

Rotary Clubs of the Sunshine Coast



WORKLIFE

PROGRAM

"Helping you transition to work"



*An initiative of the Alexandra
Headland Rotary Club*



ROTARY
SERVING
HUMANITY



Be a gift to the world



Table of Contents

Forewords from Sunshine Coast Leaders

Preface

Introduction

Part 1 - Making the Transition from Education to Work

Leaving School

The Work Situation

Rewards of Work

Meaningfulness

Your First Job and Future Jobs

Work Examples

Key Messages from Part 1

Part 2 - The Things They Don't Teach You at School

Looking After Your Most Important Asset at Work

Attitude

Motivation

Ethics

Work - It's a Team Game

Behaviour at Work

Positive Engagement and Optimism

Improving Yourself

Politics at Work

Key Messages from Part 2

Part 3 - Doing Your Job Well

Training and Learning on the Job

Everybody Serves a Customer

Work Time

Electronic Media

Office Communication

Key Messages from Part 3

Part 4 - The Rules of the Game

Before Your First Day

Awards and Fair Work

Workplace Areas

Key Messages from Part 4

References

Useful Websites

Dedication



Ashley Robinson OAM, General Manager, Alexandra Headlands Surf Club

I wish I had this book when I left school.

You see, when I left school, I wanted to be a high school teacher, but didn't have the marks. I loved school, but I was hopeless at it.

I loved being with my schoolmates, playing games and sport, I even liked the classes, but academically I was a dud.

I was always good at sports, and I dreamed of a career in rugby league, even representing Queensland Schoolboys or possibly at national level. But, I busted my knee and that was the end of those dreams.

So with no qualifications and professional sports out the window, I could have spat the dummy and things could have turned out really badly for me.

But, I'm a great believer in never giving up and doing the best you can with what you have. So in my life I tried my hand at many things, as a Barman, a truck driver, a security guard, and a salesman – you name it, I've done it. For years I did jobs I hated, because I needed the money.

As I grew more confident at work I started to think that I could do the boss's job as a bar manager. I took on his job, and made a go of it and then went on to run the Pub I had worked in for years and started making a name for myself in the Hotel Industry by working hard and being particularly good at networking.

Then one day, an influential developer who knew me and my reputation as a hard worker, offered me a fantastic job to start up a pub on the Sunshine Coast. This job was a great experience and it set me up for life and cleared my debts.

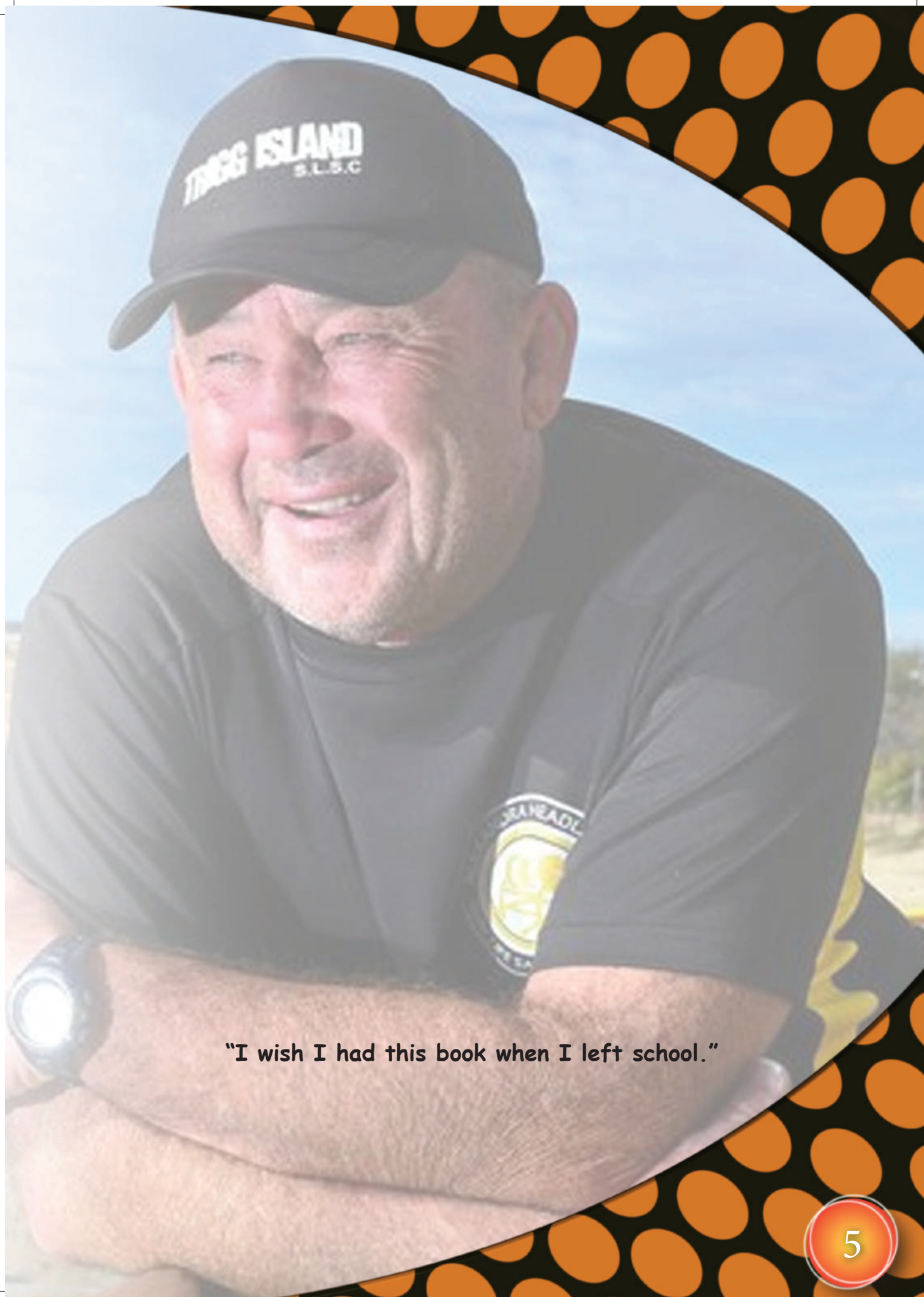
After over twenty years in Hotel Management and design I moved into Club Managing. Today I'm the boss of the Alexandra Headland Surf Life Saving Club and loving it. Other people who have had a rocky start to their working life have put some great tips for you in these pages. Learn from their experiences.

