

LIFE
IN
RETIREMENT...

IT'S
REALLY
SIMPLE

IT
JUST
AIN'T

EASY

CHAPTER THREE

"There is only one success--to be able to spend your life in your own way." - Christopher Morley

First, Let's Get It Right

THEY HAVE IT ALL WRONG!

These Guru's who want to teach you how to create financial wealth, so you can retire and live a rich, full and happy life; HAVE IT ALL WRONG!

When you retire you will see what I mean but until then let me give you the real story. The one you should really be concerned about.

Money is **NOT** the most important thing you need to worry about for retirement.

- What if it turns out that you don't have enough money to live the way you want to in your retirement?
- What if you didn't get the opportunity or have the knowledge or means to save up enough to retire comfortably?
- What if you are strictly dependent on Social Security and maybe fifteen or twenty five thousand dollars in savings and that's it?
- What if you absolutely had to supplement your income? Let's face it in fifteen or twenty years inflation may just make it more difficult for you. What do you do?

First, don't panic. Like it or not there are ways to make it through any crisis. It makes sense but it ain't easy.

Some Solutions;

1. You could get a part-time job to supplement any financial needs. I am not saying you would like it but you know you could if you had to, to survive.
2. You might even be embarking on a new career that has been a passion of yours for a long time and now you will have the time to do it and earn some dollars to supplement what you have saved for just these years.

3. You could sell your house and/or downsize your home and expenses to achieve your goals. Use the equity to help in your living expenses.
4. You could move to a city or even a country that will accommodate what you can afford to live on. I recently went on a cruise and stopped in the port of Belize down Mexico way. The guide I had, told us of an area on the island where many Americans live in what has become a little community of retirees. It cost about \$25,000 for a nice house maybe 1800 to 2000 square feet and you can have a maid and cook for about fifty to a hundred dollars for a week. I have read about other cities in other countries where similar situations are available. Hey just Google it.
5. You could cash in your Life Insurance policy if you have one for extra cash. At the later ages it is not as important as it once was.
6. You could move in with Family: children, siblings, even friends. No you don't want to and this would have to be an absolute last resort but it is an option like it or not. It's called survival.
7. Consider group living, which is becoming popular these days because many more people are retiring and are having financial difficulties. A group of seniors (2,3,4 couples) get together and rent a house to accommodate their needs. Not only that, it provides needed companionship. Look it up!
8. Medicaid can help with prescriptions and doctor's care if it comes to that. No it is not the best solution but without adequate health coverage it is THE emergency solution along with you taking the full responsibility for your own health care. Hey, it is better than nothing.
9. What if you have no money to retire but have reached the age where you want to? You've earned it! You deserve it! Hey, you could get a job with no challenge and just earn enough to live. Plus select from 1-8. Take the pressure off. Find one of those "go to work go home leave job at work no worries no cares" type of job. Then plan and enjoy the years you have left. People are doing it. With the right mental attitude, so can You!

There are always ways to work out the financial aspect of your retirement if you are willing to search and be flexible. Like I said; "don't panic."

Let's face it; you didn't reach this age without knowing how to survive. I am sure you had some lean years in your lifetime and yet you found a creative way to get through it all. I don't care how you did it the fact is

you did it. And you will do what you need to do now to accomplish your goal.

Now, I am not recommending anything in particular. The whole point is to find a way to live and enjoy your retirement years within your financial capability and know you don't have to be a millionaire to accomplish that. And after you have found your solution, I still promise you; *money is not your biggest problem.*

I ask you, how many times have you heard stories about people who were financially set retiring, at, 55,62,65,67,70, whatever. And then six months maybe a year or two later they dropped dead of a heart attack, had a stroke or suddenly got cancer or some other disease and died. They never got to spend the money they worked all their lives for, preparing for the day that they would or could retire. Why? What happened?

If you recall you were always prepared for your day, your week, your year, for the most part. You knew where you would be. You knew how much vacation time you had and usually you had plans for that. You knew where you were going and what you intended to do even if it was just visiting relatives in another state or country. Other than that you went to work everyday like most people. You might have had weekends off and just enjoyed relaxing at home, maybe with friends or maybe catching up on some chores around the house. If you were working at a specific career and/or profession you probably worked a lot more hours and a lot harder and didn't have the weekends off to relax. Again it was pretty well planned out for the most part. It wasn't necessarily a plan as much as it was an obligation to yourself and your family to work your career. The choices or options were kind of limited.

