fter twenty years, Jeff Shanley had experienced more than
his fair share of the Silicon Valley. The hours. The traffic. The
pretentiousness. It was time to make a change.

To be fair, it wasn’t really the work that Jeff had grown
tired of. In fact, he had enjoyed an interesting and successful
career. After a few jobs in high-tech marketing, at age thirty-five he cofounded a technology start-up. Two years later,
he was fortunate enough to get demoted when the board of
directors hired what they called a grown-up CEO. During the
next four years, that CEO, Kathryn Petersen, taught Jeff more
about leadership, teamwork, and business than he could have
learned in a decade of business school.

When Kathryn retired, Jeff left the company and spent
the next few years working at a small consulting firm in
Half Moon Bay, over the hills from the Silicon Valley. Jeff
thrived there, and was on the verge of becoming a partner.
But during that time, he and his wife began to grow tired of
trying to keep up with the Joneses, which happened to be
the name of the family that lived in the over-priced bunga-
low next door.
Jeff was definitely ready for a change. Where he would go and what he would do next was a mystery to him. He certainly didn’t expect the answer to come via a phone call from his uncle Bob.