

Retirement Well-Being

By Lynne Campbell-Gillies

So, you've retired. Your financial portfolio looks good, but ... are you feeling happy? Fulfilled?

Thanks to modern medicine and improved lifestyles, we can expect to live a good 20 to 30 more years after official retirement age. This presents both wonderful opportunities as well as possible challenges. To make the most of this new phase of life, a proactive approach towards a personal psychological portfolio – your mental and emotional well-being – will bring you the enjoyment you've a right to expect.

Those people happiest in retirement enjoy a variety of activities such as volunteer work, exercise, new interests, and travel. They have a well-defined purpose for living, good relationships with their partner, family and friends, stable finances, and strive to sustain a healthy lifestyle including good physical, mental and emotional health

One study (APA Monitor, 2004) describes '6 kinds of retirees' – do you recognize any of these?

“Continuers” – staying connected with past skills and activities but modifying them to fit retirement such as volunteering or part-time work in their former field;

“Adventurers” – starting new activities or learning new skills not related to their past work, such as learning to play a musical instrument or taking on an entirely new job;

“Searchers” – learning by trial and error as they look for a niche; they have yet to find their identity in retirement;

“Easy gliders” – enjoying unscheduled time and like their daily schedule “to go with the flow;”

“Involved spectators” – maintaining an interest in their previous field of work but assuming different roles, such as an MD who becomes a mentor to younger people;

“Retreaters” – becoming depressed, retreating from life and giving up on finding a new path.

For some, retirement can be a roller coaster of adjusting to changes in daily routines, relationships, work roles and even beliefs about oneself. Other challenges may include marital tension in couples who have newly retired, depression, feelings of boredom and frustration, experiencing the loss of loved ones, physical decline and illness, and coping with daily stressors of life. If you are experiencing any of these difficulties, now would be a good time to seek the help of a professional.

Wishing you health and happiness!

“Retire from work, but not from life.” M.K. Soni

Dr L Campbell-Gillies (D Litt et Phil, UJ)

Counselling Psychologist

Tel: 031 7644886

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