Well it's one thing to plan a week a month or even a year that's pretty much set out for you because of obligations, but here there are no obligations.

Here, YOU actually have to plan the rest of your life.

What are you going to do? Each day? Each week? Each month? For the rest of your life! By the way, how long will that be? The rest of your life I mean!

THINK ABOUT IT! THINK HARD! It's really simple, it just ain't easy!

When and if you decide to retire and stop working at what has been your life's occupation make sure you are ready to do so. Make sure you have a plan or at least an idea as to what you want to do. For someone who has had

a career and has achieved a certain level of satisfaction and success I don't believe you can just stop unless you have a passion for something else you intend to do.

That passion can be anything. It can also be to do nothing, or as the Italians say,

“LA DOLCE FA NIENTE.”
THE SWEETNESS OF DOING NOTHING!

Go ahead spend your day having breakfast lunch and dinner and maybe a few snacks in between. It may include reading the paper (for as long as there is still a newspaper) and watching TV and the news or certain selected programs and taking naps. It may include reading all the books in the library or walking around your neighborhood, perhaps a vigorous exercise program. You can play just so much golf and/or tennis, and then what? Maybe do some extensive traveling? Seeing places you have always wanted to see. It may be a new business or hobby that has been a secret passion you look forward to perfecting. You name it.

The point is that you must, I repeat you must, realize you will have to develop a plan to occupy your days your time and most importantly your mind.

Remember as a kid you found yourself bored at times. Now we didn't have 500 or so TV channels to choose from. In fact at eight or nine years old I didn't even have a TV. We had to go outside and play and find other kids to play with who were dealing with the same dilemma as we were. We had to create our own games and ways to keep busy and out of trouble. Reading a book was an option of last resort.

Well you are now right back in that boat. You have to create your own day. You have to find ways to keep yourself busy. You have to find friends, colleagues, associates, who also have to create their own day. Or make new acquaintances and friends to fill that void in your life. People to maybe; play golf with, or bowl with. People to meet with for a drink, a breakfast, brunch or lunch. And how many times a week can you do that? What about the rest of the day and/or days? And for how long will that still be fun?

If your spouse or significant other is also retired you can plan days and little trips or events with each other. But that presents another problem. No two people, regardless of their sexes, can be with each other twenty-four hours a

day, seven days a week without going nuts and being at each other's throats after a period of time. We are just not made that way. Ask any psychiatrist or psychologist or clinical therapist of any kind. This is especially true during your senior years. By all means sprinkle activities with the spouse or significant other, into your plan but make sure you have a whole lot more than that. You don't want to depend upon someone else in any capacity, spouse included, to keep you active, occupied or fulfilled during your retirement life. It's one thing to share your life with someone but you have to have other means of being occupied apart from that. Most importantly you have to keep your mind active and you must be at peace with what you choose and expect to do during your retirement.

You will also find that as you begin to formulate your plan and find things to occupy your time and your mind there are no obligations other than to yourself. Now you may make commitments to certain people, aside from family or your spouse. Like volunteering at various types of organizations, senior centers or hospitals. But there is nothing compelling you to do so on a regular basis unless you **choose** to do so.

For example; I met an old friend (R.K.) of mine in my dentists' office who is a professional bowler and ran a few bowling alleys in town as a career. His wife worked part time as the bookkeeper for the consortium that ran the business. When they retired he still ran a league or two and she still worked part-time at her job, for which she was paid. He also bowled in a couple of leagues and would help out at the alleys to keep active in something he loved to do, but did not receive a paycheck. But the trade-off was worth it to him. They each golfed a couple of times a week, once together and the other time with men and women friends of theirs. They were happy and still in love. He is in his 70's and she is in her mid-sixties. They had it together and were very happy and active. This is a perfect example of how to retire happily, especially as a couple.

