



HOW TO LIVE YOUR LIFE BY DESIGN IN RETIREMENT WITH YOUR PARTNER

Interestingly enough, when it comes to retirement, most couples spend a good amount of time planning financially, but then often neglect to plan for the emotional and behavioral aspects of retirement. Specifically, how will you and your partner live your Life By Design independently and together in retirement, without the distraction of work you have become so accustomed to over the years?

Everyone approaches retirement differently, but there are a few items to consider when doing so with your spouse. Co-dependency is potential occurrence to be cognizant of as you settle into your new retirement chapter. While time together is precious, maintaining a social connection with others is essential for mental health and can keep your marriage or partnership thriving for many years to come.

It's important to note that couples at any life stage- retirement included- may have very different expectations or ideas regarding how they will live individually and as a couple. Either spouse may anticipate more involvement from the other in various ways, which is why it's important to always maintain communication, openness and understanding with one another. Being on different pages may result in disappointment if either partner is feeling neglected or isn't receiving fair consideration of their needs during this time.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

It's never fair to expect your loved ones to read your mind or for you to expect them to know how you're feeling. You might need more alone time and if that's the case, it's important to make sure your partner is aware that it's part of your nature, not necessarily a rejection of their company. After so many years together, it's safe to assume that your spouse knows a bit about your temperament, but spending an increasing amount of time with one another may alter how you're both feeling. A need for space can be addressed by detaching yourselves to encounter new hobbies and interests.

CULTIVATE SEPARATE HOBBIES & FRIENDSHIPS

It's important to focus on building your individual social life in order to avoid becoming too dependent on your partner. In addition to strengthening and maintaining existing friendships, you may want to consider joining a club or organization or volunteering for something you are passionate about so that you have opportunities to develop new relationships. Additionally, the time you spend apart is likely to give you something to talk about when you are together.

SPEND TIME WITH OTHERS AS A COUPLE

Individuals have reported that they experience the most content or happy feelings when they socialize with both their partner and other adults, as opposed to only their partner. Developing & ultimately maintaining friendships beyond

your family or spouse is extremely important to your mental and physical well-being. (1) Growing with others who share similar interests can help you maintain a well-rounded and consistently positive attitude.

ALLOW YOURSELVES TIME TO ADJUST

Above all else, it is important to remember to be patient with each other during this time of transition. Change takes time and involves experimenting with various ways to succeed before finding what works for you. At the end of the day, you and your partner are individuals who have different interests and personalities, which is presumably why you fell for one another in the first place. Keeping in mind these details and being respectful of one another's thoughts and feelings is key.

SHARE YOUR GOALS

A great exercise in cultivating hobbies and encouraging clear communication is the writing down and sharing of your goals with your spouse. If you and your spouse both take the time to explore their passions and purpose and identify concrete goals they have for their life and retirement, it becomes easier to communicate what your goals are and how you envision your Life By Design. You may discover points where your interests and aspirations converge and diverge, allowing you to forge a path, together, to a fulfilling retirement.

Recognizing that retirement represents one of our last, and often most momentous, chapters in life can help one realize that it is the time to take on challenges of which you've always dreamt. Through communication, understanding and patience couples can experience these cherished moments together.

(1) <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

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