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Redefining Relevance: How To Avoid Becoming Irrelevant in Retirement

There is a lot of evidence that, aside from money issues, the things people are most concerned about when they think about retirement are:

Boredom

Loss of identity

Becoming irrelevant

Health problems

Death of their spouse or significant other

Let's talk about what it means to be relevant.

We know what relevance means in our professional lives. It means maintaining and upgrading your knowledge and skills. It means staying in tune with what your organization, your clients and customers, and your community want and need.

But...what does it mean in your personal life?

*The Collins Dictionary says that **relevance is what ...***

1. applies to things that are in front of you – for example, does the temperature of the swimming pool apply to the chicken you are cooking at this moment? Probably not.
2. is significant – **this is what we need to talk about.**

In your personal life, being relevant means meeting the needs of your family, friends, and yourself. How that shows up changes over your life.

As a child, relevance generally means having your parents' approval. To a teenager, relevance may mean teacher recognition and acceptance — possibly by getting good marks at school — and being accepted by a peer group.

As an adult, relevance may be about getting a good job and taking care of your family.

The question is, what does it mean now?

One possibility is continuing to participate with your family and friends, as they grow, mature, and adopt perspectives that may be pretty different than “back in the day”. It may mean having an influential voice, for example, on matters your teenage granddaughter is dealing with, that may be challenging. This will require staying informed about the issues she is facing socially and in school. That is just one example.

You certainly don’t want to be ignored or considered too out of touch. Even though this might be challenging, don’t disengage from the relevance journey and step back from the dynamics of your family, friends, and society.

The other priority in staying relevant is maintaining what is important to you, personally. Happy, healthy retirees have something that motivates them to get up in the morning. What is that for you? How will you stay engaged in life? It is worth taking time to figure it out.

Some of the things you can do to stay relevant and engaged are:

- Take courses at a lifelong learning organization in your area.
- Take some online courses: Websites like Coursera and Udemy offer a wide range of online courses in a wide range of fields and topics.
- Read books and articles about topics that are relevant to your family or your interests.
- Listen to podcasts and webinars.
- Attend local events about topics you are interested in.

Remember that staying relevant is an ongoing process that requires a commitment to continuous learning and growth. Perhaps, the most important thing you can do to stay relevant after your career is to stay engaged in life. That is best done by having a plan for how you are going to do it.

We welcome the opportunity to have a chat with you. Please feel free to reach out to us.

Wishing you health and happiness.