

Healthcare Business Today

7 HEALTHY HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL RETIREE

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What makes someone successful in retirement? Is it money and how much you have of it? No. Not solely, but it helps. The Employee Benefit Research Institutes recent survey does indicate that retiree confidence is higher in those who have a retirement plan and have retirement savings than those retirees that do not.

However, there are many other aspects to consider, in being a successful retiree, other than money. There are rich and poor retirees that do not live with personal satisfaction in retirement. When considering what healthy habits contribute to a successful retiree we need to consider the following aspects of life; ones' physical, social/emotional, mental, spiritual, and financial. Here are 7 healthy habits to consider in being a successful retiree.

- **Retire based on your financial plan not your age.**

This is a process that a person or couple should start long before they retire. The earlier you plan and save, according to your goals, the better opportunity you have of reaching those goals before retirement.

In my experience, retirees that have consistent income paying their living expenses seem to be happier than those who have to rely on the performance of their portfolio. Since pensions are going away this is a pre-retirement planning opportunity.

Lastly, successful retirees are financially responsible and live within their plan.

- **Stay physically healthy.** A retiree's health status is strongly correlated with retirement satisfaction. It is important to eat well and to maintain an exercise program that includes strength, flexibility and cardiovascular training. Find the type of program that best suits you and keeps you interested or challenged. Also be sure to keep up with annual physicals and your preventative appointments.

- **Give of yourself. Be a blessing.** This type of activity nurtures the soul. These activities include; volunteering your time for a non-profit organization, sitting on a board of directors, being active in ones' community and helping others who are less fortunate.

- **Be intentional.** Create a vision of how you see yourself living in retirement and then live it. Pursue the travel, hobbies and interests that you envisioned for yourself and your spouse prior to retirement. I like to think of this as living by one's vision not by circumstance. If you live by circumstances that come up in life you will find yourself just reacting and not being proactive. Live with a sense

of urgency and be intentional.

- **Stay connected to other people and nurture meaningful relationships.** Isolation and loneliness are two factors that contribute to unhappiness in life. In truth, the quality of ones' life can be measured by the quality of ones' relationships. Spend time with your family, friends, and former colleagues. Create new relationships in retirement since loss of our relationships is inevitable later in life.

- **Keep learning.** A habit of successful retirees is to read, write, teach and learn new things. This promotes growth and change in your life. It keeps you fresh and your mind sharp. You are never too old to be a student. Being a student keeps you feeling young at heart.

- **Maintain a spiritual life.** This can mean many different things to different people. It could mean spending time in nature, meditation, music, art, prayer, self-reflection or service. For example, I know a man that liked to draw but did not take it up until he retired. He took classes, practiced drawing, and then displayed his drawings. He took pride in his work and it connected him to a community of people he wouldn't have known otherwise.

Lastly, learn how to forgive. Life is too short to harbor old feelings of hurt, anger and disappointment. Holding on will take up too much time and energy. Let it go.

When we think of retirement in the future we often think of money. How much should I save? How much do I need? How long will it last? Although this is important, it is not the only ingredient to success in retirement. As stated earlier, we also need to be intentional when it comes to our physical, emotional, social and mental needs. The sooner we can create this balance in our lives, the more successful we will be as retirees.



James Speir, Founder of Speir Financial Services has been providing his clients with financial services and meeting their insurance needs for over a decade.

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