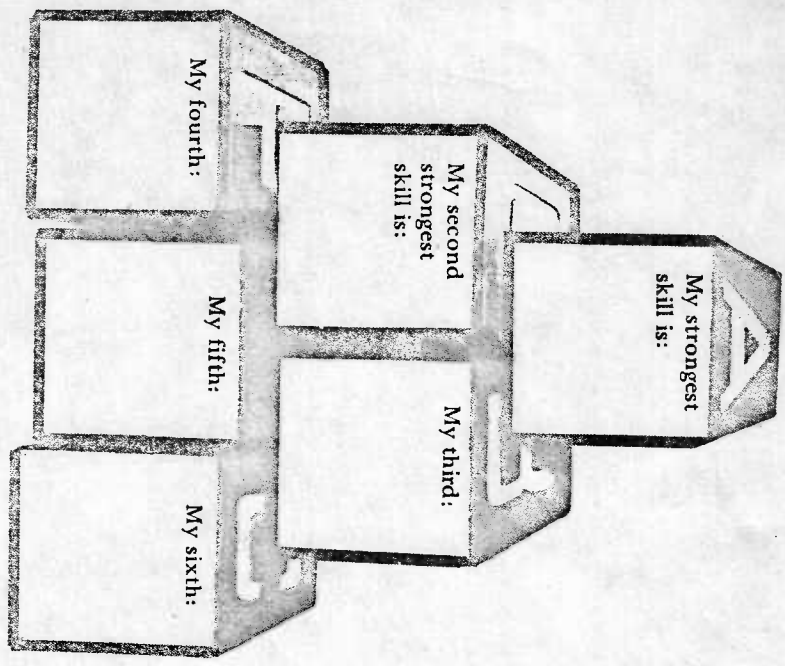


the basic units of that can be rearranged into different constellations, consistent with the goals and values that direct the inner nature which the Creator has given you, as you perceive them.

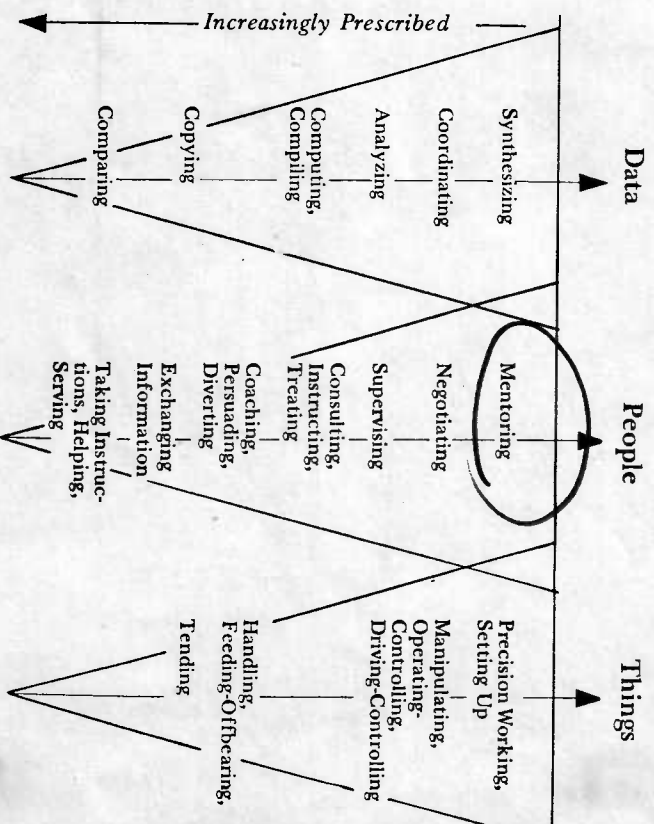
*You are aiming at being able to fill in this chart:*



**THAT BOGEY-WORD - Skills**

Now many people just "freeze" when they hear the word "skills." It begins with high-school job-hunters: "I haven't really got any skills," they say. It continues with college students: "I've spent four years in college. I haven't had time to pick up any skills." And it lasts through the middle years, especially when a person is thinking of changing his career: "I'll have to go back to college, and get re-trained, because otherwise I won't have any skills in my new field." Or: "Well, if I claim any skills, I'll start at a very nominal kind of level."

**Rich. N. Bolles' WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE? A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR JOB-HUNTERS & CAREER-CHANGERS (Ten Speed Press/72)**



All of this fright about the word "skills" is very common, and stems from a total misunderstanding of what the word means. A misunderstanding that is shared, we might add, by altogether too many employers, personnel departments, and so-called "vocational experts."

By understanding the word, you will automatically put yourself way ahead of most job-hunters. And, especially if you are weighing a change of career, you can save yourself much waste of time on the (currently popular) folly called "going back to school for retraining."

So, here we go:

According to the *Bible* of vocational counseling,—the third edition of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965)—Skills break down, first of all, into three groups, according to whether or not they are being used with Things or Data or People.

