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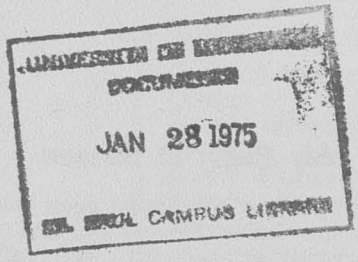

Plan for Retirement*

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Retirement May Begin at Sixteen

Is it unreasonable to start thinking about retirement even before you decide on a career? More and more people think not. One employment officer of a large Twin Cities firm says that when he has applicants who ask questions about company benefits, he "shows them the door." But retirement plans vary from job to job, and denying an applicant the right to ask questions about work-related benefits is really withholding vital information.

Some people work many years before considering what their retirement may bring. Do you know the answers to these vital questions: How many years must you be employed to qualify for retirement? What different options are available to you? What proportion of your salary will you receive during retirement? Will benefits accrue faster during your later years of employment? How do your spouse and other dependents benefit? If both you and your spouse are employed, how do your two retirement plans mesh? Do you have group life insurance and hospital/medical insurance? Can you retain your insurance after your active employment ends? If so, to what extent can you retain it? Having the answers to these questions can help you plan your working years and may keep you from illogical job hopping.

Most young people can't conceive of ever being old. One woman tells about limping around the office in mockery after discovering the retirement deduction listed on her paycheck. "I didn't plan to work that long," she says. But she did, and now, 28 years later, she is thinking seriously about retirement. As she has discovered, time passes quickly.

If people regarded retirement as a natural part of their overall working goals, it wouldn't be looked on as the traumatic emotional experience many people think it is. After all, retirement may cover a large part of a person's life, even 30 or 40 years.

Thomas H. Holmes, professor of psychiatry at the University of Washington, devised a scale that assigns points to changes occurring in our lives. These changes, good or bad, are all emotionally disturbing. When the total points in 1 year reach 300, about 80 percent of all people become seriously depressed or suffer from serious illness. On this scale, retirement is assigned 45 points. Only eight events out of the total 43 rank higher, as shown in the table.

The social readjustment rating scale

Life event	Mean value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital separation	65
4. Jail term	63
5. Death of close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Fired from work	47
9. Marital reconciliation	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sex difficulties	39
14. Gain of new family member	39
15. Business readjustment	39
16. Change in financial state	38
17. Death of close friend	37
18. Change to different line of work	36
19. Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage over $10,000	31
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Wife begin or stop work	26
27. Begin or end school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits	24
30. Trouble with boss	23
31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in schools	20
34. Change in recreation	19
35. Change in church activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Mortgage or loan less than $10,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in number of family get-togethers	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violations of the law	11

Preventing problems from arising during such a crucial time in our lives involves forethought. How we plan and live our lives in our youth, our young adulthood, and our middle years will set the stage for our retirement.

We must all learn to view retirement as a natural part of the life cycle, not as the "beginning of the end." Holding such a concept will alleviate some of the trauma experienced by so many people when they retire. Viewed realistically, retirement can be a time for attaining serenity and an immensely satisfying way of life.

Some factors that will greatly assist senior citizens attain such goals include:

1. Having a mortgage-free place to live.
2. Using your skills to add to your income.
3. Developing the ability to enjoy a simple life.
4. Maintaining good health through proper diet, exercise, and regular checkups.
5. Providing services for yourself and your family instead of hiring such work.
6. Relying on community services that you have helped finance through your taxes.
7. Taking advantage of free government privileges for senior citizens.
8. Producing a part of your own food.
9. Remaining active and interested in your community and in world events.
10. Using time or other plentiful resources instead of money whenever feasible.
11. Maintaining good relationships with your family members and your friends.
12. Accepting that death is a part of life and making plans for it.
13. Keeping a happy and positive outlook on life.
14. Enjoying young people and their development.
15. Satisfying your need for religious and spiritual life.
16. Making a healthy adjustment to the world around you.
17. Maintaining an emergency fund.