Remember that school education is just the start. Be enthusiastic and positive, be willing to learn, help other people, build relationships, and always do your best. If you take that approach you will find that job that you love!! And you will be happy doing it.

Ashley Robinson OAM

General Manager

Alexandra Headland Surf Life Saving Club



"I wish I had this book when I left school."



Fiona Simpson - MP

I am happy to offer my support for Rotary's WorkLife project.

We all want young people to succeed in their work and live as well as seeing businesses flourish.

Rotary Club of Alexandra Headland has recognised a need and are helping to fill a crucial gap in preparing young people for the transition from school to work.

Many school leavers need advice about what is expected of them in a workplace environment and how to do well in this new stage of their lives beyond the initial job interview.

Drawing on years of experience in a variety of industries and areas of employment, Rotarians have prepared a program for young people on how to be good at their jobs and how to keep their jobs.

Advice such as working in a team, relating to their boss, dealing with customers, handling co-workers and office politics and where to go for help, are some of the topics.

The writers have used real life experiences to put together tips and tools on how to find the right job and how to be happy at work.

I congratulate John Malloy, Bob Thompson and all the Rotarians who have collaborated on this project and shared the valuable wisdom they have gained from their wealth of experience in the work-force.

I also commend Schools and businesses who have a passion for helping young people succeed and are participating in this project.

Fiona Simpson MP, MLA
*Representative of Maroochydore
Queensland Parliament
George Street
Brisbane*

"Many school leavers need advice about what is expected of them in a workplace environment and how to do well in this new stage of their lives beyond the initial job interview."



John Connolly - Sunshine Coast Council

Congratulations to Rotary on this very worthwhile programme, transitioning from school to the workplace.

After being involved in coaching our youth for over 40 years, the biggest challenge for a lot of young people is finding their way in life, and the first step along the way is the transition from school to the workplace.

Firstly, finding employment, but just as important, finding a job that will keep them happy for life.

The importance of this project cannot be underestimated because more often than not, the slightest piece of advice can inspire a wonderful career.

Rotary members are the leaders in their fields of business and industry. Their expertise is grounded in many years of practical experience in the workforce.

Some of you may have already held part-time jobs or internships, however, this comprehensive guide is still sure to provide information that will help you not only transition to more permanent employment, but also navigate the interpersonal and political aspects of any workplace.

We are very lucky to have an organisation like Rotary in our local community. I wish them all the best with this project, and I look forward to being involved.

Cr John Connolly
Sunshine Coast Council

"The importance of this project cannot be underestimated."





Dr Greg Nash - University of Sunshine Coast

I encourage teachers, parents and school leavers to read and talk to each other about this book.

Transitioning from school to starting out in work is such an important time in a young persons life. Choices made at this time have really big effects on lifestyle and happiness.

