



RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHEET

When preparing for retirement it is important to recognise how our lives will change upon exiting the workforce. Too often retirement can be like falling off a cliff—we work hard right up to our last day, then slam on the breaks and feel disoriented as the reality of retirement hits. Instead we want to build a bridge into retirement.



This ‘bridge’ involves planning routines, support networks and activities for when we retire, and starting to adjust our pre-retirement so we don’t find everything changing all at once.

4S TRANSITION SUCCESS

Transition expert Nancy Schlossberg talks about four factors—situation, self, support and strategies—that are at the core of an effective transition plan. Taking stock of your strengths and opportunities in these areas can help you successfully navigate this significant work and life transition.

SITUATION

The first “S” is about how you see your situation—the story you tell yourself about what is happening.

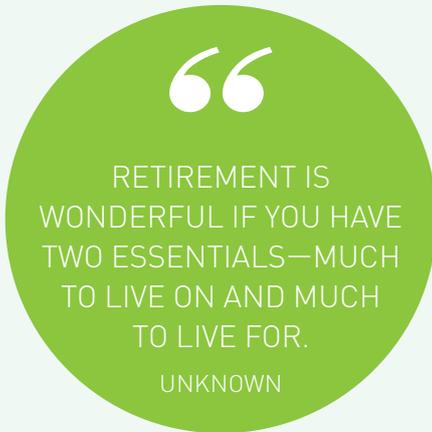
Is retirement happening when you wanted it to, do you feel in control, does it feel like a positive or negative transition, do you have **other stressors** going on in your life at the same time?



Is this happening at a good time in your life?	
How much control do you have over your retirement transition?	
Does the idea of retirement feel good? What worries you about the transition?	
What else is going on in your life?	
If you think about ‘work, wealth, home and health’— does your situation vary across these different areas? Do some areas feel better or worse than others?	

SELF

This “S” is about the strengths, experience, and doubts you bring to your situation.



What strengths do you have that will help me transition to retirement?	
What experience have you had with similar transitions that could help now?	
Do you see yourself as a resilient and optimistic sort of person?	
How do you usually respond to challenging or stressful situations?	

SUPPORT

Support networks help in tangible ways, through guidance and advice, and by helping us to cope better.

There are three types of support and it is important to get the right kind of support from the right kind of people.

In retirement our support networks are often interrupted. The workforce is a significant source of social relationships for many people, and leaving work can result in a loss of connection with others. In addition, moving house, declining health, and different routines can impact our support networks.

On the other side of the coin, we can be part of other people’s support networks. When we retire people may make assumptions about how we will be supporting them.

For example, our children may want us to be more involved as grandparents, the sporting club may think we can now take on a committee role, or our friends may be making plans for all the leisure time we now have. It can help to be prepared to have these conversations, and to know how much time and support you want to give to others.

Think about support network and the connections you want to foster, renew and create.

AFFECTION: Who offers you love and respect?	
AFFIRMATION: Who agrees with you and backs your actions?	
ASSISTANCE: Who provides practical help, advice, information (includes professionals and organisations)	
If during this activity you realised you have gaps in your support network, think about where and how you can fill those gaps.	

COPING STRATEGIES

When negative feelings arise, we need ways to cope so we can keep on going.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways to cope when we're feeling overwhelmed: problem solving the source of stress and managing the emotions that result from this stress. It is important to be able to do both.

When problems arise strategies such as brainstorming, prioritising, negotiating, taking action, or getting advice can be effective. But some problems can't be solved immediately, so we need to be able to manage our emotions.

To do this we can use strategies like changing our perspective, making positive comparisons, distracting ourselves, exercise, meditation/deep breathing, having faith, or engaging in therapy.

<p>What coping strategies have worked for me before?</p>	
<p>Do I have a good mixture of strategies for problem solving and managing emotions?</p>	
<p>What new strategies would help me as I transition to retirement?</p>	



THE STORYLINE OF RETIREMENT WILL BE LESS ABOUT WINDING THINGS UP AND MORE ABOUT TRANSFORMING ONESELF. RATHER THAN JUST BECOMING ELDERLY, WE BECOME ELDERS—WISE, WELL-TRAVELED AND DEEPLY EXPERIENCED.

MARKETWATCH

NOW YOU ARE IN A BETTER POSITION TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR RETIREMENT TRANSITION

Through your reflection you might notice a particular strength or opportunity that you can act on. Or perhaps you're still not sure what to do and want to find someone you can bounce ideas off or go to for advice.

You might also like to delve deeper using some of the resources listed below.

Whatever your next steps, take confidence knowing that you are better prepared now than you were before.

RESOURCES

See the worksheets about Work, Wealth, Home, Health and Values for further reflection ideas and activities.

Overwhelmed: Coping with life's ups and downs by Nancy Schlossberg explains the 4S transition model in detail.

On the Edge of Something Bigger by Anja Sassenberg, a step-by-step guide to reinvent yourself and tap into the possibilities available in retirement.

Retirement by Design by Ida Abbott is a guided workbook for creating a happy and purposeful future.

