

Note from DorchesterAdvisors: The article below came to me via a friend. I am unable to track the author, to give due credit. Also, neither the grammar nor the spelling is standard American, but I chose not to modify it. The ideas and concepts are, however, interesting and worth thinking about. – Dushyant, Dec 2012

Four Pre-Conditions for Retirement

I retired in year 2000 at age 52. I am now 64, thus I can claim that I got more experience at retirement than most! I thought I should share my experience with mariners because I have seen too many friends and neighbours who became so bored that they have become a nuisance to their spouse and children and to others!

A few of them have solved the problem by going back to work. They were able to do so because they have a skill/expertise that is still in demand. The rest (and many are my neighbours) live aimlessly or are waiting to die - a very sad situation, indeed..

You can retire only when you fulfil these 4 pre-conditions:

- 1) Your children are financially independent (e.g. they got jobs),
- 2) You have zero liability (all your borrowings are paid up),
- 3) You have enough savings to support your lifestyle for the rest of your life,

AND most importantly,

- 4) You know what you would be doing during your retirement.

DO NOT retire till you meet ALL 4 Pre-Conditions. And of course you should not retire if you enjoy working and are getting paid for it!

The problem cases I know of are those who failed to meet Pre-Condition #4.

When asked, "What would you be doing during your retirement?" some replied, "I will travel/cruise and see the World". They did that, some for 3 months and then ran out of ideas. The golfers replied, "I can golf every day." Most could not because they are no longer fit to play well enough to enjoy the game. Those who could, need to overcome another hurdle - they need to find the "kakos/kakis" (friends) to play with them.

It's the same with mahjong, bridge, badminton, trekking and karaoke - you need "kakis"! Most could not find others who share their favourite game and playing/singing alone is no fun. AND when they do find them, a few of them found that they are NOT welcomed like my obnoxious neighbour whom everyone avoids.

Thus if you are into group sports or games, you must form your groups BEFORE you retire. You need to identify your "kakis", play with them and discover whether they "click" with you.

The less sporty "can read all the books bought over the years". I know of one guy who fell asleep after a few pages and ended up napping most of the time! He discovered that he did not like to read after all. We do change and we may not enjoy the hobbies we had..

Routine Activities To Fill Your Week

For most people, your routine work activities are planned for you or dictated by others and circumstances. When you retire, you wake up to a new routine - one that you yourself have to establish as nobody else would do it for you! The routine to establish should keep your body, mind and spirit "sharpened".

A good routine would comprise:

a) One weekly physical sport - you need to keep fit to enjoy your retirement. If you are the non-sporty type, you should fire your maid and clean your home without mechanical aids. Dancing and baby sitting are good alternatives.

b) One weekly mind stimulating activity - e.g. writing, studying for a degree, acquiring a new skill such as use of computer and the internet, solving problems or puzzles, learn or teach something. You need to stimulate your mind to stay alive because the day you stop using your brain is the day you start to die.

c) One weekly social activity - choose one involving lots of friends/neighbours. Get yourself accepted as a member to at least 3 interests groups. Unless you prefer to be alone, you do need friends more than ever as you get older and less fit to pursue your sport.

d) One weekly community service activity - you need to give to appreciate what you have taken in this life. It's good to leave some kind of legacy.

With 4 weekly activities, you got 4 days out of 7 covered. The remaining 3 days should be devoted to family related activities. In this way, you maintain a balance between amusing yourself and your family members.

Any spare time should remain "spare" so that you can capitalise on opportunities that come your way like responding to an unexpected request to do a job or to take advantage of cheap fares to see places or to visit an exhibition.

Mind stimulating activities

Most judges live to a ripe old age. They use their brains a lot to decide on cases. I am sure MM Lee's brain works overtime. He's 80+ and still going strong. In "Today" you would have read of 2 inspiring oldies. One is a granny who learned to play the guitar at age 60 to entertain his

grandchildren. She's 70+ today and those grandchildren have grown to play with her. Another is an Indian radiologist who on retirement, qualified as an acupuncturist. He's age 77 and still offers his services (by appointment only) including free ones to those who have no income. I guarantee you that they are happy people who discovered a "2nd wind" to take them to the sunset with a smile on their faces.

Mind stimulating activities are hard to identify. They require your will to do something useful with the rest of your life, a mindset change and the discipline to carry it through.

Your Bucket List

Despite your busy routine, you will at times be bored. Then it's time to turn to your Bucket List.

Your bucket list contains a list of things to do before you kick the bucket. They are not routine and are usually one off activities. You need them to have something to look forward to. These include anniversaries, trips (and pilgrimages), visits to friends and relations abroad, re-doing your home, attending conferences (related to your hobbies), acquiring a new set of expertise. 4 such activities that are spaced out quarterly would be ideal.

Retirement Is A Serious Business

If you can afford to retire and want to, do prepare to live to your fullest. You need to be fit to enjoy it - therefore get into shape now. You do not want to get up on a Monday and wonder what to do each week, therefore identify your set of weekly routine activities now and try them out to confirm that they are the activities that you will be looking forward to doing each week, week after week. Your bucket list of "rewards" or "projects" or "challenges" is needed to help you break away from the routine thereby make life worth living.

Start listing what you fancy and refine it as you chug along in your retirement. You will have so much fun, you would wish you were retired since your turned 21 !!

Source: Unknown.

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