



Happy People Never Retire

Passion is the investment of those chasing inner dreams, and the payoff is a long, happy life.

By Dr. Gene Landrum

Psychiatrist John Diamond found that 90 percent of people “hate their work.” Why? Because they tend to take jobs for the wrong reasons or because the jobs are what the family deems right. They have been programmed to follow rules, punch the proverbial time clock, and do what is right. Right for whom? Those who preach order for order’s sake, where nothing changes, and

mediocrity reigns supreme. When I opened the first prototype of Chuck E. Cheese’s in California, I brought my tradition-bound Midwest mother to visit the store. After a glass of wine, my well-meaning mother turned to me and said, “Honey, when are you going to get a real job?” It would not have worked for me to tell her I was trying to change the world of family entertainment or that I am a right-

brained-driven innovator type who hates traditional venues.

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw offered insight into the world outside that conformity box where nothing is exciting or alters the world. A driven workaholic, Shaw worked until his late 90s and wrote these profound words:

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable

one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

Shaw's prescient insight was about venturing outside that surety zone called "the box" to find success. Chasing tradition or other people's ideas about what is right for you is just wrong, even if it happens to be your well-meaning teachers or parents. When we turn 80, what we didn't have the guts to do will be far more a problem than those things we did try that didn't work. Chasing security, or someone else's dreams, is not only insidious, it is guaranteed to lead to a schizophrenic existence.

A recent study revealed that the #1 wish of most working people was to retire. I thought it would be something like becoming rich and famous or dating Britney Spears or Tom Cruise. But it was to just quit doing what they had dedicated their life to doing for a living. What? Were they drunk or on drugs? No! They were merely revealing the underlying seething hate for showing up and working for some stupid bureaucratically driven environment where the mantra is "don't rock the boat." They had taken the job for the money or to placate their parents or some other inner need to feel safe or secure. That is a sad commentary.

Do you think Leonardo da Vinci, Picasso, Thomas Edison, or Dr. Seuss ever considered retirement? No chance! Why? Because theirs was a labor of love, not hate. Did they work hard every day? Yeah! In fact, they often worked 24/7. Edison kept a daily log of his work in the lab, and at 65, when he could have been on the beach, he averaged 65 hours per week in his lab for the whole year. Did he think of it as work? Of course not! For him it was fun and why he led such a rewarding and fulfilling life.

Passion is the investment of those chasing inner dreams, and one of the payoffs is living a long, happy life. Plato opened up The Academy in Athens when he was 40 at a time when the life expectancy was 36. He ran this first university, training such stalwarts as Aristotle, until he was 80. Pursuing positive dreams arms one with high energy and leads to a long, fulfilling life. Do such people end up with money? Absolutely! We keep score in capitalism with money, and for those

who execute positive dreams, money will be delivered in trucks.

The whole concept of retirement does not fit the lexicon of those who chase their dreams and do what they love. Creative and powerful wonderkinds all admit they would work without pay. The bottom line of such living is that we keep score with money in capitalism, so if you chase ideas, the money comes. If you chase money, ideas are lost on the highway of lost causes.

Three types of people amble down life's highways. They are Proactives,



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Proactives:

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Reactives:

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Inactives:

Those who show up in life with little interest other than living out their existence on this planet.

Reactives, and Inactives. Proactives are those intrepid warriors chasing new ideas. No matter their age, they can be found looking forward to the vast vista of opportunities in this wide world of change. They chase impossible dreams and are rewarded in kind. No way would they be found working at a job they can't stand. They make things happen by chasing possibilities, not sureties. In contrast, Reactives have a propensity to watch things happen. They will stay in a job they hate for the money and security. They

allow events to dictate their life, and unfortunately their mental state of being suffers the consequences of living life to another's tune. The saddest individuals of all in this scenario are the Inactives. They are the ones who show up in life with little interest other than living out their existence on this planet. As I say in my new book *Entrepreneurial Genius*, "Keep doing what you're doing, and you'll just keep on getting what you are getting ... If that is good, keep it up. If it's not so good, you had better change."

Wasting time on negative people merely programs us for problems. Time and energy are only available in limited amounts, and whatever we choose to fill up our emotional gas tanks with is what we will find as fuel. Filling the inner tank with negatives leaves little room in that tank for positives. Studies have found that the vast majority of people allow negatives to dictate their life. One psychiatrist on human potential found that over 85 percent of people live life with thoughts of evil, hate, and anger, and that is what they get back. Reactives get caught up in things like terrorism, war, recessions, and the world's problems. It is okay to think about them, but while thinking, try to find a positive spin on how to fix them.

Proactives are in the vast minority on this earth. They are obsessed with chasing opportunities and life's possibilities and refuse to waste any energy on the inane problems beyond their control or purview. They prefer to focus on possibilities, and consequently their life is positive. For every ounce of energy the Inactives and Reactives take up in your life, you are wasting time. Life is way too short to allow them to dictate your lifestyle or to rob you of a chance for positive outcomes.

Proactives tend to be those people who see the possibilities for change. They envision the essence of things, what educators call seeing the forest instead of getting lost in the trees. These intrepid change artists, like da Vinci, see the need for change, have the positive self-esteem to chase it, and the guts to go out and see if they can make it happen. Proactives, like Walt Disney, are overachieving *Risk-Takers*, who refuse to allow life's traumas to defeat them. Anxiety is just one more hurdle on their trek to the top. These types learn from the mistakes of

others as well as their own.

In contrast, Reactives seldom learn from the failures of others but do often learn from their own. They tend to be life's *Care-Takers*, who take only calculated risks. "Okay, I'll check with my accountant or lawyer," are statements never heard from the Proactives. Until they can remove fear from their lexicon and see the world as a forest (the essence), Reactives are destined to remain mired in the trees.

Those at the bottom of this hierarchy are the Inactives. These types watch and wait for the success train to come and save them. It is a long wait. Introspect and learning are not their forte, and they are highly risk averse. My advice to Inactives is to walk into the bathroom and stare intently into that mirror and say, "There lies the savior." Until a person can do that, it is virtually impossible to grow or change. The savior lies within, and once we accept that, the victim syndrome is whisked away through personal positive energy flows.

Visionaries are the catalysts for enlightenment. To achieve this level in your life, you must be empowered from within and tap into your "will to power," to use a Nietzsche expression. Others have labeled it vital energy or a vital force — that inner sense

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of knowing that comes only from the need to be more than mediocre. Anticipate and welcome change with the confidence and temerity to deal effectively with the consequences,

whatever they may be. Will you pay a price? Yes! Just like Prometheus, you will be resisted by the establishment, who fears change and growth, as it upsets the sense of security and assurance. Socrates was poisoned for teaching adolescents to think, and wrote, "The poet has no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses." Galileo was imprisoned, and Edison was called a charlatan. As an innovative thinker, you will pay for your daring. But the price is nothing compared with the profits you will enjoy for living a life in which you love your work. "Retirement" will never even cross your mind, and you will be in the company of greatness. ■

DR. GENE N. LANDRUM is a high-tech start-up specialist who created the Chuck E. Cheese's family entertainment concept and is the author of *Entrepreneurial Genius: The Power of Passion and Profiles of Power and Success: Fourteen Geniuses Who Broke the Rules*. To learn more about Dr. Gene N. Landrum, visit www.AdvantEdgeMag.com/Landrum today.

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