FOREWORD

This booklet was written by William Ginn in the Client Assistance Program at the Oklahoma Office of Disability Concerns. The CAP program serves as an advocate for clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In the course of my duties, I work with many people who seek employment to better their lives—people just like you.
My name is Benny, and I’m from another planet. In my world people with abilities are rewarded. We receive credit chips, and we use these to get all kinds of things we want.

But actually we get a lot more than credit chips when we use our abilities. We get an inside glow, and others of our species recognize that we have contributed to the mix in a way that will make their lives better too.

You earthlings are beginning to show signs of following us, and that can mean a lot to you. Change will make your life better. Using your abilities will make your life better.

I want to talk to you about using your abilities to meet other people’s needs as well. In shorthand we call that getting a job. Getting a job can seem like a scary thing, but it needn’t be. I think it’s an exciting thing, and I hope you’ll agree with me before we finish communicating.

I speak in my native language but we have a special device that translates immediately in my brain including the lip movements in the sounds of your language. You’d never know I was different if I didn’t tell you.

“Getting what YOU want!”
So let’s get started on your road to employment. That road starts with you. What a good place to start, but it can be an intimidating place if you know what I mean. Now let’s see what I can do. Think the words and I become smaller and smaller and smaller. You can’t see me anymore.

I’m in your head now. I’m looking around a dark cave filled with all kinds of things. And what’s that sound I hear? I hear your thoughts. “I don’t have any abilities.” Change stations on that message. Do it now.

And here’s that other thought, “I can control the world.” Turn the volume down on that one. Most of us are somewhere in between. We do have abilities but not to the degree of world control. 

*Always be honest with yourself.*

Let’s talk about abilities. Some earthlings can build things. Some of you can fix things. Some choose to work with others like I’m doing with you now. I am also building a book out of simple words. We’ll color that purple. (Colors represent abilities.)

I choose blue as the color to reflect how I’m working with you. I have a little of the purple, and I mix it with a dark blue to paint myself onto the canvass of the world. You’re
I know we started on getting what you want, but I would like to end there as well. There has to be something for us in our jobs, or otherwise nobody would want to get one. Jobs buy the services and things we want. The money you earn will buy you food, clothing and shelter to meet your needs. Jobs can provide money you need to get from one place to another. I do a great deal of interplanetary travel, and the money I get from writing this little book for you carries me to a lot of exotic places I would never have seen otherwise.

But at their best, jobs provide much more than money. They can bring you self-respect and a real sense of accomplishment. Remember that first paycheck you brought home and the pride welling up inside you? Yes, you're right, people mostly get direct deposit to their banks now, but it's still earning something you would not have had otherwise.

watching me paint right now, and you’re thinking about your own colors and how to blend them to make something beautiful. Go on. Indulge that thought.

I always tell people that their interests will lead them to their abilities. What do you do in your spare time when no one’s even aware of what you’re doing? That’s the place to start.

“I always tell people that their interests will lead them to their abilities...”
Getting Inside Your Head

I see it here inside your head. I see a tiny box glowing in a dark background. But what’s that on the latch? A lock. I know there’s treasure inside. How do I get it open? You’re not even aware the glowing box is there. It’s real. I’m telling you.

You have the key. Where is it? Help me out here. You like to watch football. What is it you like about football? Do you like all the excitement and fanfare? Do you like to watch two armies on the field pitting their brute strength against each other? Do you like the strategy originating in two opposing brains?

Most people don’t have a clue. They haven’t thought about what they like or why they like it. They just watch the game. But there’s a lot going on inside of you while you watch, and some of that going on could just be a key to that glowing box I see in your head.

OK, I’m exaggerating a little here. Maybe the box isn’t really glowing. I lost you in that brilliant moment of self-awareness when you opened the box of the treasure of your abilities and launched a career which would change the way the world works.

Most of us are little guys and gals. Our abilities are there, but they’re only visible to a small group of people at a time. You like to cook. What is it you like about cooking? Here we go again with one question leading to another.

You like to measure and mix. You like the touch and feel of fresh vegetables.
What kind of jobs measure and mix? Do you want to grow organic, fresh vegetables? Where are you in that many actions which we call cooking? Where are you in that range of human activities that are related to cooking?

I can see I lost you again. The lights in your head have gone dim and flickering. When we look at jobs we can either go inside the activity to find ourselves or go outside. Here’s what I mean.

