



LIFE 04

JACK & DEB

Retirement trials

FORWARD: For Jack and Deborah, retirement had always been (1) in the future (2) something they looked forward to and (3) something they needed to save for. The time came when suddenly, none of those were true. The future had arrived. The financial planning was now in maintenance. And the fantasy of retirement was well... just that, fantasy.

Unfortunately, there is no prerequisite seminar that covers how to retire successfully. Therefore, we are not surprised to learn that many professionals finish their careers only to recognize that they have finite time and money, but nothing worthwhile to do with their resources. Often, depression and anxiety loom as individuals try to cope with meaningfulness in the retirement years.

SITUATION: Jack had retired from a large utility eleven months before he and his wife, Deborah, called Jody Michael Associates. Their marriage was a model of those from the early baby-boomer era: Deb raised their children while Jack earned money to support the family. Their children were now adults, living in different states with their own families. The couple had prepared so that they would be financially comfortable for the next twenty years, given regular market returns. However, when they arrived, both were bored and unhappy.

RESOLUTION: Deb had looked forward to retirement as an opportunity to spend time with her life partner and to travel while her health was still good. Jack on the other hand, had envisioned this a restful period

of his life, in which he could play golf and discover some hobbies he liked at his leisure. Since he had traveled frequently for his work, traveling did not hold the same appeal as it did his wife. Further, Jack felt tired and unmotivated in the previous months. And though he was able to rest, and did rest, he felt he was wasting the life he'd been given.

JMA recognizes that retirement can be many things to many people. In this case, three stakeholders required consideration: Jack, Deb, and the couple as a whole.

After fifty-odd years of scripted life, Jack and Deb needed Ms. Michael's exercises, questions, and ad hoc homework to rediscover the interests they had thought would be bubbling to the surface. The information they learned about their relationship and each other was important for their future, but also disconcerting considering they had been married for thirty-seven years. JMA helped Deb and Jack through this discovery process and guided them to format the new information in a way that guaranteed they would act on it. Their schedule was flexible enough to allow changes in plans, but granted all three stakeholders their needs.

OUTCOME: Jack was comfortable with the allotment of time their schedule gave him to recuperate and to play golf. As part of the program, Deborah prioritized the destinations she wanted to visit and marked a block of the calendar for each of the next four, depending on that destination's optimal travel season.

The couple recognized that they did not share all of the same interests at home, or on trips. Therefore, both individuals could schedule times to get their own needs met: for instance, her to look for antiques and him to golf, again. Deborah recognized that she could not depend on her husband as her only social outlet. She culled her interests and decided to build a social network

around two of them by joining groups and participating in community forums. Concerned that she would only meet other retirees, Deborah applied to docent at a local art museum.

This is the negotiation that Jody Michael Associates introduced into Deb and Jack's retirement years. The dialogue not only kept their relationship vital and new, but made sure that each person took care of his needs as well as those of the couple. As a result of this fresh focus and plan, Jack and Deborah were looking forward to the next twenty years of their lives. They had scheduled specific activities for the next year, planned future vacations and had a larger set of goals each wanted to achieve in the following years. Best of all, this plan accommodated the changes that their inevitable self-discovery, both as individuals and as a couple, would bring.