

A baby boomer is someone who was the result of a GI coming home from World War II being greeted by a very loving wife. A true boomer is somewhere between 60 and 65 years old. Social Security can start at age 62, so most should be getting ready to quit the daily grind and happily join the ranks of the gainfully unemployed.

I retired at age 65.5, and the only regret I have is that I didn't do it sooner. The reason I stayed on so long was because I still had one child in college, and needed all the money I could gather to pay the tuition at a grossly overpriced Ivy League university.



My advice to those baby boomers considering retirement is to start assessing your life, career and savings at age 55. Or sooner, if you have a decent bank account and/or heavily worthwhile investments that didn't get badly hurt by the recent stock market drop. The usual formula is that when you retire, and if the kids are financially on their own (a big if, of course), your weekly net retirement income should be no less than half of what you're earning on the job.

If you're on the late side of your 50s, sit down with your spouse/other now and do the math. Consider pension, Social Security, investment income and everything else that would be close to matching that magic 50 percent of your regular income. If the money's there, it's time to start making retirement a reality.

Six months before I retired we put the house up for sale. It was in the cold, cold East and we wanted to go far away. Fortunately, the house sold quickly, and on the day after my retirement party, we and our loaded car were on our way to the hot, hot desert. We haven't looked back since.

A final word: retirement isn't necessarily the beginning of the end. As Churchill said, it should be the end of the beginning. Both my spouse and I worked at paying jobs in our retirement town for several years, and after that we volunteered in local charities. We're doing just about everything we wanted to do, including a lot of traveling: overseas trips, cruises, national parks, visits to family, Las Vegas and many other wanderings.

We're at least as busy every day now as we ever were when we slaved at daily jobs. So, if your heart, body and soul ... and your spouse ... feel it is time to retire ... ignore Nancy Reagan's advice, and just say YES!

*Submitted by John F., Seattle WA*