The Realities of Retirement

If you will be retiring soon, there are benefits you should know about. Most benefits do not begin automatically; you must apply for them. The two most important pieces of information you will need are your Social Security number and proof of your age. If you don't have a birth certificate or a baptismal certificate dated before you were 5 years old, you may be required to show two other items as proof: census records, school records, discharge papers, etc.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

If you are entitled to Social Security, you can apply by phone. In fact, you are encouraged to phone rather than drive to your nearest Social Security office. A representative will assist you by asking basic questions and will send you a form for additional information and your signature. You should apply for Social Security at least 3 months *before* you are eligible to receive your first payment.

The difficulties that arise while applying for benefits include proving one's age, reconciling discrepancies in earning records (the W-2 forms may differ on personnel records), and just communicating. The disabled, of course, often have more difficulty in communicating than able 65-year-olds do.

Once payments begin, there may be problems connected with stopping and starting payments if your earnings are greater than can be allowed during a pay period. You must fill out an annual income report. If you fail to send in this report, your payments may be stopped until you do. It must be turned in by April 15th. You should receive the annual income form in the mail about February of each year.

Always send a change of address notice to your Social Security office when you move. If you don't, your checks may be delayed or even lost.

The wife of a Social Security recipient is eligible to receive half of her husband's earned credit at age 65. If she applies for benefits at age 62, she is entitled to 37½ percent of her husband's benefits. A disabled widow can receive benefits at age 50 or 60, but there is a waiting period after the death of her husband. For specific details, call your Social Security office.

A retired person receiving Social Security benefits can earn $2,400 per year without penalty. Any earnings above $2,400 are taxed 50 percent. After January 1, 1975, the allowance will be $2,520.

Most employers have a personnel officer who would welcome a visit from you several months before you retire. You'll be asked to make decisions on benefit options, and you'll be given estimates of retirement pay for early retirement, delayed retirement, and various fringe benefits (medical and life insurance, for example). There may be different options for payment to your spouse. If the decision you make at retirement cannot be changed, you must consider every option carefully. Of course, forecasting family situations is frustrating. Recipients are urged to consider that a wife generally outlives her husband by about 7 years.

If you are interested in getting more retirement information, contact your retirement agency and request details. An estimate of benefits can be made for you, even if you are 10 or 15 years from retirement. An investment officer also can help you project your future income.

TAX BENEFITS

The state of Minnesota has given its senior citizens an income tax break for several years, but starting in 1973, an even larger advantage has been allowed. The Minnesota Revenue Commissioner estimates this break at about 25 percent for those who are eligible.

Eligibility is based on age and income. You must have been 65 on or before January 1, 1974, and your household income must be under $6,000. Both renters and homeowners are eligible. The larger your property tax or rent, the higher your credit is. The nearer your household income is to $6,000, the smaller your break is. Make your request for a refund on the yellow form M-ISC, "Minnesota Senior Citizens or Disabled Persons Tax Return" (1973). You should be able to get a copy at a bank or post office if you don't get one in the mail.

Minnesota property owners who were 65 on or before May 31, 1974, also can benefit from a property tax freeze. If your property taxes are higher than what you paid in 1973, you can get back the difference. Use form M-ISC (mentioned in the preceding paragraph). Check with local tax authorities for details.

OTHER BENEFITS

Minnesota permits people over 65 to fish without a license (they must have proof of age, such as a driver's license, with them), free car stickers (or passes) to state parks, and reduced rates for camping facilities in state and federal parks. The Twin Cities allow free bus service between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day. Some areas have hot noon meals available for as little as 25 cents. This is true at the Martin Luther King Center at 270 North Kent in St. Paul. The free clinic offers medical services, minor surgery, medicine, X-rays, and drugs. This program is funded and administered through the Model Cities Project. Federal as well as local funds are involved. The clinic is an extension of the St. Paul Division of Health and is administered through it. The only eligibility requirement is that the over-65 patient live in an area bounded by Lexington Avenue, John Ireland Boulevard, and Summit and University Avenues.

