

When can we finally rest

As children, we often hear the same promise, “Work hard now, and you can rest later.”

At first, it seems believable. Our parents tell us to study hard, get good grades, and finish school. They remind us that these years are only temporary. We imagine that once graduation arrives, life will become easier. We tell ourselves, *Just a little longer.*

Then graduation comes.

Instead of rest, we begin working. We wake up early, spend long hours earning a living, and worry about paying bills. We think, *Once I have a stable job, I can finally relax.*

But life keeps moving.

Soon, there is another goal waiting. We want to build a career, buy a house, or start a family. If we become parents, our own needs often come last. We work not only for ourselves but also for the people we love. We sacrifice our time, our energy, and sometimes even our dreams. Once again, we whisper to ourselves, *Maybe after the children grow up, I can finally rest.*

Years pass almost without us noticing.

One day, retirement finally arrives. The moment we spent our whole lives waiting for. We have all the free time we once dreamed about. Yet by then, something else has changed. Our bodies are slower. Our knees ache after a short walk. Our eyesight weakens, and our energy is no longer the same. The places we wanted to visit may now feel too far away. The dreams we postponed for decades suddenly seem difficult to reach.

It makes me wonder if we have been asking the wrong question all along.

Maybe life was never meant to be a race toward a finish line called “rest.” If we spend every stage of life waiting for the next one, we may never truly enjoy the one we are living in. There will always be another responsibility, another goal, or another reason to postpone happiness.

Perhaps real rest is not something that begins after everything is finished, because life is never completely finished. Maybe real rest is found in small moments along the way: laughing with friends after school, sharing dinner with family, watching a sunset after a long day, or taking a quiet walk without thinking about tomorrow.

We are taught to keep moving forward, and there is value in hard work. But we should also remember to pause. Otherwise, we may spend our entire lives preparing to live, only to realize that life has already passed us by.

So when can we finally rest?

Maybe the answer is not “when everything is done.”

Maybe the answer is everyday, even if only for a little while.