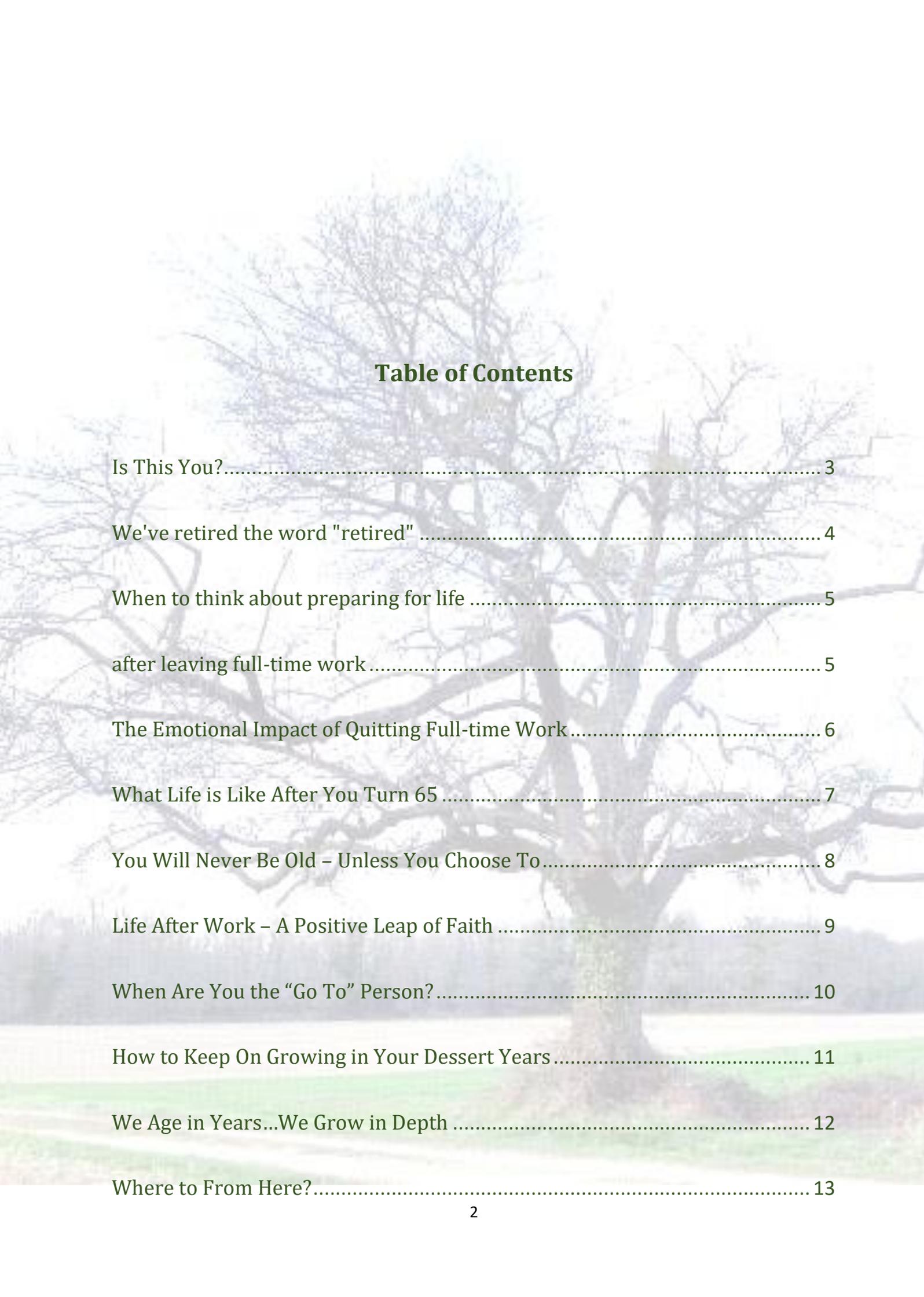


# **A TREE DOESN'T STOP GROWING AT 65 NOR DO YOU**

**Some 21<sup>ST</sup> century thoughts on how to make  
a successful emotional transition from work to  
beginning a new life adventure**

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## **Is This You?**

I love helping people who are at the height of their working career. People who -

- like pushing themselves to ever-growing heights of achievement and depths of understanding people and life
- see life as a continuum of which their working career is only one stage
- resonate with my analogy of a tree – no pre-determined age that it stops growing and the more it ages the more significant it becomes
- see life after leaving full-time work as the allowing themselves the freedom to enjoy expressing their true self in new ways.

