

retirement options

THE NEW
RETIREMENT

DISCOVERING
YOUR DREAM

*Your Mature
Career/Life
Planning Guide*

Richard P. Johnson, Ph.D.

WORLD
press

810 Horan Drive • St. Louis, Missouri 63026

The New Retirement

Copyright 2001 by Richard P. Johnson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other — except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

Contents

Introduction	1
1. Work Reorientation	9
2. Attitude Toward Retirement	15
3. Directedness	21
4. Health Perception	29
5. Financial Security	37
6. Current Life Satisfaction	43
7. Projected Life Satisfaction	51
8. Life Meaning	57
9. Leisure Interests	63
10. Adaptability	71
11. Life Stage Satisfaction	79
12. Dependents	87
13. Family/Relationship Issues	93
14. Perception of Age	103
15. Replacement of Work Functions	109
16. Developing Your Personal Retirement Mission Statement and Your Retirement Options Plan	113

INTRODUCTION

“The ‘new retirement’ is not an ending, it’s a new beginning, the start of a new life journey of vastly expanded proportion.”

A new force is silently sweeping our culture; a force that has already started to change the very fabric of how we organize our lives, how we relate to one another, how we use our money, our time, and our talents. This new force is the dramatic shift in how we retire. This shift is happening suddenly, it seems to have come out of nowhere, but has now escalated into a cascade of change that is touching every corner of our society. These changes include: shifts in what we believe retirement to be, shifts in how we perceive retirement, how we think about retirement, how we feel about retirement, the decisions and choices we make about retirement, and finally what we do in retirement. These shifts have already begun to make their mark on our society, and they will continue to surge forward in an unending unfolding of new challenges, new opportunities, new options, and new discoveries.

An entirely new definition of retirement has surfaced

that has never before been seen so clearly by so many. It's an entirely new human potential movement destined to transform every facet of the gemstone of human endeavor. This new definition encourages us to sparkle as never before, with a new freedom of action and a deepening of the human spirit. This "new retirement" is different in every way from the "old retirement." The old retirement generated personal fragmentation, desolation, purposelessness, and fixation; the new retirement generates personal reconstitution, consolation, purposefulness, and creative change.

The "OLD" Retirement

The old retirement model produced idle busyness, self-forfeiture, powerlessness, and reliance on others; the new retirement fosters life enrichment, healthy self-ownership, transformation, and creative self-reliance. The old retirement encouraged a certain denial of reality, increasing self-absorption, a disharmonizing attitude of criticism, and a passive alienation; the new retirement encourages physical wellness, a healthy self-esteem, an attitude of mentorship, and a posture of involvement. Perhaps most important, the old retirement pressured and distorted relationships; the new retirement enhances relationships with new communication, new cohesion, and new adaptive freshness. Without question, the definition of retirement is changed forever. We need to be ready to ride this new and exciting tidal wave of change, or risk being swept under by it.

The old retirement paradigm offered the illusion of a prolonged vacation, but for many it only delivered a monotony of sameness that gave only shallow satisfaction. The old retirement promised rest and relaxation but served up only

a boredom that numbed the mind and flattened the spirit. The “old” retirement was seen as a reward to be achieved; a nirvana-like place where there were no more decisions to be made, no schedules to keep, no hassles, no supervisors, no quotas, no questions, no rude customers, no uncooperative co-workers, and certainly no organizational mission statements to serve.

No, the old retirement deluded us into thinking that we would find relief from all that caused us any pain, all that introduced pressure, and all that induced stress. Of course the trade-off here was that the old retirement was also the place where there were no more accolades, no more promotions, no more camaraderie, no more sense of accomplishment, no more perks, no more stimulating interactions, no more sense of achievement, no more self-expression, and no more personal growth! The old retirement saw you as ending, while the new retirement sees you as just beginning!

The Shift

The new definition of retirement shifts us away from the old hierarchial model of life which sees retirement as a gradual slide away from fullness of life. The new retirement rests on a circular model of an ever-continuous cycle of: 1) exploration, 2) mastery, 3) mentorship, and 4) renewal. The new way of thinking about retirement values life meaning over rest; personal fulfillment over relaxation; life balance over a lopsided leisure; and realizing long-held dreams over simply time-filling “fun”! This new model promises an expanding rather than a constricting sphere of personal operation; a deepened interest in life; a heightened sense of one’s own authentic self, and a new passion for discovery not

felt since youth.

Not all retirees will want, nor have the necessary verve to pursue the new retirement. These will lapse into a retirement lifestyle of the old definition. At first old style retirees will look like they're doing just fine; they may even chide the "new retirees" for "working" so hard, for investigating new interests with such vigor, for stretching themselves toward maximum personal growth, for actively deepening their primary relationships, and for failing to follow them in their old retirement "leisure lifestyle" routines. While they may look good on the outside, we now know that on the inside they are planting the seeds of dependency, of passivity, and of ill-health that will eventually consume them in a life contorting mixture of physical, mental, and spiritual disharmony that will infect them to their very core. Their internal light gradually dims, ultimately leaving them dispirited, shallow, and frankly uninteresting.

