

### **Be careful what you wish for ...**

Many of us long for retirement - no more alarm clocks, to do lists or working to other people's agendas. However the reality of this life chapter is not always a bed of roses. When you've been working 5 or 6 days a week for 8 or more hours a day, much of your time is already accounted for. So it's a big shift to suddenly have to "fill" this time with something new for the foreseeable future and as with many things in life, preparation is key.

If you have been planning your retirement for the last 10 years then you may have already stepped down a gear, developed some hobbies and thought about some goals for your retirement. However in the current climate the timescales of those plans can often be shortened. Companies offer early retirement and suddenly a change which was 5 years away could happen before Christmas. Michelle Lucas, Career Coach of greenfields consultancy offers some help on finding pleasure rather than boredom in new found leisure time.

**Routine** : as an employee a regular routine was forced upon us and as tempting as it may appear to have a lie in at first, it can become quite depressing not to have to get up for anything in particular! So tune into your true bio-rhythms, get up when you wake up and go to bed when you're tired. Spot your own patterns and then build activities around them.

**Fill your day** : just as you used to have a "to do" list at work, try to ensure you fill your time usefully rather than fritter it away. Start by looking at your day in 3 sections – morning, afternoon and evening. Think about one key thing to do in each section – don't worry whether it takes 10 minutes or 3 hours, its just important that you want or need to do it. Typically over time you will get less concerned about each section of the day and life will develop its own rhythm, you just have to make a start.

**Socialise** : most of us underestimate the power of the social circle our work offered us. Whether we loved or hated our co-workers they were people to share the news or latest soap drama with, someone to have a coffee and share common experiences with. Without work it can be easy to become isolated so developing new hobbies where you naturally meet other people can be helpful. Golf and bowls are the cliché's but be creative – why not take the opportunity to learn a language or to put your experience to good use by taking up Voluntary work? You will quickly develop new social networks to replace your work life.

**Goals** : do you have a purpose in life ? It's really important to work out who you are now, since you no longer have a job role. There's some great books to inspire you to try new life experiences - but think about what's important to you. By getting clear about your personal philosophy and what your values are, you make it easy for yourself to prioritise what you do and who you spend your time with.

Enjoying your retirement is really down to you – you can be as lazy or as productive as you choose. Ironically this freedom of choice can be a burden you didn't anticipate. So remember that any change will bring its own peculiar hi's and lo's – roll with it but actively seek to understand what works for you and soon you will feel fulfilled, with your time well spent!

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