Thus broken down, and arranged in a hierarchy of less skill (at the bottom) to higher skills (at the top), they come out looking like this:

p. 76: "MENTORING: Deals with individuals in terms of their overall life adjustment behavior in order to advise, counsel, and/or guide them with regard to problems that may be resolved by legal, scientific, clinical, spiritual and/or other professional principles. Advises client on implications of diagnostic or similar categories, courses of action open

Before we explain these skills in more detail, let us look at the most startling fact about all these skills. It is, simply, this:

If you graded all these skills in terms of how many of their duties are prescribed in detail vs. now many are discretionary, i.e., left to the discretion of the employee, you would discover that the lower the skill, the more its duties are prescribed, with comparatively little discretion left to the employee; but, the higher the skill, the less its duties are prescribed, and the more that is left to the discretion of the employee.

This almost paradoxical meaning of the word "skill" can be easily illustrated from any, or all, of the three hierarchies on the previous page. For the sake of comparative brevity, we will take just one, namely, those which deal with people. (You know, today most people when asked what they want to do out in The World, will almost always answer, "I want to work with people." Might as well show those of us who say this, just how varied Work with People can be.) Note, as we progress to higher levels of skills, how it becomes harder and harder for a prospective employer (say) to draw up a job description for this skill.

The People Functions Scale on the following page is from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, Vol. II, pp. 649-50, as modified and adapted by Dr. Sidney A. Fine of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research (see Appendix A).

Each higher skill level usually or typically involves all those which preceded it.

### INCREASING LEVELS OF SKILL

Level	Definition
1A	<b>TAKING INSTRUCTIONS—HELPING</b> Attends to the work assignment, instructions, or orders of supervisor. No immediate response or verbal exchange is required unless clarification of instruction is needed.
1B	<b>SERVING</b> Attends to the needs or requests of people or animals, or to the expressed or implicit wishes of people. Immediate response is involved.
2	<b>EXCHANGING INFORMATION</b> Talks to, converses with, and/or signals people to convey or obtain information, or to clarify and work out details of an assignment, within the framework of well-established procedures.
3A	<b>COACHING</b> Befriends and encourages individuals on a personal, caring basis by approximating a peer or family-type relationship either in a one-to-one or small group situation, and gives instruction, advice, and personal assistance concerning activities of daily living, the use of various institutional services, and participation in groups.
3B	<b>PERSUADING</b> Influences others in favor of a product, service, or point of view by talks or demonstrations.
3C	<b>DIVERTING</b> Amuses others.
4A	<b>CONSULTING</b> Serves as a source of technical information and gives such information or provides ideas to define, clarify, enlarge upon, or sharpen procedures, capabilities, or product specifications.
4B	<b>INSTRUCTING</b> Teaches subject matter to others, or trains others, including animals, through explanation, demonstration, practice, and test.

continued

Level	Definition
4C	<p><b>TREATING</b></p> <p>Acts on or interacts with individuals or small groups of people or animals who need help (as in sickness) to carry out specialized therapeutic or adjustment procedures. Systematically observes results of treatment within the framework of total personal behavior because unique individual reactions to prescriptions (chemical, physician's, behavioral) may not fall within the range of prediction. Motivates, supports, and instructs individuals to accept or cooperate with therapeutic adjustment procedures, when necessary.</p>
5	<p><b>SUPERVISING</b></p> <p>Determines and/or interprets work procedure for a group of workers, assigns specific duties to them (particularly those which are prescribed), maintains harmonious relations among them, evaluates performance (both prescribed and discretionary), and promotes efficiency and other organizational values. Makes decisions on procedural and technical levels.</p>
6	<p><b>NEGOTIATING</b></p> <p>Exchanges ideas, information, and opinions with others on a formal basis to formulate policies and programs on an initiating basis (e.g., contracts) and/or arrives at resolutions of problems growing out of administration of existing policies and programs, usually after a bargaining process.</p>
7	<p><b>MENTORING</b></p> <p>Deals with individuals in terms of their overall life adjustment behavior in order to advise, counsel, and/or guide them with regard to problems that may be resolved by legal, scientific, clinical, spiritual and/or other professional principles. Advises clients on implications of diagnostic or similar categories, courses of action open to deal with a problem, and merits of one strategy over another.</p>

In the D.O.T. (as the "in crowd" calls the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*) Vol. II p. 649 you can find similar lists for Data and Things, if you think that you prefer to work with them, rather than with people. (At your local public library.)

The point of all this for you, the career changer/job-hunter, is:

1. The lower the level of your skills that you claim, the more the skills can be prescribed and measured and demanded of you. You'll have to fit in. Conversely, the higher the level of skills that you can legitimately claim, the less the skills can be prescribed and measured, and the more you will be free to carve out a job in the shape of *you*—making the fullest use of the special constellation of abilities that are *you*.
2. The higher level of skills that you can legitimately claim, either with people, or data or things (or, in varying degree, with all three)—depending on what *you* want to do,—the less these kinds of jobs are advertised or known through normal channels; the more you'll have to find ways of unearthing them—which is what the next chapter is all about.
3. Just because the opportunities for the higher level jobs (or careers) are harder to uncover, the higher you aim, the less people you will have to compete with—for that job. In fact, if you uncover, as you are very likely to, a need in the organization (or organizations) that you like, which you can help resolve, they are very likely to create a brand new job—for you, which means—in effect—you will be competing with practically no one, since you are virtually the sole applicant, as it were.

**The Paradoxical Moral Of All This**

The higher a skill level you can legitimately claim, the more likely you are to find a job. Just the opposite of what the typical job-hunter or second careerist starts out believing.