The book makes it clear that your destiny is in your hands.

Sure, obstacles will be there, whether it's a poor high school grade, or a difficult financial situation, there's always going to be things you cannot control. But it's how you react to these obstacles that will determine your happiness.

Listen to the stories and advice in this book, and take some of the positives into your worklife path.

Dr Greg Nash
School of Communications
University of Sunshine Coast

**"The book makes it clear that your destiny
is in your hands."**



Preface

“What’s work?” the teenager sitting on the other side of the desk asked. “Is it hard?” Mooloolaba State High School had invited Bob Thompson and myself to talk to their students in a pretend interview situation - to prepare them for getting a job.

That experience led me to collaborate with Bob and my fellow Rotarians to write this book and prepare the Worklife program for you.

But why a book on “Worklife” and not interviews?

Simple. Amazon has thousands of books about getting your first job, interview preparation, body language, CV writing, etc. etc. and all that is important for a new starter.

But I couldn’t find anything on the next (and most important) part of the puzzle,

“How to be good at your job”.

Also, at this time, there was a lot on the Internet, radio and TV about kids not being ready for work.

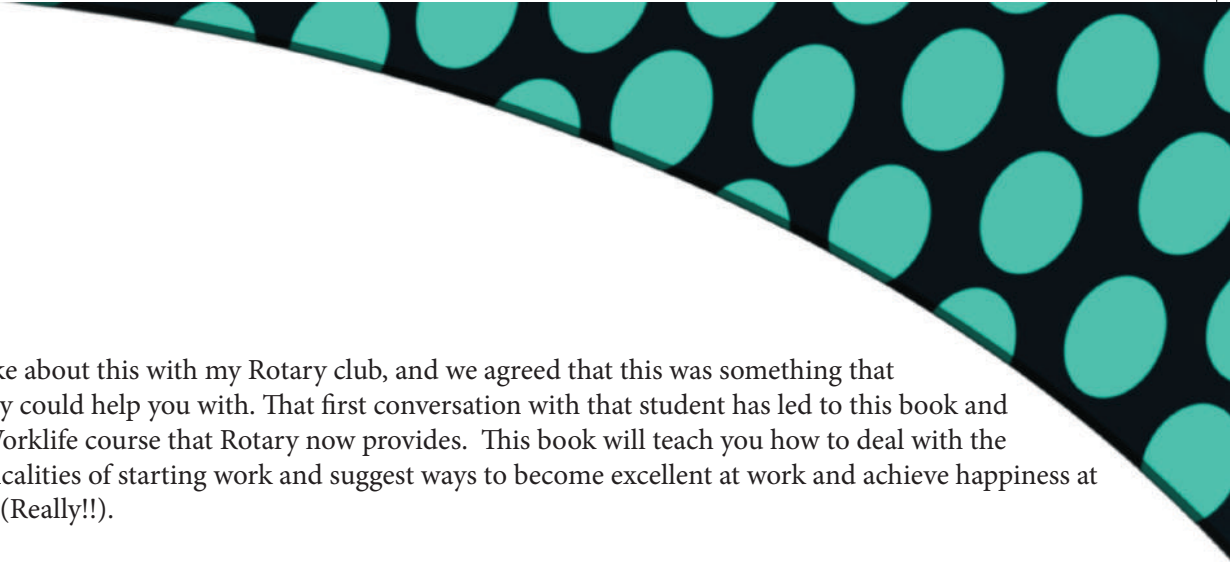
Businesses were blaming schools for turning out “poor students”.

School/teachers say that over the years their workload has increased enormously, and that they are now expected to teach “everything” in an already full curriculum.

So what was going on? Are we training kids to get through an interview, then leaving them to fend from themselves?

I looked for the information that would help the student transition to work, but found no practical information for new starters on dealing with the change from school, TAFE or university, to work.

Where was the advice on doing well when you are in a new environment, feeling your way, relating to your first boss, working in your first work team, managing your first difficult work experience, dealing with these new people called customers, meeting the new boss’s expectations, handling awkward co-workers, dealing with office politics, being ethical at work (where to go for help), how to keep your first job?



I spoke about this with my Rotary club, and we agreed that this was something that Rotary could help you with. That first conversation with that student has led to this book and the Worklife course that Rotary now provides. This book will teach you how to deal with the practicalities of starting work and suggest ways to become excellent at work and achieve happiness at work (Really!!).

Simon Cowell from American Idol, gave youngsters crap advice on being excellent at work. He said, “The secret to success is being useless at school and then getting lucky.”

Well, that might work for Simon, (who I suspect was not really useless at school), but there’s no doubt he worked really hard when he started work and pushed himself to the top of his tree.