Businesses use cooks to satisfy real human needs and wants at the café down the street from you. Recipes are collected in books and sold. Wait staff work with cooks to give people a pleasant dining experience. Accountants keep track of things.

We’re talking about mixing and measuring in cooking. Chemists mix and measure too. The mortar for bricklayers has to be mixed and measured. Your real interest may not be in food at all. You see where I’m going?

You have the key even though you’re not aware of it. I know you’re tired of having me in your head. Let me get out gracefully. I’m out now and standing in front of you. What an experience that was!

You’re thinking there’s got to be an easier way than all this head stuff. Of course there is. I thought you’d never ask. There’s something called job shadowing. You connect with a real person who does a particular job. Let’s say they clean an office building from 6 p.m. to midnight. You go with them their whole shift and watch everything they do.

Afterwards you re-group. Can you see yourself doing that job? Job shadowing helps you get experience in many kinds of work. It helps you identify those colors which you have to paint yourself onto the canvass of the world.
Can you get paid work experience? Of course you can. There is a service agency out there which can provide a paid work experience for you. We call that agency Vocational Rehabilitation. You can get help out there to discover the kinds of work which fit your unique abilities.
Sometimes finding a job happens quickly, but more often than not it requires concentrated effort over a period of time. If you are trying to find a job on your own or if you have assistance from an employment program, be willing to invest that time and effort which will be needed.

If you have gone to Workforce looking for job postings, consider visiting the organization or their website weekly. They will post new jobs on a regular basis, and you'll probably find things that you didn't see the last time.

On top of that, the very act of going through those job postings will help you decide which ones interest you and which don't. You may begin to see a pattern of the jobs you choose to follow up with an application.

Employment programs to help you find a job take time. Application, eligibility and planning involve time and effort before job search or job preparation even begin.

But my rent's overdue. I have a car payment. I need braces for my child. I owe $400 to the electric company. Those are all legitimate life needs. They are real, and they exert a pressure which can be overwhelming. But these legitimate needs will not speed up an employer's hiring you.

Getting a job takes resume building, applications and interviews with time in between for each of those steps. Be willing to follow those steps and allow the appropriate time.

If you need financial help, pursue that separately. There are places which will help you with a cut-off notice for a utility bill. You may be able to negotiate with your landlord on a time to pay your rent. Work out a payment plan with your doctor or dentist to take some immediate pressure off.

Give yourself time to find an employer who needs your skillset and abilities. Some employer out there is looking for you just as

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**Beaming Into Your Reality**

Before I came to your world I beamed into your reality. In an instant I perceived what it would take you years to register. I learned there are people who can help you on your road to employment, and I learned how to access their services to get the most of your agency experience.

Yes, I know you are in the Vocational Rehabilitation office right now. I can see you as I think about you. You must have called 800-487-4042 and followed the prompts to get the address and phone number of the VR counselor. Fill out your application there or at the agency website [www.okrehab.org/job-seekers/home](http://www.okrehab.org/job-seekers/home).

**Vocational Rehabilitation** is one employment program. It is designed to help people with disabilities get a job. **Workforce** is an employment agency which works with all people to help them find a job. Colleges and Career Tech Centers will have advisors to help you prepare for all kinds of jobs.

If you’re a young person at least 16 years of age and qualify as low income, **Job Corps** may be just the help you need to get a skill and find employment. Job Corps will train you in many career fields which can lead to well-paying jobs. It is a residential program where you live while you learn. To learn more, contact the toll-free Job Corps number at 800-733-5627. Check out their website at [www.jobcorps.gov](http://www.jobcorps.gov) for lots of good information.

Social Security Disability recipients can use a **Ticket to Work** if they choose to either return to the workplace or enter the workplace for the first time. Social Security disability payments do offer a financial safety net to beneficiaries, but that safety net is very low.

People find that trying to live on benefits is very confining, and sometimes they desire something better for themselves. If you are a Social Security Disability beneficiary and are considering going to work, the Ticket to Work may be for you. Call Maximus
at 866-968-7842 or 866-833-2967 (TDD) for information on local Employment Networks which may support the Vocational Outcome you have chosen.