Why?

Because that is how I personally have come to enjoy the 17 years (so far) of life after leaving fulltime work. I love what I am doing and I am doing what I love.

If that resonates with you, this e-book is for you.

**Peter Nicholls, Life Mentor  
Australia's People Gardener – growing better people  
September 2019**

***We age from birth to death...***

***old is an optional choice you need never make.***

***A global ageing well revolution is under way  
and it will continue for decades to come.***

***You are in the vanguard of that revolution as we proceed  
to bust the traditional myths of ageing and old.***

***In its place will rise a new world that values the depth,  
dignity, perspective, insight and wisdom  
that comes with the ageing process.***

## **We've retired the word "retired"**

Age has no bearing on your constant desire to enjoy life and maximize your life's natural potential, irrespective of whether or not you are working.

ROI - Return on Investment - has a wider, more powerful meaning than just a return on your financial investments, important though that is. Your later years are the time to consider maximizing the return on your **self**-investment of your natural talents and passions. Work is only one part of your life's mission to invest in your natural-born, unique potential.

I have long had negative thoughts about "retirement" and looked for an alternative word or phrase. A client of mine came up with the following statement which I (and most of my clients) think says it all: - "*what's for dessert? I've finished the main course and I'm still hungry*". It became the theme for my book "The Hunger to Grow"

The transition from fulltime work is now just one of a series of life adjustments that you might start considering from about age 40 onwards. You realize the clock is ticking and your remaining lifespan is increasingly uncertain. As you pass 50 a sense of urgency begins to take over. By the time you reach 60-65 years, you are feeling this is your last big chance to find and enjoy the life of your dreams.

Some of us decide we don't want to work anymore. Others want to keep working but on their own terms - sort of life/work balance (where work has to fit into life) rather than work/life balance, where life has to fit around work.

Consider this:

Everything in nature is driven by a form of energy and I suggest that includes human nature. The energy that drives human growth and development is, I suggest, stored in each person's unique mix of talents and passionate interests. The catalyst that unlocks such energy and releases it occurs when we actively and creatively express those talents and passions – at work, home and at play.

Every such experience throughout life becomes part of an energy chain-reaction as that brings each of us to our current extent of self-actualization. Like everything else in nature, there is no pre-determined "retirement" age that causes this growth to stop.

***We grow for as long as we actively and creatively  
express abilities in mind, body and spirit.***

***The bonus is that this process also provides the energy,  
inner strength and resilience to work through the tough times of life.***

## **When to think about preparing for life after leaving full-time work**

Now! Just as you are doing with your financial planning you have to think about the emotional changes long before you actually even consider leaving full-time work. I am talking about your energizing interests (i.e. interests that refresh your emotional energy). These interests never die, although life's pressures can suppress them.

These interests can surge to the fore when you leave full-time work. But it's important to remember that they are just as important now, even if you think you are too busy to enjoy them.

Why?

They give you new energy to replace the energy burnt in your daily life's pressures and stresses. I call it work life harmony – energy in balancing energy out – thereby ensuring you never experience burnout.

It's nature's way of giving you the resilience to cope with whatever stresses, pressures and changes life is throwing at you.

Age is irrelevant when it comes to identifying and valuing every life-long interest you have developed or want to develop. Interests you will always be able to enjoy whether or not you are still in your working career. These could well form the genesis of a truly satisfying and purposeful post-work life.

***There's an important message here.  
The more you pursue these sort of energising interests  
during your working life, the smoother you are going  
to find your emotional transition from your career  
working life to your next stage of life.***

## The Emotional Impact of Quitting Full-time Work

All the publicity on life after work is about how much money you will need. Very little attention is given to the emotional and mental impact such a transition can have on you. Many people have died from retirement within months of leaving work purely because of the impact it had on their very reason for living.

