



The Psychology of Retirement

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Retirement & Depression

- Relationship between retirement and depression not straightforward
- Dr. Susan W. Lehmann
- For some, mental health improves when they retire. They have accomplished what they wanted to do, ready to move on and look forward to retiring

Problem in retirement

- Others find it hard to recapture the meaning they had in their job
- They enjoy the structure, the camaraderie, being part of team
- Work is a source of validation that is very satisfying
- For those people, there is sense of loss

Study on retirement and depression

- South Korea, 2006, 50-64, 10,255
- 36.4% listed poor health as the most important reason for retirement
- 17.8% result of mandatory retirement policy
- 15% voluntarily, wanting more leisure and free time
- 13% family related responsibilities
- 7% cannot find a job

Conclusions of Study

- Those who retire due to mandatory retirement policy are not any more depressed than those who remain in the labor force
- **Retirement by itself may not create depression**
- It seems that causes that induce retirement, such as **poor health, care-giving responsibilities**, and the **inability to find a job** are associated with depression

Transition in life

- **Retirement**, like any major change in life, whether it's getting married, having children, moving, changing careers or dealing with illness or death, causes **stress**, and stress is a primary risk factor for depression

Transition

- It is **normal**, most people go through without needing any help
- But if it is causing the person to be **irritable**, to **lose interest** in things, to seem to have **lost the bearing**, professional help is a great idea
- Losing bearings not necessarily the same thing as depression but might become that

Continuity Theory

- In **transition to retirement**, an individual will make internal and external adjustments and adaptations

Internal Continuity

- **Internal continuity** is about structure of ideas, temperament, affect, experiences, preferences, dispositions, and skills
- It is important to people's **sense of control & competence**; it helps preserve **self-esteem**
- It meets their needs for **interacting** with and **getting social support** from others

External Continuity

- **External continuity** is a structure of physical and social environments, role relationships, and activities
 1. the pressures of **maintaining social roles and responsibilities**
 2. to have **view of themselves affirmed** by feedback from others
 3. the need to cope with **physical & psychological changes** that aging brings
 4. the need for clarity in **setting personal goals**

Aging Anxiety

- Aging anxiety occurs when the aging process threatens **internal and external continuity** in some individuals
- **Fear** of aging focuses on worries about declines in **health** and physical functioning, **financial** well-being, **cognitive** ability, changes in physical **appearance**, and **social losses**

Work Role

- How important is **the loss of work role** in retirement?
- It **depends** on how important the work role is to the individual
- Besides **self-identity & self-esteem**, there is adjustment to changes in **social area**, for strong friendships with colleagues may not survive in retirement

Social Roles

- For people whose **social roles outside of work** were well developed and important to their identity and self-esteem, retirement is no problem
- For people without outside social networks, finding “replacement” friendships may be a struggle

Locus of Control

- **Internal** locus of control, a belief one possesses the power to shape life's outcomes, is more positively associated with **successful adjustment** to retirement
- Individuals with an **external** locus of control, however, see life events as happening **to** them rather than **because** of them, as evidence of their luck and therefore **out of** their personal **control**

Gender

- **Professional women in retirement** feel the loss of professional identity strongly, but it did not appear to impact negatively on self-esteem and identity
- Researcher suggested women viewed themselves in various personal and professional roles before retirement. In transition, they appeared **stable**

Masculinity and Retirement

- Men **define** themselves according to their **jobs** which are evaluations of their **worth**
- Decision making and strategic planning are activities that define **masculinity**
- The transition to **retirement** can cause an **identity crisis** when work has been a man's primary source of affirmation and accomplishment

Implications of Retirement

- Men's **immersion in the work** arena provides a sense of **agency** and **identity**
- Older men facing retirement experience it as a threat to **masculine ideals**
- Negotiating of this shift means **redefining** their sense of **what it means to be a man**

Part-time job

- Those who take a **part-time** job after retirement reported fewer major diseases and better daily functioning than people who stop working entirely
- Journal of Occupational Health Psychology studying more than 12,000 subjects

Volunteering

- Helpful in making the transition to retirement
- Retired people reported **fewer symptoms of depression** and higher satisfaction with their lives if they engaged in low to moderate levels of volunteer work
- Older adults who volunteered **200 hrs per year** – about **four hrs per week** – were less likely to develop high blood pressure

Meaningful Life

- Many other ways can make a life after work more meaningful
- Travel, hobbies, college classes and music lessons
- Becoming a mentor to a younger worker in their company or field

Developing hobbies

- Developing hobbies is good
- But for many people, hobbies do not replace **personal value** one places on work, the **accomplishments** at work and the **self-esteem** one has from work

8,000 Days

- From 0 to 21 is about 8,000 days
- From 21 to midlife crisis is 8,000 days
- From mid-40s to 65 is 8,000 days
- If you make it to 65, you have **50% chance** that you'll make it to 85
- Why don't we take that period to create **new stories, new rituals, and new mythologies** as we age?