Many retirees take advantage of the numerous community benefits available to them. Some companies, organizations, and unions have educational and recreational facilities that their former employees can enjoy. These may include reading materials, conferences, workshops, lectures, movies, dances, parties, and other group activities.

Many other benefits come to the retired. Starting a second career or pursuing an interest that there wasn't time for in the past are just two of them.

Horace R. Goodhue of St. Paul said about his retirement: "I got so sick of retirement parties and of being idle that I found meaningful activities. These have made me very happy." He had been a farmer, laborer, army officer, high school teacher, and psychologist during his working career. But he'd always been interested in Indian crafts, and teaching them became his new career. He now teaches Indian crafts to people of all ages, but he particularly enjoys young people. His special interest is Indian bead craft. "What I like most about retirement is that I can be myself. I don't have to live up to society's image of a certain job. I don't have to be anybody else's man." He conducts classes, has a mail order service for craft materials, and enjoys great freedom in his manner of living. He was a scout master for years and so finds conducting art classes stimulating and always interesting. Since retiring, he has written a book, "Indian Weaving Patterns for Necklaces."

Goodhue has appeared on television and radio programs, has helped make visual aids in the area of Indian crafts, and has visited many Indian families and reservations in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana. He is also treasurer of the Minnesota Memorial Society, a group that assists people with low cost funerals that emphasize simplicity and dignity. He is in good health and plans to continue his many activities.

One retired woman in her eighties has continued an active schedule, even though she has at times been confined to a wheelchair. She is an expert handcrafter and is only satisfied when she turns out "blue ribbon" items. She excels in quilting, ceramics, crocheting, knitting, sewing, painting, cooking, and baking. All her friends and relatives have received treasures she has made.

At 85, she visited California for the first time, calling it a highlight in her life. She even found time to stop in Las Vegas. In a wheelchair pushed by her grandchildren, she operated the slot machines and was the only one in her party to hit a jackpot!

After retiring from a very time-consuming career, one retiree said, "Don't think that fixing up and painting the house is going to be enough activity for retirement. I finished that in 1 year and now am involved in community planning on an advisory board."

One retired college professor still longed to teach. She decided to tutor college students who were having difficulty in mathematics, and has won their gratitude and admiration.

The possibilities for meaningful activities are endless: traveling, learning crafts, writing, studying nature, parenting children, and visiting shut-ins are just a few.

We all need a reason to get up in the morning. Pursuing a second career or discovering new interests can be just the incentive a retired person needs. Having an objective in mind, being cautious about overactivity, and using the wisdom gained through living, any retiree can plan a meaningful and satisfying retirement.

What Makes A Happy Retirement?

Three components can help make a happy retirement: having enough money, having a place to live, and staying healthy.

HAVING ENOUGH MONEY

An early habit of saving out of each paycheck will result in a cushion for whatever financial benefits you'll have when you retire. You will need such a cushion because no financial plan is meant to be sufficient in itself.

Start with a net worth statement. List everything you own and put a dollar value on each item. Then list everything you owe in dollars. The difference between these two totals is your net worth. It is your savings to date.

Net Worth Statement

WHAT I OWN		WHAT I OWE	
House, household inventory	$_____	Mortgages (house and other real estate)	$_____
Other real estate, investments, and bonds	$_____	Notes payable	$_____
Cars	$_____	Sales contracts	$_____
Accounts receivable (what people owe me)	$_____	Oral obligations	$_____
Savings	$_____	Other	$_____
Insurance (cash value)	$_____	Total owed	$_____
Checking accounts	$_____		
Other	$_____	Total owned	$_____
Total owned	$_____	Total owed	$_____
		Balance (net worth)	$_____

Now project your monthly income for your retirement years.

Estimate of Cash Income After Retirement

Retirement income	$_____
Annual wages (second career, part-time employment)	$_____
Income from rental property	$_____
Income from investments (interest, dividends)	$_____
Other	$_____
Total annual income	$_____
Total monthly income (divide by 12)	$_____

If you find it more convenient to budget by the week, divide your total annual income by 52 weeks.

