



Your Retirement Party



One way to think about values and the meaning they give us is to determine what sort of story we want to leave behind for others to share. This does not mean it has to be the most fantastical, adventurous, amazing story—instead, it means, what story gives your life the most meaning **to you**.

This activity helps you explore what this story might be. Take your time going through it and give yourself the space to immerse yourself in the imaginative process. You have total control here.



After a long career in education, you have decided to retire. To celebrate, your colleagues, friends, family, and even former students plan and throw a party in your honor. There is good food and drink, some of your favorite music is playing, and people are playing games.

What food is there?: _____

What drinks are people having?: _____

What music is playing?: _____

What games are they playing?: _____



Halfway through the night, several people line up behind a microphone. One of them taps on the microphone to get everyone’s attention. You and the rest of your party guests look to the first speaker. They lean into the microphone and say,

“Thank you all for coming tonight. Those of us in line here wanted to share our thoughts and memories of the guest of honor tonight. We are friends, family members, partners, colleagues, and even students, and we all have things we want to say about their work as an educator and overall just what they mean to us.”

Who is standing in line to speak? Be as general or specific as you can be:



The first person approaches and begins to speak...

Who are they?: _____

What do they say about you as an educator and person?:

The second person approaches and begins to speak...

Who are they?: _____

What do they say about you as an educator and person?:

The remaining people all approach and begin to speak....

What things do they say about you?:

If your retirement party proceeded exactly like this, would you be satisfied with the purpose of your life and work?

Now, go through the exercise again. Give yourself the same amount of time to imagine and dive into what this experience will be like.

But make one change...you are not retiring in the future. You are being forced to retire now.

Go through each exercise again and reflect on how this changes things. Who would attend your retirement party right now? What would they say about you right now? And would you be satisfied with this outcome?

If there is any discrepancy between how your retirement party looks now, and how you would want it to look if you had complete control over it, where is that discrepancy”?

What is the minimal step you can take to bring these two versions of your retirement party into sync?
