

# Rethinking Retirement for Positive Ageing

Creating a Meaningful Life After Full-Time Work



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Rethinking Retirement  
Companion Exercises  
from Dr Denise Taylor

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## PART 1

# REFLECT: Reflecting on your retirement

### 3. WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

#### ACTIVITY 3.9 (page 42)

I've now got three short questionnaires for you to complete. You may like to note any thoughts in your journal and discuss your answers with your buddy. You can tick to show your answer against each question. You can also find these, to print out via this page - <https://denisetaylor.co.uk/rethinking-retirement/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I look forward to retirement as a pleasant time in life					
My life after retirement will be very similar to my life now					
Retirement will be a time to relax					
Retirement will be the welcome beginning of a new stage of my life					
Nothing will be able to replace work in my life					
Retirement will free me from the demands of other people					
Retirement will be a time to do what I want					
Most people are happy in retirement					

Below is a list of things that some people say they look forward to in retirement. For each one please indicate how much you look forward to it.

	Not at all	A little	Quite a lot	A lot	Not applicable
Less pressure					
Time just to be (taking things easy)					
Having more time with my spouse/partner					
Spending more time with my children or grandchildren					
Time for hobbies or sports					
Having more time for volunteer work					
Having the chance to travel					
Being my own boss					
A new start					
Time to create a more meaningful life					
Time to focus on some big goals					
To be in control of my own time					
Sharing wisdom through helping others					

Now for some things that worry some people about retirement. Please indicate how much they worry you (or maybe not at all).

	Worry a lot	Worry somewhat	Worry a little	Not at all
Feeling too old to do what I want to do				
Being bored, having too much time on my hands				
Not doing anything productive or useful				
Missing people I work with				
Becoming ill or disabled				
Not having enough income to get by				
Inflation and the cost of living				

## 4. WHO ARE YOU? (PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS)

### Activity 4.1 – complete the assessment (page 51)

Time to stop and complete the assessment so you can look at your results as you read on. Here is the link – <https://bigfive-test.com>.

### Activity 4.7 – how do you measure up? (page 60)

To what extent do you have a proactive personality? How many of these statements do you agree with?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I proactively take action to complete tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
I identify opportunities for improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
If I believe in something I will make it happen.	1	2	3	4	5
I set high targets for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident in my ability to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
I am passionate about turning ideas into reality.	1	2	3	4	5
I focus on achieving my goals despite opposition from others.	1	2	3	4	5
I seek a positive outcome in a new situation.	1	2	3	4	5

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## PART 2

### REVIEW: Key aspects of your retirement life

#### Activity 5.2 (page 82)

Going deep could be a separate book in itself, so let me pose some questions to get you thinking. I'd like you to look back at your recent career history and answer these questions to help you to see the positive and negatives from your work

	Disagree	In-between	Agree
I feel fulfilled by my work.			
My job uses my skills and talents; I want to continue to use them.			
I am not under undue stress through my work.			
My work is in line with my values.			
My work gives me time to pursue my hobbies and interests.			
I see my work as a calling, and I would do this work even if the pay was greatly reduced.			
My work allows me scope to mentor and support a younger generation.			
My work is creative and inspiring.			
I enjoy the variety in my day-to-day life.			
My job allows me to learn new things.			
I am stimulated by the people I meet in my working life.			
I am respected for the work I do.			
I gain meaning through my work – it gives me a sense of purpose.			
I am well paid for the work I do.			
I work with people I consider friends.			
The work I do is valued by others.			
I am energised by my work.			
I have the flexibility to work the hours I want and at the location of my choice.			
I enjoy the challenge and want to continue being challenged through my work.			
I enjoy managing other people.			
I have an opportunity to mentor others.			
I have balance in my work and wider life.			
My work gives me a structure to my day and week.			

## 6. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### Activity 6.1 (page 105)

You may like to complete this assessment and use it to identify some actions you will take to improve your health. Make a note in your journal and discuss with your reflections buddy. Choose three things you will start today.

