

## Eastham Author Offers Nontraditional Advice For Work Seekers

By Debra Lawless

Looking for a job? Throw out your resume and stop networking.

This is the radical advice that author Beverly Ryle of North Eastham offers in her new book "Ground of Your Own Choosing: Winning Strategies for Finding and Creating Work" (Shank Painter Publishing). And these days, with traditional jobs fast disappearing and unemployment rising, anyone looking for a job can use all the advice he or she can find.



*Author and consultant Beverly Ryle.*

"It's hard for me to see people being laid off on the Cape—there are so few resources," Ryle said during a recent telephone interview from her home. Ryle has been giving local talks that are aimed at both the job-seeker and those in the family who are affected by the layoff. "There are appropriate and less appropriate ways to be a resource and support to someone struggling with employment issues."

So what's wrong with a resume and what do you do after you throw it out?

Ryle invites you to imagine this scenario: You're ushered in to your interview and you see your resume sitting on the hiring manager's desk. To your astonishment, the interviewer picks up your resume and rips it in half. "I'm not interested in what you did in the past," he says. "I want to know what you can do for me now."

Are you prepared to answer?

And what's wrong with networking? For one thing, Ryle says, networking can cause tunnel vision "that prevents you from seeing the entire panorama of possibilities." She recommends "community building, "getting together with people you admire over coffee rather than in an artificial and nerve-wracking "networking" situation. With "community building" serendipity comes into play, too.

One summer Ryle was sitting outside a restaurant in Provincetown where her husband Michael was playing the double bass. Sitting next to Ryle and joining her in fighting the no-see-ums was a woman with whom Ryle struck up a conversation. The woman turned out to be Eloise Morley, who now lives in Denver. She and Ryle became friends. Morley illustrated "Ground" with her whimsical stick figure drawings. At a glance the drawings resemble the work of a child but they actually contain remarkably sophisticated details

illustrating Ryle's points. "She was part of my community and perfect for this project," Ryle says.

The underlying premise of Ryle's book is this: Gone are the days when a person went to work for a company straight out of school and was taken care of for life. With entire industries dying, outsourcing and a global economy, the face of the workforce has changed radically. To succeed, new tactics are necessary. In 10 chapters Ryle outlines new ways to think about a job search and even what a job is. She begins the book with a quote from late 19th century philosopher William James: "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives."

Despite grim news on the economic front, "this book is hopeful and optimistic," Ryle says. "Yes, jobs are disappearing, but there's still work. There are ways to tap in and have security not based on one particular job. You can learn to handle yourself in the new reality. The hard part is to create it for yourself."

For example, one of Ryle's clients was a young woman with a strong background in design. She worked in a home design store, but she wanted hands-on work. After consulting with Ryle, she came to see upholstering furniture as something that might offer her a satisfying career. She took classes, apprenticed herself, and eventually opened her own business. "She's doing wonderfully," Ryle adds.

Ryle herself practices what she preaches. Back a few years ago she worked as a resume expert and career counselor in Fairfield County, Connecticut. When she and her husband moved to the Cape about a decade ago Ryle didn't think she could pursue the same kind of work. Who might her clients be on Cape Cod? She assumed the Cape was full of tourists and retired people, neither group known for seeking career guidance. But Ryle found she was wrong. She could work here.

Sixty percent of Ryle's clients are people who live and work on the Cape, something she calls "a delightful surprise." The Cape "has a very vital business community—hidden," Ryle says. "You're not going to go through a corporate park and see all these consultants."

As for coaching her off-Cape clients, "I didn't have to be in the same space anymore," she says. She does much of her work now by telephone. Also, Ryle offers individual retreat packages that last for between a half day and two days, when she and the client "work together very intensely." And, she adds, "it's a good illustration of how the workplace has changed and a good illustration of recreating self."

Ryle will sign copies of "Ground of Your Own Choosing" at Yellow Umbrella Books in Chatham on Saturday, Jan. 3 from 1 to 3 p.m.

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