Your income during retirement may be only half of what you earned when you were actively employed, but your expenses are likely to be less also. Economists say working people re-invest half of their pay in their jobs.

The following yearly budget for a retired couple (man is 65 or over) in 1972 is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you have personal records (or estimates) of what you spend for these items, you can figure your own personal budget.

Retired Couple's Budget (1972)

Food	$1,328
Housing (utilities, property taxes, maintenance, etc.)	$1,745
Transportation	$ 448
Clothing, personal care	$ 437
Medical care	$ 434
Other family consumption (reading materials, tobacco, alcohol, recreation, etc.)	$ 269
	$4,661
Other items (including allowances for gifts and contributions)	$ 298
Personal taxes	$ 8
Total	$4,967

The biggest expenses for retired couples are for housing, food, and transportation. They spend more proportionately than younger couples do on housing and household expenses, health care, and food for home preparation.

The incomes of retired people are more fixed or rigid than those of employed people, so inflation is an all-important problem for the retired. Unfortunately, inflation is likely to continue. Over the years, inflation has been 5-6 percent, but it more than doubled in 1973. Greater effort is now being directed at designing retirement plans with built-in inflation protection.

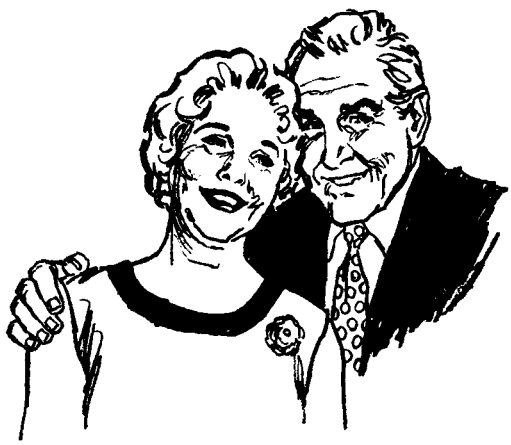
Since some expenditures are fixed and some are flexible, certain needs or parts of them can be postponed. Make a spending plan to get a clear idea of your fixed and flexible expenses.

Spending Plan

FIXED EXPENDITURES	
Housing (rent, fuel bills, repairs, and upkeep)	$_____
Financial protection (all insurance plans)	$_____
Community contributions (religious, charitable)	$_____
Debts and obligations (installment, other)	$_____
Taxes and licenses	$_____
Regular savings	$_____
Other	$_____
Total	$_____
FLEXIBLE EXPENDITURES	
Food and beverages (at home and away)	$_____
Household costs (operating, upkeep, cleaning)	$_____
Transportation (private car, other)	$_____
Recreation, entertainment	$_____
Clothing	$_____
Medical, hospital, dental	$_____
Personal spending	$_____
Other	$_____
Total	$_____

You may want to build an emergency fund. Decide how much you want in your fund and save until you have that amount. (An amount equal to 2 months income is a minimum goal.) Then try to replace the amount you take out whenever you have an expense.

Your summary of totals will be your balance sheet. If you have more expenditures than income, review your whole plan and try to determine what you can do to increase your income and decrease your expenditures.



Balance Sheet

Total income (by year, month, or week)		$_____
Subtract:		
Total fixed expenses	$_____	
Total flexible expenses	$_____	
Total emergency fund	$_____	
Total expenditures		$_____
Balance		$_____

These seven principles of cutting costs may help you trim your budget.

1. Decrease purchases or do without. All of us buy unnecessary items.
2. Increase family production. Using your skills and resources may save the need for cash purchases.
3. Use free public services. They may be better than what you can afford.
4. Use lower priced substitutes. The finished product may be as good as one made with a high priced item.
5. Make greater effort to buy at lower cost. This doesn't necessarily mean buying in quantity. Watch for good buys.
6. Get the most practical article for a purpose. For example, small cars usually cost less initially and are cheaper to operate and maintain.
7. Make things last longer and avoid waste. With proper care, the life of some items can be doubled.

