



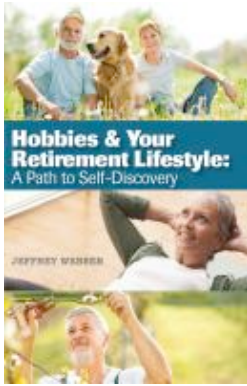
# Hobbies & Your Retirement Lifestyle:

## A Path to Self-Discovery



JEFFREY WEBBER





*Self-reinvention is a major payoff during the retirement years. The process can help us realize a deeper truth about ourselves, leading to self-discovery. One of the sure ways we can accomplish the preceding is through hobbies. They can create an invigorated sense of purpose during your retirement years. These activities can certainly keep you active physically, socially, and mentally. In addition, they may provide you with peace of mind and a feeling of relaxation. ALSO BY JEFFREY WEBBER - Frugality and Your Retirement Lifestyle: Live Your Dreams, RVing & Your Retirement Lifestyle: A Cost Effective Way to Live Your Dreams, Technology & Your Retirement Lifestyle: Tools For The New You, The New Professional Person's Retirement Lifestyle, and Volunteering & Your Retirement Lifestyle.*

# Hobbies & Your Retirement Lifestyle

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# **Hobbies & Your Retirement Lifestyle: A Path to Self-Discovery**

Jeffrey Webber

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## **CHAPTER 1 - Learning as a Hobby**

Similar in nature to other hobbies, learning affords you the opportunity to do something you enjoy. With the variety of choices available to you, it is also rewarding. Learning activities really allow you to pursue your current interests, or, assist you in the development of new interests. At the same time, you are acquiring new skills and knowledge, which can be used in every aspect of your life. And, that knowledge can stay with you along with the ability to teach yourself new things.

Indeed, learning represents a higher level of the hobby process because it is common to all hobbies. That is, when you begin a new hobby you are learning, and, the power to teach yourself new things does stay with you. Certainly, you can teach yourself many new things. Further, once you start learning and master the process of learning, you may be able to learn new hobbies at a quickened rate because you are absorbing new information faster. Take it from a veteran retired teacher and an avid hobbyist: it does work!

If you select learning as a hobby, you will find that you will be able to do it better, faster, and longer over time. And, you will feel a sense of accomplishment that can be very rewarding.

Methods for learning hobbies can include reading, where much knowledge is acquired. Doing, is one of the best ways of acquiring knowledge for specific skills, such as drawing, painting, cooking, woodworking and many other areas. Obviously, a combination of both of the previous methods can certainly be most productive.

Practicing assists you in mastering skills such as learning scales and chords in music, brush strokes in painting, sports, dance, and other physical skills. As I indicated in the introduction of this book, I have been a musician for over 55 years, and, I continue to play in bands and show orchestras. Much of my success in this area comes from intensive group and individual practice sessions with my music.

I think it is important to note that it is never too late to take music lessons, whether it is voice or instrumental. If you have a passion to learn to play the clarinet, then do it. Do not ever be discouraged by your age.

My wife has recently resurrected her art skills by enrolling in painting classes offered by our local Parks and Recreation Department. Her first two paintings are, being as objective as I can, extraordinary. In between regular classes she enhances her skills by practicing.

Our success with aforementioned hobbies has stimulated us to advance our skills in other areas such as tennis, ballroom dancing, theatre, yoga, Transcendental Meditation, and our newest endeavor, pickleball.

Now let's explore some learning hobbies.

## **Read & Write**

There are lots of advantages for seniors if you choose reading or writing as a hobby.

In essence, reading is the most common means of learning new material. It is especially useful for areas of interest where knowledge is more important than skill. If you are a history buff, or are interested in psychology, sociology, or even business, reading is a great way to learn.

As you may already know, many bookstores sponsor book readings, poetry readings, and signings. In addition there are a

variety of other author events. I have participated at a number of these events at local libraries, community centers, and town recreation departments. Locally owned coffeehouses host similar events.

Consider joining or creating a book club if you love to read. Aside from the socialization factor, you will be engaging in interesting and challenging discussions. These discussions help readers develop a deeper understanding of a book. Further, a book club is an excellent venue for people to share experiences. These discussions, when paired against reactions from other readers, often help people develop a deeper understanding of a book or article.

Here are some suggestions for creating a book club:

1. Decide which types of books your club will read.
2. Select a leader, if you already have a group of participants.
3. Choose a location for meetings. If the group is small, a home is fine. You could also inquire at the local library or bookstore to see if space is available.
4. Post ads at libraries, bookstores, and senior centers to recruit members if necessary. You may want to consider approaching local retirement facilities. This could prove to be an excellent source of membership. You will need to contact the facility administrator if you are looking at a retirement home.
5. After holding your first meeting, the leader may want to prepare a list of discussion topics and questions for the next meeting. Often times this information can be found on publisher websites.

Do not forget all the possibilities you have these days at your local library. Your card may allow you to check out the following (in addition to books):

- e-books
- magazines
- audio-books

It may also allow you to access certain electronic collections. Be sure to check out the library website.

Writing promises to keep us mentally sharp and stimulated. Remember, retired people have years of stories and experiences to offer that many people would love to read. If you write about your memoirs or research your family history, you may find that friends and relatives may want to get involved. In addition, future generations will appreciate your work. Personal writing can bring enjoyment, satisfaction, and closure to the last stage of life.

