

VERSION B: After the Cliff

For those who have already left the workforce.

Exercise 1.1B—THE REALITY OF FREE FALL

Rate each of the following statements in terms of how accurate it is for you at this point in time. Put a number between 1 and 9 after the vertical slash of each statement.

RATING VALUES

Not at all like me: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 : Totally me

I am totally comfortable with how I use my time.				
Not having money coming in bothers me.				
I feel isolated now that I don't have work as a way to connect.				
I could help many ways but no one will let me do what I can.				
I love being able to putter all day long.				
I worry that I am going to run out of money.				
I don't have people that I consider good friends to do things with.				
I feel invisible.				
I like not having to make plans for what I do each day.				
I am not willing to spend money for things I used to buy readily.				
I feel isolated.				
It bothers me that I am not contributing in some way.				
My retirement could not be better.				
I worry about the stock market and/or the security of my pension.				

No one wants all the skills and experience I am ready to offer.				
There's got to be more than this.				
I would not change a thing about my life in retirement.				
I need more cash coming in than I have now.				
I want to be more involved with other people.				
I need something to make me want to get out of bed every day.				
TOTALS: Total the numbers in each column. The highest possible score for a column is 45. The lowest is 5.				

The first column deals with your satisfaction level with retirement in general. If this score is high, the lifestyle you are living works. At most, you are likely to want to tweak it a bit, but major changes may not be necessary. Then again, you may be deluding yourself about how much you like retirement. Go for a walk by yourself and think about it if you aren't sure.

The second column deals with how you feel about your current financial situation. Though your financial situation may have deteriorated for some reason, concerns of this type are often not a reflection of the actual state of your finances. For many people, spending the money that's been saved—even if that is exactly what it was saved for—is very difficult. If this number is high, finding a way to create even a small cash flow from active income might be appealing.

The third column deals with social factors. If this score is high, it means you need more social contact than your current lifestyle includes. Work is only one way of filling this set of needs and your personality has a lot to do with what is likely to work best. For example, if you prefer to “talk shop” as a way to interact with people, work is probably a better fit than joining a social club. But if you like to dance or play cards to share time with others, then the reverse is more likely to be true.

The fourth column is about how much meaning you find in your life. If this number is high, you may be feeling hollow or restless. The only way to solve this one for good is to uncover your purpose—the thing that you want to do with your life that leaves you feeling excited no matter how tired you are after working at it for the day. Purpose and passion go hand in hand. If you know what you are here to do, it's a lot easier to “get out of bed in the morning.”

From ***Bold Retirement: Mining Your Own Silver for a Rich Life.***