State programs which work with people with a cognitive disorder frequently have an employment piece. Visit [www.okdhs.org/service/dd/pages/default.aspx](http://www.okdhs.org/service/dd/pages/default.aspx). Those programs can pay for a Job Coach to prepare you to go to work, develop a job for you and help you maintain that job after you start working. As with most programs, it is a process of application, eligibility and developing a personalized plan.

It is not an either/or decision you have to make. You may choose to get information and services from more than one of the places I’ve mentioned. Information helps you decide what’s best for you.

I have beamed into your reality to give you a sketch of places which will help you prepare to go to work and get a job. The beaming technology we have on our planet is quite advanced, but you may know of additional resources. Don’t hesitate to ask for help from any place which will assist your road to employment.
Contrary to what you might think, all people are not necessarily ready to go to work. Work readiness is not something to be taken for granted even for people who have applied for services in an employment program.

Younger people may have relied on family to support them and never developed the skills and self-discipline they need to support themselves. Middle-age and older people may have been out of the work force for some time and not ready to face the huge changes that have come about in recent years.

And don’t forget about people who have been incarcerated. Imagine yourself having been out of the work world for ten, twenty or even thirty years. Transition from prison where all your decisions are made for you to life in the community where you have to exercise choices is a big problem facing your society.

Knowing how to complete a job application online is a skill people will need if they are going to work. Job readiness requires writing a resume which lists basic information about you in the short, easy-to-read format that employers want.

What kind of interview skills do you have? And what about your learned habits of showing up on time, remaining on task and accepting constructive criticism?

“Work readiness is not to be taken for granted...”
You may get a job if you don’t have these learned habits, but you probably won’t keep that job for long without them.

If you are a person with disabilities, are the symptoms of those disabilities managed? Will you need an accommodation on the job to work? Have you talked to your doctor about work restrictions? There are things you can do to get ready to work.

Your local Workforce office may have free classes available which can help you develop the habits you will need to hold a job. Vocational Rehabilitation may pay for a Job Coach who can help you write a resume and interview for a job. Ask for what you need. If you do not ask, you may not receive the help you need to go to work.

If you seriously want to go to work, why not think about a career rather than just a job? Some people just settle for doing something they are used to, but why not think about something to better yourself?

You can get help going to school or going to a career tech. The Vocational Rehabilitation program designed for people with disabilities can pay for education, and a program called Workforce can pay for an education as well.

I asked a man recently what he really wanted to do with the rest of his life. You know what he said? He said he had always wanted to be a Harley Davidson mechanic to work on motorcycles. He even researched the two schools in the United States in Phoenix, Arizona and Daytona Beach, Florida. He was that serious about it. I said why don’t you do it.

It takes some determination to do what you really want to do, and you have to be in the right spot. This guy has some money saved up to live on while he’s going to school, and I think he might have a real shot at becoming what he wants to be.

The big thing in choosing a Vocational Outcome is knowing what you want to do and having the determination to work through any obstacle. It is not always clear what a person wants down to a specific job title and job description. That takes some real effort on your part.

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a Vocational Outcome which is right for you. If you are involved in an employment program, that program probably has some specific services which can help you decide.

It is true that you don’t know a specific job title and job description of what you want to do for the rest of your life. That’s OK, but let’s look at what you do know about yourself. You like to work with cars. That’s a start.

Do you like to fix cars? Would you like to paint cars? Would you like to design cars? Would you like to sell cars? Now we’re heading to a more specific type of work, and that’s important.

Maybe we could do some job shadowing which we mentioned earlier with people who work in these various aspects of cars to learn if we would like to do that work. Maybe we could volunteer at an automobile repair shop to get insight into several occupations involving cars. Maybe we could take a course in automobile repair at the local Career Tech Center.

You think you would be interested in a career in the medical field. The medical field has a number of up-and-coming jobs which are frequently listed as Demand Occupations at your local Workforce Center.

Hospitals often have volunteer positions. In a hospital you will see all kinds of different jobs which will require a different set of skills. Some may be of interest to you and some may not.

We all think about the nurses and doctors in a hospital, but what about the phlebotomists or the respiratory therapists? What about the X-ray technicians or the physical therapists?

Now let’s take a different tact and go into the business office of that local hospital. Somebody has to do the billing. Somebody keeps books on income and expenditures. Somebody is a hospital administrator, and somebody else works in personnel.

