

**Now What Do I Do? A Woman's Guide to a New Career** challenges the myth that career changes must be made before mid-life. An entire career can be started, developed and completed in the active years before Social Security and retirement programs begin. This book is for you if you want to or need to make a job change. It's also for you if you're re-entering the job market after a hiatus or if you've never worked for pay. You'll design your ideal job and use it as a guide during your job search to make comparisons to "real jobs." The closer the match between the ideal and the actual, the more successful and satisfying the job will be. This book provides a new way of looking at yourself, jobs and opportunities.

I've designed this book specifically for women at mid-life because I feel this population has generally been neglected in the past by career planners. When I recently turned 50, I found that all the books about mid-life focused on winding down and preparing for retirement. My reaction was, "I'm not ready for that!" While some women may choose retirement planning, others may want to or need to continue working. In this era of health and longevity 50 can be considered to be as mid-life as 40 once was.

At mid-life there are many reasons to seek help with career planning. You may decide to work more (your children have gone), or less (you don't need to or want more free time). You may decide it's time to re-enter the job market after raising children. You may decide it's time to change careers. You may have been "re-engineered" out of a job; or life circumstances may force you to work.

I've been a career advisor in private practice since 1995 and I encourage you to see career selection as an opportunity to learn about yourself as well as about the job market. Women's career paths are often less linear than men's, reflecting their adaptation to changing family needs and a changing sense of self. While such flexibility is often useful, women can readily lose sight of their real career desires and abilities. They can over-adapt and never know who they truly are. This book integrates both the external world of jobs with the internal world of identity. You're encouraged to learn about yourself and to value your years of experience (paid and unpaid).

The emphasis and attention to issues of identity result in a clear sense of your strengths, talents, interests and mid-life goals. The book also covers the “nuts and bolts” of career research, specific job-finding techniques, resume writing and interviewing. This integrated approach produces significantly more career success than simply teaching job finding skills.

The book has an upbeat, positive style and conveys the message that you’re never too old to change your life in a positive direction. It includes many case examples drawn from my practice and exercises to help with self-exploration and job search, including extensive resource lists. I think you’ll find it very useful in your own quest for satisfying work.

Enjoy the journey.

Jan Cannon