





Introduction: Why use this workbook?

Stopping work is a significant life transition - a process which people go through that can last up to a few years, and which can affect wellbeing. Spending time now on the questions and exercises in this workbook can help you to find out more about yourself.

How to use this workbook and design your own map for your future

This is an opportunity to take time, to really think about yourself and what is important to you – what makes you tick, what you need to discard, what brings you joy.

Based on my research in this area, this workbook is divided into 6 sections (steps) that are focused on what people find to be the main challenges when they stop work.

Each step has questions/exercises for you to do to enable you to work out what is important to you.

There is one question/exercise in each step that is starred – you will be adding your work on this to the final section of your workbook. You will then have your design for your own individualised map for your future.



Step 1: Your starting point

Theme = manner of leaving work

If you have already left work, you might choose to skip Step 1

Your reasons for leaving:

Draw a spider diagram to capture your reasons for leaving work: Get a piece of paper and draw a circle in the middle of it. In this circle write 'My decision to leave'. Draw lines out from this circle, writing a reason at the end of each line.

Take a note of:

a) How many different reasons there are, and why these matter

b) Which reasons are most important to you*

'Empty chair' exercise

1. Who is the person you are most dreading to tell that you are handing in your notice (if there's no-one you're worried about telling, then just skip this exercise)?

2. Set up two chairs opposite each other and, sitting in the first one and imagining the person in the other one, tell them that you are leaving.



3. Now get up and move to the other chair, and imagine you are that other person and have just heard the words that you have said. How do you think you will feel as this other person, and how will you respond?

Your last day

Imagine your final day at work: Who's there, what happens? What do you need to do to make sure that becomes reality?

***You will be adding this to your map at the end of the workbook.**



Step 2: Your timetable

Theme = change in time and structure

Your Wheel of Life

It can be useful at any time of life to take a step back and review what you spend your time on, compared to what you would like to spend your time on. If you are planning to stop work, this is your chance to have a really good think about how you want the balance of your life to look like; if you've already stopped working, here's your opportunity to see if you've got it right for you at the moment.

1. Look at this list and choose the 8 things that are most important to you to spend your time doing (please feel free to add to this list so that it is accurate for you):

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>friends</i> | <i>health</i> | <i>caring</i> | <i>fitness</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>relaxation</i> | <i>community</i> | <i>work</i> | <i>hobbies</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>holidays</i> | <i>adventures</i> | <i>fun</i> | <i>creativity</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>exploration</i> | <i>spirituality</i> | <i>family</i> | <i>volunteering</i> |

2. Get a piece of paper and draw a big circle in the middle of it, then add 8 lines (spokes) to it that cross in the centre.

Label the end of each spoke with each of the 8 categories you have decided on from above.

If the centre of the spoke is 'no time at all', and the edge of the spoke is 'masses of time', mark with an X along the spoke to show how much time you want to spend on each of your 8 categories.

Join up the Xs.



3. What do you notice about your wheel?

Is there anything you would like to change? If so, what do you need to do/who do you need a conversation with to help with this change?

Looking at what you've put on the wheel, what do you need in every: day, week, month?

What does this tell you?

Structure

How important is structure to you in your life on a scale of 1 to 10?
(1 = not at all important, 10 = very important)

How much do you enjoy going with the flow on a scale of 1 to 10?
(1 = hate that idea, 10 = love it)



Your plan

If you knew that you only had 10 years left to live, what would you want to do/make sure that you did?

If you knew that you only had 5 years left to live, what would you want to do/make sure that you did?

If you knew that you only had 1 year left to live, what would you want to do/make sure that you did?

Reviewing the above, design your plan for the first week, month, and year after stopping work (or next week, month, and year if you've already stopped)*

***You will be adding this to your map at the end of the workbook.**



Step 3: Your guidebook

Theme = learning, growth and connection

Spend some time thinking about the following questions, so that you're clearer about what you might want to learn and why:

1. Do you want to learn something new because:

a) you want to meet others?

b) you have a goal?

c) you're interested in that particular topic?

