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## Finding Purpose by Helping Others Plan for Their Best Lives in Retirement

Retirement coach and co-author of [Victory Lap Retirement](#), Mike Drak, believes that “each of us has been given unique skills, abilities, and a special mission that needs to be fulfilled. And until we find out what that special purpose is and start working on it, we will never feel complete.”



Mike knew helping other people made him happy. However, it wasn't until he left his “primary career behind” that he realized helping others was an expression of his life's purpose.

### Retirement and Aimless Hours of Leisure

For 38 years, Mike was a financial professional. Then the day came when it was time for his career to end and for retirement—his long-awaited reward for all his hard work—to begin. But once his full-time career was behind him, he was no longer sure where he was headed. Retirement was nothing like he had anticipated, and he had no map to figure out how to navigate it.

He soon discovered that the fictionalized traditional retirement dream with aimless hours of leisure time was anything but satisfying.

“I couldn't see myself sitting around and acting retired. I needed much more in terms of challenges, of learning new things, and of course, I needed to find a way to feed my need to help others. If I couldn't find a way of feeding that need, I knew I was going to be in trouble and would never be truly happy.”

After reading and researching everything he could find on retirement, Mike understood that the idea of retirement as a long period of leisure was neither desirable nor even possible for most people—especially when ‘retirement’ could last 30+ years. He also knew that unless people had a realistic view of retirement and were prepared, they would likely struggle far more than necessary when they entered their “third stage” of life.

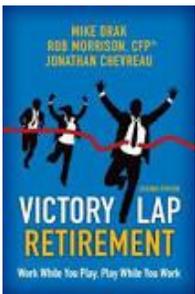
### Two General Lifestyle Paths for Retirement: Comfort-Oriented or Growth-Oriented

Mike discovered that most retirees follow one of two general lifestyle paths. The first path is for what he refers to as comfort-oriented retirees. “Comfort-oriented retirees don't like to venture outside their comfort zones. They are comfortable with things the way they are. They derive purpose from the simple but meaningful things to them—taking care of their

family, hanging out with their friends, taking care of a pet, or their garden, etc. They would never consider running a marathon or starting a new business—that would be too stressful for them, and they do not want to experience any stress in Retirement.”

Unlike comfort-oriented retirees, Mike wanted to keep growing and learning. He believed that some of his “best days were still ahead.” The second general retirement path Mike refers to is for “growth-oriented” retirees. Growth-oriented retirees are those who want to keep learning, having new experiences, and living their lives to the fullest. “A growth-oriented retiree can either focus on pursuing self-actualization, or be a ‘transcender’ type who derives meaning through helping others. And some people, the lucky ones, can be both.”

### Helping Others Live Their Best Lives



Mike had co-authored *Victory Lap Retirement* as a way to help other growth-oriented retirees. This book “presents the concept and financial case” for people approaching their third stage of life. It also makes a case for working or volunteering to some degree.

As a follow-up to his first book, Mike has written *Retirement Heaven or Hell*, which will be available in January. This second book provides a “step-by-step process for how people can design and transition to an optimal retirement lifestyle for themselves based on their own needs and wants.”

After his book is released in January, Mike will be teaming up with his wife, an investment advisor. He plans to provide free retirement coaching for her clients.

### Virtual Talks for Canadian Libraries

Mike is offering free virtual retirement talks to libraries in Canada.

Two different presentations are available:  
(1) Retirement lessons learned from the pandemic  
(2) The nine retirement principles Mike addresses in his new book, *Retirement Heaven or Hell*. He has already scheduled two talks at branches in Toronto (where he lives).

### Living His Best Life

Even though he loves his work, Mike restricts his writing, coaching, speaking, and seminar facilitation to no more than 20 hours a week. One of the other activities he enjoys is fly fishing. He calls it his “Zen moment.” He also enjoys traveling with his wife and learning about new cultures. Peak experiences interest him as well.



Currently, he’s preparing for an Ironman race in Cozumel, Mexico. The event will take place in November 2022. “That will be an interesting challenge at age 68, and the training will help me get my health back.”

On his radar for the future, Mike plans to visit his son in Australia. While there, he plans to go into a shark cage and see a ‘big white’ up close. “There is something about sharks that has always both fascinated me and scared me. I guess you could say I like doing things that take me way out of my comfort zone and scare me a little.”

### Advice for Others

For comfort-oriented retirees who are happy with their lives, he has no additional advice. But for those like Mike who are growth-oriented, he encourages them to read his book to be prepared. “Retirement is not something that should be endured. It should be the happiest period in your life if you plan for it properly.”