There are many media articles about how poorly prepared the youth of today is for work. There is an equal number of articles about how tough things are for business, and how everyone in business, (including the new starter) must add value.

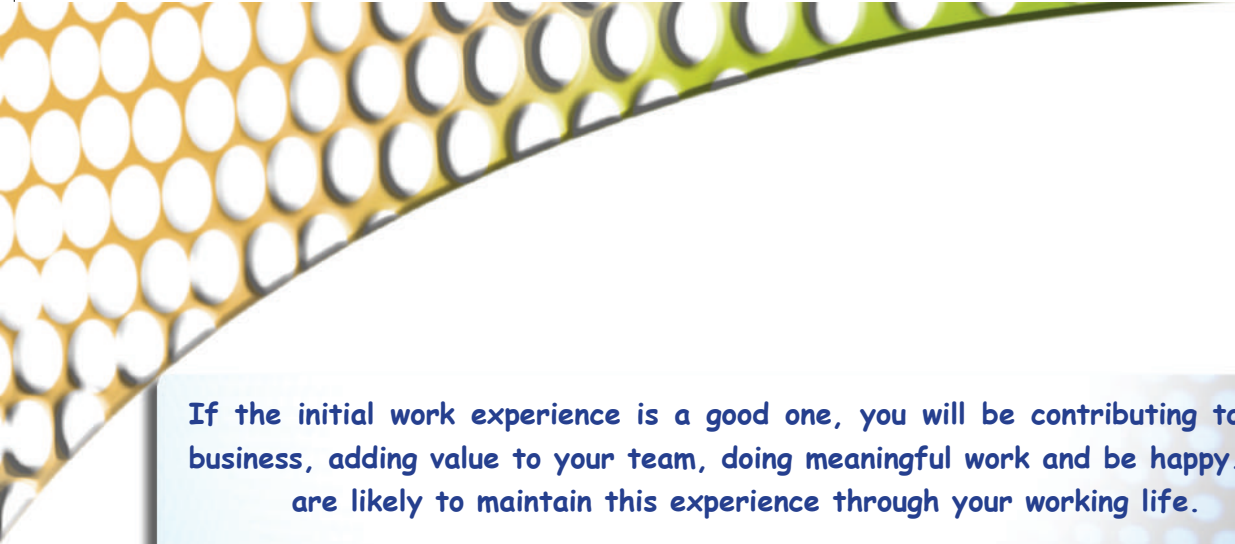
Also the schools are rarely out of the news, citing the poor numeracy and literacy rates among the school leavers, leaving the blame at the doorstep of the students or teachers.

All these things are of course related. In this book we cover these issues, and provide inspirational and practical advice on how to overcome them.

The importance of your first job is huge.

Your first experience of work will determine your attitude to work, and almost certainly impact on your work happiness and earning ability for many years.





If the initial work experience is a good one, you will be contributing to the business, adding value to your team, doing meaningful work and be happy. You are likely to maintain this experience through your working life.

If your experience is negative, and you are not being correctly mentored it is likely that you will not be doing meaningful work, be unhappy and underperforming. More importantly a bad experience will undermine your self worth, and will have negative repercussions in your later working life.

This book will help you do better at your first job, and so all your future jobs.

It contains the wisdom of my local Rotary club, adding up to over 1,000 years of work experience, from all sorts of industries including leisure management, retail, health industry, education, office management, engineering, banking, and most other areas of employment.

In the later parts of the book I've drawn on the work experience of many in the club to give practical advice on what a new starter can do, and what they should look out for in a work situation.

I have also researched the latest papers from those stakeholders in this area. (Educators, industry groups, governments, universities, career guidance consultants, Human Resource consultants etc.)

