



CHANGING RETIREMENT EXPECTATIONS

“Encore.org is building a movement to make it easier for millions of people to pursue second acts for the greater good.”

Over the past several years, many Americans have begun to question their ability to prepare for a financially secure retirement. This awareness now begs the question, how will pre-retirees adjust their retirement expectations to match their economic realities?

The **Retirement Confidence Survey (RCS)** is the longest-running annual retirement survey of its kind in the United States. It gauges the views, experiences, and attitudes of Americans regarding retirement preparation and related issues. Results of the 2013 survey shed some light on how workers expect to adjust their retirement plans and expectations.

For example, 22 percent of respondents reported that the age at which they expect to retire has increased in the past year. The most frequently cited reasons included 1) the poor economy, 2) lack of faith in Social Security, and 3) inability to afford retirement. In addition, 75 percent of the respondents indicated that employment will provide either a major or minor source of income.

Encore.org (previously known as Civic Ventures) is an organization that has long recognized the growing need for individuals to work beyond the traditional retirement age. It has also been a leader in recognizing the desire of many older adults to engage in work that provides them a sense of meaning and purpose:

“Encore.org is building a movement to make it easier for millions of people to pursue second acts for the greater good. We call them “encore careers” – jobs that combine personal meaning, continued income and social impact – in the second half of life.”

Encore.org offers a huge library of resources for older adults including the recently released ***Encore Career Handbook: How to Make a Living and a Difference in the Second Half of Life*** by Marcia Alboher.

This book is described as a “comprehensive, nuts and bolts guide to finding passion, purpose, and a paycheck in the second half of life.” It provides a road map for every step of the encore career journey including how to plan the transition and how to strike a balance between **making a difference and making a living**.

Sources: “2013 RCS Fact Sheet #2: Changing Expectations about Retirement,” www.ebri.org; www.encore.org.

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WHY YOU NEED A HEALTH CARE PROXY

Callout:

A health care proxy allows you to legally designate someone -- a proxy -- to make medical decisions for you.

Social Media Message:

Who will look out for you if you are no longer able to do so? Find out about health care proxies.

Description:

Who will make critical decisions regarding your health care if you are unable to do so? This article discusses the legal mechanisms and issues that can help you answer this question.

You may someday face a sudden health crisis due to an accident or serious illness that leaves you unable to make your own medical decisions. Fortunately, there is a means to address this potential future concern -- it's called a health care proxy.

A health care proxy allows you to legally designate someone -- a proxy -- to make medical decisions for you. Keep in mind that in some states you may even be able to combine a health care proxy and living will into a single document.

Hospitals and nursing homes are required to ask about the existence of any advance directive when you are admitted. In most states, a health care proxy does not take effect until you can no longer make medical decisions for yourself; until then, only you can legally consent to any treatment. In addition, you can always change or cancel the document as long as you are mentally alert. If you decide to make changes to any of these documents, be sure to do so in writing.

Know the Potential Drawbacks

Though it is a legal document, a health care proxy cannot handle every medical situation. Here are some key points to consider before you designate a proxy.

- **Some caregivers could override your document.** Most states permit a doctor or health care facility to reject any advance directive for reasons of conscience. In these cases, the doctor or facility must tell you or your health care proxy about this when you are admitted to care and must offer to help transfer you to another party or facility that will comply with your wishes or the health care proxy.
- **The advance directive may not be followed by emergency medical services (EMS).** If EMS is summoned to treat you in case of a life-threatening

situation, they are usually required to resuscitate and stabilize you until you reach the hospital, regardless of an existing advance directive.

- **Know state laws.** Though all states accept health care proxies as legal, each varies considerably in what is required of these documents. Also, if a health care proxy is written to your state's specification but you undergo medical treatment when visiting another state, the rules regulating health care proxies in the state in which treatment takes place will usually prevail.
- **Do not use a health care proxy unless you fully trust the person you have named.** If you don't have a health care proxy, many states will appoint a person to make medical decisions on your behalf. Usually, this person is your closest relative, whose values may or may not coincide with your intentions.

The information in this communication is not intended to be legal advice and should not be treated as such. Each individual's situation is different. You should contact your legal professional to discuss your personal situation.

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“A health care proxy allows you to legally designate someone -- a proxy -- to make medical decisions for you.”

LIFE LESSONS: EMBRACING VULNERABILITY

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, and has spent much of her career studying the complex human experiences of “vulnerability” and “living wholeheartedly.”

