

Book Review of Book “Ten Steps to Plan a Happy Retirement- By Dr. Meera Kulkarni

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Ten steps to Plan a Happy Retirement

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Retirement and life is a big puzzle to many as traditionally it is just a stage of career and then starts the big challenges. Dr. Meera Kulkarni's Retirement Planning book explains the importance of financial planning which begins at the early career stage. Then comes the planning of life and it leads to design of dreams. Dr. Meera Kulkarni who has been academician and principal of Management School now runs her consultancy on finance management, career planning and retirement planning. Every aspect deals with the decisions we make. Dr. Meera Kulkarni also covers the aspect of Ikigai in this book. Retirement Planning has been a doctoral thesis.

Retirement is been associated with declining health, very low social activity, marital disharmony, and economic hardship. Due to this negative imagery, no one wants to grow old. Family and colleagues keep us away from the very thought of retirement hence it comes as a blow. There are three stages of retiree, early retiree, senior retiree, and elderly. As per Hindu philosophy retirement is a stage of disengagement.

Unfolding retirement – The three different stories shared share; they offer insight that how retiree people adjust and accept their life. How do some retirees plan to travel to lead satisfactory life? Some develop a passion for skill, some loneliness.

Planning for your nest – Planning to live or settle in comfortable surroundings is a major choice in retirement. A comfortable and manageable space decides the happiness in retirement. Indians have started realizing the independence need to offer to children, it helps children understand the different stages of life. Shifting to live with children certainly brings a lot of joy. Here one needs to understand the importance of an aging lifestyle. The **Old Homes / Institutional Living** comes as an option. Sometimes it limits interaction, today we have another option of **Assisted living** is another option, where a medical facility is provided. Retiree does not like to depend upon a help, then there is another concept of combination of **Old home and Assisted living**, Silver Homes is one of the examples located in Baner Pune is discussed in the book. It is a new option for the elderly, when there is a limitation on mobility, staying along with other people and getting a chance to develop new relations and bonds. This way retirees can lead an independent life with assistance ready for them. The study shows they don't feel abandoned or neglected.

Health is Wealth - The working people remain busy and keep their mind occupied, it is a disciplined part of life. At the age of retirement, one needs to maintain existing health and routine for a healthy lifestyle. It is like a challenging and motivating self to be more neat and attractive. All this is possible with a healthy diet. Emotional wellbeing is the key to a happy life. Writers explain it in a simple line, “Communication is to understand to be understood.” Being grateful is a step that adds to positivity to life.

Finding your purpose Ikigai – It is a Japanese method to find the meaning of life. It helps us, realists, what we can choose as a profession, what skills we can develop as passion, and which skill we can develop into a hobby. As it clears our vision, it helps us to plan and devote our time to learning new skills and upgrading in careers. The book shares some tips on how we can plan new learning options, volunteering, extension activity, becoming an entrepreneur, and working on honorarium.

Managing Personal Finances – While in a working career and pre-retirement age one needs to use the income and expenses model. Financial calculators help us understand the importance of budget and insurance. This chapter focuses on wills, nominations, and power of attorney.

Hobbies Leisure and Pursuing your creative call – The major part of a career is occupied with jobs and targets. It offers us identity but it consumes most of our time and energy. One needs to incline and develop hobbies, it offers us sense of purpose, happiness, and delight. Post-retirement one can pursue current hobbies or explore hobbies that can be done alone. One can develop a hobby that can engage social interaction.

Attitudinal Change – There is a direct connection between behavior, attitude, and mind. The quality of life post-retirement is depending upon our attitude. It helps us decide when to stop-continue-start. The book shares some exercises before retirement –

- Taking stock of all possibilities
- Mindful journaling
- Keep giving
- Be in the present
- Pick your company
- Take charge of your life

Relationships – Relationships constantly change and evolve. Maintain healthy relations with children. Throughout life, we play various roles at different stages and at different places. It is important to have an inner circle of friends in our life. Being socially active plays an important role post-retirement. It helps in the overall wellbeing of a retiree. There is a need to unlearn and re-learn new ways of socialization.

The secret of Will Making and Health Wish – Consolidate all the assets and mention it into will. Make your accounts join, it helps for bank account and investment. Making a Will in the Indian context is a rooted concept now. Adding the health care wish and advance directive makes things more clear. It is not a document of fear but a document that takes care of you even when you left this world.

Ask for Help – Asking for help is the most complicated affair, one does not accept the inability to accept the dependence. Asking for help is a very simple thing and we practice also while making our career but it is never acknowledged. One always proclaims the self-made career but it has actually helped and been nurtured by many. All retirees need to be gracious while asking for help and express gratitude for receiving help. Remember help does not mean refusal of you as a person.

Living a Full life – Retirement gives us the opportunity to re-look at life. This is the time we get a chance to relive life. The book suggests seven dimensions to a newer perspective of life.

1. Re-frame
2. Re-learn
3. Re-design
4. Reconcile
5. Recreate
6. Rejuvenate
7. Re-view

This is how we can develop a newer perspective towards life. The book suggests characteristics of life satisfaction.

Zest – Energy that we use to participate in activity liking or doing things.

Resolution and fortitude – Not giving up and making the most of the situation

Congruence between desired and achieved goals – Apathetic attitude

Positive self-concept – *Being positive help us overcome many challenges*

Mood Tone – maintain a positive attitude towards life.

Therefore, retiree can live active life after retirement, they can take care of their health retirement will give them satisfaction and hope. And life will give them life of dignity when they are no longer earn money.

Conclusion - Retirement is a chance to grab the opportunity to redo different dimensions of life that will bring happiness, respect, and satisfaction to your life. This book covers our life right from the beginning of our career and financial planning. The Ikigi part guides us for ultimate goals and satisfaction. Planning retirement and making arrangements for it while working the solution for meaningful retired life.