

## *On Retirements: Playing Seriously with the Work of Growing Older*

### **The author's Book Club Discussion Advice**

This book may not (probably should not) require very much initial priming of the discussion. Actually, it might prove best not to begin focussing discussion on the book at all, but rather to start by asking the participants a few related questions about views people have of retirement: their own views, those among their close family, and perhaps others they know at work. In particular you might start by sharing answers to questions such as:

- a) Why are some people reluctant and some eager to retire?
- b) What generally appear to be some of the main drawbacks of being retired? What might be some main advantages?
- c) What is there about growing old that takes "work"?
- d) Are there things about growing old that are better faced only after becoming retired?

In particular, some of the questions above might best be discussed at the end of the previous club meeting, to create further interest in reading the book and coming next time.

Then, with respect to the book itself, you might want to begin a more focussed discussion with some of the following questions:

- 1) In the view of this author, what roles can (or should) reading play during retirement? And in your view?
- 2) In the view of this author, what roles can (or should) personal writing play during retirement?
- 3) Does this book make retirement seem like "work"? Like "play"?
- 4) Is this book "serious" in tone? Is it "playful" in tone? Would you have enjoyed it more had it been more of either? Of both? (Why?)
- 5) For whom does this author seem to think retirement is best suited? And for whom does he seem to think retirement is ill suited?
- 6) Was there anything in this book that you found surprisingly helpful? Or disturbing?
- 7) Are we really "beginners" in the senses suggested in this book? Don't we always recognize when we are, and when we are not, beginners?
- 8) Did the author strike you as an "angry" person? Why do you think "anger" appeared when it did as a topic in this book?
- 9) About Psychology: what should we expect from future research and theory in this field? What does the author seem to think it is possible to expect?
- 10) What do you think the metaphor of the "Wand choosing the Wizard" means to the author? Do you think the same metaphor appeared anywhere else in the book, perhaps in a different guise? Why do you think he waited until the end to discuss it?
- 11) What is missing from this book? What do readers need to know while reading that has not been shared with us? Why might such topics have been left out of the book?
- 12) Why and when were muses mentioned in this book? How would you define a "muse"? How does the author appear to define it?