The Aging Population

- In 2015, there are **617 million** people aged 65-plus around the world
- This number will increase to **1 billion** by 2030
- It will reach an estimated **1.6 billion** by 2050
- By 2050, the worldwide proportion of the 65-plus will have doubled from today's **8.5% to 16.7%**

Trends in Japan

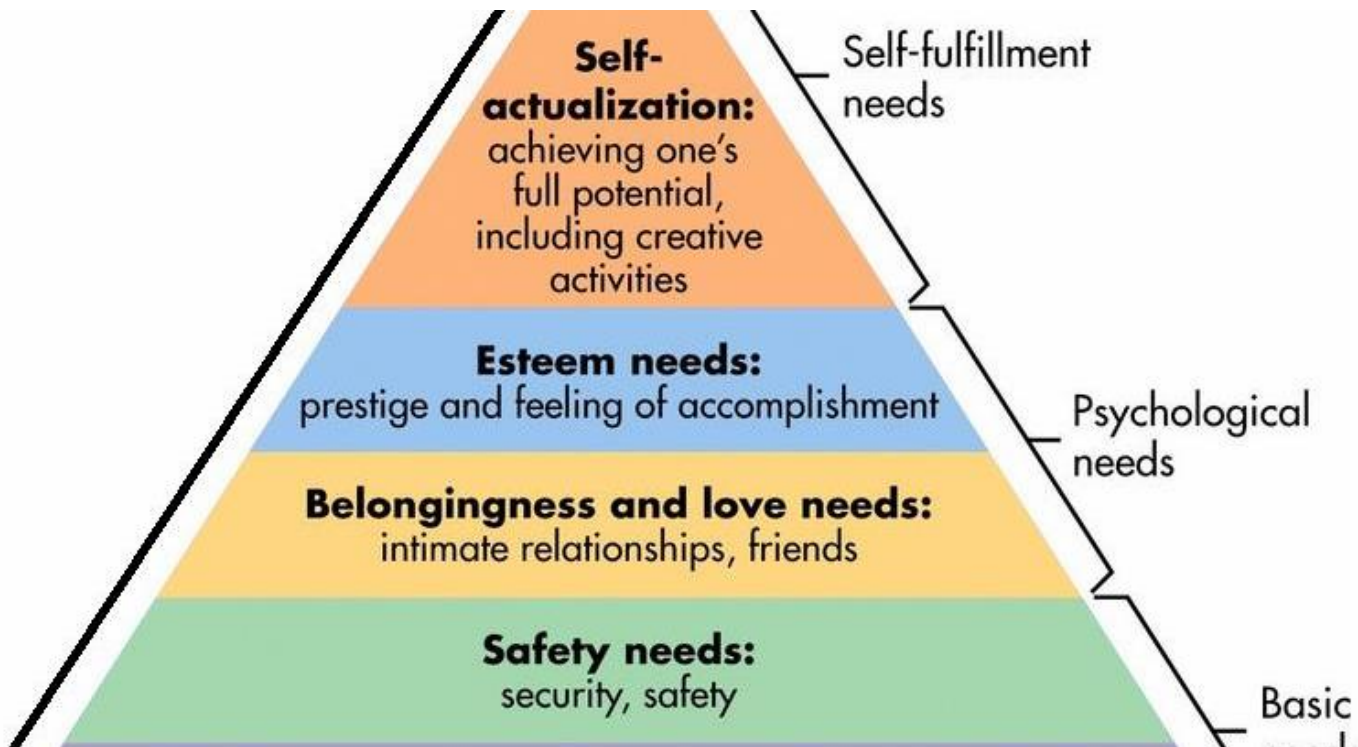
- The largest karaoke chain now converts many karaoke rooms into **classrooms**, where women of 50s, 60s, 70s can choose from more than 50 courses on dance, languages to flower arrangement
- The largest eyewear chain sells more **reading glasses** than all other eyewear
- The largest provider of sanitary products sells more **adult diapers** than baby diapers

Elderly becoming dominant spenders

- Older adults in the high-income world spend an average of **US\$39,000** per year, while those aged 30 to 44 spend only **\$29,500**
- In US, spending by people aged 50 or older came to **\$5.6 trillion** in 2015, while those under 50 accounted for **\$4.9 trillion**

Biased idea of Old Age

- **Crisis, ticking time bomb**, the figure in a bathrobe, crouched over a walker, attached to an intravenous bag filled with blood
- A population that **depends** on others to survive because it cannot provide for itself
- **Consumer** of goods, services, and ideas, never the **producer**
- **Needy** and **greedy**



Bertrand Russell: How to Grow Old

- Russell: How to live a fulfilling life

“Make your interests gradually wider and more impersonal, until bit by bit the walls of the ego recede, and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life.

An individual human existence should be like a river – small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past rocks and over waterfalls. Gradually the river grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being.”

Bertrand Russell

- “The man who, in old age, can see his life in this way, will not suffer from **the fear of death**, since the things he cares for will continue. And if, with the decay of vitality, weariness increases, **the thought of rest** will not be unwelcome. I should wish to die while still at work, knowing that others will carry on what I can no longer do and content in the thought that what was possible has been done.”