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**Retirement happiness**

**By Carol Dee Meeks**

Golden Days of Leisure

Months of arranging, rearranging and getting our finances in order before retirement, brought our golden years, with leisure time, to a peak. Actually, we awaited this decision and all the issues of stepping down from job security, for four or five years. Then the time for our lifelong change was here.

"But what are you going to do all day?" my boss asked when I handed him my letter of resignation.

"We are going to have fun."

"Carol. You will be soooooooooo bored."

"I hope not. We've prepared for this for a long spell. It is time to do something different."

Advice from those already retired was mixed. We were warned of lazy days ahead. We were told about days filled with boredom and that we'd be back at work in less than a year. We were even told that we were making a big mistake.

The only positive responses were from people twenty years or so from retirement. Still, we welcomed this time with open arms, promising each other retirement days would be happy days for us. We have always been different from other people, so we went into retirement with a different attitude.

I pondered one of the remarks we had heard from several people, that we "would become lazy and unwilling to work or engage in energetic activity." My husband and I agreed to not become TV retiree-a-holics, and that we would only watch the boob-tube during the day for noontime news. So far, it stays on during March Madness, College Baseball, College Softball and sometimes Law & Order. (I am addicted to that show.)

We also enrolled in the local Community Bible Study Class - him in the men's group, and me in the

## Retirement happiness

ladies'. This has been most fulfilling and was a wise thing to do. The study has brought us a connection we've never had in our entire marriage. Our spiritual growth is phenomenal - I see it on Pat's face; I feel it in my heart.

"Carol, my life with you has always been good, but it is better now than ever."

"Life is good," I agreed. "Our slowing down years are fun, and I wouldn't want to spend them with anyone else."

"I wish I'd had more compassion when I worked," he tells me, gazing at the floor, then rubbing his hand through his graying burr haircut.

"We start today. We can't change history."

He agreed.

In our CBS study, we looked at Matthew 25:1–13. The details of the ten virgins: five of them were prepared by taking oil in flasks along with the lamps, and five were foolish by taking only their lamps. To me, the foolish ones were lazy. They were not alert. They did not look ahead for the future and it cost them attendance to the wedding feast. When they returned from buying additional oil, the door was shut, and the Lord told them that He did not know them. Just a few extra minutes and a little extra effort would have admitted them to see the bridegroom.

In Matthew 25:14–30, we also studied about the man who went on a journey and loaned money to three of his slaves. The slave that buried his talent was lazy, and when the Master returned, He told him that he was not only lazy, but also wicked. All he had was taken from him and given to the slave that had worked and earned double what he had been given.

In retirement, I want to remain alert and active, not asleep as the five virgins, or lazy like the slave. I want to be prepared for eternity. We've learned that life here on earth is the pre-game show for eternal life. I no longer crave an eight to five-schedule, but I don't want to be asleep when Jesus comes again either. Pat and I ask Him to walk with us and keep us safe in these golden days and retiring ways - and He abundantly provides for us.

Pat and I want our retirement to be fun - but not all fun. I was raised with the saying, "All work and no play makes George a dull boy." But, I also know that all fun and no work makes one shallow, dull, and eventually indolent, and even slothful. We want these years to count. We want to give back to the community that has helped us raise our boys.

"Let's go check out MEALS ON WHEELS," my husband suggested one day.

He was excited as we drove into the parking lot at RSVP. The director jumped with joy; a joy that showed in her grin that stretched from ear to ear. After our visit, we both agreed we would participate with this activity when next our church was scheduled to be involved.

## Retirement happiness

We do not have piles of money, but we come and go as we wish. When it is time to see a new grandchild, our trip can last as long as Pat's wallet isn't empty. In our slowing down years, we cook, we visit our family, we wear our jammies all day if we want, or we can go shopping. The main thing is, we do it together. We are blessed beyond measure and are smelling the roses in these lazy days of retirement - the days that fill our hearts with joy.

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I write the encouragements for the prayer chapel at the church we attend. My love is poetry and I've won several contests over the years. We have two sons and three grandsons. We are happily retired.

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### **Three Inspirations for Happiness**

**By David Leonhardt**

The following three inspirations were adapted from A Daily Dose of Happiness, and they represent three key ways to increase our happiness.

#### 1. FORGIVING FOR HAPPINESS

We like to think we are better than our friends below us in the food chain, such as the octopus and the snail. After all, we have love. We feel happiness. We have empathy. We have a conscience. We can reason.

We can also hold onto grudges.

Grudges are, in fact, prickly little creatures that worm their way into our hearts. Holding onto them is a self-defeating exercise.

Fortunately, forgiveness is also uniquely human. Forgiveness cleanses the spirit. Forgiveness let's us get on with enjoying our lives instead of being preoccupied with someone else's. Forgiveness opens the door to happiness.

#### 2. SUPPORTING FOR HAPPINESS

When things seem to be very bleak, it does not take much to lift someone's spirits. Sometimes all it takes is to let somebody know they are not alone.

That is why it is so important to smile at people, especially if they look down. And if you know what is

## Retirement happiness

weighing the person down, let them know they are not alone. Don't go burdening them with all your miseries, but let them know you have been there.

Guess what? You will feel happiness for having helped them, too.

### 3. ACCEPTING FOR HAPPINESS

There is no such thing as happiness if you are not at peace with yourself. Too many people just don't know how to make peace with themselves.

Peace begins with acceptance. Whether we agree with everything we do (like the environmentalist who sometimes throws out a recyclable container), it is important to accept what we do.

Do we always make the best choices? No. But they are the choices we make.

Do we always treat people with the most respect? No. But it is how we treat people.

Can we improve? Yes, and we should. But that is a project for the future. First we must accept who we are now, rather than condemning ourselves. Then we can move to improve the person we will be tomorrow. Both acceptance today and improvements tomorrow will increase our happiness.

This inspiration first appeared in A Daily Dose of Happiness:

<http://thehappyguy.com/daily-happiness-free-ezine.html>

Get the best Daily Doses in a free ebook:

<http://www.thehappyguy.com/l/daily-motivation-inspiration.php>

, or visit David Leonhardt's home page

on happiness:

<http://www.thehappyguy.com>

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Three Inspirations for Happiness

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