2. Thinking about other times when you have learnt something new:

What has been your motivation?

What was the outcome?

What was the best thing for you about the experience?

3. Thinking about learning, what makes your heart sing? Why?*



4. If you were to throw all caution to the wind, and be really brave, what would you decide to do?

***You will be adding this to your map at the end of the workbook.**



Step 4: Your travelling companions

Theme = relationships

1. Thinking of the people you know, who gives you energy, and who drains your energy?

It could be useful to focus on those that give you energy.

2. Thinking about your friends, what is it you recognise in your relationships with each one that you benefit from?

Is there anything missing? If so, where/who are you going to get this from?

3. If you have a partner, think about spending time together and spending time apart.

How much time for each do you want or need?

What about your partner – what do you think they want or need?



On a piece of paper, draw a big circle with you in the middle of it. Draw in other important people and then write down the significance of where you have placed them, and which direction they are facing. *

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Step 5: Your travelling gear

Theme = identity, image and status

Identity

1. How will you describe yourself once you have stopped working? Try drawing an image of yourself (it could be as simple as a stick person) and label it, to help with your description.

2. Think about what image you want to convey to others, how you want to be perceived, how you want to feel about yourself. Try practising saying it to yourself to see how it 'fits' you.

3. What phrase will you use that will encapsulate this next stage of your life? You might never need to say this to anyone, but it's a great idea to at least think it!

Put together your description of yourself, and of this next phase of your life.*

Image

Draw up a list of words that bring up the image for you of someone who is old and put this in the left-hand box. Thinking of an alternative word or phrase, put this in the right-hand box.

Think about how often you use the words in the left-hand box and start instead to introduce the words in the right-hand box.



Your motivator at work

Write down what you think motivated you at work – was it status, adding value, feeling valued, collaborating, etc?

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Step 6: Your compass

Theme = meaning and purpose

Finding your ikigai

The word 'ikigai' can be roughly translated as 'the happiness of always being busy', but it's not just about business, it's about combining your skills and things that you love to do, and contributing in some way to your community or the world.

In their book *Ikigai. The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles suggest completing the following stages to help people link their ikigai to being in a state of flow (when you are completely absorbed in a task, time flies, you feel energised and focused):

1. Write down all the activities that help you enter a state of flow.
2. What do these activities have in common?
3. Why do you think these activities drive you to flow?
4. Are the activities just through thinking or doing, or do they also involve movement?

Once you have answered these questions you will have a much greater idea of what gets you into a flow state, and you can then choose to do these things more often.



Personal values:

Here are some personal values. Choose the ones that are most important to you; feel free to add more – this isn't an exhaustive list.

integrity

generosity

altruism

acceptance

respect

authenticity

assertiveness

family

adaptability

community

flexibility

self-compassion

honesty

dependability

loyalty

Your skillset:

Think about all aspects of your life (work, relationships, etc), and write down all your skills.

Then think about what those that work with you, that you are friends with, that know you in any way, would say that your skills are – you could ask them if you want.



Giving back:

Many people say that, at this stage of their lives, they want to 'give something back'. What are you involved in, or what do you feel passionately about, that you want to contribute your time to at the moment?

Combine the work you have done on what helps you get into a state of flow, what your values are, what your greatest skills are, and in which ways (small or large) you want to contribute – to give something back. This is your ikigai at the moment.*

***You will be adding this to your map at the end of the workbook.**



Your map: Step 1

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 1: Your starting point

Your map: Step 2

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 2: Your Timetable



Your map: Step 3

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 3: Your guidebook

Your map: Step 4

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 4: Your travelling companions



Your map: Step 5

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 5: Your travelling gear

Your Map: Step 6

Add your answer to the starred exercise in Step 6: Your compass

You now have your own unique map for your future!