

Resilient Retirees: Retiring Happy by Finding Flow

My first crack at retirement wasn't very successful; I turned it around by learning from others who were happy in their retirement. I noticed that happy retirees seemed to follow similar patterns I call the 5Fs (Fun, For others, Fit, Flow, Financial) of a happy retirement.

This column I will focus on Flow, the fourth F of a Happy Retirement. Have you ever heard of the term "Flow"?

Flow is when you get lost in the moment, researcher Mihaly *Csikszentmihalyi* (2008) describes flow as a "sense of timelessness that occurs when you engage in meaningful, challenging activities." The metaphor of flow describes a sense of effortless action.

Csikszentmihalyi has studied artists who find flow when working on their art, athletes who are in the zone when they are competing, businessmen who find flow when they seal the deal, readers who lose themselves in a book, choir members who are lost in song, actors who are immersed when they are stage.

Flow is when you are using your strengths in a challenging activity that stretches you. Flow is when you are operating at the outer reaches of your creative passion.

Flow requires us to actively pursue goals that require effort on our part. If we remain passive, we lose chances to reach flow. Going with the flow is no longer passive.

Is it possible to find flow in retirement? Emphatically yes! I think that retirement is a great time to find flow. Here's why:

- During retirement we are more likely to pursue activities simply because we enjoy them.
- Our free time has been expanded.
- We can engage in activities that create energy for us.
- Our self-awareness is at its peak; we have lived long enough to know our strengths, interests and priorities.

Want to meet a resilient retiree who has found flow in retirement?

I caught up with Worthington resident Mike Tizzano, a retired art teacher and sculptor, during one of his public sculpting events at the Dublin Community Recreation Center.

Mike has been commissioned to create a bronze and stone sculpture that will be installed at the corner of High and Bridge Street in Dublin.

Mike has indentified himself an artist since kindergarten, he has been selling his work since high school. Mike is working on this project as well as some private commissions. He is really busy, and has no plans to slow down, as he feels compelled to create more art. What is striking about Mike is that he is stretching and growing during a time of life in which others are coasting. He loves the challenge that his work presents. Figuring things out is one of his passions. Mike has found flow by using his strengths as he stretches and tries new endeavors.



Mike's work is on display in Brandt-Roberts Galleries in the Short North. His website is www.tizzanosculpture.com/

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Want a chance at finding flow in retirement? Begin by setting goals that have meaning for you; using your strengths to reach them.

Mindfully set goals which stretch you. If a goal is too easy, it creates boredom, not flow. Check your expectations, if a goal is too hard (cannot control the weather), you will become discouraged.