<https://livingto100.com/calculator>

[Living To 100 Life Expectancy Calculator](#)

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## PART 3

### RENEW: Finding meaning and the new you in retirement

## 9. MEANING, MATTERING, AND GENERATIVITY

### Activity 9.2 (page 151)

Let's consider the meaning and purpose in your life. With the questions below, indicate if they are not true, partly true, mainly true or fully true

	Not true	Partly true	Mainly true	Fully true
I understand what makes my life meaningful.				
I have a clear purpose to my life.				
I feel part of something that is bigger than me.				
I lead a fulfilled life.				
There is a deeper meaning to my life.				
My life feels significant.				
I have found my life's purpose.				
I remain curious for further direction to my life.				
I have a belief in the divine – spiritual or religious faith.				

### Activity 9.4 (page 156)

None of my clients had ever considered if they matter; answering these questions made them stop and think. I'd like you to do the same. Rate yourself against these questions and then journal your thoughts.

	Not at all	A little	Some-what	A lot
How much do people depend on you?				
How much do people pay attention to you? By listening to what you say?				
To what extent would you be missed if you weren't here?				
Are people interested in what you have to say?				
Do people like having you around?				

### Activity 9.5 (page 157)

I've identified 11 areas that relate to generativity. Consider each of the questions below and decide to what extent these are things you can agree with. You can be truthful; this is only for you unless you choose to share with your reflections buddy.

	Never	Some-times	Often
People say I have a positive effect on others.			
I feel as though I have made a difference to many people.			
I feel needed by other people.			
People come to me for advice.			
I feel I will leave things behind that will live on when I am gone.			
I have important skills that I try to teach others.			
People say I am a very productive person.			
I believe society should take responsibility for those in need.			
I see myself as a role model to younger people.			
I volunteer for a charity.			
I try to pass along the knowledge I have gained through my experiences.			

## 13. THE NEW YOU

### Activity 13.5 (page 212)

Chip Conley, co-founder of Modern Elder Academy talks about being a modern elder. He created a list of ten statements<sup>12</sup> where you give yourself one point if it fully resonates, half if you are somewhat there, and zero if it doesn't resonate. Read these questions and give yourself a score.

1. Outside of my family, I am often in environments where I am the oldest or one of the oldest, and I don't hide my age.
2. I am both a lifelong learner and a 'long-life learner', someone who wants to live a life that's as deep and meaningful as it is long.
3. I enjoy growing older, and I believe my best work and life are ahead of me.
4. I feel like my ego is no longer my primary operating system, and I have a growing stirring in my soul.
5. I have developed an active practice of cultivating and harvesting wisdom based on metabolising my life experiences, and I can teach others to do the same.
6. I love becoming a new beginner at something and am endlessly curious.
7. I believe my emotional intelligence has grown, and I'm less reactive than I was ten years ago.
8. I have moved from the accumulation stage of my life to the editing stage. I am good at ending projects, relationships, mindsets, and distractions that don't feel nourishing or allow me to serve others effectively.
9. People tell me that I'm a great mentor and a conduit for wisdom. I would be honoured to be called a 'wisdom worker' instead of a 'knowledge worker'.
10. I no longer define myself based on my achievements, image, status, or power, as I'm more focused on my purpose and legacy. The sentence 'I am what survives me' defines my life today.



## AS WE END THIS BOOK

I have loved being on this journey with you. This is a wonderful time to reach this life stage and we are so lucky to be here; many people never reached it. If you have enjoyed journalling, you may like to continue.

I'm in a happy place with my life; even looking back five years I would never have imagined that I would choose to work less and to spend more time in nature. I will continue to research around ageing, wisdom, and elderhood and already have things in hand for my next book. I write regular articles, published on LinkedIn and on my websites. Feel free to sign up. I have plans to give talks to a wider audience, too. Wishing you a wonderful future



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*'It is not the young man who should be considered fortunate, but the old man who has lived well, because the young man in his prime wanders much by chance, vacillating in his beliefs, while the old man has docked in the harbour, having safeguarded his true happiness'. Epicurus*

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