



**Barbara M. Walker**  
M Ed., MBA, CPCC

*The Retirement Lifestyle Coach*

### **Reworking Relationships**

As millions of Baby Boomers head into the new retirement, their search for the perfect romantic relationship continues - much of it online. The latest numbers indicate that 4.2 million people over 50 are looking for love on dating services online. This new activity is a big change from earlier expectations, when in your 50's and 60's you were expected to stay at home and be a grandparent.

The relationship with your significant other is not the only one to undergo change in the retirement years. Not only does the divorce rate increase, there are other relationships that undergo change as you move from the world of work to the world of active retirement.

These changes occur in:

- 1) your relationship with colleagues;
- 2) your relationship with family and friends; and
- 3) your relationship with yourself.

Once you retire your relationships with your former colleagues change, and you need to accept that--your life is different and so is theirs. At this time you can consciously decide which former colleagues you want to have as friends and develop those friendships to a personally satisfying level.

You may see other former colleagues only occasionally. The key is to differentiate from among all those people in your earlier life, growing closer and friendlier with some while letting others become a network of casual friends.

Relationships with your spouse, family and friends will all be different. Naturally you have more time and want to spend it with particular people. This is the perfect time for addressing toxic relationships and for forgiving others for whatever wrongs you perceive they may have done you.

For best results, inform those you select of your desire to rework your relationships with them and ask them what they would like in their relationship with you in the future. Create a mutual agreement so that each person feels comfortable and honored in the new relationship.

There may be relationships you want to close, like those that have been difficult over the years. This is the time to forgive both them and yourself for these difficulties and move on. Do not hesitate to follow these proven steps as you build your new retirement lifestyle. Let these people know you are creating a new life with new



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priorities. There's no need to feel guilty about this closure process; if the relationship is not serving you, you both will be better off without an obligation you do not wish to honor. Keep only the best and most rewarding relationships. Close the old and make room for the new. Your relationship with yourself will surely change as you create your new retirement lifestyle. The first thing you need to do is to forgive yourself for any difficulties you have experienced with your various relationships in the past. They are over; it is time to make new friendships as you create your retirement. You will meet fascinating people and make rewarding new friends with whom you can share activities and experiences. Often we make our very best friends late in life; keep in mind there are many people who would love to know you. Reach out to them and invite them into your life. You will enjoy rich rewards that will enhance your retirement immeasurably.

An example of a friendship made later in life is that of Jamie and Darlene who met after each had retired. Jamie, an actuary, and Darlene, a college librarian, met on an escorted tour of Greece, Jamie to view the columns, the buildings and the ruins of Greek architecture, and Darlene to immerse herself in the phases of Greek history, the statues and the artifacts still revealing the life of ancient times.

Jamie and Darlene became friends and after the tour ended decided to develop a richer relationship. Over the next six months each invited the other to his/her respective city and took turns playing host, touring everything of interest in architecture, art and history.

Then they decided to meet in places they both wanted to see and where they shared the sites and the learning. Since both enjoyed the food, wine and culture, their friendship allowed them to experience a depth and variety in their travels they might not have experienced alone.

They continue their relationship on the Internet and with regular phone calls to plan their next meeting. They have become great friends at a time in life when it is expected that making new friends is difficult. The Jamie and Darlene experience is true of many who find rich rewards in new relationships in their retirement years.

The three benefits of reworking your relationships in retirement are the opportunity to:

- 1) change the ones that are not pleasing you;
- 2) close the ones that are not serving you
- 3) create new and satisfying ones.



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Remember, your retirement offers you a new chance to literally design your evolving relationships with others to suit you.

**About the Author**

Barbara M. Walker, The Retirement Lifestyle Coach, uses her skill, knowledge and experience to inspire others to create a unique, fulfilling and successful retirement lifestyle. Barbara Walker may be contacted at <http://www.bmwalker.com>.