Let an investment specialist help you project the earnings you'll realize from your savings and investments. Might you profit from a change in living style? Living in smaller quarters or renting out part of your space may be alternatives. Are your savings earning the maximum for any risk you wish to take? Are some of your savings tax exempt? Do you have insurance policies with a cash value or policies to cover future emergencies? Draw a plan for the flow of your future income year by year.

If your income is lacking or if you plan to continue in some type of employment, ask yourself:

1. What is my future health outlook?
2. What saleable skills do I have?
3. What demand is there for these skills in the current job market?
4. Are my skills saleable on a part-time basis?
5. What is my spouse's earning ability?
6. Can my (our) real property be made to earn an income?
7. Have I exhausted all my (our) retirement benefits?
8. Is a later retirement possible and might it net me the difference needed in cash?

HAVING A PLACE TO LIVE

In the past, it was not uncommon for three generations to live together. But today housing for retirees is likely to be handled as a community project.

Two-thirds of Minnesota families own their own home by the time they are 65 years old. Most people (95 percent) prefer to remain in their communities and do not depend on institutional care. Many housing options exist: closing off part of the house, selling a big house and investing in a smaller one, turning part of a big house into rental property, or living in an apartment, mobile home, townhouse, or condominium. Whatever you plan to do, be sure to check with appropriate resource people to get the facts (Federal Housing Administration, the Governor's Committee on Aging, the Social Security Administration, local welfare agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, and others).

If you plan to move to another area, make an extended visit beforehand to evaluate job opportunities, living costs, whether friends might be living nearby, and whether the climate agrees with you. Another way to learn about a new community is to subscribe to the local newspaper. Note the opportunities for housing, employment, recreation, health care, social and religious activities, etc. Weigh all the advantages you find against those of your old home before you make a permanent move.

Rental housing may be your choice. The federal government has made public low rent housing available in many locations. Nonprofit housing is built and sponsored by churches, fraternal groups, labor unions, and professional organizations. Group food service, recreation facilities, and medical and health care may be a part of the housing available to retired people. In Minnesota, the Home Delivered Meals Project is designed for those who are home bound and for those who can shorten their stays in hospitals or nursing homes if adequate food is made available. Ask if this project is available in your community.

STAYING HEALTHY

Good health in retirement is a boon to good living because "when you have your health, you have just about everything."

Unfortunately, doctor and hospital bills of several thousand dollars for a single illness are not uncommon these days. The Social Security Administration estimates that for those aged 65 and over, the average medical bill in 1970 was $796, with the public sector paying $528 and the private sector paying $268. The average bill for those under 19 years was $126 and for those 19 to 64 years of age was $296. The expenses per patient day for community hospitals in the United States rose from $15.62 per day in 1950 to $81.01 per day in 1970. All these costs continue to rise.

Because of inflation, many retired people would be unable to pay their medical expenses without some assistance. For example, a couple who retired in 1960 on a fixed income now has only 70 percent of its purchasing power remaining. Two programs, Medicare and Medicaid, can be beneficial to retirees.

Medicare, a part of the Social Security system, is a program of health insurance available to all Americans who are 65 or older to help them meet the cost of medical care. The program also assists disabled people who are younger than 65.

Hospital insurance benefits are available to anyone 65 or older who is entitled to monthly cash Social Security or railroad retirement benefits. No premiums are involved. The medical insurance is available to anyone who is 65 years old who enrolls and pays the premium, which was $6.70 a month as of July 1, 1974. For further details, call or write your local Social Security office. Free bulletins describing the program are available from local offices.

Medicaid is a welfare program funded by the federal, state, and county governments. It is administered at the county level. Only those who meet the state's financial eligibility requirements for public assistance or for inclusion in a group termed the "medically needy" are eligible. There is no requirement for a fixed period of residence as long as a client plans on permanent residence in the state. Apply for Medicaid at your local welfare office.

If you buy supplementary health insurance, be sure the company involved is licensed to do business in Minnesota. The Commissioner of Insurance has such information. Weigh the advantages of keeping any group policy that was effective during your employed years against the advantages of changing over to an individual policy.

