

Lecturer's Contribution

Life, post-retirement!

by Rasaya Marimuthu



As I plan for my impending retirement that is to come soon, many thoughts have been criss-crossing my mind. Generally speaking, one significant feeling that engulfs me is the muted excitement. Exactly what this excitement is all about, I am still trying to decipher.

My current circle of friends is mainly those who have either just recently retired or will be retiring soon as I would be. Meeting those who have just retired and listening to their own experiences have somewhat influenced my thoughts on how my own post-retirement life would turn out to be. This, I feel, is a double-edged sword. While I can take solace in the fact that life will be less regimented upon retirement, I am also left with an uneasy feeling about the uncertainty that lies beyond.

Well, so much for the doom and gloom of retirement!

Let us talk about the excitement part of retiring. As the days approach, I mainly feel excited for two reasons: *excitement of the impending (inevitable?) freedom and excitement of the unknown.*

Excitement of the impending newfound freedom.

For the last 35 years, life has been a somewhat regimented routine with a definitive work schedule: chores had to be completed within a stipulated time frame, issues had to be addressed indefinitely with meetings to be attended, activities and projects to be implemented and completed, objectives to be attained, and the list goes on and on

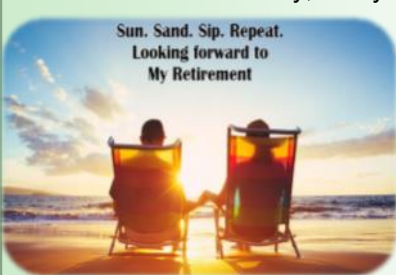
When retirement happens, I believe I would be unshackled from all the above, finally, a free man. Free to do the things that I have always wanted to do but never had the luxury of time by my side.

Then, there is the *excitement of the unknown.*

It is like stepping into the wilderness of life of another phase, not knowing what is in store for you. Many a time, we tend to be overawed by the uncertainties that life has to offer. This is one of those moments. Yes, we have friends who have retired before us. Yes, we have their stories and experiences to go by. But, no two sets of experiences are the same. What another person experiences may not turn out to be the same for me when I retire. It could just be an overwhelming or even an underwhelming experience for me. One could never say, and I would rather not dwell on it. I will cross the bridge when I come to it later.

On a more serious note, I look at the retirement part of my life as a continuation to my present life. Sure, there are definitely some adjustments to be made. Otherwise, I would like my life to be just the same as it is right now - a contented and fulfilling one, albeit at a more relaxed pace. I do not want to be looked upon as someone who had slowed down, slackened and became inactive. For matters of personal health, I intend to devote more time to maintain, if not, enhance my level of fitness - by engaging in more physical activities. Yoga and meditation are also activities that I have been wanting to engage in for quite some time now, but never got down to doing them. Maybe, this is the time. Then, there is the 'me time' - things that I would like to do in solitude.

All the above may sound cliché to most people. It is typical for every potential retiree to dwell on these same things. I do not wish it to be that way, in my case. I feel it is better to tread carefully with a calculated risk in my post-retirement life.



Generally, when one turns sixty, there is an inherent tendency to feel and behave sixty. However, no one can deny the younger self that so persistently exists within oneself in every person. Some term it as 'being young at heart'. At this juncture, words of the American author, J. A. West rings true: "*Don't act your age in retirement. Act like the inner young person you have always been.*"

Coming back to the crux of the matter. Life is always a bag full of surprises, no matter at which stage you are currently in. Retirement is no different in this aspect. It is almost impossible to be ever fully prepared for its aftermath. One can only be barely prepared to face what may come in one's way. The rest is a game of chance.

In essence, we can be rest assured that retirement is a transformative experience for anyone, and it is an existential issue too. With appropriate adjustments where they are most needed, one can beat the odds and have an equally contented and fruitful life ahead. That is my resolute conviction to this end.

