden path: decide what you want, go meet the people who already do it, let them get to know you — and be the name that comes to mind when a need appears. **The second path has far less competition because almost no one walks it.**

Why this matters more now, not less

It is tempting to assume technology has made this human approach quaint. The opposite is true. As AI makes it effortless to fire off hundreds of applications, the front door is more crowded and more automated than ever — résumés are increasingly read by software and ranked before any person sees them. That is precisely why the side door has grown *more* valuable, not less. An algorithm can sort a stack of strangers; it cannot replace a real person vouching for you, or the impression you make in an honest conversation. In a market flooded with automated noise, being known by a human is the rarest and most powerful signal you can send.

How you actually reach the hidden market

You reach it through conversations, not applications. Specifically:

- **Talk to people who do the work you want** — informational interviews (next chapter). These are the single highest-value activity in a job search.

- **Go directly to organizations you admire**, whether or not they're advertising. Find out who leads the team you'd join, and get to them through a mutual connection or a thoughtful approach — not the careers portal.
- **Tell everyone what you're looking for**, specifically. Vague ("looking for opportunities") gets nothing; specific ("I'm looking to move into commercial real estate analysis in the Southeast") lets people connect a dot for you.
- **Become findable and credible** in your target field — show up where its people gather, online and in person, and contribute something useful.

EXERCISE 9A

My way in

Three organizations I'd genuinely want to work for (advertised or not)...

1

2

3

People I already know who touch my target field (or know someone who does)...

PART TWO · THE CORE SKILL

Talking to People

The informational interview is the heart of this method, and it makes most people nervous, so let's be precise about what it is and isn't. It is **not** asking someone for a job. It is asking someone to tell you about their work. That distinction changes everything: people are guarded when you want something from them and generous when you're curious about them. You are doing research, and most people are flattered to be the expert for twenty minutes.

Make the first one easy. You do not have to start with strangers, and you do not need perfect words. Start with people you already know — a former colleague, a friend's parent, someone from church, the gym, or the neighborhood who does interesting work. A message this plain is enough: *"Hi [Name] — I'm exploring a move toward [field], and you actually know it. Could I borrow 20 minutes in the next couple of weeks? I'm not asking for a job — I'd just love to hear what the work is really like. I'll work around your schedule."* Most people say yes.

The PIE method

One simple way to build the nerve and the skill, described in Bolles's work and credited to Daniel Porot, is to practice in three stages — remembered as **PIE**:

- **P — Pleasure (practice).** First, interview people about a topic you simply *enjoy* — a hobby, a passion. The stakes are zero; the only goal is to get comfortable asking questions and listening. This builds the muscle.
- **I — Information.** Next, interview people about the *work* and *fields* you're considering. What's it really like? How did you get in? What would you tell someone starting out? This is where your career list gets tested against reality.
- **E — Employment.** Finally, once you know the field and have met its people, you talk with those who have the power to hire — not as a stranger with a résumé, but as someone who has done the homework and is already a familiar, credible name.

Questions that open people up

You don't need a clever script — you need genuine curiosity and a few good questions. These rarely fail:

- How did you get into this work?
- What do you love about it — and what do you wish someone had warned you about?
- What does an ordinary day actually look like?
- What kind of person really thrives in this work?

- If you were me and wanted to get into this, what would you do?
- **Who else should I talk to?** — always ask this last; it's how one conversation becomes ten.

EXERCISE 10A

My first five conversations

Name five people to reach out to this month — start with the low-stakes "pleasure" ones to warm up. Note who might introduce you.

Person & what they do	How I'll reach them / who connects us

Always send the thank-you. A short, specific note of thanks within a day — mentioning something they actually said — is not just manners. It's what makes you the person they remember warmly, and gladly help again. Few people bother; it sets you apart.

PART TWO · FOR THE CAREER-CHANGER

Changing Careers

If you're not starting out but starting *over*, the same method applies — with one extra idea that makes the leap far less daunting. A career has two big variables: the **field** you work in (the subject) and the **role** you play in it (the job). A career change means changing one or both. The trick is to understand that **changing both at once is hard; changing one at a time is not.**

Move one variable, then the other

Say you're an accountant in a hospital who wants to become a marketing director at a software company. That's changing both the role *and* the field at once — a long jump that employers find hard to underwrite. But you can break it into two steps. Either keep your role and change your field first (become an accountant at a software company, learning the new world with a skill you already have), then change your role from inside. Or keep your field and change your role first (move into marketing within the hospital you already know). Each single step is a credible, hireable move. Two steps, and you've crossed a gap that looked impossible in one.