Lois Daniel, author of *How to Write Your Own Life Story*, suggest the following topics:

- Where were you on important days in history?
- accomplishments of which you are most proud
- children and the things they say
- inventions
- brief encounters

As I've previously mentioned, be sure to check on creative writing courses available through your local library, and recreation departments, as well as the adult education office. You may find, through an Internet search, that creative arts workshops are available as well. Some of those workshops include poetry writing and play writing.

Another way to harness your creative writing is to begin blogging. Basically, you would be writing short articles on specific topics that interest you. Indeed, blogging is a great



retirement hobby. You can write about your travels, passions, life experiences and activities that you enjoy.

You may want to check out *hubpages.com*. It is simple to sign up. Online help is offered by the site to assist you in the submission of articles. You get a real feeling of community as fellow Hubbers are very supportive and will leave positive comments on your work.

If you really enjoy writing, you may be interested in self-publishing. As this industry is more or less unregulated, the author of *How to Age in Place* suggests the following points to keep in mind:

- Work with a reputable organization such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble.
- Avoid vanity presses that make unfounded promises regarding sales volumes.
- Use social media to get the message out.
- Be prepared to do some legwork (readings, signings, etc).
- Write about what you know and love.
- Set the bar high. Only put your work out there when it is the best it can be.

## **Learn a New Language**

If you ever plan on traveling, that may be the motivation you need to learn the basics of a new language. Additionally, this is a great way to enhance the learning process. And, you can do so frugally, especially if you explore local community services, as previously mentioned. In particular, check reference materials available at your library.

Kathleen Peddicord, a retirement author and blog host, has some tips for learning a new language during the retirement years.

- Listen to podcasts. You can listen on your iPod or in your car.
- Connect your language study to other interests or hobbies.
- Don't sweat the grammar. Your main objective is to learn to communicate, not necessarily sentence structure.
- Understand how you learn best. Some of us are visual learners, audio learners, or tactile learners.
- Speak the language as much as possible.
- Read in the new language.
- Find a native speaker to practice with.
- Try the Ultralingua software dictionary, which, can help you read books online.

By the way, learning a second language with your grandchildren is a fun thing to do. If the kids are at least school age, you can check out a DVD from the local library, which, is geared towards teaching a children a second language. Open Culture (*openculture.com*) offers you the opportunity to learn at least 40 languages by downloading free audio lessons to your computer.

### **Take a Course, or Two**

Do you recall what I said earlier in this chapter about the fact that knowledge staying with you when you learn something new? At the same time, you empower yourself to learn new things. So, if you consider learning as a hobby, the possibilities are limitless. Learning skills are very practical.

Aside from utilizing your learning skills for recreational hobbies, why not consider taking courses to learn more. And, those courses can be artistic or for academic purposes. If you are a senior, there are many free course offerings available to you online.

Again, I suggest that you begin your exploration at Open Culture ([openculture.com](http://openculture.com)). They offer a plethora of free cultural and educational media. That includes 540 free online courses, free audio books, free movies, free textbooks and much more. Courses offered include film, architecture, art and much more.

In addition, be certain to check about.com ([distancelearn.about.com](http://distancelearn.about.com)). The site presents detailed information about free online courses in a variety of hobby areas.

The Great Courses ([thegreatcourses.com](http://thegreatcourses.com)) offers more than 390 courses in a variety of subjects including history, science, philosophy, mathematics, literature, economics, business, religion, professional and the arts. You can choose whatever format suits you (audio or video, on your TV, laptop, tablet, or mobile device). At the time of this writing, I am looking at a special offer of only \$9.95 on certain courses. They also have an array of courses that are under \$40. Their faculty includes more than 100 professors, many of whom have won awards.

You can find much more additional course information by simply doing a search online using the term “free courses for seniors.”

Again, do not forget to explore course opportunities at your local Parks and Recreation Department and adult education program.

If you are interested in taking some college courses, or even pursuing a degree, there are many tuition free opportunities online. Some colleges give college credit for the coursework. Simply do a search for “free online courses for seniors” and you will be surprised at all openings. You can search a specific hobby area of your interest. If you would rather take courses simply for enrichment purposes, many colleges offer adult education courses at night (or on the weekend). You may also

be able to audit a regular undergraduate course. I have a friend who is learning conversational Spanish this way and loves it.

There are a few things to keep in mind if you do take an undergraduate course:

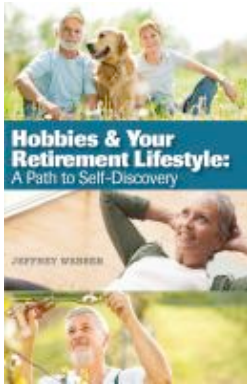
- Many courses have websites, which may feature a syllabus, articles, and book chapters.
- Textbooks can cost at least \$100 these days.
- Many classrooms no longer have blackboards. Professors may be using PowerPoint (a high-tech slideshow computer application, in case you did not know) for presentations.

If you would like to obtain an online degree, check out *degreesearch.org*. There are also colleges and universities that offer scholarships for seniors that may cover full tuition.

**Road Scholar** (*roadscholar.org*) – If you are looking to travel and learn something new, by all means check out Road Scholar. They offer 6500 educational tours in all 50 states and 150 countries. Many of the instructors are local, renowned experts. This non-profit organization attempts to inspire adults to learn. Programs include:

- crafts
- birding
- arts
- food and wine
- history
- music
- photography
- science
- theater

The website offers an excellent search mechanism.



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