

Travel and a Paradigm Shift on the Concept of Retirement

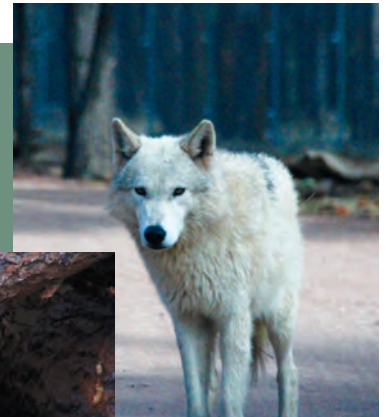
Wheeling through the West by: Carin Aichele

Cognizant that three words used daily in our vocabulary have tacit meaning to me and likely you, I pulled out my dictionary to review the literal definitions. Retirement: "removal or withdrawal from service, office or business." Vacation: "a period of suspension of work, study or other activity; usually for rest, recreation or travel." Travel: "to go from one place to another, journey, to proceed or advance in any way." Playing with these ideas, I espy a perception change that encourages us to experience retirement in an enlivened way. Pause and consider that vacation, travel and retirement are naturally concomitant with each other.

Using these definitions as my point of reference, I am on a perpetual vacation, traveling to unknown destinations both internally and externally. Retired, I am not. I am daily in service to myself, family, friends and the world. I am a life-long learner, a curious student who contributes and receives. As an advocate for freedom and for choice and particularly relevant here: for the idea that our beliefs and perception determine our experience of our "reality" I want you to give consideration to this concept of retirement as a long-term vacation. It is meant to be fun, restful, and for us to travel - be that literally or figuratively.

As many of my contemporaries are either retired or on the spectrum approaching retirement, reframing our understanding of it may create a more favorable and optimistic outlook on the major life event. It might just encourage some of us to take that leap sooner rather than later! For those who are currently retired and struggling with a loss of purpose or a sense that your identity is no longer clear, contemplating retirement as a journey, as a time to explore (travel, proceed or advance) may bring new and inspired opportunities that enrich our lives and engage us more in the intimate lives of others - isn't that what we often do on vacation?

Retirement could quite possibly be the most important and impactful time in our lives. In my new and dramatically changed lifestyle, I am discovering that my expression and my contribution have greater impact than the buildings I designed. My identity has shifted from being a successful architect to being a successful human, a humanitarian. My activity has shifted from doing to being and often being in the company of others.



I am acutely aware of the system we have created in the US that asks us to work, consume, repeat, then retire and often on a meager social security or slim investment portfolio. There are options. I will share the one that I have recently discovered and am advocating for. Downsizing! Reducing our consumption, reducing our expenses, and making choices to live a life filled with quality in exchange for quantity. This was not always my outlook. The decision to leave a successful business to travel in my RV was not easy. It was made over a couple of years and with great urging from sources that were not always pleasant (the economic downturn, an inner voice that said "you have to do this", and a lack of joy in my work that I could not continue running from).

Nearly a year into this lifestyle, I have met hundreds of people in as many places and there is a common theme when we talk about the patterns of behavior and lifestyle we have created relevant to our quality of life. The theme is: something's got to give and it cannot continue to be the very soul of a person for the sake of making more money and consuming more. I have yet to meet the person that says: "I love my 60 hour a week job, I love that my kids raised themselves without a parent at home, I love my 3,500 SF house more than my freedom, I love the idea that I will work until I am 72 fighting with Medicare to have my health be truly cared for,

and I am grateful that I didn't have more time and quality experiences shared with other people."

Life is a journey. We are traveling. What is one change that you can and will make to create an overall life experience that feels more like a vacation? I would love to hear from you.

BIO.

Carin Aichele has embarked on her new life living in her RV towing a jeep with 3 bikes, a kayak, snow shoes, a tennis racquet, and a golden retriever with intention to travel the USA and Canada. She will continue writing articles for Living in the West as she journeys inside & outside of CA. She is underway with her first book incorporating spiritual healing testimonies combined with creative photography. She will also be writing a book about her travels. With a spinner for direction and one for distance, Carin will be regularly traveling to the destination as directed by the spinners, writing about the experiences of going into the unknown with curiosity and childlike wonder. Carin's website is live for your perusal at: www.sublimetravel.net. Her blog is on the "follow me!" tab. Carin may be reached at cga.sublimetravel@gmail.com