

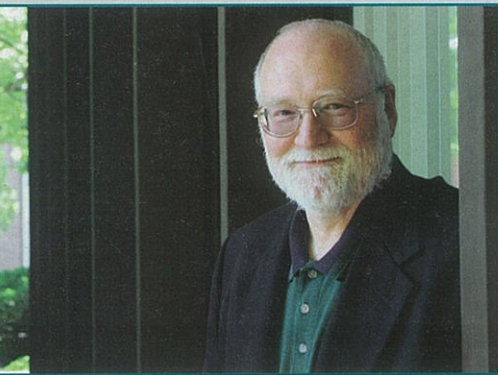
SECOND CAREERS

STORY BY SEAN MEYERS

You know the color of your parachute, but have you picked out a landing zone?

If you want to live to spend all that money you saved for retirement, plan activities that will challenge your brain, whether it's a second career, charitable pursuits or both, says executive coach Jay Bloom of Bloom Anew in Portland.

"CEOs are very good planners, almost by definition. What surprises me is that they haven't done that for themselves, particularly beyond financial matters. Golf, travel and time with the grandchildren generally are not enough. I've very seldom seen that work," says Bloom.



Baby boomers will turn the American concept of retirement on its axis. When the first Social Security check was issued more than 60 years ago, the average life span was 64 years. A taxpayer had to reach age 70 to begin collection. For the lucky few, "retirement" was a brief respite before death.

Today the average life span is 78 years, many people are retiring earlier — especially executives — and medical technologies continue to advance.

"If you're a man and reach the age of 55 in good health, odds are that you're going to live another 30 or even 40 years. People say, 'Well, this is what I'm going to do when I retire.' Can you really look ahead 30 years and know what you'll be doing then? That's like saying at age 20 you should be planning everything that you're going to be doing through age 50. Realize that you're going to be going through several evolutions as changes in your life occur," says Bloom.

Depression, illness and early death are the payouts for a sedentary, aimless retirement, says Bloom, a past director of Multnomah County's Task Force on Vital Aging whose resume includes current and past volunteer work with more than three dozen nonprofits.

Bloom's last "retirement" came in 2006, when he stepped down as CEO

of Morrison Child and Family Services, where he quadrupled revenues to \$21 million in his 13-year tenure.

Like many successful executives, Bloom's not the type of guy to relax quietly on the couch, which is precisely why his loving wife of 37 years gave him a pointed warning when he packed up his desk. "She said, 'Whatever you do, don't bring that energy home.'"

Bloom isn't a fan of the word retirement. Among the definitions, he points out, are "to withdraw or go away" and "to fall back or retreat."

Think instead of "returnment," which Bloom defines as "the act of giving back or returning in some small way what the world has given to you."

Bloom cites great world thinkers to make his point. A few examples: Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran ("Work is love made visible") French novelist Albert Camus ("Without work, all life goes rotten"), and Spanish politician Jose Ortega Y Gasset ("An unemployed existence is a negation worse than death itself, because to live means to have something definitely to do, a mission to fulfill").

Even if you're nervous about the recent drop in your 401K portfolio, don't pick a second career or start a business with the primary goal of making money.

"In our society, that's how a lot of people keep score. How much is enough? Some people feel like there is never enough. When a rich man dies, people ask, 'How much money did he leave?' The answer is always, 'He left it all,'" says Bloom.

Plan the spiritual aspects of your retirement the same way you planned your financial portfolio — spread out your risk by spreading out your assets.

"Think of it as a portfolio of life, one that includes children, grandchildren, education, community service, volunteerism, work, marriage and recreation. There is no one thing that can occupy all that time," says Bloom. Jimmy Carter is one of the few good examples of living the concept, he adds.

Like a stock portfolio, you have to make periodic adjustments in response to market conditions.

Don't do anything full-bore like you did in the business world, he advises. "Why go from one extreme to another? A vacation is only a vacation if it's a vacation from something."

Planning your later years is a unique and internal process.

"Pay attention to the messages," says Bloom. ■

ABOVE Jay Bloom of Bloom Anew.