



Retirement Vital Signs

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*Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have
rushed through life trying to save.*

~Will Rogers

Physical vital signs: pulse, temperature, blood pressure, and respiration are "signs of life." These can easily be measured to determine if someone is in a severe medical emergency. Vital signs are also used as general measures of health, a quick "snapshot" of how the body is doing. While vital signs are not the complete health picture, they can give a quick sense of physical wellbeing.

Meanwhile, *Retirement* vital signs are indicators that you have the potential for a fulfilling retirement. Retirement vital signs are a bit more challenging to measure than physical vital signs– but there are measurement tools available. Just as physical vital signs give a quick snapshot of health, so do retirement vital signs provide a picture of retirement health.

An easy way to remember these retirement vital signs is the acronym RAMP which stands for:

Relationship satisfaction

Adequate time management

Mattering

Purpose

Let me explain the retirement vital signs in more detail.

Relationship satisfaction is an essential component of a fulfilling retirement. Most humans desire the company of others and are fulfilled only with other people in their lives. Although a close personal relationship such as a spouse is often significant, it is not sufficient (or perhaps even necessary) to have one person at the center of your world, if you have a variety of satisfying relationships. To maximize fulfillment, we need to interact with people of a range of ages. We

are fully alive when we have diverse roles of a friend to those about our age, a mentor to young adults, and a wise partner in play and learning to children.

Adequate Time Management One of the critical features of work and employment is that it structures our time – from what time we need to get up in the morning to when we can plan for vacations. Retirement requires self-structuring of time. For some adjusting to managing their own time can be a significant obstacle. Structuring daily life entails developing new routines and rituals. Structuring time for bigger picture issues, such as moving and lavish vacations also requires careful planning.

Mattering How much do you matter to others and the world? This vital sign looks at your significance in the world. A sense of mattering is highly related to retirement fulfillment. Many people get their primary sense of mattering in a work environment. Upon retirement, we need to strengthen the old ways we matter, and possibly find new ways to matter.

Purpose What is essential for you to accomplish in the world? Do you have a sense of your most deeply held values? Do these values guide your decisions and actions? Identifying and acting on a purpose is highly related to retirement fulfillment. Over the course of our lives our purpose shifts. What motivates us as teenagers is usually very different than what drives us in mid-career. Upon retirement, there is often another shift in purpose, as the commitments that work expressed may no longer be valid. Retirement may also provide an opportunity to explore the social and emotional legacy that one wants to leave behind. On the next few pages are some tools to measure your Retirement Vital Signs. behind. On the next few pages are some tools to measure your Retirement Vital Signs.



With over 30 years of experience in providing consultation and workshops, Michael Winters has been a teacher, administrator, speaker and a psychologist. He retired as director of the Rice University Counseling Center in 2011. Not ready to stop working, he began providing retirement transition consultations and coaching, among other services. As a leader in professional organizations, he continues to give back to multiple communities. Michael is a gifted teacher and storyteller. He is a Moth Story Slam champion. Though his proudest achievement is grandfathering.