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**Ten Ways To Use Your Strengths, Gifts, Talents And Abilities In Retirement**

**By Cynthia Barnett**

I've got to be honest with you, the greatest human failing is not being able to judge your own

personal strengths, gifts, talents and abilities. In fact, if you're like most folks, you spend way too much time identifying your weaknesses and spending all your time trying to overcome these imperfections. This is very detrimental to our spirit and totally takes away from your strengths and talents. If you've been doing this all your life, now is the time to stop! Being a successful retiree means learning how to use your strengths, gifts, talents and abilities. In this article, we'll discuss ten proven tips to help you take advantage of your abilities:

- Recognize your abilities - The first thing is that you have to do is recognize your abilities and dismiss feeling of inadequacy. You must recognize your strengths, gifts, talents and abilities, whatever they may be. Believe in your `true self' and find out what you're truly good at and what your "unique calling is." We all have special talents and are unique individuals.

- Identify your unique strengths - Explore and identify your strengths and talents. For instance, if you had pursued carpentry as a career or as a hobby, your strengths could be an eye for detail, precision, and creativity. You could mold your after-retirement career around these traits.

- Be confident and proud of your strengths- It is a natural tendency to underplay your strengths. After all, no one wants to be a "brag" but retirement is the time to be confident and proud. You've accomplished so much in your life and now is the time to take advantage of your skills. So, its OK to give yourself a small tap on the back. By capitalizing on your strengths, you can accomplish all of your goals and help others in your path.

- Building your retired life around your strengths - After recognizing your strengths, gifts, talents and abilities, plan your retired life around them. Use your skills and talents to identify opportunities. Perhaps you'll pursue a `second' career after retirement or a volunteer opportunity. The possibilities are endless. Just be open and receptive to receive and you'll gain a sense of fullness and accomplishment.

- Finding new goals - Now that you have some time on your hands, really think about your goals and aspirations. What is it that you want to accomplish in your life? Has your dreams changed since you

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were a teenager? Do you still have the same interests that you did 20 years ago? How can you make your dreams become a reality?

- Start a business - Today, retirees are better educated and skilled. Use your knowledge and skills to start a business or nonprofit organization. Not only will you use your talents in a wonderful way but you'll make a significant contribution to the world.
- Educate others - If teaching and coaching is your special talent then don't hog it, share your knowledge with others. Conduct adult education classes or tutor students.
- Re-education - Reeducate yourself. After all, learning is a lifelong process and you could use your retirement years to increase your knowledge. Take this time to learn new skills or brush up on rusty ones.
- Community service - Pay back to the community that gave you so much by volunteering your services. For instance, if you're a retired carpenter, perhaps you can make cribs for a teenage pregnancy shelter.
- Remain active - Stay active in the community. Perhaps you can run for political office, help someone with their campaign, become a deacon, whatever you're called to do.

In conclusion, everyone has special gifts and talents that could be utilized to make the world a better place in which to live. Even if they were previously hidden or dormant, retirement is the time to take advantage and pursue them.

Dr. Cynthia Barnett is a "refired" educator who had reinvented her life moving from the school house to an entrepreneurial venue.. She is the author of "Stop Singing the Blues: 10 Powerful Strategies for Hitting the high Notes in Your Life, and RE-FIRE, Don't Retire: 7 Secrets of Highly Successful Retirees She was featured by Time magazine for their article on women in mid-life who have reinvented themselves. If you are ready to "RE-FIRE" your life sign up for my free 7 day audio mini course on the 7 biggest mistakes retirees make and how to avoid them for an extraordinary life at

<http://www.refiredontretire.com>

## **THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES – Turning Disenchantment Into Enchantment – Part 2**

**By Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein**

In my psychology practice I hear so many disenchanting stories — stories full of pain, anger and fear. My heart goes out to my clients every day. But the wonderment is listening to these stories and helping my clients listen to themselves, recognizing the special capacities that each display in their stories. I try to help someone appreciate and even feel beloved toward herself as she realizes that she has had so many talents and strengths buried even in the worst of times. I try to help her see that it's her very coping skills that may reflect her genius, her humor and her capacity for endurance. If I can do this,

## Ten Ways To Use Your Strengths, Gifts, Talents And Abilities In Retirement

then I've helped my clients and we have begun the healing process.

In my counseling and therapy, I teach clear ways of reframing a person's experience so that she can retrieve from it what are her positive capacities and even to reclaim what gives her pleasure and joy. For example one of my clients was constantly put down by her husband and was now separated, was able through telling me stories about her childhood to reclaim the wonderful talent of singing. Even though her childhood home had been dysfunctional, the family had the capacity to sing together and once she recognized as a great gift, she brought it frequently into her own life with her children. It was a small step in regaining a sense of self worth and actually having pleasure with her children.

I'd like to leave you for the moment with an easy activity to begin to reframe some of your life story:

1. Pick a year in your life and spend some time jotting down the main events of that year. They may be pleasant or they may be unpleasant.
2. Next make a list of all your talents, abilities, strengths, and coping skills that you used during that year. This may take some time as you may find yourself dismissive of talents and strengths. However, try to be fair and generous of yourself, as you would be if you were generating this list for a dear friend.
3. The third step in this activity is to go back and tell the story of that year of your life either on paper or to a friend or maybe just inside your head but tell it honoring some of the talents, strengths and/or coping skills that you used that year.

I think you will quickly begin to see that any year of your life takes a different shape and shape more favorable to naming yourself a wondrous person when you truly take into account the efforts that you gave to that year of living regardless of the outcome.

This material is based on an article from the Story Circle Journal.

Dr. Holstein is the originator of The Enchanted Self and a psychologist since 1981. She is the author of two books: The Enchanted Self, A Positive Therapy and Recipes for Enchantment, The Secret

Ingredient is YOU! Dr. Holstein speaks on radio, and appears on television in NY and NJ. She gives lectures, seminars, retreats and audio interviews on LadybugLive.com and is in private practice in Long Branch, NJ with her husband, Dr. Russell Holstein.

THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES – Turning Disenchantment Into Enchantment – Part 2

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