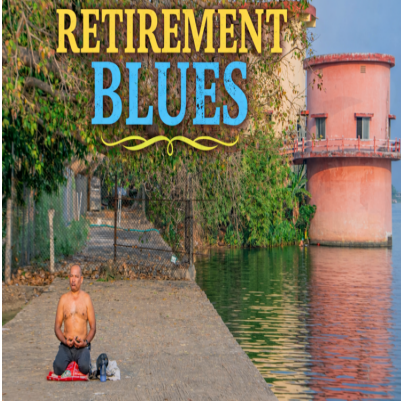




RETIREMENT BLUES

Description

I used to believe that aging well meant doing somethingâ??anythingâ??just to keep moving. Stay active. Stay engaged. Stay busy. That was the chorus I heard everywhere, and I followed it without question. But now, sitting here in the quiet aftermath of a life once filled with urgency, I ask: why did no one ever say, â??Learn to sit with yourself and not twitchâ??•?

default watermark

An elderly fisherman clears water from his boat as the golden sunset reflects on the river.

Retirement has not brought me peace. Instead, it has exposed me. I have become a restless version of myself—someone I hate to admit. I cannot sit still, not even for a few minutes. My mind hunts for tasks the way it once chased deadlines, as if I have to prove myself to an invisible audience that I’m still worthy, watching over me, judging my value by my busyness. I began to suspect that idleness is a fault I must correct immediately.

default watermark

default watermark

A quiet moment as a boat rests near floating lily pads under golden sunlight.

Thirty years. Thirty years of teaching, managing my school, guiding othersâ??yet I failed to learn the most basic lesson for myself: how to rest. How ironic. I taught discipline, structure, purposeâ??but never stillness. Now I sit here, a retired man who does not know how to sit for a minute without that shred of guilt.

default watermark

A photograph of a wooden boat with a blue tarp on a body of water. The boat is made of weathered wood and has a blue tarp covering part of its interior. The water is calm with some ripples. The text "default watermark" is overlaid on the image in a grey, italicized font.

default watermark

A fisherman pauses in thought while standing in his boat surrounded by still waters.

Today I'm seeking a fantasized version of life: the idea of slouching on a couch, holding a cup of coffee, watching a movie in a most relaxed comfort. Why do I feel it like a luxury now? Why does relaxation feel like a wrongdoing? Somewhere along the way, I trained myself to believe that rest is weakness, that stillness is failure. And now, I am paying the price for that sentiment.

default watermark



A floating log drifts gently near the riverbank under soft evening light.

I speak to myself now, almost accusingly: What have you done to your own mind? Why does it refuse to listen? Why does it drag you from one meaningless task to another, as though idleness itself is something to fear?

default watermark

default watermark

Two boys share a quiet moment by the water, lost in thought.

I have read countless booksâ??self-help, philosophy, reflections on lifeâ??but none truly prepared me for this. No one taught me how to sit with myself without discomfort. No one told me how to stop this endless internal argument. I am not trying to empty my mind anymoreâ??I realize that now. I am only trying to stop fighting with it. But even that feels like a battle I am losing.

default watermark

default watermark

A fisherman readies his net as sunlight dances on the water.

When I was younger, I wore my busyness like a badge of honor: “I’m busy, I can’t spare a minute.” I said it with pride, with arrogance even. But now, those words echo back at me like a quiet regret. Was I running from something all along? And if so, what am I gaining now from this forced activity?

default watermark

default watermark

A fisherman carefully organizes his net inside a boat on the river.

I long for a kind of surrender—a gentle letting go. I was seeking a way to ease into days that are not driven by urgency but by breathing easy. But I don't know how. And perhaps that is the hardest truth I must face: after a lifetime of knowing what to do, I no longer know how to simply be.

default watermark



default watermark

Daily commuters travel across a bridge lined with bold yellow railings.

And so I sit here, not at peace, but learningâ??slowly, painfullyâ??to stop running from myself.

default watermark



Friends gather near a bridge, sharing stories beside a parked scooter.

Category

1. Places

Tags

1. #InnerPeaceJourney #SelfReflection #MindfulLiving #QuietMind #EmotionalWellbeing
#FindingPeace #Stillness
2. #RetirementBlues #LifeAfterRetirement #RetiredLife #AgingThoughts #LifeReflections
#SecondInnings

Date Created

2026/04/09

Author

eswarnadipalli

default watermark