Our rapidly ageing society is a global issue and we need to take a much more modern 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to ageing. We all want to make the most of our statistical expectancy of living a longer and healthier later life.

Your new life adventure after you leave work needs to embrace all of the following emotional factors – expressing your authentic self, creative enjoyment, unique abilities, emotional energy (interests that energize you), passions, a positive outlook, connecting with like-minded others, and a desire to keep growing.

I myself remember, a few months after I left work, sitting at home thinking “if I sat here all day no-one would give a damn”.

There was no-one specialising in helping me work out what I would actually do with the rest of my life. It was up to me to figure it out for myself.

You however now can access my subsequent personal and professional experience in helping others make the emotional leap into a new life adventure.

***Importantly, the fact that you are different  
to everyone else continues for the rest of your life.  
Only you can know the real you and your emotional needs.***

## What Life is Like After You Turn 65

One of the biggest problems I face in helping people who are considering making the transition from full-time work to a new life adventure is their *perception* of life beyond the age of 65.

It's essentially true that you cannot know what it's going to be like until you get there yourself, but a lot of negative perceptions don't help. Having been through it myself and in helping clients do so, I would suggest you can put to rest many of your perceived fears and doubts about your life beyond 65.

I base this on the fact that the authentic you, the person who looks out at the world through your eyes, never changes. In my presentations I often use a slide of me at the age of 14 and me now. I look totally different and much has changed in my life in those intervening years. But in both pictures, it is the same me – the authentic me who has never changed since birth.

Try this yourself with a picture of you in your youth and now. No matter what life has thrown at you in the intervening years, the inner you has never changed. Nor will you do so after you turn 65.

Forget the perceptions you have created about people who have aged for many more years than you. Forget the perceptions of those who think that only people under 40 can cope with the pace and change of modern business life. Forget the perceptions of 'old'.

'Old' too is a *perception* – usually yours of others or others of you. If you think you are old or you think you are not old, you are right! That we age from birth to death is a fact. 'Old' however is an optional choice.

So how will life look like to the authentic you when you go beyond 65 years? You will continue to review and modify your thinking and priorities as you do now. Importantly you will also continue to deepen your understanding of people and life, your insight, your perspective and your wisdom. And you will enjoy continuing to do so for as long as your health permits.

***A tree doesn't stop growing at 65 nor do you***

## **You Will Never Be Old – Unless You Choose To**

Why are we sucked in by this word "old"? Who decided anyone was old or at what stage of life one becomes old?

It's a fact that we age from birth to death but old has always been a matter of perception. And usually perceptions of other people, not of self... "whether you think you are old or think you are young, you're right!". Nor do I know of any health or social issue that is solely age-related.

Perhaps it didn't matter in the past when life was short. Now we are being told that, despite our increasing longevity and medical advancement, employers are shrinking the working lifespan to as low as age 40! Why? "Because you are 'too old!'!"

Oddly, many of the people influencing the existence of age discrimination are themselves over 60...interesting!

It's time to *stop* perceiving society as divided into "us young people" and "those old people".

It's not just a matter of current age discrimination issues. Globally the numbers of people over 65 are growing faster than those under 65. Sooner or later we shall reach the tipping point beyond which age discrimination of any sort will become totally unworkable.

The good news?

In a world where the "them and us" age division no longer exists 'we young people' will never be old unless we want to.

***Now in my 70's, I can and do enjoy my life-long ageing process without being old***

## Life After Work – A Positive Leap of Faith

The idea of making a leap of faith during your working life can be exciting but, for most of us, you are likely not to do so because of the "what if it doesn't work out?" question.

Yet, unless you are self-employed, it's almost inevitable that one day you are going to be faced with having to make the leap of faith into a life that doesn't include a full-time job.

When it comes to helping people work out what they will do when they leave full-time work, it's rather strange selling people a future they cannot know nor can I predict. In a sense I am trying to sell a product that the potential buyer knows nothing about.