A New Retirement Landscape

In the U.S. alone, more than 10,000 people retire every day! In Canada, the number is over 1,000. Two trends are converging to produce this fantastic surge. First, people are living longer. We are in the grandest social experiment ever witnessed by humankind: in the last 90 years longevity in western culture has increased 30 years! This is nothing short of a social phenomenon. The ranks of retirees are surging like a juggernaut. Retirees can expect to live this new lifestyle for 30 or 40 years; longer than any other stage or phase of life! Yet this is not a negative force in our society. Instead of worrying about "how we can 'take care' of all these old people," we need to realize that a new paradigm

shift is occurring where retirees no longer act like the retirees of yesterday, instead they are finding new ways of invigorating society, investing their experience and their wisdom in it, thereby creating added value in it economically, socially, and spiritually, in ways their grandfathers and fathers could not.

The second trend swelling the ranks of retirees is that people are “retiring” earlier. The average first retirement age is somewhere around 57! The old retirement model of stopping work at the age of 65 is all but gone. In its place is a new fluidity of movement from job to job, from career to career, from interest to interest. The individual herself or himself is the new manager of mature life careers and life planning; the old retirement had the corporation or organization “in charge” of when, how, and at what pension the worker would retire. This is all but gone as well; the new retirement puts the individual in the driver's seat, making the decisions, “calling the shots” of a completely self-directed and growth-focused lifestyle fashioned from the mix of financial, social, relationship, family, leisure, meaning, and spiritual needs and desires that have been well defined and from which plans have been drawn. Each retiree is free to enter and exit work projects, leisure interests, educational pursuits, travel, and any other endeavors that have been identified as part of the admixture of life-giving activities that constitute one's retirement “dream.” All this requires planning.

No ONE Retirement Model

Retirement means different things to different people. For some, the old retirement with its emphasis on “rest and

The New Retirement

fun,” while not providing for expanding personal growth will still suffice for their desires. Others will want to continue to work in the field they have become accustomed, still others will want to venture into a new entrepreneurial enterprise they had always wanted; some will opt for travel experiences, some for educational courses and even advanced degrees, others will find themselves fulfilled in volunteering, and finally, others will find themselves pulled to ever-deepening spiritual understanding through further education and service to their church, synagogue, or mosque. There is no one pattern for retirement that will satisfy all, but one thing is for sure; it all takes heightened personal career/life planning of a unique type that may not have been a part of your life before.

Retirement is not an ending, it is a new beginning, the start of a new life journey of vastly expanded proportion. Retirement holds up a light for us so we can see a wider horizon, an unlimited horizon where we can become more interesting even to ourselves; more alive, more personal, and certainly find deepened meaning in life as never before. This new light is the same one that has shone inside of you for so long but one which only a very few ever let shine in the main corridors of their life. It is the dream that was planted in you long ago, a dream that you may have only superficially considered as a youngster only to gradually let it dim and finally slip from your consciousness, covered over by the busyness of making a living, and meeting obligations. The ember of the dream still burns faintly. Now is the time to fan the ember into flame, time to resurrect this long-forgotten dream, examine it closely, study it, and find expression for it. That spark is with us in our retirement years just the same way it has been with us all along ... only more so! Let your light shine!

Retirement challenges us in ways we haven't experienced. It is our invitation for growth calling us to: transform our beliefs about ourselves, reframe our perceptions of what we are all about, invigorate our thinking, refocus our feelings, clarify our decisions, and find purposeful action. If we wish the full measure of our own giftedness, we need to heed the call of our dream and meet these challenges on all levels of life. The journey from full time work to full time retirement will probably take many years. Along the way you will find more of you than you ever thought existed. Retirement calls us to an expanded capacity for living and loving, each day we are called to live fully. Each day of our retirement lives we are to ask ourselves: "How can I learn to live and love better today?" The answer to this question propels us on a daily adventure of celestial proportions. Are you ready for the adventure?

Yet, to achieve this level of retirement fulfillment each retiree must consider much; each must look into him or herself with a keen introspection that has probably not been tried for many years, if ever! This self-inventory is crucial if a new retirement lifestyle is to emerge; failure to undergo such a personal assessment leaves one at great risk for descending into the grip of the old retirement.

A Retirement Success Analysis

My research has identified 15 factors that together constitute the content for a most thorough self-analysis. This self-evaluation can be most profitably accomplished at successive intervals before your first retirement event; 15 years before, again at 10 years before, again at 5 years before, and the year before first retirement. After your first retirement,

it's recommended to update your self-analysis at five year intervals. Such analysis can pay rich dividends by keeping your goals, life purpose, and your personal fulfillment fresh, as well as keeping your energies focused on what's truly important.

This analysis can be most efficiently accomplished by taking the Retirement Success Profile, the RSP. The RSP is a 120 item self-assessment that provides a detailed, personal inventory of your current strengths, as well as areas needing added focus. The RSP gives you information that you could receive no where else; it tells you which of the 15 factors are “strength factors” for you, which ones you are quite adequately addressing, and which you may want to focus more energy upon. The RSP not only compares your scores with others like yourself who have taken the RSP, but also, in a most creative way, it compares you to yourself. The results of the RSP are designed to be used in conjunction with this book.

Both the RSP and this book can be immeasurably enhanced when you enroll in a retirement seminar or individual consultation with a certified “retirement specialist” or “retirement coach” who has been specially trained in helping you develop a functional retirement plan and assist you in executing it well. Each of the chapters of this book is devoted to one of the 15 factors in the same order they appear on your personalized RSP profile.

NOTE: For more information on the RSP and retirement coaching, consult the Retirement Options website:

www.RetirementOptions.com