



# CAREERS

## 1/3, 1/3, 1/3

By Sara Tusek

In 1978, Richard Bolles wrote a book called *The Three Boxes of Life*. The theme of this career development book is that our lives can be divided into three areas: education, career and leisure. Bolles provides an exploration of a typical person's progression through the three boxes of life. Each box represents 1/3 of your life.

### Box #1

In the first box, Bolles takes you, the reader, through your years of initial education (grade school, high school, and college) and then reminds you that your education is never officially over, as you will need on-going training and retraining in any career you choose throughout your life. You may even want to pursue a different career at a later stage in life, calling for another degree or certification in a new field.

Bolles notes that education will become increasingly more necessary as society and its jobs become more technical and develop more rapidly than ever before.

### Box #2

The second box, your career, is an important box indeed. For those just starting a career, this box will need to be filled with your work experiences in your field, more training, development of expertise in one or more areas, and the establishment of a sound professional reputation.

Also in this second box are a number of distinctively different people: your bosses, your

colleagues, those who support your work, those who report to you, your former colleagues, those whom you mentor and those who mentor you. Each of these people deserves special treatment and respect, even though they are all in the same big box—the second box of life.

Into the second box you can also place the notion of vocation. The idea of a vocation (Latin for “calling”) has been used by the Roman Catholic Church to distinguish those people who are called by God to take holy orders (become ordained) in the Church.

But in a larger sense, each person can look for his or her own vocation, or calling. This concept takes your career beyond the simple give-and-take of labor exchanged for wages into a new realm, one in which your job bestows purpose and meaning into your life.

A doctor, a professor, a minister—we can easily associate these careers with vocation. But even a more mundane career can become your vocation if you consider it to be suited especially to your particular strengths, interests and goals: custom-tailored for you. *To p. 2*



Photo courtesy Adriana Stegmullerova



## Box #3

The third box, leisure, is the one everyone would probably choose for their most-visited box. Leisure is a huge box, containing your family, friends, spiritual life, exercise, recreation, hobbies and travel (avocations).

Box #3 is sometimes metaphorically shoved into the closet during the busiest times of life: starting a new job, raising children, taking care of aging parents. This is a mistake, as stressful times make the third box more valuable than ever. An hour spent hiking or swimming, singing or knitting, chatting with friends or praying, is an hour that will go a long way in relieving stress and putting a smile back on your face.

## All three boxes at once: a whole life

In past years, the progression through the boxes was predictable. Box #1, education, was filled first. Then box #2 preoccupied

the next 40 years or so, followed by permanent residence in box #3: retirement. This orderly arrangement of boxes was divided neatly into thirds.

The 21st century has disturbed this neat progression. You may be educated for a particular career, only to find that you can't keep at it due to changes in economic or personal circumstances, often beyond your control. You have to go back and refill box #1, continuing your educational process.

The career box, box #2, is becoming monstrously large for some, as they struggle to hold on to their job in a tightening economy. Taking home the stresses and strains of their job causes these unfortunate people to feel they are trapped in box #2.

Box #3 is not sitting empty, waiting for you at the end of life, ready to be filled during a pleasant extended retirement. You need to keep adding a steady flow of energy, interest and creativity into box #3

all the time, or you may be disappointed when you finally get to it.

Or you may never get to the point where you can spend all your time in box #3, if your finances or your desire to contribute prevent you from stopping work at age 62. The concept of retirement is undergoing close scrutiny, as people live longer, enjoy better health, want to feel connected to their communities and desire to contribute to the well-being of their society.

Bolles suggests to the reader that living in all three boxes simultaneously is the best way to avoid stagnation, remain flexible (be "green and growing") and get the most out of life. At the time of economic, political, educational, spiritual and social restructuring that we live in, this is very good advice. Don't put all your eggs in one box: visit each box daily and check its contents, making sure that your three boxes of life are filled with everything you need to live a complete, fulfilling life of purpose.

## Careers is back!

We started publishing this newsletter in 1985, at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY. In 1987 it migrated south to The University of the South in Seawane, TN, where we published it till 1993.

After giving it a 16-year rest, we're reviving *Careers*, in response to the needs of people to find a career in the 21st century.

**We want to help you find the job you like and can do best!**

### Careers

Sara Tusek, Editor  
830-13 A1A North, #317  
Ponte Vedra Beach FL 32082  
www.ili.cc  
Email: saratusek@ili.cc

## "21st Century Jobs Seminar"

The "21st Century Jobs Seminar" gives you access to the practical advice of Institute President Jarda Tusek, who has more than 27 years of experience in helping people get jobs that correctly match their skills, abilities, interests and goals with the needs of businesses and organizations.

**This seminar uses our newest book, *21st Century Jobs*, as its workbook.**

We aim to help you, the job seeker or career changer, to identify your unique set of gifts, talents, skills, interests, accomplishments, values and dreams--and then to find ways to make those dreams into reality, bringing all of your potential to the job which will use this potential to the fullest: **the job that you will love, and can do best.**

**The next "21st Century Jobs" seminar begins in August, in Lake Mary, Florida.**

**Please email Jarda at [jbt@ili.cc](mailto:jbt@ili.cc) for more details.**