

## LEISURE TIME AND THE RETIREE

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"Free time from employment" is Webster's definition for leisure. People in the field of gerontology, the science of aging, refer to this period of life as the after-retirement years, free time, bonus years, unscheduled time or nonwork years.

More people are living beyond retirement today than ever before, and the numbers will continue to increase. Some say that retirement or leisure years will range from 20 to 35 in the foreseeable future. Some believe that the work week will shrink to 20 hours in the next decade. Thus, this new freedom or leisure time has become important, not only to the recipient, but to all of society.

### Reactions to Aging

Leisure time comes so rapidly to so many that some gerontologists say our aging population will react in one of three ways: they will misuse and abuse it and regress; they will use it to preserve their health and restore and maintain the status quo; they will use it to improve and strengthen personality. One authority says most people do not know how to retire. Old age to many people means too much time and too little money.

Many misconceptions exist about leisure time. It has long been accepted that man was made to work. Some say we need to be strong in our philosophy about work, and a happy, healthy retirement will come. Others believe that leisure time is well earned and honorable. Modern men are beginning to look upon leisure as a human right.

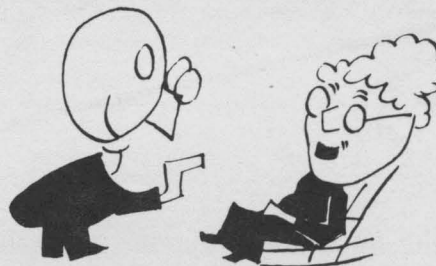
Today, many people have leisure time, and most of them are aged. Some believe that retirees with ideas know where to look for new sources of interest, but those who have worked primarily with people and things show little skill in finding new interests. Many observers agree that the elderly are generally unprepared to cope with this new freedom.

### Planning for Retirement

The best planning for leisure time begins early in life. When retirement comes, there will likely

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## You've just started



be many interests and activities to fill these hours. Too, planning helps develop a positive attitude which is vital to gaining new interests.

One large company urges children of the elderly to help them continue activities in church, volunteer jobs, part-time employment or any social activity of their interest. The company believes that any one of these activities may help the aged to remain happy, to be active and to achieve community status. The retiree often feels the loss of the status connected with his former position.

Retirement or leisure time that is truly satisfying is based on some general requirements:

- Adequate health, finances and housing.
- Establishment of true companionship with spouse.
- Satisfactory religious expression or participation.
- Development of interests outside the job.
- Decision on what to do and actions according to abilities and stamina.
- A feeling of acceptance in the community.

There are many leisure-time activities to choose from. How do you make a choice? This depends on your individual interests or personal likes and dislikes. *There should be a good balance.* Do not limit your interest to one activity.

Suppose you are interested only in golf, and it rains—what a pity! Cultivate interests to enjoy



alone, with friends and with family. Health may force the abandonment of one or more interests, even a favorite, but with variety there are others to fall back on. Just don't have *too* much variety. Over-involvement may cause confusion, and then the interests pursue the person.

#### Activities for the Aging

The range of activities is great. What will your interest be?

- Reading (newspapers, books, magazines)
- Traveling (short or long trips, sightseeing, exploring)
- Games (spectator or participant)
- Physical activities (jogging, walking, exercising, fishing, hunting)
- Music (listening or performing)
- Gardening (in and out, vegetable, flower, ornamental)
- Arts and crafts (painting, camping, weaving, woodwork)
- Do-it-yourself projects (carpentry, needlework)
- Moneymaking projects (babysitting, handyman)
- Collecting (stamps, coins, antiques, glassware)
- Science (ham radio, study chemistry, archaeology)
- Writing (history of your family or county, pioneer-day stories)

- Study (high school or college credit, a language)
- Volunteer services (church, nursing homes, hospitals, 4-H leader, civic committee)
- Politics (city, county or other office)
- Theater (performing or spectator)
- Pets (enjoyment, training, breeding)
- Loafing (doing nothing—just sitting, rocking)

The big question is: "What will be done with leisure time?" Since many individuals are unprepared for using it, much could be accomplished if each would work toward these goals:

- Establishing a positive attitude concerning leisure and work.
- Directing this "huge reservoir of creative energies" toward productive living.
- Helping others begin early in life to develop inner capacities for self-expression and differing interests.

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FLE 3