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“ If you have always done it that way, it is probably wrong.” Charles Kettering, American inventor (Page 22)

**NEW DIRECTIONS:
Successful Strategies for Career, the Workplace and Personal Growth
By James G. Ward**

You’ve got a job, you’re happy and, maybe, you’re even famous. You’ve got it made, right? After forty years at Men’s Warehouse and countless television commercials, George Zimmer was the company’s public face. But then the unthinkable happened. Zimmer was fired, stripped of his health insurance.

Due to an unexpected surprise (like Zimmer’s) or to your own desire for a better job, HR consultant and professional coach James G. Ward says that you should view your career as a series of new directions. His book, **New Directions: Successful Strategies for Career, the Workplace and Personal Growth** (Greenleaf Book Group Press; Spring 2017; \$19.95 hardcover), is a comprehensive guide to job-hunting and career satisfaction. Though a job loss can be frightening, from his observations as a career coach, Ward says change almost always leads to a better place. “Recycling” yourself in work and in life is inevitable and ongoing. Managing the uncertainty is part of our ability to learn and grow. To avoid being caught short, he recommends that each of us conduct a self-assessment periodically. Since we can expect a lifetime of several mini-careers rather than a lifetime job, embracing new insights can help us think differently and motivate us to move ahead.

Ward answers the questions job seekers ask themselves every morning: where do I look for a job; how do I present myself in person and on my resume; and, if still employed while looking, how to do this discreetly? Networking is the top activity for finding a good new position. Social media and in particular, LinkedIn, are key sources for connecting with other professionals and searching for opportunities. In fact, many Fortune 500 companies use LinkedIn to source external talent. In addition to showcasing your strengths on LinkedIn, Ward encourages joining as many industry groups as possible in order to network widely.

To prepare, Ward provides sample cover letters and networking emails, sample interview questions and how to rebound from a failed interview, as well as how to answer salary questions and the best ways to follow up.

The book covers more than a job-hunting. Ward urges us to wring every opportunity from our current job by learning new skills and increasing the value of our “brand.” He nudges us to try new behaviors in order to manage workplace

difficulties. Most people are not good listeners, he contends, so we should aim to improve our “active” listening skills. He advises never accessing sites from your work computer that you wouldn’t want to be known publically. Avoid posting comments about your company and colleagues; there is no privacy online. And unless one is truly miserable at one’s job, avoid circulating your resume widely. It is a red flag that you don’t value your reputation.

Change your bad workplace habits to change your attitude about the job. Plan how to handle work stress and annoying behaviors from colleagues as well as, particularly, your boss. Instead of complaining about a bad boss, learn from the situation. Ward gives numerous examples including his personal struggles.

By encouraging his clients to make daily checklists, Ward shows how workers can feel productive and manage time better. A critical career activity is assessing your own strengths, skills and abilities. As Warren Buffett’s co-manager Charles Munger stated, “knowing the edge of your circle of competence is one of the most important elements of a successful executive. “

For better job performance today and to prepare for the inevitable transitions in the future, read James G. Ward’s new book and listen well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jim Ward, MA, PCC, is a seasoned human resources executive and professional coach with over thirty years experience working with individuals and corporations to solve their business human capital issues. After living and working in Asia for many years for such companies as the financial firm PIMCO, Ward understands the importance of diversity, cultural sensitivity and globalization. He earned a master’s degree in human resource management and completed the Columbia Coaching Certificate Program at Columbia University. His company, New Direction Consulting, provides coaching and human capital strategies to corporations and individuals. He lives in South California with his wife and has two grown sons.

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Spring 2017

Greenleaf Book Group Press

Hardcover \$19.95

ISBN-13: 978-1-62634-353-5

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