



RETIREMENT DREAMS: DISTINGUISHING FANTASY FROM REALITY

What does retirement mean to you?

- Enjoying the freedom to do what you want with your time?
- Continuing to work, but at a slower pace?
- Finding some balance between family, work, and leisure?
- Working on things you want with people you like?
- Pursuing further education or continuing to learn?
- Seeing the world and seeking adventure?
- Participating in volunteer and charitable activities?
- Starting your own business?
- Attaining your life-long dreams?

Planning for retirement used to be easy. You worked hard until age 65, and then you reaped the benefits of your savings, pension plan, annuities, and social security in order to live out your retirement dreams. That was then . . . But now, the costs of benefits are increasing and pension plans are becoming obsolete. The familiar retirement model is changing before our eyes.

Advances in medicine and technology have extended the average lifespan, and with many of us now anticipating a retirement that lasts as long as our working years, ending our career at 65 is no longer financially viable—or even desirable. Changes in the retirement horizon require changes in financial planning.

Have you set a timetable for your retirement? Perhaps you are the type of person who comes home from work and crosses off another day on your calendar, counting down the days. Or, perhaps you are in no rush to hang up your hat. It's not important which category you fall under; however, it *is* important that you understand your options and plan your finances in a way that best suits your needs and desires.

Once you retire, what will you do with your days? For many people, just having unlimited time to relax and tend to hobbies is what makes all of their hard work worth it. If you can imagine yourself doing all those things you never seem to find time for—day in and day out, for 30 years—then early retirement is for you. And some people simply love their jobs too much to call it quits based on something as insignificant as age. If you're one of those people, perhaps retirement isn't on your horizon at all.

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Retirement Dreams: Distinguishing Fantasy From Reality continued

Perhaps you fall somewhere in the middle, and, like many people, you can foresee being ready to retire from your demanding job but not ready to leave the workforce entirely. Does that sound like you? If so, think about what it is that you really love to do and consider working part-time in that field. For example, if you're an avid golfer, you might consider working a few days a week in a pro shop. Or, if you love to read, a part-time position in a bookstore might suit you. There are a number of jobs that can help ease you closer to a life of leisure.

The key to a successful retirement is to decide which option makes the most sense to you and to then craft a dynamic financial plan that seeks to meet both your short- and long-term goals. Using the appropriate investment allocation and products will help you pursue your financial goals. You've worked hard and you deserve to live life to its fullest. Don't let your retirement options become a stressful decision.



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