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Ask Dr. Robert Butler

Post-Retirement Blues

Q: I have just retired from my job of 23 years that included hustle and bustle. I now have a very flexible job, in which I can make my own hours. I have two daughters, one is grown and out on her own and one is entering her junior year of high school. I have everything, but feel somewhat sad and stressed. Do I have too much time on my hands, or have I not let the transition take place? I just retired a few weeks ago.

— Renee, Florida



A: It is usually best to retire to something and not just retire *from* something. It was wise of you to have a very flexible job and to be able to control your hours but it is not surprising that you would go through a sense of sadness and distress. You apparently enjoyed the job you had for 23 years and the relationships you must have built there. So, your **emotions** seem quite appropriate to your situation. I think you need more time to adjust. If you do find that you have too much time on your hands, there are many opportunities for useful volunteering in most communities and, I am sure, that is true in your own. There are good data from scientific studies that show that having a purpose prolongs life. Helping other people is among the best of life's purposes, so try getting involved in a local charity, and chances are you'll not only be helping someone else, but you will get a boost from the work as well.

Learn more in the Everyday Health [Senior Health Center](#).

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