Her 2010 TED Talk presentation, “The Power of Vulnerability,” catapulted her into the international spotlight with a powerful message that literally resonated with millions. In fact, it is among the top ten TED Talks viewed worldwide. In addition, she is the author of the *New York Times* best seller, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*.

The phrase “**Daring Greatly**” came from Theodore Roosevelt’s speech “Citizenship in a Republic.” It has also been referred to as the “The Man in the Arena” speech, and was delivered at the University of Paris on April 23, 1910. Here is the passage that made the speech famous and gained Brown’s attention:

*“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, ... who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while **daring greatly**, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”*

Brown explained that the first time she read this quote she thought, “This is vulnerability.” Based on more than a decade of researching this multifaceted emotion, she had learned that vulnerability is not knowing victory or defeat, but rather understanding the necessity of both. “It’s being all in. I think the first thing we have to do is figure out what’s keeping us out of the arena.”

In an interview, Brown was asked, “What are the first three steps to daring greatly?” She replied that she is not a fan of prescribed steps or tips because it is not a linear process, nor as easy as the steps can imply. However, it can be as simple as “showing up and being seen.” She further explained, “It’s about owning our vulnerability and understanding it as the birthplace of courage and the other meaning-making experiences in our lives.”

The truth is that most of us have been conditioned not to reveal our vulnerability. Brown wrote:

“In our culture, vulnerability has become synonymous with weakness. We associate vulnerability with emotions like fear, shame, and scarcity; emotions that we don’t want to discuss, even when they profoundly affect the way we live, love, parent, and lead.”

In contrast, Brown’s research reveals that important positive outcomes emerge from stepping into the arena of vulnerability, “The thing that I have learned is that vulnerability is at the center of fear and shame, but it is also the center of joy and gratitude and love and belonging.”

“It’s about owning our vulnerability and understanding it as the birthplace of courage and the other meaning-making experiences in our lives.”

LIFE LESSONS...

Continued

The truth is, it is only when we expose ourselves, perhaps in a personal relationship or in our work, that “we have experiences that bring purpose and meaning to our lives.” Vulnerability is also at the heart of true leadership:

“Re-humanizing work and education requires courageous leadership. It requires leaders who are willing to take risks, embrace vulnerabilities, and show up as imperfect, real people. That’s what truly, deeply inspires us.”

Sources: “Leadership Series: Vulnerability and Inspired Leadership” by Brené Brown, www.impatientoptimists.org; “Brené Brown: How Vulnerability Can Make Our Lives Better” by Dan Schawbel, www.forbes.com; “Get Ready for a Vulnerability Hangover” by Roman Krznaric, www.theschooloflife.com; “Professor Encourages Openness to Vulnerability” by Michelle Klump, www.uh.edu.

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In My Opinion...

Learning is a Two Way Street...

“I am too (old, tired, lazy, busy.....you fill in the blank) to learn anything new”

Have you ever made and/or heard such a statement? I know I hear it from my brain almost daily. Each time a new phone, television, music player, computer, video game system comes out; I reassure myself that my trusty five year old version is still working, so why should I have to learn a new one? There is an answer, of course. The answer is: I might gain a new capability that enhances the fulfillment of my life goals.

But that involves giving up time and energy towards learning. There have been recent studies which show that our minds and bodies actually gain proficiency by the effort, alone, in trying to learn. Our brain works better, our bodies improve their chemistry, and we have a more satisfied outlook on life. So, it seems that the time and energy is well spent. So, why is it that we quit trying to learn as much when we age?

I think it is a common problem that is all too human...energy --- both mental and physical. We just don’t seem to have enough it to embrace the extra work it takes to learn. In fact, I think you must be purposeful in setting aside resources to the goal of constant learning.

Another excuse is time. I have never understood this one. There are 168 hours in each week. That’s the same for everyone. But, somehow, many people see themselves as a victim of Time, rather than owning up to the fact that it is their choice of how to spend it.

If you are one of the fortunate individuals that have not had their capabilities limited by health concerns, then I encourage you to take advantage of that blessing by expanding your aptitude. Take some time to reflect upon how you are using your resources towards the Life Goals you have set for yourself.

Above all, include the planned activity of learning something each week. There is no telling what a knowledge stepping stone might lead to!

Until next time, that’s my opinion.

Robert J. Cole, Jr., CLU, ChFC, CASL, CFP®
President