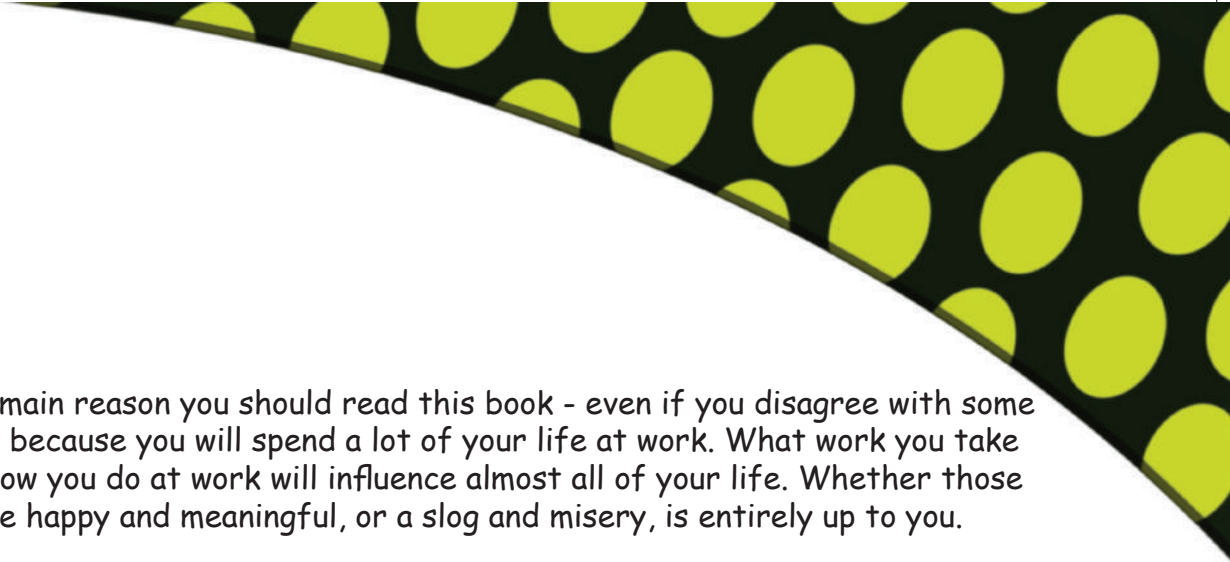
I've filtered the information from these papers, and thrown out the advice that failed the "sniff" test.

I know from my experience that not only is it getting harder to get a job but also to find one that works to your strengths. But it's not all bad news, because there are new jobs being created all the time, and there are real opportunities out there if you get the right support.

In this book I have tried to explain how we got to today's work culture. It's clear that the work experience of mum and dad is quite different to yours as a new graduate / school leaver. But the rules of the game are the same. If you want to make a successful transition from school to work, you need to know the rules and get a few tips.

I've used true stories from working lives to explain the change that you will experience between education and work, so that you can relate to the issues of a new starter.

I hope that by drawing on real life experiences you can relate to the issues that a new starter faces and get some practical advice, tips and tools on how to make a successful transition to work.



But the main reason you should read this book - even if you disagree with some of it - is because you will spend a lot of your life at work. What work you take up and how you do at work will influence almost all of your life. Whether those years are happy and meaningful, or a slog and misery, is entirely up to you.

It's got a bit to do with your school score or your TAFE qualification or your university degree. But that is by no means the full story. Those scores are just starting points that may open a few doors. But working life is a very long road and there are more paths in it than you can imagine. You have it all ahead of you to make of it what you will.

Unfortunately, many young people don't make the right choices and may end up in a job they don't like, often for many years. So I'll also cover what NOT to do.

Finally, I know teenagers don't like to be told what to do (I know I don't!). So I have tried to keep the book like a conversation between you and a friend (albeit an older and more experienced friend).

Feel free to start anywhere in the book.

Although it's in the order of setting the scene for work, then talking about work in a helpful way, and then finishing with some of the rules and regulations of work. If you have a specific query, or are experiencing some sort of difficulty at work, please go to the section that interests you most.

I'm sure that Simon Cowell also got a few lucky breaks, but he would agree that unless you have the tools and character to put in the effort, when you get that lucky opportunity, you will not succeed.

This book gives you the tools.

John Malloy
Rotary Club of Alexandra Headland

Introduction

It's not surprising that most of you leaving education struggle in the early stages of work.

In fact it's very rare to find someone who easily transitions from education to a successful and happy work career.

Let's find out why. Let's start at the beginning, on "the purpose of your education."

There are conflicting views on the reason for your schooling, and even university education, if you go that far.

Is school to prepare you for work?

"Absolutely" say the industry and business leaders! Why else would you go to school except to make a living? What's the point of learning anything unless it can help you get a job? So you find that educational places are judged on how many of their graduates get jobs. On the other hand:

Is school to teach you how to think?

"Absolutely" say the teachers and mentors! Why else would you go to school except to find out about yourself, and become the best person you can be? You never know what a person might achieve with the right support. So it's obvious that they should be exposed to different ideas and skills to find out where their interests are, and what they are good at. Anyway, jobs are always changing, new jobs being created, old ones disappearing, so teachers (rightly) ask where's the sense in schools trying to guess the jobs of the future, when business doesn't even know what they are?

