

## Really Retire Your Retirement?

Our commitment is to help you make the best of the rest of your life. How each of us sees our future shapes how it plays out. What's the role of 'retirement' in our thinking?

### When 'retirement' began.....

Today, 'retirement' means many different things. The modern concept of retirement began about 150 years ago, linked to pensions for people who reached long ages (for those times), commonly starting at age 65.

A century ago, a person's remaining lifespan (their longevity) at 65 was about 12 years. Today it's about 22 years in typically better health. There are a lot more challenges (how will we fund it, what if I'm just unhealthy longer). There can also be many more opportunities.

### Understanding 'framing'

Negative perceptions of ageing adversely influence our behaviour and outcomes. If our view of ageing focuses on risks and problems, we are likely to respond defensively. 'Retirement' often has negative connotations which are often used in the marketing of products and services to older people. With a better-informed outlook, we can take a more balanced view of these approaches and are less likely to be defensive.

If we frame ageing more positively, this is more likely to be reflected by increases in quality and length of life. Studies of the biology of ageing show that for common health challenges, a belief in the benefits of better health management leads to preventive behaviour which contributes to better outcomes.

Poor longevity education has meant 'retirees' are vulnerable to the negatives of sophisticated marketing or are simply unable to identify and make informed decisions about their future. It also means we focus on the event and tend to see 'retirement' as the goal rather than preparing to make the best of it through proper management of health and other resources.

By framing making the best of our longevity (the rest of our life) as the key issue, we take a broader view of what lies ahead. We can start earlier in making the best of it, including what we may currently call our 'retirement', and establish realistic goals for a much longer period.

### What can you do now?

Community longevity looks likely to continue increasing, with opportunities and challenges. A longer living community means all of us need to accept a wider range of personal commitments in supporting those who may not benefit as much as those living longer. A first step would be acknowledging that the growing notion of 'entitlement' to 'retirement' is already being fulfilled by the huge bonus of increasing longevity.

Our personal differences are likely to continue increasing too, so we benefit from a more personal framework for our own longevity, which the SHAPE Analyser and its initial plan provides. We can decide what to address, why and in what order and how to proceed. Then we can track our progress, choose how and when to seek the professional advice that may be needed, make properly informed commitments to our decisions, and track our progress.

Framing our lives through personal longevity planning enables us to review our important decisions and adapt them over time. We can approach our future more confidently, potentially remain productive, contributing longer and enjoying it even longer.

‘Retirement’ then simply becomes an important event in our ‘longevity’ – the rest of our life.

*It's a good idea to update your SHAPE Analyser results regularly - why not do one now?*

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**SHAPE Analyser** now