The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention: Essential Survival Skills for Any Economy by Pamela Mitchell

Reinvention is the key to success in these volatile times—and Pamela Mitchell holds the key to reinvention!

In The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention, Americas Reinvention Coach(r) Pamela Mitchell offers every tool readers need to navigate the full arc of career change. Part I introduces the Reinvention Mindset, with what you need to know to be prepared mentally to get started. In Part II, you read the real-life stories of ten individuals who successfully made the leap to new and unexpected careers, using the 10 laws:

The 1st Law: It Starts With a Vision for Your Life

The 2nd Law: Your Body Is Your Best Guide

The 3rd Law: Progress Begins When You Stop Making Excuses

The 4th Law: What You Seek is on the Road Less Traveled

The 5th Law: Youve Got the Tools in Your Toolbox

The 6th Law: Your Reinvention Board is Your Lifeline

The 7th Law: Only a Native Can Give You the Inside Scoop

The 8th Law: They Wont Get You Until You Speak Their Language
The 9th Law: It Takes the Time That it Takes

The 10th Law: The World Buys Into an Aura of Success

Each story is followed by an in-depth lesson that explains how to adapt these laws to your own career goals, and what actions and precautions to take. The lessons answer all your tactical concerns about navigating the roadblocks, getting traction and managing your fears. The final section provides workbook exercises for fine-tuning your reinvention strategies for maximum results. Clear-headed, calming, practical, and thorough, this is the ideal action plan for getting through any career crisis and ending up securely in the lifestyle you’ve always dreamed of having.

My Personal Review:
So far I’ve found two career books to recommend: Working Identity (Herminia Ibarra) and Finding Your Own North Star (Martha Beck). Now I’m adding this one to the list. Beck focuses mostly on choosing what you want; Ibarra talks about the search process. This book is somewhere in between. Beck has more exercises for choosing a career and Ibarra goes into the process differently. I’d work with all three.

The title is unwieldy and the book takes a serious, no-nonsense approach. Mitchell focuses on exploring options. Much of her advice seems based on taking a sales approach; she even refers to "career reinvention materials."

Mitchell doesn't have a lot of soul-searching exercises, like "What should be on my tombstone." She invites readers to heed their intuition. Like Martha Beck, she believes the body knows more than the mind: if you find yourself feeling ill when you contemplate a type of work, it’s time for a move.

Nor does she spend a lot of time on the trappings of a career search, such as resumes. In fact, if you need to write a resume, she invites you to download samples from her company’s website.

Some useful points:

Career reinvention takes chronological time. She points out that many career-changers think "six weeks" when they should be thinking "six months." I would agree more with Ibarra in Working Identity, who says three years is not unusual.

Besides chronological time, you need time during your week. One of my own clients said she could talk to me on Sunday evenings at 6 PM Eastern. Her weekdays were completely taken. She was too busy to change careers; she needed to take an interim job that would free up her hours.
Functional fear versus dysfunctional fear. Functional fear is based on realistic situations that you have to deal with.

Real qualifications versus negotiable qualifications. To be a doctor, you need an MD. For other careers, you may be able to substitute experience for academics.

My only quibble is that Mitchell can be a little too strong on some points. The term "laws" in the title sets the tone. For instance, on page 27, Mitchell suggests that "Patty" who dislikes a marketing job will not find happiness by moving to Google, which is after all an online advertising company. Yet in fact the culture of a high-tech company will be so different that a job with the same title might be transformed. I've seen people change their whole attitude to a career when they switched companies or even moved to a new geographic location. It's not always easy to pinpoint the source of discomfort.

Similarly, researchers find that serendipity plays a key role in both career change and career success. By staying active and following the steps Mitchell lays out, you are more likely to experience the kind of serendipity that propels you forward. But I've met few people who logically chose a career and then took a linear path to get a job in that field. Mitchell undoubtedly understands the zig-zag pattern of career change, but she doesn't highlight it the way Herminia Ibarra does in Working Identity.

Still, this book is one of the best career books I've seen in a long time. I'm surprised it hasn't gotten more publicity. The long, awkward name and bland cover might have something to do with it. The blurbs on the back cover don't really convey excitement and the subtitle is a yawn that doesn't even describe the book.