

9 Career Books To Give Inspiration, Opportunity & Insight In 2012

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If you're searching for a gift that will give meaning or some mentoring to a friend or family member, you could enroll them in a webinar or pay for a subscription to a magazine that covers spirituality or alternative approaches to success. Or, you could find a great career book that speaks to their situation and hopes and dreams. Books open up the world of ideas and offer insights and advice, and they move at the pace of the reader. They come in many formats – e-books and even career comic books like *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko* by Daniel Pink – and thousands of titles. They are available for people just starting out and for those who are moving into senior leadership roles.

With such an array of choices, I decided to consult with some of the best career experts I know and ask them for their top recommendations. Some of their choice titles are offered up here and the rest of their choices show up on my own blog, [WorkingKind.com](#).

Kate Wendleton, president of the [Five O'Clock Club](#), a job search organization, and author, recommended mostly titles by other Five O'Clock coaches. Among her picks:

- *ACHIEVING THE GOOD LIFE AFTER 50: Tools and Resources for Making it Happen*, by Renee Lee Rosenberg. This book, by a Five O'Clock career coach, explores who you are and what is important to you, offering resources and strategies to help you work through your personal retirement concerns. And it gives stories of people 50 plus, some struggling with the issues of aging and retirement, others accepting and enjoying their new state of being.
- *THE GOOD PERSON GUIDEBOOK: Transforming Your Work & Personal Life*, by Richard C. Bayer, Ph.D. This book by Five O'Clock's chief operating officer helps you answer two key questions: "What type of person should you be?" and "What should you do given a decision of ethical importance?" Topics include: what makes people happy, how to overcome suffering, whistle blowing, raising children well, a meaningful work life and respecting human dignity.
- *FOR EXECUTIVES ONLY: Applying Business Techniques to Your Job Search*. by Bill Belknap and Hélène Seiler. Authors have coached more than 400 execs and managers, and write what executives need to know to execute an effective [job search](#). They include case studies showing success and pitfalls.

Margaret Riley Dikel, creator of [The Riley Guide](#), is a former librarian who has compiled career information online since 1995. She suggests:

- *What Color is Your Parachute?* (2012 edition), by Richard N. Bolles (Ten Speed Press). "This is the grand champion of [job search](#) books and works for persons who are new to the world of work as well as those who are considering a career shift," said Riley. Parachute guides you through deciding where you want to go and how you'll get there. It contains a mix of personal evaluation, job search and networking strategies. "Always excellent!"
- *Social Networking for Career Success*, by Miriam Salpeter (LearningExpress). An experienced career coach and career columnist for *U.S News & World Report*, the author introduces social media as a job search tool and instructs readers on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and even blogs to create a "personal brand" and land [a job](#).

[Phyllis Mufson](#), a career coach for 25 years, works with people to achieve their “wildest dreams.” She also recommends *What Color Is Your Parachute* as the “only one book about job searching” especially for the more analytically inclined. Her other choices include:

- *Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want*, by Barbara Sher and Annie Gottlieb works well for those who are more intuitive. It’s great for finding passion in work and life and using support to get started going after what you really want. *I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was: How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It*, by [Barbara Sher](#) and Barbara Smith. This book “is insightful about many of the ways people get stuck” and offers written exercises for personal exploration.
- Two books for those want to learn more about personality type and career choice/development, through the Myers-Briggs and other lens, are *What’s Your Type of Career?: Find Your Perfect Career By Using Your Personality Type*, by Donna Dunning and *Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type*, by Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger. *What’s Your Type of Career* has stronger information on self-management, Mufson says, while *Do What You Are* is stronger on career choice and job search.

If these don’t feel like a good fit for the people on your list, try using some of their key interests – entrepreneurship and food or leadership and kindness, for example, when you search on an online book site. Or head to a book review and recommendations site like Goodreads (check out the listopia called “most inspiring nonfiction” or the sections on business, labor or self-help for many more options).

If you really want to make their New Year’s bright, buy them one of the books recommended here or on Goodreads – and then give them a \$15 gift card for a bookstore, with instructions to pick another that will inspire or advance their career in 2012.