Financial planners can at least work with what's in your pocket/bank but I have to work with what's in your mind - a mind which is likely to be negative about a future without full-time work. No matter how many positive concepts I can put to you, it's hard to shake the many outdated images of "retirement" – old, invisible, valueless, loss of identity ...you can add a few of your own I am sure.

It's now 16 years since full-time work and I parted company, so let me say very clearly about the old concepts of retirement – they are now all bs!

Life after work today is about a very important step forward and no different to any other major change in life you have faced – when you started work, got married, had children, when the kids left home, whatever. What you did then was totally up to you (with the support of your life partner).

Nothing's different about leaving work. I had to make my own decisions and here I am thoroughly enjoying being a life mentor.

The beauty of life after work is that I was released from obligations and external pressures of bosses, corporate policies, clients, shareholders, workplace cultures and the like. I became free to be me, to do what I love, to mix with the people I choose to be with and to help people in my way, using not just my skills but my depth of understanding life. It is a most exciting and releasing feeling!

***Only you can decide your future.  
My job is to help you remember all of the strengths  
your life to date has been built on,  
creating your own foundation on which to choose  
and build your exciting future.  
Not when you retire...now!***

## When Are You the “Go To” Person?

Think of the person who left your organisation after many years of faithful service. You lost so much more than the skills in their job specification. They might have been the person who could solve computer problems, or who organised the social functions, provided counselling skills when tragedies struck, had good artistic skills for designing flyers and brochures, the problem solver, provide music for a business event, the “mr/ms fix it” when something goes wrong with the equipment... the list goes on.

You know what it does for your self-esteem to become known as the “go to” person in your workplace to meet certain needs that are not part of your job but which you are renowned for providing.

Of course your “go to” talents aren’t reserved for the work place. You developed them in your own time because you enjoy being good at them.

Having meaning and purpose in life tends to generate lofty-minded thoughts of being able to change the world in some way unique to you...and if that’s your passion, go for it! Yet it’s the “go to” skills that we all develop over our lives that make the world go round each day.

Your “go to” skills can be made more widely available come the day you are no longer chained to the limits of your working day. And the thanks and admiration you get will never lose their value, giving you a true sense of purpose in your life.

***Be proud of what you are good at doing.  
Your value as a "go to" person will always be needed.***

## How to Keep On Growing in Your Dessert Years

*Excerpts from my book "The Hunger to Grow"*

Baby boomers may well be the last generation to experience life in the traditional three stages – preparation for your working life - your working life and then a life after your working years. It happens already with eating – we no longer limit ourselves to a sitting of entrée, main course and dessert. We eat what we like when we like. Our perception of our traditional journey through life is going the same way with people deciding when and for how long they will work and in whatever order suits their thinking. We are beginning to live life on our own terms. No longer is life centred on work, though of course work still serves a vital role in giving structured economic and social value to our lives and the community that our work serves.

What do you want to do in your dessert years? What will be the unique ingredients in your recipe? You certainly want it to taste great, contains large dollops of passion, full of rich experiences, keeps you healthy and, best of all, satisfies your hunger to keep on moving forward, growing in mind, body and spirit, enjoyed to the last drop. Structured work is only one way to achieve this. We are increasingly realizing that work goals limit us to the demands and expectations of bosses and clients. Life after the end of our working career frees us to express ourselves in our ways for our reasons and for our own unique personal sense of satisfaction.

The dessert years however are less about a period of time in your life. More they are about a change in your attitude towards what, for you, life is all about. The dessert years begin when you start thinking about (and gradually act on) a transition in your life's priorities from doing what you *have* to do (supported by what you love to do) to doing what you love to do (supported by what you still have to do).

Imagine you are attending a live theatre performance divided into three Acts. It is interval, following the conclusion of the second Act and you are reflecting on the show so far. You feel that Acts One and Two have been powerful and thought-provoking. You are wondering what surprises the rest of the show might bring. But this show is unique. There is only one performance...it is a play written by you and you are writing the script as the performance happens in real time...the actors are on stage waiting for their lines. There is no rehearsal and there is only performance – this is opening night and closing night all in one. And no one yet knows – not even you, the playwright – what the ending will be. And the final twist? You are the lead actor, the star of the show. The play is called "Your Life".

