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Areas of Focus

Apparently, less than 10% of us think about our later years except in the context of money.

But having a plan and choosing the things you want to spend time on, are critical for any satisfying life stage.

The possibilities are much broader than many of us think they are - we need to be realistic as we've seen, but not to let that stop us dreaming a bit and making choices.

When you think about it, work has probably given you structure, purpose, and a built-in social circle for years. Take that away suddenly, and it's very easy to feel a bit lost, even if you were looking forward to leaving. This is true for going part-time or moving to a consulting role or whatever, as well. That's

where planning comes in: it turns ‘What now?’ into ‘Here’s what I’m moving toward.’

A big part of that planning is deciding what you actually want to focus on, instead of just hoping something meaningful will fall into your lap. People who do best in later life usually have a mix of things that give them a sense of purpose, keep them connected to others, and are simply fun. That might be spending more time with family, diving into creative projects, contributing to the community, or finally exploring interests you never had time for while working. Choosing a handful of core areas like this gives you a rough roadmap for your days and weeks, so you don’t end up with time that’s technically ‘free’ but doesn’t feel very fulfilling.

If you don’t think about this ahead of time, common consequences include boredom, too much unstructured time, feeling lonely, or even questioning who you are now that your job title is gone. Many new retirees enjoy the holiday phase at first, then realise they need something deeper underneath the lunches, trips, and sleep-ins, something more fulfilling than daytime TV. Trying out and then building a small portfolio of activities - maybe including social, physical, creative, giving back or whatever you enjoy - can make a huge difference to how you feel day to day.

It’s also worth remembering that retirement can last a long time, and it won’t look the same at 65 as it does at 80. Your health, energy, and finances may shift, so it helps to think in stages and choose focus areas that can evolve with you. Maybe you start with travel and hiking, and later more of mentoring, clubs, or less physical hobbies. Planning, in this sense, isn’t about locking yourself into a rigid script; it’s about giving yourself enough direction and options so you can keep reshaping a satisfying life as things change.

The lists on the following pages will give you plenty of ideas to start you thinking and creating your own personal focus map.

You might want to have a look at the lists first, then go back and select some top favourites. Do add in some that feel a bit scary or too hard, if you are curious about them. This is a really good opportunity to broaden your horizons, keep your curiosity active and be a bit creative with the possibilities.

And remember, if you are interested in something, say painting, it's not like you have to aim for an exhibition, or even study painting or take lessons, unless you want to. It might be enough to make a plan to visit a new art gallery once a week or once a month - or look at collections online if that's more feasible. It's your choice…

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Primary Focus Areas

- ☐ Health
- ☐ Finances
- ☐ Wellbeing
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Meaning
- ☐ Purpose
- ☐ Home
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Identity

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Other Key Areas

- [ ] Legacy
- [ ] Spirit
- [ ] Adventure
- [ ] Partner
- [ ] Hobbies
- [ ] Giving back
- [ ] Someday project
- [ ] Learning
- [ ] Social
- [ ] Creativity
- [ ] Travel

More?

- ☐ Leisure
- ☐ Work
- ☐ Place
- ☐ Personal
- ☐ Belonging
- ☐ Structured routines
- ☐ Unstructured time
- ☐ Small pleasures
- ☐ Small challenges
- ☐ Following your curiosity

And still more…

In case you are looking for new focus areas with very specific suggestions, here are 50 more generated by my AI assistant. Happy browsing!

Creative Pursuits

- Art and painting
- Writing or journaling
- Photography
- Pottery or sculpting
- Music composition or playing an instrument
- Crafting, knitting, or sewing

Physical Activities

- Gardening
- Hiking or walking
- Golfing
- Cycling or biking
- Yoga or Tai Chi
- Swimming or water aerobics

Social and Community

- Volunteering
- Book clubs
- Joining a choir or theater group

- Bridge or card games
- Socializing with family and friends
- Hosting dinner parties or entertaining

Learning and Intellectual

- Online courses or lifelong learning
- Learning a new language
- Genealogy research
- Birdwatching or astronomy
- History studies or museum visits

Travel and Adventure

- Road trips
- Cultural tourism
- Camping or caravanning
- Cruises or international travel
- Local day trips or exploring your city

Wellness and Health

- Meditation and mindfulness
- Nutrition and cooking classes
- Fitness training or senior Olympics
- Mental health practices like gratitude journaling

Practical and Hands-On

- Woodworking or carpentry

- Home improvement or DIY projects
- Beekeeping
- Wine making or brewing

Outdoor and Nature

- Fishing
- Kayaking or boating
- Beach cleanups
- Stargazing

Philanthropy and Purpose

- Mentoring or teaching
- Environmental activism
- Supporting charities

Entertainment and Leisure

- Reading
- Puzzle solving or chess
- Attending concerts or films
- Podcasting
- Dancing (e.g., ballroom or line dancing)
- Collecting (e.g., stamps, coins, antiques)
- Pet care or adoption

I hope you have found this free resource interesting.

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I run workshops from time to time and am happy to come and talk to your community group about flourishing as you age.

joannamaxwell.com.au

joanna@joannamaxwell.com.au