



## Employed for Life!

By Frumi Rachel Barr

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**Author's bio:** P. Anthony (Tony) Burnham, Esq. draws on over three decades of real-world experience on both sides of the corporate equation. After serving as corporate vice President of Human resources for Nestle/Carnation, Tony co-founded the ProActive Institute to help both employers and employees learn to navigate organizational transitions. He is currently President and co-founder of Human Capital Co-Op, LLC, providing counsel and HR solutions to small and mid-sized businesses.

**Author's Big Thought:** In this book the author clearly outlines the methods you can use to achieve lifetime employability in the modern workplace. The needs of both employees and employers to produce more, do it better and faster, and do it cheaply - must come together. The answer is very simple - producing greater results leads to greater security, and those increased results, in turn, fulfill the company's desperate needs for greater competitiveness and profits! The key to mastering the new workplace paradigm requires more than just finding your "bliss", it lies in enhancing your personal value as an asset to your employer, what Burnham calls "The Value of YOU".

### Chapter notes:

#### Chapter 1: The Workplace: My, How You've Changed

What most employers won't tell you is that today, despite greater accountability and productivity from their employees, they generally offer what amounts to only temporary work. You can also expect to be reselected or "deselected" at least annually by virtue of your performance, which is measured not in loyalty or longevity, but in *results*.

- Today, you are hired and retained on the basis of your demonstrated self-reliance and your proven track record of contributing results.
- Successful leaders of the new millennium are more "empowering" than powerful—they rely on their own competence rather than mere authority to get the job done, and they expect you to do the same.
- Work security has shifted from being something dictated by an employer to something largely controlled by you. The security you seek will then come from your own confidence in

your abilities, skills and knowledge - your Value (with a capital V). "At will" employment has become a two-way street. Properly self-managed, your side of that street will provide you a long and successful career.

- You must understand your own Value and be able to communicate and demonstrate your worth on demand. Facing the reality that you, and not others, are responsible for your life and career sets you free to take greater responsibility for shaping your own future.
- By understanding the scope and types of changes that have occurred in the workplace, you can take full advantage of the opportunities available to you through knowledge that, by performing, you can control your own work security and career.

## **Chapter 2: First Steps**

- All of the insight you need to thrive in today's changed workplace is entirely learnable and, like riding a bicycle, once learned, you'll never forget it. Developing the required insight involves a shift in self-perception more than anything else. Seeing yourself as a "product" or "business" that you continually market, both between "jobs" and while actively employed, is the self-view that can and must be acquired.
- Both today and in the future, being hired and retained depends on the specific results you contribute, not merely your regular attendance, positive attitude or formal education.
- You must prepare yourself in fundamentally different ways to create and control your career security. You must focus on "work", not "jobs". Doing the work required is what is needed, not just doing 'your job'.
- Whatever security "jobs" may have offered in the past is now being far outweighed by their limitations on your opportunities to learn and use new skills by making broader contributions "outside the box".
- To succeed, you need to know exactly what your basic skills are, and likewise, you must be conscious of your weaknesses. Your educational background, past experience or even skills alone won't sell your "product". Your features and benefits, in the form of results that you have and will consistently attain, will.
- Keeping your current skills up to date, along with acquiring new ones that produce the results you sell, is the process you must become comfortable with if you are to be continuously investment-worthy and thus "employed".

## **Chapter 3: the Value Formula**

We all understand that a product's value needs to be communicated in order for someone to buy it, but we're not used to thinking that way when it comes to our careers.

Some basic principles for achieving more career self-reliance and control over your working future include the following:

- To be a successful self-employed businessperson, you need to understand that you are your own "product". Begin by taking responsibility for your career. You must think and act as though you are a successfully self-employed individual who has personally produced the results that have justified your paychecks.
- You need to know your product's unique features and benefits-your skills, strengths, achievements, qualities and attributes.
  - Make a list of your skills and strengths.

- Identify the skills you have used and acquired both for pay and otherwise.
  - Organize the list. Place your five greatest skills or strengths at the top. Consider which of your strengths will be (or is) most valuable to this specific employer.
  - For each skill or strength on the list, write a brief sentence or two clearly describing your actions that demonstrate your on-the-job use of that skill.
  - List the specific results you've achieved by applying your skills. These results must be quantifiable.
  - Preparing yourself to quantify your achievements both verbally and with your written list, will distinguish you from the vast majority of other applicants and coworkers.
- You need to toot your own horn at job interviews and performance evaluations-present the facts about your performance and let them speak to your value. Understanding that you are the one person who can best represent You is the crucial first step toward career success. Be prepared to speak specifically about how your value relates to the job in question. Find out exactly what the company expects and needs from this job, and communicate your value as it relates to those expectations and needs. In preparing for a performance evaluations it's essential that you know what results were expected during the period being reviewed. By knowing the expected results, you can prepare yourself to best communicate your value to the company. In both interviews and performance evaluations, be prepared to identify and discuss your accomplishments and to offer detailed, written support for them.
  - The Value Formula: Strengths + Actions + Results = Your Value
  - Your strengths and skills are the things at which you excel. Some of these may result from formal education; others may be inherent in our personalities, such as being a good listener. Still others may have resulted from our ongoing experience; and some strengths come from a combination of education, personality traits and experience. Review your lists with colleagues, friends and family. You will be amazed at the strengths they identify that you have taken for granted.
  - Your actions are the things that you do which demonstrate or apply your strengths. It's your responsibility to identify and communicate the successes that have resulted from applying your skills.
  - Results are the bottom line of every business venture, including yours. Without positive results, there's no real value being created. It's your value that will show your current or next employer that you are an investment that has produced, and will continue to produce, a solid return.
  - If you like what you do, you will be much better at it than if you don't like what you do.
  - Know which category best describes yourself and your coworkers as the degree to which you prefer one over the other can dramatically influence your career choices, and ultimately, your life.:
    - Humanist - concerned with unity and harmony, and with the feelings of people involved in any venture.
    - Organizer - prefer structure.
    - Energizer - open to the possibilities for productive change, and are active in starting and implementing change.
    - Futurist - most interested in knowledge and thinking.
  - Well thought out goals and an action/business plan to meet your goals are important steps in

