

Reinvent yourself

Feeling stressed about retirement?
Take heart from these examples.

Albert Einstein famously observed: “Necessity is the mother of all invention.” But if he were addressing executives transitioning from their corporate careers, I think he would say, “Necessity is the mother of all re-invention.”



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My Next Season, a company whose purpose is to help executives transition from careers oriented around productivity to lives anchored in purpose.

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Transitioning out of a corporate role necessitates re-invention, as few of the routines that dominated your career will continue into the next phase. It's also easy to feel stressed. What will you do? How will you spend your time? This is where re-invention is essential.

The best part of giving up your well-earned, well-worn corporate title is the unrestricted options. When experienced, talented professionals bring their capacity and wisdom to a world of possibilities, amazing things happen.

Here are four short illustrations of that:

Norm

Norm retired as corporate president of a high-growth agriculture company. He transitioned to leading a not-for-profit focused on food security in third-world countries. Now, he meets farmers about donating land, talks with seed company representatives to obtain fertilizer and seed wholesale, and cultivates donors who have a passion for food security.

His skills in marketing, sales and business leadership — carefully honed throughout his career — are useful. And his re-invention has led him to discover his life's greater purpose: creating sustainable solutions to feed hungry people.

Liam

Liam, a retired *Fortune* 100 CEO, went on to teach in business and law schools. He mentored first-time CEOs of not-for-profits.

He published articles highlighting what he learned while being a first-time CEO himself, and re-invented himself as a teacher, mentor, writer and thought leader.

Julie

Julie, a retired bank executive, joined the boards of two nonprofits focused on girls/women's issues. She gives talks across the country to middle school and high school girls on “empowerment.”

For most of her career, she was the only female on the management team, and she hated that. So she was determined to inspire other young women to be all they could be, and not give up.

Sam

Sam, a *Fortune* 10 division president, retired with his wife, to the city where their two sons live, and is now assistant coach of his grandson's baseball team. His new priority is to spend as much time as possible with both his sons' families.

He feels that he neglected his own family as he traveled constantly, leading international divisions for 18 of his 22 executive years. In retirement, he reprioritized, putting family first.

These stories illustrate the power of re-invention. There is no right or wrong answer — no performance review that will evaluate how you are doing.

It's all about seeking your purpose, following your heart, finding where need meets your gifts and re-inventing (and re-incenting) yourself accordingly.

The possibilities are endless. Just let go of your old definitions of who you are/what you do, and trust that your corporate career has prepared you to re-invent the new you. ●



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