When Your Spouse Dies

What would you do if your spouse should die today? Would you know where to find legal and business papers? Would you know the financial status of the family business? Would you know how to handle funeral arangements? Would you be ready?

You can save yourself much anxiety and frustration by putting some basic information in order today. Just discussing the possibility of a death in the family may lead to some planning. In such a conversation, ask yourself questions like these: Where would I live? Where would my spouse be buried? What would happen to my standard of living? What special problems might I experience? Where could I go for help? How would I feel? What kind of casket would I buy? What questions would I need to answer for the doctor? the funeral director? the clergyman? the state health officer? the life insurance agent?

INFORMATION TO PUT IN ORDER

Write a brief personal history of each member of your family. Include dates and places of birth and marriage, places and lengths of residence, education, business and club data, military records, church affiliation, the family tree, burial wishes or preferences (memorials, pallbearers, amount to be spent, disposition of remains), and any special accomplishments and requests of each family member. Including each person's Social Security number and any military discharge records is very important.

Visit the funeral home you are likely to use, and tour the business office, the chapel, the casket selection room, the preparation room, and the garage to see the vehicles used for funerals. Discuss prices with the funeral director. (All establishments are now required by Minnesota law to itemize costs.) Visiting a funeral home before a death occurs will lessen the fears associated with funerals. Don't be afraid to ask questions. What about autopsies? When are they necessary? Who requests them? What do they cost? Who pays? A doctor or hospital manager can help with such information.

On the basis of your answers to the following questions, decide what information you need to collect.

1. Has a will been prepared and where is it?
2. What types of bank accounts do you have? How much money is in each? Are they joint or single ownership accounts? Where are the passbooks, bank statements, and checkbooks? Could you write checks if your spouse died? Can you reconcile an account?
3. Do you have an up-to-date inventory of assets, both business and household?
4. Have you reviewed your family insurance program (life, property, medical, car, liability, homeowners')? Where are the policies kept? Are they paid up? Do they have a cash value? What are the payment options? Who are the beneficiaries? Can the policies be continued after your spouse's death?
5. Do you rent a safe deposit box? Where are the keys? How many days might it be before it is inventoried after your spouse's death? What are its contents? Who will receive the contents? What papers should be stored there? What should not be stored there? Do you own all the contents?
6. Who is your family legal advisor? What family records does he/she have? Who is your financial advisor? What records does he/she have?
7. What benefits are you entitled to under Social Security? the Veterans' Administration? company retirement plans? union policies? fraternal policies?
8. Have you recently reviewed your family investments? Is there a listing with amounts, companies, addresses, phone numbers, agents, etc.?
9. Do you have a mortage on your house? Could you keep your house if your spouse died? What is the legal description? What is the present value? How much are the upkeep and operating expenses?
10. What Minnesota property tax exemptions would you be entitled to if your spouse died? What federal tax breaks would you get? What are the terms of inheritance taxes?
11. Do you have any trust funds?
12. What outstanding personal debts do you have? Who are the debtors? What are the terms of the contracts or agreements? Do you have any accounts receivable?
13. What are your monthly or yearly living expenses? Could you get along on your projected income?

SOME PROBLEMS OF THOSE WHO ARE LEFT ALONE

There are millions of former wives and former husbands in the United States. Figures from the 1960 and 1970 Censuses for Minnesota are shown below.

MINNESOTA, 1960 CENSUS		MINNESOTA, 1970 CENSUS	
Male, widowed	40,069	Male, widowed	37,285
Male, divorced	18,289	Male, divorced	27,100
Female, widowed	135,973	Female, widowed	162,803
Female, divorced	24,555	Female, divorced	40,271

Those who are left alone face special problems. Perhaps the most overpowering difficulty is loneliness. Being isolated or left alone and longing for friends is an unhappy, desolate feeling. We all experience loneliness from time to time, but widows and widowers experience it most acutely.