controlling your career. Goal-setting requires knowing that your needs and priorities may change. Goal-setting is not a one-time action, but a process that evolves and lasts a lifetime. Once your goals have been established, it's necessary to develop a plan to ensure you meet those objectives.

#### **Chapter 4: Déjà Vu**

Reread chapter 3 just in case you missed something of value.

#### **Chapter 5: Kaizen: Continuously Building Your Value For Long-Term Success**

- The Japanese business-related concept Kaizen is defined as "continuous quality improvement," which can be applied to your own product: You.
- You must make a constant and focused effort to continuously improve your own product: You. Some keys to continuous quality improvement include:
  - Learning to want to learn - there is no substitute for formal education when you're honing and adding to your skills and strengths. If you really want security in today's world, it's important for you to develop or increase your desire to learn. By learning to enjoy learning and then adding to your skills (and results) list every year, you will continually be increasing your value to your company and gaining more and more control over your own career and work stability. Education is clearly a process rather than an event.
  - Volunteering. Volunteering can result in building your inventory of accomplishments that can enhance your current work security and future employability.
- In today's workplace You are the product and, like any product, you must continuously strive to improve yourself-as you do through volunteering and continuing education.
- Quality, like value, requires personal commitment, and thus is an "inside job."

#### **Chapter 6: Personal Mastery: Controlling Your Own Future**

Personal mastery is a process of getting from where you are to where you want to be, while being honest with yourself about exactly where those are. The general idea is that you can get whatever you want; you just have to be able to identify what it is. Being able to stand out from the rest and make an impact requires you to be committed; to believe in the possibility that you can obtain anything you truly want; to organize and use your resources; to clarify your values; to focus your energy; to effectively communicate and bond with others; and above all, to be honest with yourself when engaging in all of the above.

- Personal mastery means continually expanding yourself and your abilities to achieve the results you want in your life.
- "Creative tension" is the gap between where you are and where you want to be. That "tension" needs to be strong enough to cause you to act, yet not so strong that you see no hope of achieving your goals and give up.
- People who have achieved personal mastery:
  - find purpose in their lives
  - welcome change
  - are inquisitive
  - feel connected to themselves as well as others - see life as a challenging journey,

and, most importantly, *choose to be proactive participants in that journey.*

- Personal mastery starts with seeing yourself as an individual who is able to cope with life's challenge- but even more, it means taking full responsibility for creating your personal vision and then making it happen.

### **Chapter 7: Family Matters**

- It is essential that families understand the new work realities in order for them to provide you with meaningful support and share in your successes. Without this understanding, they may not readily see the benefit of building the value of You.
- If you don't take the time to communicate your views and objectives, family and friends may offer advice (or worse, discouragement) that you don't need.
- The equation for balancing work, self, family and friends has become significantly more complicated, and requires more effort and two-way communication by you than ever before.
- Friends and family members should be seen by you as compatriots, collaborators, colleagues and willing resources during your challenging
- Set your own rules. Learn to delegate. Focus. Be honest. It's the entrepreneur's critical advantage. With control, you can create a workplace that's flexible and rewarding, and allows you to find balance in your life.

### **Chapter 8: The Price Of The New Value Paradigm**

- The new Value Paradigm means you no longer have to be at the mercy of your employer when it comes to your work security or your opportunities for achievement and growth. Knowing your Value brings with it new freedom and independence.
- Independence requires that if you are to find success, you must define your purpose and direction based largely on your skills, strengths and core tendencies and then marshal all your energy and resources toward achieving your goals. It takes continuous personal conviction, confidence and courage. It is never easy but the rewards are immeasurable.
- The world of business has been changed forever, and if you become *value-minded* you will find freedom, independence and control.
- With your freedom comes responsibility for your value, your relationships, your career and, ultimately, your peace and prosperity, and the wellbeing of your family.

**Reviewer's recommendation:** One of the most common issues that executive coaches help with is that many leaders do not carefully communicate the expectations they have of their employees. In order to achieve results, employees need to be clear about what success in their position looks like. If leaders would transmit the principles discussed in this book, all their constituents would benefit - their customers, employees and their shareholders.



Frumi and Deborah Gaal recently co-founded the Leaderly Learning Center to benefit leaders and their teams. The center for continuous learning guides emerging and awakening leaders to develop their unique leadership voice and nurture authentic organizations. Women in Leadership is a major focus due to the experiences of the co-founders as CEOs CFOs and COOs.

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