

# Finding **YOUR** **NEW TRIBE**

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## What is a Tribe?

**Simply put, a tribe is a group of people who are linked by purpose, interests, political affiliations, causes or kinship. In retirement your identity changes. Overnight. Regardless of how much planning you put into it, membership, of a team or organisation you may have been part of for many years, is withdrawn.**

While work is unlikely to have been your only tribe to date, for some it has superceded all others in terms of time and energy.

## Why do I need a new one?

In generational terms, assuming an average retirement age of 66, you are now in the bracket of 'old age' and run the risk of being defined as such by society and any communities you belong to, unless you take action to avoid it being your sole identity.

Erik Eriksson's eighth and last stage of his theory of Psychosocial development describes those over 66 at the point of Integrity versus Despair <https://simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html> . This stage, he proposes, involves looking back on our lives with a balance of pride at what we have achieved and guilt and hopelessness at wasted opportunities. Despite the age of this theory there's no doubt that entering retirement involves a period of reflection about our achievements, which can help form the basis of how we move forward in this next life stage. Who we surround ourselves with in retirement will contribute greatly to how we view ourselves.

Retirement, with its headline of being released from daily drudgery, demands and deadlines, is heralded as eutopia, the reward at the finishing line of our working lives, and while this bears some truth, the reward bit takes some work. Some material is now emerging that considers the loss that comes with retirement.

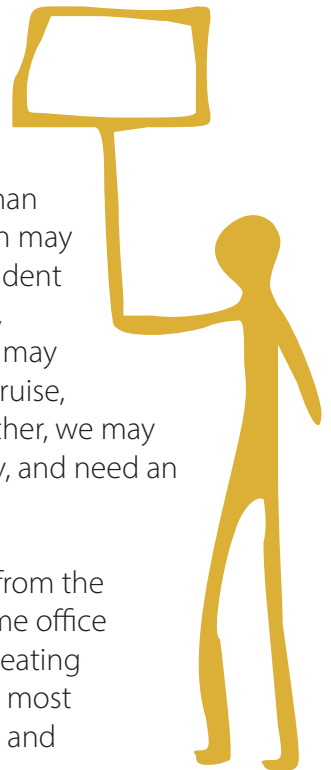
In this pocket guide we concentrate on how you acknowledge the social separation and change of identity that comes with leaving a team to forge new links and a new tribe.

## First Steps

First of all it's important to think about yourself and the personal world that surrounds you. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Do you form friendships easily or do they take time? Do you have a defined support network or do you feel you have largely played the supportive role outside work? Are any of your friends retiring at the same time as you?

Unlike other transitions - starting school, university, getting married, starting a family - retirement has less of a common denominator than you might assume. Retirement as a single person may look very different to that of a parent with dependent children and elderly relatives. Different pensions, savings, and demands on finances can mean we may not be able to fulfil all our dreams, to book that cruise, buy that holiday home, or join that golf club. Rather, we may be spending time being creative with our money, and need an alternative retirement plan to that of our dreams.

**But it is not all gloom!** Retirement releases you from the confines of your profession, the commute or home office and, should you wish, offers you the chance of creating a completely new identity and purpose. For this, most of us will need a new tribe. A network of support and



companionship is an essential part of our extrinsic environment and, when we lose the familiarity of our work tribe, it can feel like a great loss. (see Personal Mastery pocket guide, PEOP model). So we may well need to set about building a new one.

**Pause Point**

Let's have a think about forming a tribe.



**Think how you met new friends in the past?**

(Circle the words that best describe how you found friends and acquaintances.)

- |                       |                      |                     |                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Join</b>           | <b>Contribute</b>    | <b>Invite</b>       | <b>Seek</b>             |
| <b>Reunite</b>        | <b>Volunteer</b>     | <b>Meet</b>         | <b>Follow-up</b>        |
| <b>Subscribe</b>      | <b>Tweet</b>         | <b>Network</b>      | <b>Work</b>             |
| <b>Contact</b>        | <b>Initiate</b>      | <b>Chat</b>         | <b>Study</b>            |
| <b>Social media</b>   | <b>Through hobby</b> | <b>Through work</b> | <b>Through children</b> |
| <b>Through family</b> | <b>Any others?</b>   |                     |                         |

Unless we have failed in past efforts, we are likely to repeat our previous modus operandi; but a word. We may need to take a different tack in retirement.

School, university, employment, antenatal classes. . . . . All offered us a captive crowd of people we could get to know over time, casually at first, testing the water for compatibility and permanent friendship. How will you replicate this process in retirement when you look for a new tribe?

