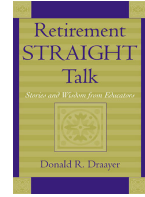


# **Retirement STRAIGHT Talk:** **Stories and Wisdom from Educators**

## **WRITING EXCERPT**



When retirement becomes a possibility, the educator faces a host of new choices. The first choice is to consider the idea of retirement seriously. The idea ingrains itself early in our life as a concept, but retirement as a concrete possibility and imminent choice usually comes much later. Words in the abstract become a direct reality. Concurrently, emotions rise and fall like a second adolescence. To do “something” takes root in mind and heart. Energy release at this point is largely internalized and may even be subliminal. Chapter 1 focuses on this “new” phenomenon called “my” retirement.

Once the idea of retirement begins to take on new meaning and serious intent, tentative exploration of the idea with others comes next. Every educator has one or more persons with whom new ideas can be shared safely. Typically, the words are spoken aloud first to a spouse, a trusted colleague, a dear friend, or a confidant such as a pastor. Gradually, others are brought into one’s circle of conversation. Each time the potential retiree looks into the eyes, face, and body language of the listener to test the idea in a relatively safe environment, gauge reaction, and see this new “self” through the reflection of others. Chapter 2 walks the reader through this transitory period of adjustment.

In due time what “was” and “now is” can be set aside just long enough to entertain future possibilities. Seldom does the pending retiree “study” future options initially; that would put too sharp a point on a growing openness to new ventures. Rather, post-retirement experiences of others are gathered and discussed informally. Depending upon personality and lifetime habits in making important decisions, a degree of formality is then added to the search -- ranging from a mental catalog of choices to a written document listing possibilities and priorities. Chapter 3 describes this scanning process.

Often-pursued options are identified within the final four chapters in this section. Noteworthy is the fact that many retired educators build in a transitory activity before deciding how to allocate newly freed time. Eventually, choices typically fall into one of four general arenas -- or a combination thereof.

Chapter 4 focuses on personal choices such as hobbies, recreational activities, and family time. Chapter 5 identifies part-time educational choices that bring satisfaction to many. Chapter 6 describes a host of private sector options that beacon to those who wish for part-time or even full-time employment in the *for profit* sector. Last, Chapter 7 explores public service options that provide engagement and fulfillment to many newly retired educators. The intent herein is not to catalog all the possibilities -- an impossible task. Rather, stories of people will be told who have moved out of full-time work as educators and into a very special time in life when manifold choices exist that can yield an abundance of growth, friendships, and even joy.