

It's Your New Show, Not Your Encore

John was contemplating retirement as a division CEO for a large, global corporation. "I have loved my work and most of my 31 years here," he said. "I cannot begin to imagine what I will do for an encore."

The word *encore* stopped me dead in my tracks. I felt compelled to look it up, to ensure my full understanding of the word. Webster's dictionary defines *encore* as "a reappearance or additional performance demanded by an audience; a second achievement especially that surpasses the first."

John's face and tone revealed his feeling every bit of the pressure that an *encore* implies: additional performance; surpassing what he has already done in a notable way; pleasing people/responding to what others want from him, regardless of his own heart. We went on to have a rich conversation about how different his "next season" in retirement would be from an *encore* or replay.

Everyone's next season takes on unique characteristics, behavior patterns, important relationships, geographical parameters, activities, and definition of success. Your most robust and rewarding next season stems from discernment and choice, versus an encore—simply continuing to do what was expected/desired by others. Few of us can outdo our very best—but each of us can be great at something different.

As Susan Peters, Chief HR Officer of General Electric notes, "Change, ultimately, is a matter of learning and adapting. And it often requires a mindset shift. But you may be more prepared than you realize. Think of those finely-honed capabilities you've developed: your ability to influence, to make tough calls based on instinct and judgment, to rally a team around a vision, to move an organization, to spot talent and help others rise higher. The world needs capabilities like that now more than ever."

One executive, Charlie, left his corporate CEO role, but was not ready to leave the corporate environment entirely. He shared, "I wanted to do something truly new and different, so I joined boards in industries that interested me, but in which I had little to no experience. I was seeking places and ways to learn, work part-time, and grow in new ways."

Another former Fortune 100 executive, Brenda, saw her next season not as an encore, but as an opportunity to reinvent herself. "I could have coasted to retirement, but I wanted to find a way to leverage my history, so I set out to explore something new." After a successful career in corporate banking, Brenda went to work for the U.S. Department of Education, helping with student loans. Today she is coaching/mentoring women who are early in their careers.

Transitioning into your next season does not mean performing an encore. Instead, it gives birth to a whole new show and the opportunity to live fully and deeply into your purpose and calling. Your gifts and talents go well beyond what an encore of your old gig would be. And be sure to listen: the crowds will still shout "Bravo!" and mean it.



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Find Dr. Braksick's new book, *Your Next Season: Advice for Executives on Transitioning from Intense Careers to Fulfilling Next Seasons*, on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).