

10 Pioneering Steps For Boomers: Blazing A New Trail For Retirement

By *Dee Cascio*

I am inspired by Abigail Trafford, author of My Time: Making the Most of the Bonus Decades After Fifty, who is leading boomers on a pioneering journey to leave a new legacy for future generations. By adding her insight to my experience as a retirement lifestyle strategies coach, I want to encourage you to be a trail blazer in your retirement years instead of simply resting on your laurels or retiring from an active, purposeful lifestyle.

Movers and Shakers Once Again

We are in the middle of a social revolution we might want to call the anti-aging movement. We are getting older visually but we bring much wisdom within our generation as we pave the way for this next life transition-retirement. We were fortunate: we grew up with the invention of the TV, fought for civil rights and equality for women in the work place, took pride in the Hippie movement, changed the music landscape with Rock and Roll, landed a man on the moon and accomplished much more. We had the courage to fight in the Vietnam War when it wasn't a popular war. Because there are so many postwar babies born, our numbers influenced a cultural power that created an incredible force in our society. We did not shy away from a cause, an injustice, a challenge or an indulgence.

As we move into middle age, we are now paving the way for a new retirement legacy. However, because we are so driven towards change yet may not know quite how to do this one, we may be struggling with our new identity. You could say that we are experiencing similar identity and intimacy issues that we transitioned through as teenagers-who am I? Who are my friends? What is my role in my family now? What career do I want to pursue?

Now that all of our tasks are completed - getting married, raising our children, climbing the career ladder-we meet ourselves on the other side of these transitions. Who am I without work, without a cause, without a purpose? Who do I want in my inner circle? How strong is my marriage? How have I nurtured my friendships? What do I want to do with the rest of my life, especially when there will be 20 to 30 more years of our lives than we had planned for? We are destined for some path, but what is that path?

Longevity = Loss, Liberation, Legacy, Love

As we move into our 50s and 60s, we are experiencing loss as we let go of a lot of responsibilities, freeing us up to create a life filled with dreams that have gone unfulfilled temporarily while we move through earlier life stages. Now we are liberated and free to explore a different kind of success mindset. How will this life stage that you are about to enter create the kind of legacy that you want for your children and your grandchildren? Relationships become much more important in our lives as we consider those that we love and care for. Marriages go through major stress points and change over the years. "Until death do us part" has extended to much longer periods of time than anyone ever anticipated. In some situations, that's a wonderful thing, and relationships thrive and get even better. In others, fragile relationships dissolve. Love and romance for people who become single in this phase of their lives is once again possible.

Pioneering Steps toward a Successful Revolution

Ms. Trafford highlights 10 steps to consider as we all transition to this new life stage we are still trying to define. I hope these will start great discussions for you, your friends, and your family.

Change the language from *retire* to *regenerate*; the word *senior* to *older adult*; *volunteering* to *legacy work*. Each change in the language suggests more energy and vitality.

Get an attitude. Allow yourself more boldness and sense of urgency. For example: if not now, when will you go after what you really want to do? Show your children a new model so they can say they hope they will accomplish as much as their parents have.

Make sure you plan beyond the money. Having enough money to be comfortable and maintain a reasonable lifestyle is important, but make sure that you weave in purpose and meaning so that each day you have something to get up for.

Get educated! Our kids have had wonderful educational opportunities, and we should do the same for ourselves as we enter this life stage. Educate yourself by learning more about midlife transitions through community programs and online educational opportunities.

Redefine and reframe the workplace. We don't have to be wedded to a 40-hour week. Job sharing, part-time work, and extending one's work in order to mentor new generations coming on board are all ways that we can contribute our talents and skills.

Craft your legacy. Pass on life experiences, talents and interests, the business that you built, and the cause that you believe in along with the values that you have lived by.

Redefine the family. There are long-term marriages with and without children; divorces and remarriages that expand the family by including more relatives; those single and married creating families of choice; villages of intergenerational members who are caring for each other as they all age from birth to death. Intergenerational relationships make for a great contribution to our legacy.

Guard your health and spirit. Be aware of ageism. Don't let that stop you from doing what you really want to do. Take care of your body, because it is the only one that you have. Nurture it, move it and get the medical check-ups and treatment your body requires.

Love well. Giving and receiving love is vital to a fulfilling life. People are meant to be in connection with others. It's important to have 8 to 10 people in your life that you can't imagine your life without. If your support system falls below three people, you are at more risk of poor health, emotional isolation and depression.

Put longevity into the political arena! We need a longevity agenda. Change is occurring all around us. Because we are living longer, there are now well over 80 million people between the ages of 50 and 80 in our nation. These numbers will drive change culturally, politically, scientifically and economically.

Let these steps shed more light on your midlife transition to rewiring, regenerating and reinventing your life in order to leave a lasting legacy. Be a pioneer and blaze a new trail for your retirement years, and go and make the best of your life for the rest of your life.

Dee Cascio specializes in Retirement Lifestyle Strategies for those planning to retire in 3-5 years. She is a Certified Life & Retirement/Recareer Coach, an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) and a member of the International Coach Federation. Dee is also a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), a National Certified Counselor, a Certified Couples Imago Relationship Therapist, and a member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). For the tools you need to build the retirement of your dreams, sign up for The New Lifestyle Retirement newsletter at <http://www.retirementlifestylestrategies.com>.

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