

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF RETIREMENT: PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

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HOW ROBUST IS YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTFOLIO?

A study of 100 retirees found that the act of retiring is one of many transitions in the retirement process. Results showed that coping with these transitions depends on the following:

- the role of work and family in the life of the individual
- the timing of retirement
- the degree to which work has been satisfying
- the degree to which retirement is planned for
- the expectations one has about retirement
- the degree to which a meaningful life is established
- one's health and sense of financial security

WHAT WILL BE THE REALIGNMENT OF MY DOMESTIC STRUCTURE?

Your transition to retirement and your status as retired will have an impact on those around you.

- Will both you and your spouse/partner be retired?
 - Consider the new experience of having more time together and how your roles and domestic duties may change.
- Regardless of your personal relationship status, what new and different demands will family and friends make of you? Or, you on them?

TRANSITIONAL STAGES OF RETIREMENT

■ Pre-retirement

- Focus on getting to retirement rather than on what happens afterwards

■ The big day

- Shortest stage in retirement, day when work actually ceases.
- Should be marked by a ceremony of some sort.

■ Honeymoon phase

- Initial freedom enjoyed. Time spent doing the things that “never could be done because of work.”
- Lasts as long as person has activities planned.

■ Disenchantment

- Novelty of the honeymoon phase wears off
- “What do I do now?”
- Typical feelings include disillusionment or disappointment, boredom, and anxiety

■ Reorientation

- Often the hardest phase, involves building a new identity.
- Takes time and conscious effort.
- Self examination questions that must be answered again.
 - Who am I?
 - What is my purpose?
 - What is important to me, and how do I get it?

■ New Routine

- New daily and weekly schedule established.
- New patterns become firm.
- Adjustment to new lifestyle.
- Negative emotions fade.

**THE MOST CHALLENGING
ASPECT OF THE PROCESS
OF RETIREMENT IS
TRANSFORMING
FROM A WORK BASED
IDENTITY TO A WORK FREE
IDENTITY.**

MODELS OF DEALING WITH CHANGE: IDENTITY ADJUSTMENT

Assimilation

- Seeing one's experience of the world as compatible with one's identity. In effect, minimizing the importance of change.
 - this internal conceptualization is more likely to result in identity adjustment problems
 - assimilation is more likely to result in an emotional response

Accommodation

- Making adjustments so that experience and identity are compatible. In effect, change leading to revision of the view of the self.
 - reliance upon accommodation is more likely to result in a problem-solving response to change
 - assimilation is more likely to result in self-reflection

COMMON EMOTIONS EXPERIENCED THROUGH TRANSITION

- Excitement
- Joy
- Freedom
- Accomplishment
- Peace of mind
- Optimism
- Ambivalence
- Anxiety
- Boredom
- Restlessness
- Uselessness
- Loss, especially of identity
- Sadness/Grief
- Physical/Mental sequelae of aging

WAYS TO ESTABLISH NEW IDENTITY

- Find activities that are satisfying (Mind/body fitness)
- Create new social ties/network
- Learn new skills
- Become involved in community issues

STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

- Visualize who you want to become
- Gradually implement lifestyle changes
- Share your new plans and goals with family, colleagues, and friends
- Use your emotional intelligence: by recognizing it takes conscious effort, time, and perseverance to evolve

PERSONAL COUNSELING CAN HELP FUTURE RETIREES A.K.A YOU!:

- Increase your awareness.
- Help you understand old personal issues that may resurface and become newly problematic.
- Adjust to this new stage.
- Help in the exploration of issues related to new life decisions.

SUPPORT

- Faculty & Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)

- No cost confidential counseling
- Work-related and personal problems
- Management consultation

- Contact FSAP:

- fsap@hr.ucsf.edu
- (415) 476-8279

- Human Resources Website

<http://ucsfhr.ucsf.edu/index.php/assist/>