

# Retirement Coaches: 5 Essential (Nonfinancial) Things to Do Right Now

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Everybody knows about the need to set aside more in savings, 401(k)s, and IRAs. But for a second, forget about the financials. Some of the best retirement coaches in the country agree that some of the most important preparations you need to make have nothing to do with your pocketbook.

## **1. Don't be shy: Talk about retirement**

Joanne Waldman has an anecdote that says it all. The director of training for Retirement Options and owner of New Perspective Coaching in Missouri says she once did a workshop with a group of executives, and afterward one of them came up and said he had thought more about his retirement in the past two hours than he had in the last 20 years.

"People tend to put it off, and they want to avoid it," Waldman says. "I want people to get it in their brain that this is going to happen, and this is coming up. People plan more for a two-week vacation than they do for their retirement."

Waldman and other retirement coaches say they're amazed by how often spouses don't talk about their retirement plans with each other.

"When we see people having trouble, it's [often] that spouses have different expectations and haven't discussed it," says Gerriann Fagan, founder of the Alabama-based The Prism Group. "For success in retirement, each should have a vision. Spend time on your own -- and then talk about it with your spouse."

## **2. Focus on your health**

Fagan says people should choose to stay healthy and must learn what that means for them.

"Someone told me one time that we're all our own ecosystem, and we have to figure out what works for us," Fagan says.

That means watching what we eat, getting more exercise, sleeping more, and dealing with stress. That could include yoga and meditation, she says.

Retirement coaches say people should get a full health assessment from their doctors and get on a program that helps lead them to better health. After all, who wants to spend all of his or her hard-earned money on endless doctor bills after finally having time off?

"And what kind of retirement," Fagan asks, "are we going to have if we're not healthy?"

## **3. Meaning and purpose**

Waldman says she asks clients this question: "Why are you on this planet?" The reason she does this is that many people who don't have meaning and purpose in their retirement don't live more than a few years after their career comes to a close, she says.

"We know a lot of people who died within a few years of retirement because they didn't have that meaning and purpose," Waldman says. "They would go home and watch TV. I know a lot of people like that."

Waldman says people need to know what they want to do. About 70% of her clients say they want to go back to work after they retire, but they often don't want to do what they were doing.

"They did it a long time," she says. "They did it well, and they made a lot of money. But they don't feel it anymore. They don't connect with it anymore. They want to, in their retirement career, do something that has some kind of purpose and give back on some level. First, they have to figure out what that is."

For some people, that means volunteering in retirement. Only 4% volunteer full-time, and 29% do so at all, Waldman says.

"The data is so clear about the benefits," Waldman says. "You get more out of it than the people you're helping. It's healthy medicine. It really helps people feel better, but it's something the population of retirees haven't embraced yet."

## **4. Start living your dreams now**

Waldman gives this [real-life retirement advice](#) : People should start living their dream now instead of waiting until they retire. She says she advises people to pick one thing and start doing it now. Most people lived to work and didn't have a lot else going on in their lives, she says. You should do what you always wanted to do.

"Not everybody likes the term 'bucket list,'" Waldman says. "I worked with somebody who called it a no-regrets list. What are the 100 things you want to do, and it can be anything from traveling to learning something."

Fagan says she attended a Chamber of Commerce event where everyone wore a suit or business attire, except for one attendee. He was dressed in long shorts and his shirt hanging out of his pants.

"He said he wanted to get a little bit closer to 'the real me' he wanted to be in retirement, 'and it starts with this,'" Fagan says. "He said he wasn't wearing suits anymore. It was kind of cool. He has clearly spent time thinking about where he's going. It's a journey, and he's enjoying the journey."

## 5. Make changes that prepare you for retirement

The last thing you want to do when you reach retirement is have a house full of clutter in storage and then become too overwhelmed to deal with it, the retirement coaches say.

Now is the time to start decluttering by either selling items or giving them away. It's also perfect for people to consider getting a jump on downsizing homes if they envision themselves living in a smaller home during retirement.

Another aspect of retirement that people need to think about is their social networking. Many people think they'll socialize with co-workers once they leave their careers, but retirement coaches say that's often not the case.

It's important to have a network of friends before you retire that gives you the ability to socialize after you leave the workforce.

"You have to have some structure in your life," Waldman says. "You've been structured at work and then you hit retirement, and that structure sometimes goes away. If our socialization at work goes away, we think we're going to keep up with those people and we don't always. Things happen. You have to build yourself a social network now."

*This article originally appeared on [NowItCounts](#) .*

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One bleeding-edge technology is about to put the World Wide Web to bed. And if you act quickly, you could be among the savvy investors who enjoy the profits from this stunning change. Experts are calling it the single largest business opportunity in the history of capitalism... *The Economist* is calling it "transformative"... But you'll probably just call it "how I made my millions." Don't be too late to the party -- [click here for one stock to own](#) when the Web goes dark.

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