

Life After Retirement

Yoko Wakui

What is retirement? What does retirement truly mean? According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, it is “to withdraw from office, business, or active life, usually because of age” (Flexner & Hauck, 1987). However, what should we do if we still feel energetic when we reach retirement? I suppose it depends on our decision. It would be nice to enjoy travelling around the world or do what we could not do while we were working. In my case, though, I have chosen to continue serving people, simply because that has been my focus in the course of my career. Also, by doing so, I believe I could keep my brain active as well.

I have been working as an English teacher for about 40 years, during which I encountered situations that greatly concerned me. Every year I found at least one student who was mentally challenged. I hoped to involve them in a constructive way, but I did not know how. In the meantime, while trying to pay attention to these students, I needed to manage and teach all the other students in class. Then one day, one of my colleagues recommended me to attend a seminar which dealt with issues related to the brain. There I

first learned about Neural Linguistic Programming (NLP), through which “communication skills can be learned by anyone to improve their effectiveness both personally and professionally” (O’Connor & Seymour, 2011, p. xii). The knowledge of NLP has changed both my teaching and life since then. After studying it by completing courses and obtaining certificates during summer for five years, I realized that it may be helpful to use the technique not only for my class, but also for my mother, relatives, and friends.

Now I have been practicing counselling professionally for five years and continue learning. I am curious to gain new knowledge. While meeting my clients, I read books in related fields, attend seminars to learn new techniques, and hope to further my study at various institutions and conferences. Though this may sound back-breaking especially after retirement, learning something new to help people improve their lives gives me a great thrill. I also teach English using the techniques, because by being engaged in multiple activities, I believe we can maintain and continue developing flexibility and creativity as well as better communication skill even during our second life.

Biography

Yoko Wakui obtained a master’s degree in TESOL from Columbia Teachers College. She has also received extensive

training in NLP, generative coaching, hypnotherapy, and meditation since 2005. The certificates include NLP Practitioner by Transformations International, Ericksonian Hypnosis by International Hypnosis Federation, Advanced Hypnotic Techniques by International Therapy Training Organization, Time Line Therapy TM Practitioner by Time Line Therapy Association, and Transcendental Meditation by Meditation Center of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In addition, she has given presentations and published papers on themes such as NLP and language for classroom management, and yoga and meditation for classrooms and teachers, and removing stress. She spoke at COCORL, the Training Seminar for Therapists: Spiritual Care, the Annual Conference for Women Educators and Language Learners, the Annual Teacher Development Conference at Ferris University, the Annual Faculty Development and Symposium at Aoyama Gakuin University, and English Teachers in Japan. She also wrote for JALT, Teachers College Columbia University, Aoyama Gakuin University, and the Independent Learning Association. She can be reached at ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp.

References

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