

Why retirement can be the start of your career | The New Daily

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Write a novel, open a guest house, design an app: retirement needn't be the end of your career.



Retirees: get ready to run a new race.

Active lifestyles, healthy eating and medical advancements are helping Australians live well into their 80s, 90s and beyond.

For many this could mean as many as 30 years in retirement. Rather than just sinking into a monotonous life of golf, gardening and reading the paper, it is actually an opportunity to reinvent yourself.

First-time novelist Suzanne McCourt turns 68 this year. Based on her family history she expects to live at least another 25 years.

“On the female side of my family, they are living into their hundreds. As long as these are healthy years, it’s a great gift. Having the best part of your life shouldn’t just be in your early years, it should be same as you get older,” she says. “As long as you’re relatively financially secure, there is a great deal of freedom at this time.”



Why not write that novel you've been planning for decades? *Photo: Shutterstock.*

Ms McCourt began a career in teaching, but always dreamed of becoming a writer. She took up teaching because of financial necessity; however, her longing to be a writer never left her. Retirement gave her the opportunity to chase her dream.

"I started exploring my creativity with some writing exercises and began writing. Ten years ago, I began working on my first novel, *The Lost Child*. It did take a while to finish, but it kept me going. The book took many different forms before I was happy with it," she says.

Today, Ms McCourt is thrilled to have *The Lost Child* as one of the 10 finalists nominated for the prestigious Miles Franklin literary award.

"A lot of people I know play bridge, do charity work, lunch a lot and travel and get a lot of pleasure out of this; while some of my friends are doing diverse things. If you have that dream to do something and that niggle never lets up, find the courage to follow the dream. We are continually reinventing ourselves. Why shouldn't we go on to have a richer life if we are fortunate."

Create an app

Former recruitment executive and cancer survivor Robert Day is a strong believer in keeping actively employed; even if it is as little as five hours a week. The 67-year-old says it is vital for mental and physical health in older age.

“Some retirees I meet are always talking about yesterday; they never talk about tomorrow, because they don’t have anything to do tomorrow. They just talk about yesterday,” he says. “It’s important to have something to look forward to and to get out of bed for; otherwise one sits around and becomes lazy.”

Mr Day has created an app called Rision Pty Ltd, which matches jobs to individuals.

“Much like a dating website,” he adds.

His vision behind the platform is to break down the barriers between employers and candidates to help older people into work.

Mr Day is about to list Rision Pty Ltd on the ASX next month.

“Just because I left the traditional workforce, doesn’t mean the ideas stop and, it’s not about they money. Do anything even if it’s charitable work, the main thing is to remain active.”

Open a guest house



Esther Lalor, 75, has added a few strings to her bow since retiring as a director of Vision Australia 15 years ago.

After retiring, she and her husband established and run the Lalor Lodge Guesthouse in Apollo Bay in Victoria.

“We specialise in accommodating international guests. This has provided us with a way of learning about the rest of the world as we do spend time talking with our guests.”

Recently, Ms Lalor undertook study to become a qualified genealogist. Today she is running a genealogy business gaining most of her clients from LinkedIn and word of mouth.

“I believe that we are always able to build on our strengths and we must take advantage of this. There are many avenues people can follow this. For those getting on in years, go and study something new. This is a great way of finding where your interest could be,” she says.

“If you’re looking for inspiration, think about what you may have thought about doing in your past. Look for some volunteer work in the area of your dreams. Step out of your belief that you can’t do anything and take a risk.”

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