

## Preface

**T**he revision of our 1998 book about John Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS) and related career interventions was a task that was sometimes daunting and almost overwhelming, but one that became captivating and thoroughly engaging. The amount of information available about Holland's RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, or Conventional) personality theory, practical tools, and the scholarly research is enormous. It is an incredibly rich body of work, and this writing experience has provided us with a glimmer of what Holland learned long ago in his 50-plus-year fascination with RIASEC theory and the SDS.

However, as we have conducted scores of SDS workshops and trained hundreds of practitioners to use these materials with increased skill and confidence, we have become aware of how much our cognitive information processing (CIP) theory can inform and enhance Holland's work. We have been humbled and heartened by the committed and creative efforts of many practitioners in the field who are using interventions based on RIASEC and CIP theories, many of which are unreported. The synergy created by these two theories is a recurring theme in this book and a special focus of Chapters 7, 8, and 9.

In writing this book, we imagined we were speaking directly to practitioners seeking to enhance their use of the SDS or to our graduate students learning to be career counselors or advisors. We use the term *practitioner* in this book to include professional career counselors, psychologists, career development facilitators, career coaches, and career guidance technicians, as well as librarians, social workers, teachers, and a host of other professionals. We thought about individuals who had been handed SDS materials and didn't know what to do with them. We considered sole practitioners working in high school guidance offices, workforce centers, human resource offices, outplacement programs, VA centers, rehabilitation centers, small colleges, mental health clinics, and academic advising offices. We reflected on practitioners working outside the United States seeking to help their fellow citizens make career choices as their nations make the transition to

a market economy. We also thought about those individuals teaching career courses for graduate or undergraduate students, or those supervising paraprofessionals or pre-professional counselors interested in learning more about the SDS. These are the groups for which this book was written. To simplify things, we refer to them generically as practitioners.

We were also especially mindful that counselors are primarily SAE (Social, Artistic, Enterprising) types, and we wanted to deliver the information with those types in mind. We realize, of course, that many social types would rather get their information about the SDS and RIASEC or CIP theories in a workshop or class—with many opportunities for discussion and tryout—so we wrote this book with limited referencing, statistics, and academic detail. Much of the literature about RIASEC and CIP theories has been written by investigative types for other researchers and scholars, and we are seeking to move in a different direction.

Dr. Reardon was the principal author of Chapters 1-6 and 12, and Dr. Lenz wrote Chapters 7-11. As a result, readers will sometimes see "I" or "we" pronouns used in various chapters. Each of us critiqued and rewrote parts of every chapter, so it was truly a collaborative effort.

We realize that readers may choose to approach this book in different ways and, to some extent, that affected our writing strategy. For instance, we deliberately chose to be repetitive across chapters in relation to some topics. This is because less experienced practitioners who are new to Holland's work may choose to read each chapter in sequence. We hope that any repetition they find will simply serve to reinforce their learning, i.e., make the point stick in their memory. Those more experienced with the SDS may choose to read only selected chapters. These readers are likely to encounter content about a particular subject only once. However, we have made every effort to provide cross-references to related topics found in other chapters.

We want to thank those who have helped us produce this work. For more than 40 years, John Holland provided

us with insights into career research and practice and inspired us to become better at integrating both scholarship and service into our own careers. Our former and current bosses, Jeff Garis and Myrna Hoover, gave us space and all kinds of support to pursue our interests and endeavors. R. Bob Smith III, PhD, and Melissa Messer, MHS, at PAR, Inc. patiently and fully supported us in this project. We also acknowledge the special contributions of our colleagues Jim Sampson, Gary Peterson, Debra Osborn, Kathy Dorsett Ledwith, and Emily Bullock-Yowell. We are also grateful to individuals and organizations who provided case materials for this book.

Finally, we especially acknowledge the questions and ideas about the SDS from hundreds of career advisors working in the Florida State University Career Center and from workshop participants from across the world—their stimulation has energized us in this endeavor.

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