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Topic: Change or Time

Searching

Remembering these dreams as I awaken, I wonder why I'm so confused and seemingly conflicted.

First, in a nondescript 1960's building on CU's East Campus, I meet with William Ward to discuss my schedule. Bill deftly manages the Facilities' Design and Construction Group, balancing projects with staff and budgets. We discuss whether two or three days will work for my part-time employment.

In another dream, I return with my husband to one of my alma maters, Kenyon College. We are touring the country looking at law schools for my "next chapter." I have not been in this bucolic Ohio setting since June of 1972, almost 46 years ago.

In all my years at school and as a professional woman born in the '50's, I have always had a schedule. Now, it occurs to me, I only have questions. How does one maintain momentum and a purpose in life when one is liberated from external structure? What drives one to continue – to enthusiastically arise in the morning to a day full of promise and meaning?

Having been retired for almost a year, the time has flown by with momentum and a certain fury - madly doing yoga, swimming, playing mah jongg and participating in an inspiring CU writing course. This time has been peppered with trips to New York, Chicago, Wisconsin and Costa Rica.

I have a new perspective on my life. I understand now that I have *always* had structure to rely on - first a Catholic grade school, then several high schools, Kenyon

College, University of Pennsylvania and finally the Architectural Association in London. After school, I moved on to my 38-year working career as a project manager in London, San Francisco, Glenwood Springs and at Boulder's University of Colorado.

On the flip side, I am now free to set my own schedule and actually go to the gym – previously I was too busy or too tired to attend. I remember reading in a New York Times article about a course at Stanford called “Designing Your Life;” * a course intended for college students to encourage them to maneuver within (and out of) their fields and figure out a path for their lives. I was struck by the premise that there are multiple options for life. One can try on one thing and then decide if it works. And, as with design, if the path doesn't work, try something else until the solution strikes a chord.

Freedom is both a precious gift and a challenge. I miss having my pre-determined daily schedule and I struggle with creating my own new routine.

This is a conundrum that many of us may have in the throes of establishing a meaningful life in retirement. In the midst of designing my next stage, I may continue to have dreams that illustrate conflicting feelings. Someday, however, these dreams will be replaced by new ones that look towards the future and not to the past.

I will just have to sleep on it.

*” Want to Find Fulfillment at Last? Think Like a Designer” by Steven Kurutz 09.17.16