Psychological, social, and economic problems come into sharp focus for the individual who has experienced a loss. The newly widowed person may not understand himself/herself and may not even be able to accept that separation has occurred. Most of these problems could be lessened if people would think about them before a loss occurs.

Psychological problems can be especially upsetting.

1. Grief and mourning are perhaps the first problems encountered by people left alone. Grief is the feeling and emotion within us. Mourning is the outward signs and actions that express our inner turmoil.
2. The "holiday syndrome" is an acute attack of loneliness during a special event or season of the year when the missing member is no longer a part of the usual family interaction.
3. Fears, real or imagined, may actually lead to physical illness.
4. The person may try to escape into work and not get enough recreation for good mental health.
5. There may be loss of incentive to live at all.
6. Suspicion may be a problem.
7. There may be actual mental upset.

Social problems may weigh heavily on the widowed person's mind.

1. A widow may feel out of place in the business world if it was her husband's role to handle the family business.
2. The widow or widower may feel lost or confused in a couple situation.
3. The individual left may have to be both father and mother, a role that may be difficult to accept and even more difficult to fulfill.
4. A person who was dependent on a spouse over many years may find it difficult to become independent.
5. Getting used to making decisions alone may be a burden, especially if there is no one close by to discuss personal affairs with.
6. Changing an entire life style, which often is necessary, may seem impossible.
7. Communicating with others may not be easy. This is especially true for women who want male companionship.
8. The feeling of being a burden to one's family and even to society may lead to other difficulties.
9. The thought of retiring to a nursing home may be objectionable.
10. Young widows or widowers may have grave concerns about child care.

Economic problems may relate to some of the concerns mentioned above.

1. Immediate cash will be needed. Funeral, hospital, and medical expenses may loom threateningly. Living expenses, regular payments, and past due accounts may seem too large to manage with available resources.
2. Long term living needs must be planned and met. Regular income may be cut in half.
3. Insurance, investments, and other properties must be reviewed and reinstated with proper names, beneficiaries, and descendants.
4. There may be large amounts of money to manage from the proceeds of insurance and investments.
5. Individuals with money may become prey for unscrupulous business people.
6. Individuals left alone may feel they must buy their way in life and let this feeling threaten friendships.
7. A job may be necessary for meeting family goals, and getting one may require training or education, which involve expense.

A few problems cut over all these categories.

1. For the elderly, getting around may become increasingly difficult.
2. Planning meals is no pleasure when there is no one to share them with, and poor nutrition may result.
3. Keeping up the yard, garden, or house; replacing a fuse; raking the leaves or shoveling snow; and putting on storm windows may become insurmountable problems.
4. Spiritual poverty may be keenly felt.

A Respect for Retirement

A great philosopher once said there must be a balance in all we do. But this balance changes constantly. So what may have been a happy balance during employment days may undergo drastic change when we retire and will continue to change throughout our lives.

The General Services Administration, a federal agency that conducts programs on preparing for retirement, has found that small group sessions are much more effective than lecture programs. This group also has found that people preparing for retirement must deal individually with their psychological and emotional problems before planning for retirement.

Suggestions which this organization has offered regarding group session techniques include:

1. Plan group participation for employees who are now eligible for retirement, but also include those who are 15 years from retirement. The emphasis then is on planning, not retiring.
2. Keep the size of the group small (12-20) so an individual can participate if he/she wishes.
3. Let participants help plan the program so that guest speakers will address themselves to the group's concerns. Guest speakers fare best with individuals if they can be helpful in counseling in an informal manner.
4. Have conference leaders set the stage for freely expressing feelings. Encourage participants to examine themselves and to be involved. Permit people to express their differences.
5. Encourage attendance at a second session to examine the role of a retiree. Encourage each person to define his/her personal idea of a happy retirement.
6. Allow sufficient time for interaction. Relating retirement plans, activities, and goals to experiences the participants already have had can be very helpful.
7. Encourage spouse participation. Case histories may be reviewed as a helpful tool in planning.
8. Prepare handout materials and suggest sources for further information.
9. Include conference leaders of both sexes to encourage participation by both sexes.
10. Plan the flow of information for about five sessions and begin with the most personal and most emotionally threatening information. Then present the less personal and less emotional topics and end the series on a positive, happy note.

