



### FROM CHAPTER 3

## CREATING A THIRD AGE LIFE PORTFOLIO

Your third age journey is to become the person you can be. The creative balance of play and work builds a key passage to your identity. As the woman artist put it, “It’s who I am.” A major task is to shape your endeavors so that they enrich your journey through the third age. One way you can do this is to build a *third age life portfolio* that contains different kinds of work, careers, and play. But it will include much more.

Similar to artists putting together portfolios, each of us will concentrate on different aspects of work, play, relationships, contributions, and self-care. At different times, each of us will hone skills in new areas, experiment with new activities, enlarge the scope of meaningful activities, become more involved with others, and retreat to have more time alone. A life portfolio opens up worlds and puts lives in balance.

A good time to build a third age life portfolio is before you start your transition into retirement. As one retiring business leader put it, “This process implies a change moving from one condition to another in a positive direction.” It becomes, as he learned *a work in progress*. It keeps changing. If you haven’t designed your portfolio yet, it’s not too late to start. An emerging portfolio life can express both your pre-retirement planning and a redefinition of retirement.

This process will add a dimension of creativity to your life. It gives you a chance to become, as one woman put it, a *life artist*. Your world will become more complex, filled with activities, interests, commitments, and relationships that run in many directions at the same time.

Sometimes people discover that in developing a portfolio life they embark on a third age career more fulfilling than an earlier one. One of our third age heroes has been former President

Jimmy Carter, who has contributed so much to the world after he left the White House. He has set a precedent by using the American presidency as a stepping-stone to significant new careers.

After leaving Washington, he was bitter about losing the election, in part because he felt he had been pushed out of his presidential career before he had finished with it. Gradually he realized, helped by soulful conversations with his wife, how much more meaningful life could be with greater freedom to devote himself to worthy causes.

Leaving a premier executive position enabled him to tap his potential and blossom in ways he hadn't dreamed of. During his third age he has been engaged in rebuilding indigent communities, brokering peace between warring nations, helping developing countries establish democratic processes, keeping up with the changing world and writing books, providing civil leadership for the improvement of society, and providing religious leadership in his faith community.

The value of his many contributions is recognized around the world; winning the Nobel Peace Prize has been a fitting tribute. As he has reshaped a life of meaningful work, he has also allowed more time for play, especially with his wife and family. Without using the term, he has actually been acting as a pioneer in crafting a third age life portfolio.

A portfolio life, enriched by passion and creativity, conceived as a new form of leadership directed towards making a difference to this world, can become your passage to a new identity that greatly exceeds whatever you thought of yourself in the second age.

Copyright 2008 William A. Sadler, Ph.D. and James H. Krefft, Ph.D.

All Rights Reserved

For ordering information go to <http://www.changingcoursebook.com>