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Finding Joy in Retirement

Retirement is so different these days. Gone is the expectation that you will sit in your rocking chair on the front porch. Today there are as many retirement lifestyles as there are people to lead them. The joy of retirement is that you now get to redesign your life, to reinvent yourself and to create the lifestyle you have always dreamed of living.

Because it is such a big transition from the world of work to the world of active retirement, it is important to take the time to review old patterns and to create new ones that meet your personal goals. You may be a person who has continued for years in situations, both personal and professional that meant missing out on many opportunities. But be assured, retirement can be the highlight of your life. If you feel that you have missed out on what is really important to you, here are several suggestions for finding joy and personal fulfillment.

Live your lost dreams. Think of a decision you made when there were forks in the road. Imagine what would have happened if you have taken the other fork. Did you give up on a dream to accommodate the necessities of life at one time? What if you now picked up that dream and made it a reality? Retirement is the time to recapture lost dreams.

Enjoy lifelong learning. There are book clubs, travel groups and special groups dedicated to causes like breast cancer. Being a part of these activities constantly offers new and interesting experiences. You will come to know the bravery, determination and indomitable spirit of others as you learn more about yourself and the world around you.

Hold a big image of yourself. List the many ways you are capable and think about your potential. If you could achieve one important thing in your life, what would it be?

Hold a big image of others. Encourage others to be the best they can be. Challenge them to undertake projects you know they can manage. Support others as they search to fulfill their life's dreams.

Champion yourself. You are unique! There never has been and never will be another person like you in this world. Write down your unique qualities. Decide how you can use these unique qualities to make a difference. You can do whatever you want to. Tell yourself that you can and believe that you can. You can be your own best cheerleader!



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Manifest what you really want. Believe that what you really want, you can have, whether it is a loving spouse or a new car. You are worthy of all the abundance the world can provide. Write down the criteria for what you want and then release your request into the universe. You will be amazed at the results!

Live a life of intention. Decide on the legacy you want to leave whether it is painting, literature, or teaching. Arrange your life so that your actions line up with your intentions and make each step one of ultimate purpose. When you are distracted, realign yourself gently and continue on your specially chosen path.

Live your mission in retirement. Select a metaphor for your life's mission. It could be a rainbow or a shooting star. Write it down and repeat it every day. Reach out as you manifest this mission and you will be fulfilled – which is the ultimate in living a joyful life in retirement.

For me the idea of living my lost dreams is a very important one, because as a single mother and teacher, I felt that for years, I needed to make decisions that would benefit my career and ultimately my financial security. Several times I pushed the urge to be an entrepreneur out of my mind and chose the path of promotion, salary, and security. Only when I retired for the second time did I allow myself to run my own business as a life coach.

Making the decision to become a coach opened up many other parts of my life as well. It allowed me to continue to enjoy lifelong learning. I had studied all through my teaching days and always felt blessed that I had the opportunity to continue to learn. Becoming a life coach was a joy for me. I could learn something new and exciting and yet incorporate it into the years of learning and experience I had gained.

This newfound freedom encouraged me to have a big image of myself. I could be a free agent, coach my own clients on their agendas, write and freely express my newfound joy and, through my own business, live the life I had always dreamed of living. My new lifestyle also helped me to hold a big image of others. I have a new understanding of the potential and the magnificence of the human spirit. I now work with people who are doing astonishing things with their lives because they receive support and encouragement in our coaching sessions.

I now realize that I am unique; not just another teacher but a person whose experiences and talents are my own. I now appreciate that people really do engage with me because of my uniqueness. I now trust my ability to manifest what I really want. I have long been able to set goals and manifest new opportunities and situations in my life. Now, I realize that I can take this ability to bold new heights. I



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love to set out the new criteria, send this message into the universe and see what comes of it – I am always delightfully surprised!

To achieve joy in my retirement lifestyle, I realize it is imperative to live a life of intention. This is such a valuable concept that provides the guidelines for daily thought, action and for achieving my vision of life. For me, living a life of intention motivates me when I stumble and comforts me when I feel lost. Having a purpose helps me line up my actions with my intentions again and again. All of these ideas converge as I live my mission in retirement. My metaphor for my life is that I am a serene angel who embraces my potential and graciously helps others embrace the potential in their lives as well. How will you find your joy in retirement?

Barbara M. Walker is The Retirement Lifestyle Coach and author of *Create Your Retirement: 55 Valuable Ways to Empower the Rest of Your Life*. Contact her at Barbara@bmwalker.com