



Making the leap

Despite tough times, many successfully reinvent themselves

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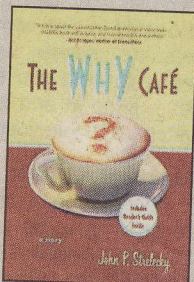
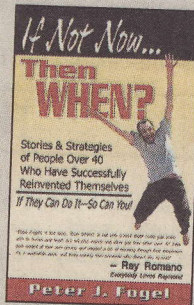
Robin Niles was a fifth-grade teacher on Merritt Island when she realized the short sessions she spent teaching children about health and nutrition were her happiest ones. That realization gave her a new direction and, after a number of steps, led her to her dream job.

This month, she opened the Core Café inside the Melbourne Athletic Club in Eau Gallie, delivering nutrition info casually to customers while serving healthful breakfast and lunch wraps, smoothies, snacks and more.

"I can't imagine having such a huge aspect of my life being something that doesn't stimulate me," Niles, 25, says of her job. "... This past month flew by. Every morning when I wake up, I'm like, I'm going to my job, where I do what I love to do."

In uncertain times, many people may face the prospect of reinventing themselves, whether they are rethinking what they want to do with their life and career or are forced to reimagine their future.

"With chaos, there's opportunity," says



Just do it

■ Laura DeCarlo, a Competitive Edge Career Service: www.acompetitiveedge.com

■ Peter Fogel, "If Not Now . . . Then When?": www.reinventyourselfnow.com

■ John Strelecky, "The Why Café" and "The Big Five for Life: Leadership's Greatest Secret": www.whycafe.com

Peter Fogel, a successful comic who reinvented himself to be a copywriter and now a motivational speaker and "The Reinvention Guy." "You know: 'I was laid off. Now what do I do? Hey, this would be the perfect time to change my career. I have my money saved. What can I do to venture into a new world that will give me more fulfillment, more control over my destiny?'"

Fogel, who lives in Delray Beach, wrote "If Not Now . . . Then When?" focusing on the success stories of people who reinvented themselves.

How do you know it's time to make a change?

First, if your health is affected, you have to make a change, he says. There may be a defining moment that tells you it's time to leave a job. Or, if you get a lot more excited planning a two-week vacation than you do working for the rest of the year, that's a good sign you need a new career.

"People will plan their vacations more than their own future," Fogel says.

He doesn't advocate jumping into a new life. "The most important thing is you have to take care of business. You need to have at least six months' worth of money in your bank account before you venture into anything." Your family is a priority, as is their support for you as you make a big change. And research what you want to do, making sure that you have the basic qualities necessary to pursue your new career.

"For years we've been in a position where nothing has been certain," says Laura DeCarlo, owner of A Competitive Edge Career Service in Melbourne. "We don't have the employment market that we did a couple of generations ago when we started with one company and we stayed there."

She says your skills have to have a 50 percent match to your job target, reflected on your resume, before you can cross the bridge into a new career. In some cases,

See REINVENT, 2E