



# PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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## How Can I Make Retirement Satisfying?

Retiring from one's career, early or late, need not be traumatic, and need not lead to deterioration in the physical or mental spheres, as is often predicted. Being occupied with a formal career exercises the *executive* function of the personality – the ego – which mediates the rational problem-solving aspect of one's behavior relative to external reality.

Distress following retirement results from some individuals' failure to stay in contact with the world in a meaningful way, and to solve the problems posed by that lack of contact. On the other hand, one can find upon retiring an emotional liberation and an opportunity to be more creative. Career demands, schedules and other pressures are removed. Successful retirees are occupied with different matters. They may return to former interests they were forced to abandon. They sometimes parlay a so-called hobby into an activity that brings monetary reward in addition to satisfaction.

Many new retirees start out with plans for extended vacations or the pursuit of play-like activities. This "play" must eventually be supplanted by effort and involvement, or "ego" occupations.

***Talk to someone who can help.*** If you would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please try our Psychologist Locator.