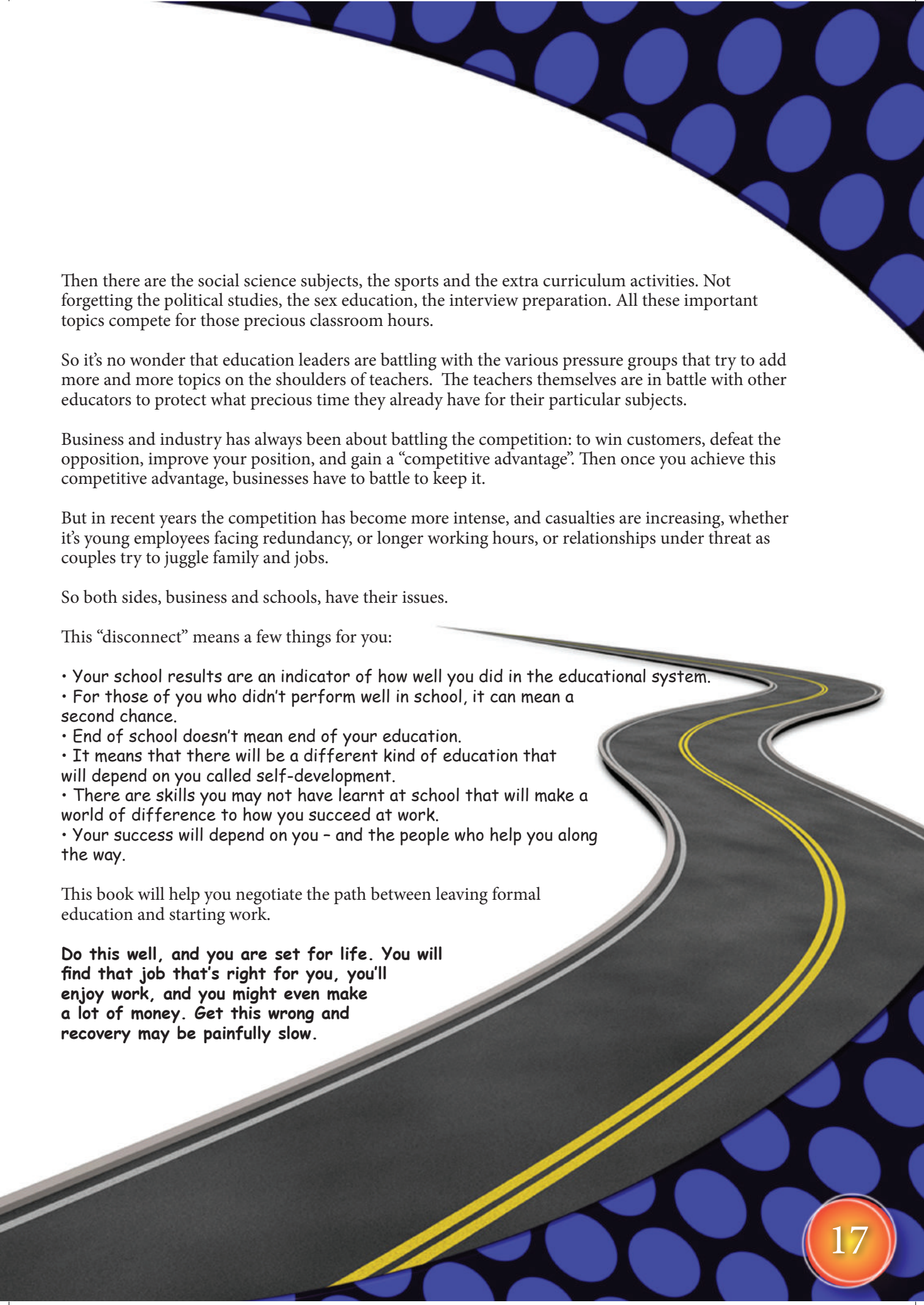
This conflict in ideas has created a kind of "no man's land" between education and work. This ground is continually being fought over, with the lines of responsibility regularly redrawn.

On one side are the education institutes, schools, universities, etc. who are struggling with the ever increasing curriculum load, and on the other side, business and industry groups who are struggling to make a living and haven't the resources anymore to train new starters in the skills as they did in the past.

Most teachers I met believe that the task is to expose you to ideas, to teach you how to think, and to explore subjects that you may have an aptitude or interest in.

So every day there are increasing demands on the curriculum to cram more and more into the time available. Students are expected to know more about a wider range of subjects and the "core" STEM subjects to know in greater depth.

This book will help you negotiate the path between leaving formal education and starting work.



Then there are the social science subjects, the sports and the extra curriculum activities. Not forgetting the political studies, the sex education, the interview preparation. All these important topics compete for those precious classroom hours.

