

ENCORE CAREER

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Many Americans long to work in the job of their dreams after they retire from their first career. But what do these “encore” jobs look like, and how does one find one?

Those are the questions that millions of pre-retirees must answer if they hope to find work that matters in the second half of their lives. Or at least so says Marc Freedman in his new book, “Encore.”

According to Freedman, the founder of Civic Ventures, all is not rosy for those who want to keep working after they retire. Age discrimination still exists, there are not enough flexible jobs in the nonprofit or public sectors, and continuing education and retraining is neither commonplace nor affordable.

Freedman says pre-retirees must consider whether they want to be a career recycler, career changer or career maker. In addition, he says pre-retirees should think long and hard about their motivations and what makes them happy.

Resources to do that include such books as “The Purpose-Driven Life” by Rick Warren, “What Color is Your Parachute? For Retirement” by John Nelson and Richard Bolles, and “Don’t Retire, Rewire” by Jeri Sedlar and Rick Miners. The latter book can help you explore the reasons for working, beyond salary.

Merrill Lynch has an abbreviated version of Sedlar’s and Miners’ reasons-for-working checklist on its Web site ([ask merrill.ml.com](http://ask.merrill.ml.com)).

And then there’s the more expensive version of discovering yourself called My Next Phase. That site (mynextphase.com/public/index.php) offers a range of services, including an online assessment, telecourses and private coaching. Services cost from \$39.95 to \$395.

According to Freedman, older Americans have to sell their experience as an asset when seeking an encore career.

“Stress your reliability, good judgment, problem-solving ability, ability to navigate a crisis, experience in negotiating compromise, ability to listen, ability to assess costbenefit trade-offs, comfort level working with all types of personalities, sense of responsibility, established identity, and sense of purpose,” Freedman advises older Americans on selling their experience.

For those who have trepidations about landing an encore job only to have it be the wrong one, Freedman suggests: “Try a few things before leaping into a commitment.” He recommends finding an internship, working part time as a temp, or volunteering until a paid position is available.

For those who plan to work for the greater good instead of the greater salary, Freedman suggests taking a gander at the salaries offered in the nonprofit world. Resources include: The NonProfit Times Salary Survey, Compensation in Nonprofit Organizations, and the GuideStar Compensation Report.

Consider where some of the top job growth is, such as health care, education, senior services, the federal government and the nonprofit sector.

For instance, the American Hospital Association is actively encouraging hospitals to recruit midlife career changers, according to Freedman. And you don't have to be a doctor or nurse to work in health care, he says. In fact, there are more than 100 areas of specialization generally known as "allied health professions." Learn more about opportunities in health care industry in the American Medical Association's Health Professions Career and Education Directory and at the Health Care Workforce Web site (healthcareworkforce.org).

The nation is also in need of educators, says Freedman. The demand is most acute in cities, but everywhere there is a need for teachers in math, science and special education. Given the commitment required, he suggests signing up with a local school district as a substitute teacher before diving headlong into teaching as a career.

Other opportunities include day care teachers, afterschool program staff, tutors and adjunct professors at local community colleges. Experience Corps (experiencecorps.org/index.cfm) is one resource for those who want to mentor or tutor elementary school students.

Another place to find an encore career is in senior services, where Freedman expects there will be an increase in the number of organizations dedicated to helping people age well. Storytellers, oral historians to record the memories of older folks, yoga teachers, dance instructors and computer-skill teachers are just some of the jobs that will be or are available.

And of course there's always Uncle Sam, which with nearly 3 million employees is the nation's largest employer. According to Freedman, there are civil service jobs available in every state, many of which have good benefits, flexible scheduling and opportunities for advancement. Two resources include USAJOBS (usajobs.opm.gov) and Federal Jobs Net (federaljobs.net).

For those interested in the nonprofit sector, Freedman says there are 1.8 million nonprofit organizations to choose from.

For those searching for a nonprofit job, resources include Bridgestar (www.bridgestar.com), Charitychannel.com, Commongood Careers (cgcareers.org), and the Community Career Center (nonprofitjobs.org).