

Ideas . . . Enhanced and Advanced[®]

by Enise Olding and Carol Baird-Krul

The majority of the columns that we've written for Canadian Teacher Magazine have focused on you, the teacher, as you begin thinking and planning for retirement. We've accomplished this by featuring the varied experiences and personal insights of former educators who have shared these thoughts and ideas with us.

Over time and through our questionnaires we have noticed that often, after the first flurry of excited retirement, travel, moves and personal free time indulgences, people come to an abrupt halt and start to wonder what to do next. After years of working in their chosen field they know they have skills and abilities, but they can't quite put their finger on what they can do with them now that they are no longer directly involved in teaching. Usually, however, most don't see the incredible range of skills and abilities they have, and they need help in recognizing them. As an extension of the workshop and book *Transition to Retirement: The Uncharted Course*[®] we developed a two part workshop that encourages participants to first look carefully at their career and themselves, then define and list their unique skill set. After this, we help them consider how to best use these special skills to enhance and advance their life in retirement. Ideas... Enhanced and Advanced[®] is that workshop, and we are going to give you the gist of it here, so that you will have a head start and can begin cataloguing your own talents, skills and abilities well before you retire.

WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

Project into your future: You've retired, or you have left your primary job for some reason, or perhaps your job has changed so much since you first started, it is hardly recognizable and no longer satisfying, and now you're wondering what to do next. You may have enjoyed the heady joy of freedom that comes after retirement; but now, for some reason, are stuck and possibly frustrated, wondering what to do with your spare time.

You know you've got a great deal of life experience, expertise and know-how, but what to do with it now that it is not being used in your long time job? This is when you have to take some time to focus on just what are your skills and abilities, and how you might go about using them in the future. This is not a complicated job, but neither is it a small one. It takes time and honesty and will be the means by which you can begin to make decisions about future ventures, activities and occupations based on your new reality.

1. Getting To Know You

- You have hidden talents and abilities—search for them in the activities or interests you have pursued outside your work.
- Keep thinking about all your attributes and the experiences you have had in life and consider how they might be brought forward and used to advantage in the future.
- Record your talents and skills. Start with the major ones and branch out from there.

Example: *Brent was very good at helping people resolve problems and had used computers extensively in his job, so after much thought he decided to use these skills and found an enjoyable part time job at an electronics store.*

2. Ideas – Unveiling Your Venture

- Let your mind free-flow allowing all ideas to surface regardless of how wild and crazy they may seem.
- Record all of your ideas and don't dismiss any until you really assess them individually.
- Share your ideas and thoughts with others by articulating them in a way that they will understand and that will also help you clarify your thinking.

Example: *Meg had a big house and arranged unstructured gatherings of alternate care professionals. Very soon this new venture became established, branching off into an interactive information email forum that was both useful and enjoyable.*

3. Ideas Enhanced – Identifying The Pros And Cons

- Spend time focusing on different aspects of your venture/idea. This will allow you to identify, in a balanced way, the pros and cons—and decide if the pros outweigh the cons.
- Take into account and give credence to your own hunches and intuition; with a lifetime of experience behind you, these insights are based on a more solid foundation than you might realize.
- Be creative and think how you can and would turn a negative into a positive; and a positive into something unique.

Example: *Because of her volunteer work with the provincial Mental Health Association, Jean felt that there was a need for someone to provide training for people who work with the mentally ill. The audience would be businesses, organizations and unions. There were lots of cons—tough sell, lots of ground work, etc., but despite the negatives she felt her hunch was spot on and she had the necessary skill set to make it happen. She*



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Carol and Enise (info@drassociates.ca) are the creators of a series of pre-retirement and post-retirement planning workshops: *Transition to Retirement: The Uncharted Course*[®], *Recently Retired: Charting a New Course*[®] and *Ideas ... Enhanced and Advanced*[®], and authors of *Transition to Retirement: The Uncharted Course*. Previous articles on retirement may be viewed in back issues at www.CanadianTeacherMagazine.com.

forged ahead and turned the idea into a successful series of contracts.

4. Ideas Advanced – Getting Started

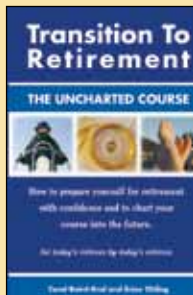
- Seek out those close to you, pose any tricky questions you may have and see what they have to say about it all.
- Research: read, keep an eye open for news items, send emails or make phone calls to anyone you think can give you information or shed some light on an issue or venture you are considering.
- Move another step towards actually formulating your idea and putting it into action: give it a name, slogan, catch phrase and give yourself a title. Note: you're not stuck with this, you can always change it. By taking this step your idea becomes something tangible and this provides you with the key to open doors and start spreading the word.

Example: *Dave knew he was good at conducting meetings and offered his services to organizations using the idea of "have gavel will travel." He kept and eventually used the descriptor to successfully promote his unique service.*

In the next two issues we'll go on to feature some retired educators who have used this method to put their own particular palette of skills to good use as they forged ahead enhancing and advancing ideas that went on to become exciting new ventures in their retirements.



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**Carol Baird-Krul
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¹ Statistics Canada

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