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## Four Ways to Make the Most of Retirement

By Maddy Dychtwald | December 4, 2014



**MADDY DYCHTWALD:** Have you ever heard the expression, “live fast, die young”?

As you probably know, this philosophy of life suggests taking lots of risks, enjoying life to the fullest and not suffering through old age. But with life expectancy another 20-plus years for those who have already reached age 65, maybe this philosophy needs to be tweaked. Maybe it’s time to *live fast* (meaning take some risks and enjoy life to the fullest) and *die old*. And maybe, just maybe, the one thing you need to think about the most as you near retirement is this: *How can I make the most of the time I have left to walk this planet?*

With that in mind, let me share with you a few of the gems we have learned from decades of primary research on retirement, surveying tens of thousands of retirees and soon-to-be retirees.

- 1. Have more fun.** One of the most revealing findings that we have uncovered has to do with what boomers want more of in the next stage of life. At the very top of the list is “to have more fun.” Some of us may have been so busy working and raising our family that we don’t how to inject more of it into our lives. It doesn’t necessarily take a lot of money or include exotic travel. But think about what is really *fun* for you. Whether it’s reading a great novel or joining a garage band like my 67 year-old brother-in-law, Alan, just did, make it a priority.
- 2. Get quality time with family** (that’s friends and family). Spending time with those we love takes on special meaning once we clear the clutter of full-time work obligations out of the picture. Whether it’s grandchildren, children, sisters, brothers, or college roommates, be sure to factor in exactly how family will enrich your retirement lifestyle. Once you have an idea in mind, be sure to communicate this to those you want to spend more time with, so it doesn’t come as a big shock when you announce you’ll be coming to visit for a month.
- 3. Maintain health and vitality.** Retirees tell us that the #1 ingredient for a happy retirement is having your health. At the same time, health and health-care expenses are their #1 worry. Health is the pivot point around which retirement can mean the chance to live your dreams or the challenge of dealing with debilitating health. An investment in your health can keep you physically and fiscally vibrant.
- 4. Have few, if any, regrets.** Approach the next phase of your life with a sense of fearlessness. If there are things you’ve always dreamed of doing, it’s now or never. Give yourself the chance to try new things, meet new people, see new places. Whether you succeed or fail is not as important as putting forth the effort.

In short, plan for the future but live for today. Live fast and die old!

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