So it's no wonder that education leaders are battling with the various pressure groups that try to add more and more topics on the shoulders of teachers. The teachers themselves are in battle with other educators to protect what precious time they already have for their particular subjects.

Business and industry has always been about battling the competition: to win customers, defeat the opposition, improve your position, and gain a "competitive advantage". Then once you achieve this competitive advantage, businesses have to battle to keep it.

But in recent years the competition has become more intense, and casualties are increasing, whether it's young employees facing redundancy, or longer working hours, or relationships under threat as couples try to juggle family and jobs.

So both sides, business and schools, have their issues.

This "disconnect" means a few things for you:

- Your school results are an indicator of how well you did in the educational system.
- For those of you who didn't perform well in school, it can mean a second chance.
- End of school doesn't mean end of your education.
- It means that there will be a different kind of education that will depend on you called self-development.
- There are skills you may not have learnt at school that will make a world of difference to how you succeed at work.
- Your success will depend on you - and the people who help you along the way.

This book will help you negotiate the path between leaving formal education and starting work.

Do this well, and you are set for life. You will find that job that's right for you, you'll enjoy work, and you might even make a lot of money. Get this wrong and recovery may be painfully slow.



Where does this leave you, the student about to start work?

This increased discrepancy between education and work has squeezed out the support that used to exist for the new work starter.

Sadly, at the same time there is increased expectation that new starter will immediately contribute to the business, often with less support.

Survey after survey confirms that school leavers and university graduates are leaving school without a clear understanding of what is required at work. Employers complain that new starters are lazy, illiterate, and are generally just too much trouble to hire.

They arrive at work with sky-high expectations and low work attitude.

A YouthNet survey of UK employers found that nearly half feel young applicants don't understand the required job skills, and about two-thirds reject candidates because they can't clearly articulate their abilities.

Business is arguing that "The Ivory Tower image" exists in much of academia, and Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, says that "schools are going to have to pay more attention to careers and what employers want".

Carnevale goes on to say "Employers say students may have textbook knowledge but don't have the ability to take that knowledge to think critically, innovate, solve complex problems and work well in a team. They want students to come to the workplace with skills that people used to develop on the job."

As the job market gradually improves, businesses say they are not finding enough savvy graduates who can start contributing from day one on the job.

CareerBuilder, the online job search site, surveyed employers in the UK and India in 2016, and found that they believe recent graduates are most lacking in problem-solving skills (60% India, 40% UK), creative thinking (56% India, 39% UK), and interpersonal skills (50% India, 49% UK).

Meanwhile today's new work starters are under pressure to get a good job, build a career, get a house, get a car, start a family, save for retirement, etc. etc.

Sound familiar?



3 So how will this book help me?

The advice in this book has been put together from the practical work experiences of many senior people.

But the contributors to this book were also once new starters in the workforce, and we have lived through and witnessed what you are about to experience as you start your career.

Then we went on to complete our work life. Now, on looking back we can see what would have been helpful to us. We want to pass that on.

We have all had real experience at mentoring workers in leading organisations. So we know the difficulties from the perspective of both the individual and the business.

Will this book help me pick the right career?

"It isn't normal to know what we want. It is a rare and difficult psychological achievement"
Abraham Maslow

Only very, very, few new work starters know what they want to do. Why should they know? Unless you have experienced working as a fireman you would only have a vague idea what it would be like.

So don't feel that you are at a disadvantage because you haven't made a commitment in your head that you are going to do XYZ for the rest of your life.

It's always much better to keep your options open for as long as you can and experience as much as you can, before committing yourself to a career.

This book will help you with the work processes. Processes are the things that are common to all work. These can then be applied across ALL future work choices.

We'll cover the work processes, behaviours, attitudes, the do's and don'ts – lots of things that can be applied whether you are starting out as a waiter, apprentice, shop assistant, engineer, accountant, or whatever.

The book has been divided into 4 parts; jump in at any part that interests you.



From *School* to UNIVERSITY

Part 1 guides you through the changes from school / university to the workplace.

We discuss the differences and how to prepare for these changes.

We talk about why you think you are ready, but why you are not ready for work.

All surveys carried out by schools, universities, industry groups, etc. indicate that you are not ready for work. Yet the same surveys show that most new starters think they are ready and that they are doing well. So something is clearly wrong here.

We also talk about what your work experience may have taught you (good and bad) and what to expect from your first job.

We discuss modern work, and why it is different from your mum or dad's experience. We look at the type of people you will meet in the workplace.

Then we look at building good relationships in the workplace. We study the two things that matter in carrying out work, and why it can be just as important HOW the work is done, as achieving the right result.

To do this you need to understand the differences between relationships you have experienced in your school and university years, and those in the work setting.