Retired people, as with the rest of the population, often have such a variety of interests and commitments, we/they can be quite hard to pin down. Some of us will be fine with this. We are socially adept and make friends easily, but others, who feel a huge void on leaving work, may struggle to find the deeper connections we all need to make us feel valued and needed. Like other coming of age events, it's a time of levelling out. We may reconnect with old friends as a result or find something in common with people we would never have met in our working lives. However, if another person does not respond to your offer of friendship, do not despair. Not everyone is looking for new friends or reconnection at this stage.

One of our greatest fears may well be that we're not making the most of retirement. We've dreamed of it, we've talked about it, we're even smug about it - but carefully laid plans have not worked out and there are periods of slack we had not envisaged, feelings of loneliness or boredom can shatter confidence and increase isolation.

Contrast this with. . . . . 'I'm so busy, I don't know how I found time to work'. You have likely have heard this many times, from many people. It is puzzling because busyness is something most working people say they look forward to relinquishing on retirement.



As far as new tribe potential goes, beware. 'Busy' says, I don't have time for you, I don't need you. Busy is not available for months, cancels arrangements and cuts your time together short. Another thing to think about is - why are you so busy? Have you taken on responsibility because no one else was willing to? Do you feel the need to prove that retirement does not mean redundant? Do you not quite know how not to be busy? But remember - you have nothing to prove You were, and are brilliant, and as long as you are happy, and being busy is not injurious to your health, go for it.

### **Aiming for the Middle ground**

Busy is fine. So is not busy. Keep your tribes light, maintain them regularly but at a time and duration that suits you. Make sure your tribes include diferent sets of people. Have you at least one tribe includes younger people, or neighbours? These are the people you may come to rely on for help.

### **Pause Point**

Which tribes do you currently take time to nurture?

**Family**

**Neighbours**

**Work Friends**

**Old Friends**

**Church**

**Pub or Village  
Hall**

**Activists**

**Walking/  
fitness**

**Sports**

**Committee**

**Hobby groups**

**Volunteer  
community**

**New friends**

**Any others?**

## How do you like to keep in touch?

Phone	Face to Face	Email	Text/What's App/M'ssger
Letter	Social Events	Holidays	Via a Thrid Party
Shared interest group	Spontaneously	Planned	

## Any others?

Think back over the past week, how many of the above have you used to keep in touch with people or interests that are important to you? You can keep this box in mind if you find yourself distanced, at a loose end or temporarily lacking a new direction. An established tribe will manage without you, but are all the better for you. Genuine interest is of greater value than time spent, and any of the ways of keeping in touch are valid if they work for you.



## Tribes to Avoid



You'll come across them, inevitably – but be aware and decide what your relationship will be with the:

'Do me a Favour' Tribe. Wait in for my Amazon parcel, let the dog out, take me to the hospital, water my pots, let the dog in, make up the numbers. . . . . Any that assume your retirement = their time. Helping others is a great asset to a tribe, but works best in friendship when it is reciprocated. If you have difficulty saying no, it's not too late to learn.

'Let's moan about the old days' Tribe. Re-hashing the past, licking old wounds and slandering the living are not uplifting ways to spend your precious time. Neither is looking back with rose-coloured spectacles. What lies ahead is more important than what has gone.

Your old workplace Tribe. Not your specific friends but those who you've worked alongside who say 'Come back and visit', 'Keep in touch'. They'd quite like to see you for a few minutes but they didn't mean at lunchtime on a Friday when all hell has broken loose. Remaining workplace tribe members will be delighted to see you – but outside of work hours.

## Volunteer but don't commit

. . . . . Until you are sure. Then be reliable, diligent and have a great time. Volunteering that is noble, but not enjoyable, is a waste of your energy and could unwittingly put you in the busy zone, leaving no room for fulfilling friendships.

## Leave some gaps

There will likely be some trial and error in forging new networks and friendships, so it is important to leave some gaps for the opportunities that arise, for a new interest or relationship . . . . and for some down time.



## And Finally

Why do you need a tribe at all? Ultimately it is about belonging. We are social animals who may differ in what we need from people, but in retirement most of us need to top up our human contact.

Finding a new tribe can come from an organised group, an informal arrangement, or a chance encounter. Nothing is right or wrong if it works for you.

For a moment forget about being retired and look for what interests you, work on your acceptable level of risk in new social situations and value yourself as a new tribe member. Curious, enthusiastic, reliable, and available - when it suits you!