In the course of your daily business, you will come across people doing all kinds of work. Yesterday I interacted with several people who did different kinds of work in state government. I
also interacted with wait staff at the local café, and at the end of the day a man came to my home to install a new oven.

Some jobs require people skills. Others require mechanical skills. Some jobs allow me to work alone, and some jobs require that I work with the public. Be aware of what the people you see every day are doing for a living. Can you see yourself doing similar work?

Go to https://okjobmatch.com to search for jobs. This website puts employers and job seekers together to meet needs. Job descriptions, resumes, job listings, colleges and training facilities—they’re all there on okjobmatch.

Another website is www.indeed.com. Browse local, national and international jobs here. Post your resume or view resumes for particular jobs. Compare salaries for the same job in different cities.

People think of Craigslist to help find a lot of things. Craigslist helps you find jobs too. You can go to specific job categories in specific cities to see real-time job openings. Drill down to job descriptions and contact information.
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Can you get paid work experience? Of course you can. There is a service agency out there which can provide a paid work experience for you. We call that agency Vocational Rehabilitation. You can get help out there to discover the kinds of work which fit your unique abilities. Much as you are looking for them. I’ll bet you didn’t think about that, did you.

Getting a job is a job!
Preparing for Change

Going from a long period of not working to a job requires some resilience and willingness to change. The same goes for changing from one job to another. Let’s say you go from a part-time job to a full-time job. That involves some real changes to your personal routine as well as anyone who lives with you.

You are used to doing your business during the day, but now you landed a job during those hours and feel some real restrictions on your time. Next week you start working the graveyard shift at your local box store, and your sleep schedule will be severely interrupted.

Work places are becoming more relaxed in their dress code, but doubtless you may have to dress differently on a job. You may need uniforms which you will have to purchase. Do you have the clothing you will need to work the job you want to do?

When considering the workplace, never forget that you will be working for and with other people there. Some you will like more than others, but you will need a working relationship with all. That means respect for and coordination with others on projects and responsibilities.

And now comes the big one that challenges your best-laid employment plans—transportation. Not everyone has a car—not even in your world. Where I come from we can beam to any place on our planet in seconds, but I quickly found out that you haven’t progressed as far.

You depend on cars and public transportation to take you to work. Public transportation varies in degree of availability from one city to another. Many places have no public transportation at all. One new change in the world of work allows people to work from home. That can solve the transportation problem.
Decisions have to be made on all kinds of things that are related to working. Be prepared for changes, and learn to embrace those changes because your road to employment will bring good things your way. Just wait and see.
Getting What You Want

I know we started on getting what you want, but I would like to end there as well. There has to be something for us in our jobs, or otherwise nobody would want to get one.

Jobs buy the services and things we want. The money you earn will buy you food, clothing and shelter to meet your needs. Jobs can provide money you need to get from one place to another. I do a great deal of interplanetary travel, and the money I get from writing this little book for you carries me to a lot of exotic places I would never have seen otherwise.

But at their best, jobs provide much more than money. They can bring you self-respect and a real sense of accomplishment. Remember that first paycheck you brought home and the pride welling up inside you? Yes, you’re right, people mostly get direct deposit to their banks now, but it’s still earning something you would not have had otherwise.
For creative people jobs provide a conduit to share themselves with the world. And I am not just talking about people in the arts here. Creative extends to business and technology as well as other fields.

And what about the regular people who have jobs you are more familiar with who put their suggestions in the suggestion box. In small ways they change how we do things to make them more efficient and productive. The right job can be a very satisfying activity.

And now we’re back to you and your road to employment. That road will take you many places and through many experiences. Other people will be there to help you along the way, but only you can drive that car. I will be watching you and whispering suggestions along the way.
My name is Benny, and I'm from another planet. In my world people with abilities are rewarded. We receive credit chips, and we use these to get all kinds of things we want. But actually we get a lot more than credit chips when we use our abilities. We get an inside glow, and others of our species recognize that we have contributed to the mix in a way that will make their lives better too.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank all the clients I’ve served for teaching me about getting a job. I’ve talked with people who wanted to work for themselves, people who wanted to be truck drivers and people who wanted to be doctors and lawyers. Through all those dissimilar vocations, I’ve identified some common threads involved in getting a job. Getting a job involves a lot of self-searching and perseverance. This is meant to be a beginning on your road to employment.