To learn more about Mike’s work or virtual talks, visit <https://victorylapretirement.com/>

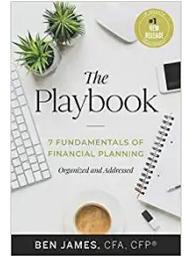
## Your Mindset Matters

Carol Dweck, Ph.D. author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* says the growth mindset “is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.”

Developing a growth mindset also helps us deal with life’s challenges. Dweck explains that “People in a growth mindset don’t just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch.”

## A Lot to Learn

One way to get a handle on what documents we need to keep and how to organize them is to read [\*The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning\*](#) by the president and founder of Elevate Wealth Advisors, Ben James, C.F.A., C.F.P.



Another way to learn how to get your financial house in order is to read about the [Playbook Process](#) on the Elevate Wealth Advisor’s website. The site also offers free downloadable documents and short, informative videos.

A third way to educate yourself on managing your finances is to attend one of Ben’s quarterly webinars. Last month, Ben offered a webinar on estate planning with guest estate attorney, Mark Holady. The hour-long session was engaging, informative, and interactive with polls and opportunities to submit questions. Mark explained why probate isn’t always something we want to avoid. He also explained the difference between wills and trusts and how each worked.

In January, Ben will be offering his next free webinar covering another fundamental element of financial planning. To register, click [here](#).

## Challenges, Changes, and Life Planning

Perhaps you had been cruising along with little thought of any major detours or pending threats.



Then COVID-19 hit. And later in the summer, fires erupted all over the West Coast, and floods hit the East and Southeast

regions of the country. Within a few months, most of us recognized how quickly life can change. For many of us, having all of our important documents (including estate planning documents) in order suddenly become more urgent.

Fortunately, some of us have followed the proprietary [Playbook Process](#) that [Elevate Wealth Advisors](#) developed. Using this simple system, we have been able to organize all of our financial records, legal documents, and other pertinent information in a single binder. In case of an emergency, everything we (or family members) need to access is readily available.

## Secrets for Thriving with Age

Research points to resiliency—the ability to adapt to change—as an essential ingredient for thriving as we age. Aging experts and authors of *What Retirees Want: A holistic View of Life’s Third Age*, Ken Dychtwald and Robert Morison identified three aspects of resilience that are especially significant: (1) A positive view of aging, (2) Social connections, and (3) Having a strong sense of purpose.

## S.A.G.E. – Bridging the Gap Between Generations

By Beryl Katz

Twenty-one years ago, as a parent at a school board meeting, I saw two distinct groups of people: parents who wanted the best education for their children and older adults who did not want higher taxes.

As a mother, a former English teacher, and taxpayer, I sat there an idea began forming in my mind. Why not bring in older community members as volunteers making them a part of the solution rather than part of the problem?



Little did I realize this idea would soon materialize into Senior Adults for Greater Education or S.A.G.E. This successful, non-profit, community-based intergenerational program places older volunteers in schools to interact with the students to share their wisdom and experience.

“I am passionate about the S.A.G.E. program and credit its success to several volunteers, teachers, school officials, and a loving, supportive family, including my own parents and grandparents. “A lot of children don’t have the opportunity to spend time with their grandparents because their grandparents are deceased or their families live far away. Through the S.A.G.E. program, you get a completely unconditional acceptance that I remember so vividly while growing up. If you can find the similarity in someone, then there is a connection.”

Click [here](#) to read the complete article. For more information, visit the S.A.G.E. website at [www.beasage.org](http://www.beasage.org) or contact Beryl Katz at 215-357-2323.

## Nextdoor Digest: Staying Connected

What do you do if your beloved dog or cat wanders away from home, or you lose your keys while taking a walk? How do you find out who to call for repairs around your house or learn about the latest updates in your community? How can you get the latest information on any attempted break-ins or other criminal activity in your neighborhood?

If you want neighborly help finding a pet or a lost item, need a recommendation, or want to know what is going on in your neighborhood, [Nextdoor](#), a virtual community connection, might be your answer. Anyone can sign up for free and get connected with their neighborhood or community.

Nextdoor has helped create connections for communities in the U.S. and in several other countries. However, if you discover that your local area is not connected with Nextdoor, you can start your own virtual community in a [few simple steps](#).

With COVID restrictions and the risks associated with isolation, it is more important than ever to stay in contact with people around us.

## Retirement and Aging in Place

As reported in a [November 9, 2020 Medical Xpress](#) article, older people typically want to remain independent and “connected in their communities” as long as possible. As part of retirement planning, it is important to anticipate the kinds of needs we will have as we age. For example, navigating multiple stairs in the future might be out of the question. Living in a single-story home in the right community may help support a greater degree of independence for a longer period. If relocating is desirable, available community support and medical services should also be taken into consideration.

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