

## ***Marriage Milestones***

### **RETIREMENT**



**This is one of the last stages and potential crisis points that a marriage will go through. Like some of the others, such as the birth of a child, there is an upside and a downside ...**

A new baby brings joy and delight and a sense of fulfilment and achievement, but he or she can bring extreme fatigue and upset the harmony of the marriage. A husband may find that he is no longer the centre of his wife's attention or affection.

So too, retirement can be the opportunity for the couple to enjoy one another and share in activities that they have not been able to do before. On the other hand, retirement, like a baby, may disturb not only the routine but also the dynamic of a marriage. There is a masculine saying that retirement is simply **'half the money and twice the wife'!**

#### **GIVE THANKS**

**First it is good to be reminded of the blessing that you still have each other.**

Bereavement may be around the corner, but that is another story. You have not yet experienced the sense of loss and disorientation that is often suffered by widows and widowers who have been married to one person for many years. Right now you can give thanks for your husband or wife.

If giving thanks does not come easily, it suggests that your relationship is the core problem and not the fact that one or other of you has retired.

#### **NEW ACTIVITIES**

- **If the wife is not used to having her husband at home, she will need to adjust to him being around all day** – possibly not knowing what to do with himself! One man found that, if his mornings were fully occupied out of the home, the rest of the day looked after itself. Additional exercise is of course very beneficial to health - now you may have more time to join a gym or aerobics club.
- **Computers have become** a means open to most of us to engage with the wider world.
- **You might even want to start a small business** from your home, working part-time when you wish to do so.
- **Supremely, retirement may be an opportunity to see more of your children or grandchildren,** and to be able to love and serve them.

## NEW ROLES

- **If you are someone who is involved in a church or charity, or a hobby organisation**, you may not want to 'retire' from active service with it. In fact you now have much more time to invest in such activities than before.
- **Some organisations, including churches, are not good at using the resource that retired people can offer**, and there is a good deal of 'ageism', where youth activities are given much higher priority than activities designed for the older generations. It would be wise to consult with the leaders to see if there is an enlarged role for you.

## FINANCE

- **Financial adjustments will have to be made.** If you have not already done so, it would be a good time to get some free advice from an adviser at your bank, so that any gratuity you may have received, and indeed any other capital, can be invested to provide income in the best way suited to your circumstances.
- **Many interesting and inexpensive courses** are offered by the Workers' Educational Association, The University of the Third Age and other organisations, details of which can be found online or at your local libraries. The latter also offer a variety of CDs and DVDs for hire very cheaply. There are many other inexpensive pleasures waiting to be discovered.

## WORKING IT OUT

- **You may find it helpful to work out with your spouse how much time for separate interests you need to give each other**, without sacrificing closeness. But retirement will bring more opportunities to do together things you have hitherto had to undertake separately - even the household shopping perhaps!
- **There is a whole new field for discussion and exploration** as to what will strengthen the remaining years that you have to enjoy together. They will not last for ever. If planning your retirement causes you to sit down and talk these things over, it may well become a very happy stage in your life together.

## FINALLY

**Most of us will have the car serviced regularly (if only for the MOT). What about marriage?** Just as a car that is neglected is more likely to breakdown on the road, so is a neglected marriage more likely to end in divorce. How about giving your marriage a service?

To meet this need various marriage enhancement courses have been produced. **See the page "Marriage Enhancement" on the Marriage Resource website [www.marriageresource.org.uk](http://www.marriageresource.org.uk)** . These courses are usually either provided by organisations on a residential weekend or a midweek break, or on a series of weeknights usually by a local church, both for their members and for non-members. These courses are designed to make any marriage better, whether or not there are problems. Do give your marriage a service – the benefits last for years!