

The National Council on the Aging

Book Review: "Looking Forward...An Optimist's Guide to Retirement"

Baby boomers on the brink of their 60s sometimes are at a loss as to what comes next. They may even dread retirement. After all, this was the generation on the go. How can you tell them to stop?

Looking Forward... An Optimist's Guide to Retirement, Ellen Freudenheim's new book on this provocative and relevant subject, offers valuable advice and insight to both boomers and older retirees on how to make the most of the new opportunities that being retired offers.

The author, a baby boomer herself, thinks it's a mistake to be viewing the retirement years simply from a financial perspective, as is often the case. What makes most people tick, she says, are other things, like health, relationships, and a sense of meaning and connectedness.

The subtitle of the book, "An Optimist's Guide to Retirement," captures the spirit of the text and of its upbeat message. In the course of her research--interviewing over 200 older people from age 45 to 90--Freudenheim found both younger and older retirees happily enjoying interests and activities they'd always dreamed about and now, finally, have the time to pursue. The inspiring range of older men and women she writes about includes octogenarians getting college degrees and studying ancient Greece, as well as early retirees--men and women in their 60s leaving careers in business to become artists, dancers, political activists and world travelers.

Just say no. And yes! According to many who'd left the wage-earning world, satisfaction in volunteerism ranked high as a joy of retirement. And the author offers apt advice on making a good choice: With so many interesting volunteer opportunities, she says, no one need get stuck in one of the dull ones.

She reminds retirees that, "You're entitled to say no!" Older people happily saying "Yes!" can be found in communities across the country--in libraries, schools, and hospitals--and in non-profit organizations, protecting the environment, caring for animals, and promoting the arts.

Looking Forward... retails for \$10.85 and may be purchased at your favorite neighborhood or online bookstore.