We go through the 4 key areas to make your early work experience a positive one. We explain why your education results are important, but are not THE most important thing in holding down a job.

Finally we discuss adding value, and while you may think that you're just starting work and have little to offer by way of value, you're wrong. If a job exists, then it exists to add value.

how to prepare for
these **CHANGES.**



YOUR MOST *Asset* IMPORTANT



Part 2 is about your most important asset - and it's probably not what you think it is!

We'll discuss what you need to do to grow this asset, and what you must do to protect it.

Related to this asset are the important areas of attitude, motivation, work ethics and behaviour. We'll lead you through the things you need to know, what to do, and what to avoid.

There are examples from real situations at work to reinforce the points on these important topics.

Work exists in a team environment, so we discuss why graduates and school leavers don't always know how to work in teams, why they may need to change, and what to do if you want to be better in a work team environment.

Then we prepare you for positive engagement with the people you will meet, and enhance your most important asset in your working career.





Part 3 discusses the daily routines of work with some emphasis on social media

We talk about the practical, specific, things you need to do to do your job well. We'll show you what a daily positive work routine looks like.

We talk about the customer in the workplace and how work is all about attitude and customer service.

We return to the theme of adding value and show how everyone can and should add value in a work situation. We'll also go through why you need to love your work, and what you can do to make your work experience a positive one.

When you are at work you are still connected to the world of social media. We also give you some advice on how to use social media and how your use of it needs to change now that you have joined the workforce.



NUTS & BOLTS

of the framework





Part 4 is the nuts and bolts of the work framework.

You are vulnerable at this stage in your life. There are scammers out there who will take advantage of you. Although you may be starting at the bottom rung of the ladder, you have rights. We explain what they are.

We discuss industrial arrangements, types of work from casual through to permanent full time. Scam contractors are very active with new work starters, so we show you how to recognise these particular rats in the rat race.

Finally, we discuss why your first job(s) are so important in setting you up for what could be a very long working career.

Entering the workplace for the first time can be nerve-racking and very confusing for a school leaver or graduate. If you're not nervous about entering the workplace or a bit confused about entering work, then maybe you don't understand the rules of the game, or the stakes you are playing for!

We wrote this book for all types of school leavers and university graduates.

Whether it's a small family business or large multinational, whether you are using your hands or your head, you will find practical advice on how to negotiate those all important first few years in the workplace, and be guided towards that ideal job you may even learn to love.

Good luck on your work journey!

All the members of the Rotary Club of Alexandra Headland



PART I

Making the Transition from Education to Work



Leaving School, TAFE or University

"Education is what you learn after leaving school" – Robert Kiyosaki

Kiyosaki is making the point that the grade on your certificate that you received when leaving formal education is not a passport for life. It doesn't entitle you to anything other than the ability to open a few doors.

Whether these doors lead to a brilliant career or a miserable existence is pretty much up to you now.

You may think that because you have poor ranking on your school certificate, your whole life is marked by that result. Not true. The truth is that a poor school result will only hold you back from reaching your capabilities if you let it.

Also, if you are under the illusion that a great score on your certificate has set you up for life, think again.

You need to know the rules in this new landscape.

The good news is that if you got good grades, you will probably pick up these rules quickly.

What you become in your working life, and especially how happy you are at work, is entirely a result of what you do after school.

Let's discuss what has changed in your new work landscape.

From Educational Institution to Work

Whether it's leaving school or university or college the challenge for you is the same.

Your formal schooling is over, now you are beginning an education about work and life.

You are in a different game where the object is to make a living. So what's changed?

- There is no curriculum to follow. No longer do you have teachers or schoolmates to help you with your development. It's all on you now to decide where you want to go.
- No longer is anyone watching to make sure you don't fall too far behind in your goals. Falling behind? Not happy you have to do everything for yourself? Too bad.
- Forget about your educational qualifications. It's all about business results now.
- Forget about people being polite and encouraging. You are going to have to deal with criticism (fair and unfair) and some of the rudest people you will ever meet - sometimes called the general public.
- Forget about timetables. Your boss now has a claim on your time 24/7.
- Forget about getting a chance to redo your homework and correct your mistakes. You'll be judged on your first effort, so better make it good.
- Forget about being friends with your workmates forever. You're at work to get the job done, and although working in a team is important, friendship is optional.
- Forget about fairness.

PHEW!!!

You'll probably have figured out by now that you have just had a whole load of responsibility thrown on your shoulders.

UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

Then read on to find out the stuff you need to know about starting work, and discover that there are huge rewards out there - if you learn the ropes and find out the things that maybe they didn't teach you at school.