FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Retire Smart, Retire Happy: Finding Your True Path in Life

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In Japan, a phrase that means “wet leaves” is sometimes used to describe retired men: to their wives they seem passive, clinging, and hard to get rid of! The author of this rich, concise, and practical guide is retired from teaching psychology at the University of Maryland but continues to consult and write. She scans a broad area of research and offers ideas, a planning guide, and several self-tests that will serve most readers very well.

In seven chapters Schlossberg covers change and transition, self-assessment, relationships, finding a path, taking charge, learning while doing, and goals. An advocate of planning, she nonetheless prepares the reader for the unexpected, so that surprises that appear to be stumbling blocks can be changed into springboards. Research tends to express generalizations, but there is enough of it-and Schlossberg is well-versed and clear in reporting-to structure an intelligent approach to life in retirement.

Many retirees make the transition gradual, continuing to work part-time for remuneration or as volunteers. Those without hobbies or passionate interests face greater challenges, but what matters most is mattering, i.e., having a sense of importance to people and projects. This is more important than material wealth.

Each chapter ends with transition tips, a self-audit, or both. Schlossberg’s own research identifies five pathways in retirement, taken by people she categorizes as continuers, adventurers, searchers, easy gliders, and retreaters. The last group describes those who have given up. The other four, almost self-explanatory, are not rigid categories; people sometimes choose-or just find themselves using-two or more pathways. This kind of conceptualization and the self-test that goes with it nicely enhance the process of discovery in this new phase of life.

The book’s one weakness is a failure to address end-of-life issues. Making a proper will, including advance directives and assigning power of attorney for health care, should be an enhancement of life, a form of empowerment in dealing with unpleasant reality. This is not to say that the book avoids painful issues in many areas that are even less obvious. For example, most people cannot anticipate turf issues that arise “when both members of the family are in the

same space twenty-four hours a day.” And most people do not want to be thought of as wet leaves!

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