The bridge is your transferable skills. What carries you from an old career to a new one isn't your old job title — it's the skills underneath it. That's why Petal One matters so much for changers: those verbs are exactly what survives the move and what you'll lead with when you explain why a "newcomer" is really nothing of the kind.

It is genuinely not too late

People reinvent their working lives in their forties, fifties, sixties, and beyond — often into the most satisfying work of their lives, because by then they finally know their own Flower. Age brings a deep stock of skills, knowledges, and relationships that a younger person simply hasn't accumulated yet. The method doesn't change with age. The self-inventory may even be easier, because you have more life to mine for it.

EXERCISE 11A

My pivot, in steps

Where I am now — field: _____ role: _____

Where I want to be — field: _____ role: _____

My first single step (change field *or* role, not both)...

The skills I'll carry across as my bridge...

Can you afford the move? The money in between

Here is the part most career-change advice skips — and the part a finance institute won't let you skip: a pivot usually has a cost, and you have to fund the gap. Be honest and concrete about it before you leap. There may be a stretch of lower pay while you earn credibility in the new field, a retraining or certification bill, or simply months of searching with no income. None of that means "don't do it." It means plan the bridge, so the dream survives contact with the mortgage.

Three numbers make the move real: your **runway** (how many months your savings cover your essentials), the **cost** of getting in (courses, credentials, tools, lost income), and your **bridge** (any income — part-time, freelance, a partner's earnings — that carries you across). If the gap is too wide to clear in one jump, that is exactly when the one-variable-at-a-time pivot earns its keep: each smaller step usually costs less and pays sooner.

EXERCISE 11B

The money bridge

My runway — months my savings would cover essentials: _____ **months**

Cost to get into the new work (training, credentials, tools, lost income): \$ _____

Bridge income I can count on during the move (freelance, part-time, household): \$ _____ / **month**

My honest read — can I fund the gap, or do I need a smaller first step?

PART TWO · THE LAST MILE

Showing Up

A Flower tells you what you're for. It does not, by itself, make an employer see it. The last mile of this method is translation: turning your self-portrait into the handful of words and signals by which the world will size you up — a one-line pitch, a résumé and profile that point in one direction, and, if you're changing fields, a way of framing yourself that turns "newcomer" into "exactly right." Even when a job comes through a referral, you usually still have to clear a keyword screen and survive a busy person's ten-second glance. Make those count.

Your positioning sentence

Before the résumé, write one plain sentence that says who you are and what you're for. It's what you'll say when someone asks "what are you looking for?" — and the spine every other document hangs on. Pull it straight from your Flower: a skill you love, a field you know, and the value you create. *"I'm an operations person who's great at making chaotic systems calm — I want to run the business side of a healthcare practice."* Specific beats impressive every time.

EXERCISE 12A

My positioning sentence

One sentence, drawn from your Flower. Try: "I'm a [skill] person who [value I create] — I want to [the work or field]."

Make your résumé and profile agree with it

Once you have the sentence, everything else should echo it. Your online profile headline is not your last job title — it's your positioning sentence, trimmed. Your résumé's top lines should lead with the skills and results that match where you're *going*, not a full archaeology of where you've been. And use the actual words of your target field — the ones you collected in your informational interviews — because those are the keywords both the screening software and the human are scanning for.

If you're changing fields: reframe, don't apologize

The career-changer's instinct is to apologize for what they lack. Reverse it. You are not an outsider with gaps; you are a rare combination who brings transferable strengths the insiders don't have. Lead with the bridge skills from Petal One and the unusual pair of knowledges from Petal Two. "Ten years calming

frightened patients" is not a detour on the way to operations — it's a reason to hire you. Name the transfer out loud, so the reader doesn't have to do the work of seeing it.

The whole last mile, in a line: say what you're for in one sentence, make every document agree with it, speak your target field's own words, and frame your difference as an advantage. Clarity, expressed consistently, is what turns a Flower into an offer.

