

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

A Second or Third Act – Another Chance | Part 2

Lisa Bowers · Wednesday, October 18th, 2017

At 73, Joe Biden made a choice to devote his time to the Biden Cancer Initiative. What business owners, artists, and advocates are out there with dreams they think too lofty, unreasonable, uneconomical, unfeasible, or poorly timed to realize? How many people are working for companies that do not align with their values? Or for whom going to work each day feels like drudgery? Or who are feeling underutilized post-retirement?

A lifetime of achievements. Multi-talented.

OR

Untapped potential. A burning desire to realize a dream.

Both of the above represent possibility. No matter what your age.

Following a Dream



Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

? Harriet Tubman

Led by native elders, the Standing Rock Sioux tribe held proud their "indigenous vision of sacred air, sacred water, and sacred land," when confronting the fossil fuel industry. They garnered international support for stopping the multi-billion dollar Dakota Access Pipeline, a dispute that continues. The power of their dream caused at the very least a slowdown in the project's completion and worldwide attention to their culture and land. Whatever happens, they will never give up. Their dream will never die.

The comedian Joy Behar was a high school English teacher until the age of 40. An ectopic pregnancy which nearly caused her to die motivated her to follow a dream of a career in comedy. She worked tirelessly for ten years in [comedy clubs in London](#) until her unique style became recognized. She worked another 7 years before getting the co-host position on *The View*, which she held for 16 years.^[i] Her dream was realized after 17 years of hard work. Every ounce of sweat was worth it.

Bridget Firtle dreamed of owning her own distillery, which she named The Noble Experiment. After a career as a hedge fund manager, she taught herself to craft artisan rum. She sacrificed a lot to make this change, even moving back in with her parents to make ends meet. But she has no regrets. She says, “I would 100% encourage somebody to do this... I was completely inspired to do this. That feeling was like nothing’s going to stop me. If you have that feeling—if you have that passion for something—you will succeed.” [ii]

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Possibilities for An Aging Generation



Some baby boomers at retirement age are questioning what’s next. The prevailing point of view is that retirement is a time when people deserve to rest. However, some of the 74 million Boomers (the estimated number in 2016 [iii]) are not content with a life of leisure. And given that an estimated 41% of households aged 55-64 have no retirement savings *at all*, [iv] second or third acts may represent much more than fulfilling one’s purpose.

One out of every four 65-year-olds today will live past age 90. Many from this population will be able to have multiple careers and accomplishments. Boomers can more easily shift from the traditional and structured positions they may have held for most of their lives, because of their experience, their network, and their wealth. They have had more years to develop their skills, establish credentials, and build professional networks. “Baby boomers actually take more risk and bring more entrepreneurial spirit to the workforce than younger employees. Indeed, 45% of Boomers consider themselves to be more entrepreneurial, versus only 32% of Gen Y (Millennial) employees.”[v]

The promise of a new start can be powerful inspiration for people close to retirement. Adages usually reserved for new graduates like “The world is my oyster” or “The sky is the limit” can become theirs as well.

In addition, change is healthy. “Science shows it stimulates your brain, broadens your perspective, and boosts your performance.”[vi] “It opens the door to exciting new opportunities, which takes your skills to the next level and shows you that you can handle challenges,” says K. Anders Ericsson, Ph.D., a coauthor of *Peak: Secrets From the New Science of Expertise*. “Positive change puts you in control of your life.”



The work of the nonprofit [Encore.org](https://encore.org), with the tagline “second acts for the greater good,” demonstrates how older generations can benefit society. Encore.org taps the skills and talents of experienced adults to improve communities and the world. Encore CEO Mark Friedman has asked of places sorely lacking human capital, “Where are the human beings to do those things that only human beings can do?” Part of his answer lies in [Encore’s Fellows](https://encore.org/encore-fellows), who apply the experience they’ve gained in their first career to making a social impact. Check out their stories and be inspired.

Joe Biden continues to dream of eliminating cancer through the Cancer Moonshot. What is your

dream? Role models and people leading the way abound. Just last week, the legendary Vanity Fair editor Graydon Carter, 68, announced that he was stepping down, saying, “I wanted to have a third act. And I thought time is precious.” [vii]

Are you ready for your own second, third, or fourth act? Keep your eyes open. How would you answer the question posed by Pulitzer Prize-winning Mary Oliver in her poem “The Summer Day”: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” No matter what your previous career choices, your passions, your situation, there is no time like the present. If there is something you’d rather be doing, Just Do It.™

[i] “Joy Behar.” *Biography.com*. A&E Networks Television, 21 Jan. 2016. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <<https://www.biography.com/people/joy-behar-9542451>>

[ii] Greenawald, Erin. “A Truly Noble Experiment: Leaving Finance to Open a Rum Distillery.” *Free Career Advice*. The Muse, 19 July 2013. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <<https://www.themuse.com/advice/a-truly-noble-experiment-leaving-finance-to-open-a-rum-distillery>>.

[iii] Exner, Rich. “Baby Boomers Slip to 74.1 Million in U.S.; Census Bureau Estimates Growing Edge for Millennials.” *Cleveland.com*. Cleveland.com, 24 Apr. 2017. Web. 12 Sept. 2017. <http://www.cleveland.com/datacentral/index.ssf/2017/04/baby_boomers_slip_to_741_milli.html>

[iv] Backman, Maurie. “10 Retirement Stats Every Baby Boomer Should Know @themotleyfool #stocks.” *The Motley Fool*. The Motley Fool, 28 Mar. 2017. Web. 12 Sept. 2017. <<https://www.fool.com/retirement/2017/03/28/10-retirement-stats-every-baby-boomer-should-know.aspx>>

[v] Emling, Shelley. “Baby Boomer Entrepreneurs Take More Risks Than Generation Y.” *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 27 Feb. 2013. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/27/baby-boomers-entrepreneurs-more-entrepreneurial-than-generation-y_n_2767195.html>

[vi] Ketchif, Mirel. “How to Change Your Life for the Better (Without Freaking Out About It).” *Shape Magazine*. Shape Magazine, 04 Sept. 2017. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <<http://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/how-change-your-life-better-without-freaking-out-about-it>>

[vii] Grynbaum, Michael. “Graydon Carter to End 25-Year Run as Vanity Fair’s Editor.” *Graydon Carter to End 25-Year Run as Vanity Fair’s Editor*. New York Times, 08 Sept. 2017. Web. 13 Sept. 2017. <<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/graydon-carter-to-end-25-year-run-as-vanity-fair%e2%80%99s-editor/ar-AArsZMI?li=BBnbfcL>>.

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