After all this is your life and for probably the first time in your life you will eventually find out and know that you **"really are in control."**

As a result of that you will begin to find that when people come up with untimely requests of your time you will take umbrage to it. You will not like people disrupting your plan.

Another example; I had a good friend of mine, a retired salesman (R.H. FL.), who though retired was working part-time and had his week planned when his boss called him one morning and wanted him to take an appointment with a prospective customer that day. His other salespeople were committed

and my friend was the only one left who could fulfill this need. Well my friend was not pleased at all. While he told him would do it, it rankled him all day and by his own admission, he did not give his best presentation that day. He was upset because in his mind his day was planned and he didn't like anyone infringing upon his plan and his day. It's part of the process of retiring. We tend to get a little selfish like that.

It's one thing if it's a family emergency and even that can be unsettling. You will find when you have your day or week planned you will not like interruptions. Now you may say, "what's the big deal?" Well IT IS a big deal. And you will find out how big a deal it really is.

When you were younger and your life was more or less being planned for you, you handled disruptions and emergencies as part of your normal routine and were able to adjust to them and fit it all in or easily move one thing around to accommodate the other or the disruption. It was pretty much a part of your life.

NOT ANY MORE!

I promise you things have changed and will change. Now if someone wants you to do something that is not on your schedule for the day or week you want and need notice. I tell my kids, give me at least two days notice if you want a commitment from me. I need to put it into my mental process for my life to happily accommodate your request and that means the proper amount of time. They joke about it because they don't understand, but I am serious. Now, that is not to say that I can't be counted on in a moment's notice if there is an emergency of sorts. I can be, but I will probably not be the happiest camper in the group. It does disrupt my mental process and requires me to adjust my thinking, as well as my day.

There are no requirements as to what you should, can, or even can't do. But there is a requirement that you have some sort of plan even if it is just a general one with which to start. Just so you don't fall into the trap of boredom and loneliness, which can lead to depression and illness. That's the pitfall those others we spoke of fell into. That's what caused their demise in a rather short period of time. At least that is my belief and if it is ever monitored I truly believe that will be the outcome.

You set your week and you can make plans and changes as you desire but mentally you create an order to your week in your mind. Even if the plan is to do nothing. That is what you have set your mind to deal with. You may not like a week of doing nothing but if that is your only choice and is what

you have planned, you set your mind to accepting it and dealing with it and your energy is spent in finding ways to fill that time. When someone upsets that mindset and plan you can be upset and even cranky.

You have to compartmentalize your life based on what is available to you to create and fill the days of your life and believe me at times that can be a chore. Even the chores and the “Honeydos” are programmed into your mindset and days. And at times you even welcome them because they fill a part of your day. Only, “Dear God!” don’t, let your spouse know that.

Simultaneously you have to and want to maintain an upbeat attitude. You want to be happy and enjoy the peace and tranquility of being by yourself at those times and find the harmony between you and the Universe that makes it all worthwhile and special and allows you to appreciate being alive.

I have a very good friend who fills in as a substitute teacher during the school year. He (J.F., FL.) said he has two plans for each school day of the week. The first is that he will be asked to teach and so the night before he lays out all his clothes for school, makes his lunch, sets up the coffee pot for the morning and even shaves and showers the night before. So if he gets a call the next morning he can be out of the house in fifteen minutes. Give or take.

His second plan, if he is not asked to teach, can include chores around the house, read a book, play his guitar and write songs, exercise at the gym with his Medicare silver sneakers plan with his wife, or just sit around watch TV and do whatever. He did say, “although, with my wife there are very few ‘sitaround’ days.” But he is enjoying his retirement years and admits it took him a few years to get the hang of it.

I promise you, you will learn a great deal about yourself and what makes you tick. It will probably be the most introspective time you will ever have with yourself and provide you with the most exciting ride you will ever encounter on the “Train of Life” (another chapter). You will have the time to reflect upon all that happens and get a better understanding of life, the life you have led and the future that is yet to be lived. And most importantly recognize the role you can play and have played along the way.

All this will have a direct correlation to; your health, your mindset, your attitude. So says Papa J. It’s really simple, it just ain’t easy! BY ALL

MEANS READ ON!