

## Resilient Retirees: Retiring Happy by Doing Things for Others

I was off the trail a bit in my first crack at retirement. I turned it around by learning from people who were building a happy retirement. I noticed similarities in the retirement mindsets of happy retirees that I call the 5 Fs (Fun, For others, Fit, Flow, Financial) of a happy retirement. This column I'll focus on to the second F of a happy retirement: Doing things "For Others." .

Also known as "Giving Back", "Paying Forward", "Benevolence" doing things "For others" is a great way to make sure that you still matter, that you are still relevant. There are two powerful questions that you may ask yourself in retirement. Do I matter to others in my retirement? Does my retirement matter to me?

You have seen what happens when people feel that they don't matter in their career. They start to believe that they have nothing to give. They lose their swagger. The spring in their step, the fire in their eyes, the life in their voice disappears. They become tentative and meek, failing to take action that can bring them greater satisfaction. They become marginalized, put out to pasture.

This also happens in retirement!

Want to meet someone who matters in his retirement? Then buckle up; this will take you for a ride.



The first thing you notice about Rick is his size; he is one solid dude. Shake his hand and you get the sense that he used to work with these hands, and he did in his former career as a plumber. You also suspect that at age 74 the ex-marine can still take care of himself; you would be correct.

He is very good at this job. The walls of his office are filled with awards (he explains that his boss made him display them.)

So how did he make the jump from retired plumber to Suicide Prevention Services Coordinator?

Rick has first hand knowledge of the impact of suicide on a family. He also knows a thing or two about how to bounce back and build a happy retirement lifestyle. Rick's youngest son attempted suicide at 16. Rick is a guy who likes to fix things, he wanted to understand suicide and pitch in and help. Men of action do that kind of thing. He noticed a call for volunteer in his church bulletin. The hotline is answered 24/7, 365 days a year. They needed help. He became a volunteer on the Suicide Prevention Hotline, logging over 5000 hours, training over 40 classes of volunteers.

The tipping point came when Rick's son died by suicide several years after his first attempt. Rick closed his plumbing business and went to work at North Central Mental Health. He then began spreading the word about depression and suicide.

Rick taught me a lot about building a happy retirement.

First he matters to a lot of people. Rick continues to be a positive force in the life of others. I get pumped up being around the guy. Second, Rick, like many retirees is still working. He matters and is not willing to give up this mattering piece of his life.

Way to retire happy, Rick! And thanks for letting me share your story.

Want to connect with Rick?

Thinking about volunteering with Suicide Prevention Services?  
[sps@ncmhs.org](mailto:sps@ncmhs.org)

*Dr Tim Conrad is the founder of Resilient Resources LLC and the author of Retire Happy: How to Remain Relevant Reputable and Resilient. He can be reached at [drtim@resilientresourcesllc.com](mailto:drtim@resilientresourcesllc.com)*