If sessions are held for employees, it is good to evaluate them so results can be used in planning future training sessions. Suggested evaluation techniques include:

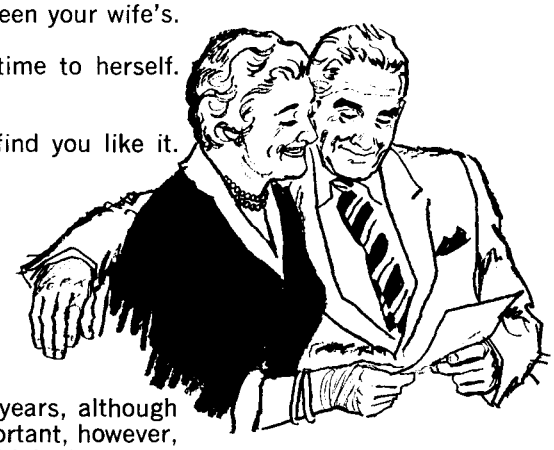
1. Listen for oral feedback from participants.
2. Have participants fill out questionnaires before and then after the sessions.
3. Note attendance records.
4. Note application of suggested ideas for retirement.
5. Note if participants bring acquaintances to later sessions.
6. Note feedback from supervisors of employees attending.
7. Note interest shown by other community employers for similar sessions for their employees.

Ralph T. Collins, occupational psychiatrist for Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York, says that preparing the wife of a prospective retiree is an acute problem. After having the shared domain to herself most of the time, she must now prepare to have her husband at home for a greater part of the day, 7 days a week. He offered "10 commandments" for the retiree's wife:

1. Don't act embarrassed about your husband's retirement.
2. Don't start every sentence with "now that you are retired."
3. Don't assume domestic authority that you previously have not exercised.
4. Try to be happy at the prospect of having your husband more to yourself.
5. Don't choose hobbies for him.
6. Resist the temptation to compete when he nails down an interest of his own.
7. Let him do some cooking if he wants to.
8. Give in when he wants his own quarters.
9. Don't protect him.
10. Don't act as though it is "all over."

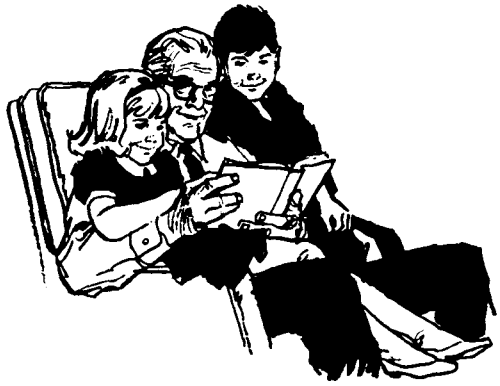
Of course, retirement is a difficult time for husbands, too. Here are "10 commandments" for the retiree himself:

1. Don't act as though all your retirement time belongs to you; share some with your wife. She may have been waiting for this time.
2. Try to spend a good share of your time with friends and relatives, especially with your grandchildren.
3. Allow your wife her independence.
4. Don't try to "take over" areas of the house that previously have been your wife's.
5. Don't act as though your life is "all over."
6. Don't belittle your wife's activities. Remember, she still needs time to herself.
7. Don't act embarrassed about your retirement.
8. If your wife is still working, help her with her busy schedule.
9. Try cooking and learning about running a household. You may find you like it.
10. Take on new interests and actively seek new experiences.



Planning for retirement means more than financing your freedom years, although everyone needs money to get the most out of retirement. Just as important, however, is assuring that your plans have direction and purpose and that you think about your family and friends when making plans. Couples thinking ahead to retirement need to be sure their plans are mutually satisfying.

Retirement is a time to enjoy, to do the things you want to do, to live at a less active pace. But living must have direction and purpose. After all, you might live to be 100!



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