PART THREE · DOING IT

The 30-Day Plan

A method only matters if you move. The work in this book can quietly become something you "mean to get to," so here is a simple cadence to make it real. Treat the next month as a campaign with a rhythm. You don't have to do everything at once; you have to do something every week.

THE CADENCE

A four-week campaign

Week	Focus
Week 1	Build the Flower. Do the Seven Stories and all seven petals. Assemble the master page.
Week 2	Generate careers. Ask people for ideas; build the long list. Line up your first conversations.
Week 3	Start talking. Three to five informational interviews. Narrow the list. Always ask "who else?"
Week 4	Go deeper on your top two or three. Reach toward organizations and the people who hire. Keep the conversations going.

A weekly rhythm you can keep

After the first month, settle into a sustainable pace: a little reflection, a little outreach, a few conversations, every week. Job-hunting alone in long, demoralizing marathons is how people burn out. Steady and social beats frantic and isolated, every time.

EXERCISE 13A

My weekly commitments

- Each week I will reach out to _____ new people.
- Each week I will have _____ real conversations (calls or coffees).
- Each week I will spend _____ hours moving this forward, on these days: _____
- The person who will hold me accountable is: _____

When it gets hard

It will. There will be unanswered messages and conversations that go nowhere. Two things keep people going. First, remember that rejection in a job search is mostly a sign of *mismatch*, not of your worth — you are looking for fit, and a "no" is just fit you didn't find, bringing you closer to the one you will. Second, don't do it alone: tell people what you're after, lean on someone who'll check in on you, and keep your Flower in view so you remember what you're actually walking toward. You are not looking for any job. You are looking for *your* work — and now you have a method to find it.

The whole method, in one breath: Know yourself, concretely. Name the work that fits. Reach it through people, not portals. Move a little every week. Measure everything against your Flower. That's it — and it works.

PART THREE · CREDIT WHERE DUE

Sources & Further Reading

This workbook is a practitioner's distillation of a method built by others over more than half a century. We've put it in our own words and our own worksheets — including the word banks, which are our own compilations — so it can be given away freely, but the ideas belong to the people below. If the approach helped you, go to the source — especially the first one.

The core source

Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*. First published 1970, revised in many subsequent editions (Ten Speed Press). The origin of the Flower Exercise (the "Self-Inventory") and of the modern, self-knowledge-first approach to job hunting. The single best book on this subject ever written; this workbook is a doorway to it, not a substitute.

The ideas behind the petals

Bernard Haldane — pioneer of the "dependable strengths" / accomplishment-stories approach, the ancestor of the Seven Stories exercise used in Petal One. His work in mid-twentieth-century career counseling shaped the idea that your skills are best discovered through stories of what you've enjoyed doing well.

John L. Holland — psychologist who developed the theory of vocational personalities and work environments, summarized in the six RIASEC types used in Petal Three (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional). See his book *Making Vocational Choices* and the related interest inventories.

Daniel Porot — European career expert and longtime Bolles collaborator, originator of the PIE method (Pleasure / Information / Employment) for practicing and conducting informational interviews, used in the "Talking to People" chapter.

Where to go next

For self-assessment of Holland codes, the U.S. Department of Labor's free **O*NET Interest Profiler** (onetonline.org) is a useful, no-cost tool — and a good source of fuller skill and interest vocabularies. For the full method in its definitive form, read the current edition of *Parachute*. And when you want a thinking partner for the financial and professional side of a career move, that is what The Baratelli Institute is here for.

This is a free educational workbook. It summarizes and builds upon the cited works in original language; it reproduces none of their text and is not endorsed by or affiliated with their authors or publishers. Provided for general guidance, not as individualized career, legal, or financial advice.

A CLOSING WORD

You are not stuck. You are between drafts.

The question "what should I be doing with my life?" feels like a wall. It is really a door — one that opens only when you stop staring at job listings and start taking an honest measure of yourself. That is the work this book asked of you, and if you did it, you now hold something rare: a clear picture of the work you are for, and a way to go find it that doesn't depend on luck.

Keep your Flower close. Revise it as you grow. And the next time the Sunday-night feeling comes, you'll have an answer — not a perfect one, but a true direction, and the method to keep walking it.

And when you're ready to act on what you found — the economics of a career move, the path into accounting or finance, or simply a practitioner's read on your options — that is exactly what The Baratelli Institute is built for. Start at **baratelliinstitute.com**.

Go find your work.

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