Act One embraced the early years of your life – the years that prepared you for work. The content of Act Two has been your working life. Act Three is yet to come and you wonder what surprises it has in store for you. Act Three may well be a long one. It's up to you to make it memorable for you and for those who love you. You will want to feel that, at the end of "Your Life", the rest of the cast and the audience alike will give you a standing ovation, acknowledging that you have given a performance they will never forget.

***"The Hunger to Grow – How to Enjoy the Dessert Years of Your Life"  
is available in print, audio and ebook formats from amazon.com  
or contact the author Peter Nicholls at [peter@apg.life](mailto:peter@apg.life)  
for a personally-signed printed copy.***

## We Age in Years...We Grow in Depth

**Maturity** brings closer together your thoughts on “making moments matter” and “the big picture of your life” - what gives you a sense of meaning in your life. You are becoming aware that, while your age is measured by time, your growth is measured by depth - your insight, perspective, wisdom and understanding. It's time to dig deep within your natural psyche.

**What's Next in Your Life?** Self-development, meaning and purpose will always be at the core of discovering the next stage of your life. You don't see yourself retiring. You want to know and keep expressing your best self, honing your skills and tapping into interests which open doors to new opportunities.

**Your working life** has been structured by society – in your job and in your life. You are starting to recognize your future will become more self-driven, whether you keep working or not. My special area of expertise is in providing a foundation for building your own comprehensive picture of your natural abilities, interests you deeply enjoy and talents that you have yet to fully develop.

Focus on your natural self – the inner man or woman looking out at the world through your eyes. Like any other gardener I focus on creating a healthy environment in which the real you can grow and blossom to your natural-born potential. The growing is up to you.

**Your natural-born gifts** have got you to where you are today. These have been deepened by your accumulated life experiences, knowledge and intuition. What is becoming more apparent to you is your growing wealth of understanding, perspective, insight and wisdom.

**If you've been hiding your light under a bushel** now is the time for others to see the real you in action. Bring it all together, ensure you truly know yourself, all your capabilities,. Everything you need to create your next phase of life - the many years still to come.

**You don't want to lose your sense of identity** structured life, being valued, having purpose, feeling wanted. It's in your hands to maintain all of them for life, whether or not you quit full-time work.

**What's the legacy you'd like to leave behind?** It's time to take stock of your depth and centre your life around your worth. To explore your untapped potential, to take charge of a future controlled by you for as long as your health allows.

### Start with these three (3) basic tips ...

when planning to give your life more purpose and meaning:

- List every type of experience that you deeply enjoy for the sheer intrinsic pleasure it always gives you - at work, home, play and in community life
- Growth is about how you spend your energy, not your time. Manage your energy more than your time.
- Focus on your positive strengths...they are what make you different to – and valued by - other people.

## Where to From Here?

The contents of this e-book are simply a taste of my depth of understanding on issues relating to:-

- People transitioning from life after work to their next life phase
- Positive human behaviour
- Mental fitness (something to aspire to, like it's sister physical fitness)
- Work life harmony (far more realistic than work life balance)
- Creative leisure and recreational interests (my bread n' butter career work)
- ...and generally what makes people tick in ways that make them feel good about themselves.

**You will find lots more free information  
on all of the above in my virtual library at:  
<http://www.australiaspeplegardener.com.au>**

I firmly believe in the value of giving away as much of my knowledge as possible in the interests of helping people to see life differently, especially when experiencing or facing a significant life change.

It's when you work with me (one to one or in a group workshop) that you come to enjoy the real value of my services. Together we:-

- Unpack all of your unique life experiences/talents/gifts/skills/passions that have energized your growth, development and enjoyment of life from your childhood to the present day
- Re-packed those you see as being the essence of creating your new life after work, one that is going to allow your true life potential to flourish and blossom.

*It's your life.  
Only you know your authentic self.  
Only you can decide on and create your next life phase.  
I provide the process you need.*

**Contact me, Peter Nicholls at [peter@apg.life](mailto:peter@apg.life)**

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