EMPLOYEES` LEAVING TO RETIREMENT FROM PERSONAL MANAGEMENT AND SELF-MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The article deals with the process of employees` leaving to retirement and its determinants that do not often appear in practice. Retiring of employees from active work life forms a crucial part of personal management. This management represents a significant factor influencing a successful or unsuccessful adaptation of seniors to life after finishing their active working activity. However, more important in this context is the way of life people have during their whole productive working age, and not only at the time of their highest vitality, mental or psychical strength. This study focuses on these aspects in the given problematic area. At the same time, it highlights the need for examining and solving the period of the old age more comprehensively, from several scientific disciplines.

Keywords: involution, leaving to retirement, geragogy, well-being, workaholism, burn-out syndrome, personal management.

1 Introduction

Ageing and the old age belong to the essential concepts of geragogy. We can define the concept of old age as "... a certain period of the human life cycle that is related to the legal right for retirement and to the time when people notice several involution changes in their bodies and personalities."(Határ, 2014, p. 45). The traditional deficit model perceives ageing as a process of significant involution changes in the physical, psychological, social, health and working area. However, nowadays, there is preferred a newer model, the so-called developmental model of ageing. This model assumes that several processes occur during the human life, and they ultimately lead to positive consequences in the old age (Potášová, Golecká, 2004, sin: Ráczová, Klasová, 2012). Based on the results of Bonn study, Kruse and Lehrová (1989, in: Šolcová, 2011) concluded that ageing is a process of growth where appear new sources and potential skills. Some examples of favourable phenomena related to the increasing age indisputably include higher wisdom acquired with experience, practical intelligence, prudence, stability in opinions, ability to make judgements (Stuart-Hamilton, 1999, Vágnerová, 2000), as well as more effective emotional regulation (Tangney, Baumeister, Boone, 2004, in: Ráczová, Klasová, 2012). Older people often have increased persistence, mainly in monotonous activities. They are also more patient, and they can understand other people better. A characteristic feature of seniors is also their higher prudence and stability in opinions and relationships (Balogová, 2004).

To experience successful ageing, older people need to adapt to the changes related to the autumn of life. They have to accept their leaving to retirement and their income decrease. At the same time, they should create positive relationships with people and feel useful. Seniors can handle these problematic tasks only if they feel balanced, and they set real-life objectives. At the same time, they should accept themselves and have a full scale of interests. Ageing correctly is an art. We have to learn how to accept the old age and prepare for it positively (Balogová, 2004). Attitudes to ageing and old age represent a critical condition for the adaptation to ageing (Ráczová, Klasová, 2012). The lifelong optimistic attitude to life has a significant impact on active living. The recent surveys confirm that there is a direct link between the life satisfaction and the ability to have an active attitude to life. The general satisfaction of seniors is higher if they stay optimistic, and they deal with different activities and hobbies. It is essential so that they prepare for the old age, at least in an unplanned way. Several authors (Balogová, 2004, Čornaničová, 2007, Határ, 2013, Veteška, 2017 and others) think that the preparation for ageing should start much earlier than in the last years or months of productive life. We agree with the

opinion (Balogová, 2016, Ráczová, Marhevská, 2013, Veteška, 2017 and others) that preparation for ageing is an individual matter, and it should form part of the lifelong concept of individuals (Šolcová, 2011, Balogová, 2004, Čornaničová, Határ, 2014, Veteška, 2017 and others). According to Čornaničová (2007), preparation for ageing should decrease the social, psychological or biological risks of adaptation failure. At the same time, this preparation should prepare older people for the biological and psychosocial changes which are waiting for them. In this context, the preparation for ageing should run in three-time horizons. *The long-term preparation* is running all the life. It includes preparation for a healthy lifestyle as well as education to have an adequate attitude to ageing and older generation. *The tuning period* runs at the age of 40–60. The preparation for ageing uses the healthcare measures and psychological preparation as a prevention against ageing. *The short-term preparation* starts about five years before reaching the retirement age. This preparation aims to achieve the social security and safety of older people when they leave to retirement. It also focuses on the options to achieve a fluent transition in this process.

Several scientific and specialised publications in the field of geragogy, andragogy, sociology, or social work deal with the issue of creating suitable conditions for employees` leaving to retirement. Based on the study of foreign and local literature, we can judge that there exists a relatively small scientific research. There are not enough examples implementing research findings in the practice that would offer a comprehensive view at solving the given problematic issue in interaction with all the relevant scientific fields of study. It is also essential to study this topic holistically, cooperating with medical fields of study, a special education pedagogy, psychology, as well as with the age and personal management, human resources departments and others.

2 Specific features of the employees` leaving process from personal management perspective

It is indisputable that leaving to retirement represents one of the most significant social factors which influence the lives of older people. They experience the limitation in the range of their activities, they lose their previous programme, and their social contacts are smaller, as well. Seniors start focusing on their problems, and they attribute a high significance to them. This behaviour can lead to social isolation because seniors also stop being members of social groups they belonged to before (Balogová, 2004). Older people have to accept the fact that only some people from their previous contacts stay in touch with them, many people leave forever, and there are less and less people they can share their memories with (Šolcová, 2011). According to Balogová (2004), personal dissatisfaction (more frequent by men than by women) arises when seniors do not know what to do with their free time. Until very recently, work occupied a lot of their time, and after leaving to retirement, they suddenly have much time, and they can feel empty. Working 60-year-old men with a positive attitude to their retirement have more plans and a more optimistic vision of their future life than their peers who can see only negative aspects of their leaving to retirement. Seniors who make plans about their future already during their working period can adapt to retirement much faster and more easily. Here it is crucial to emphasise the importance of education, healthy lifestyle and preventive measures aimed at timely preparation for ageing. In this way, seniors get enough information, they can adequately develop their out-of-work activities and hobbies, and they prepare for their retirement.

The experience from practice show that the process of employees` leaving from active work life is frequently absent there despite being part of the central areas of personal management. Personal management deals mainly with the recruitment of new employees and their adaptation to the working environment. It focuses on the stabilisation of

employees, their education, professional growth, remuneration and evaluation in relation only to their working performance and not to the preparation for their leaving to retirement. There arises a question whether the current employers create suitable conditions for the adaptation of their employees to retirement and whether they stay in touch with their ex-employees after finishing their work contract. In many cases, these employees are people who have spent their whole productive working life just in one organisation or company. For this reason, "...the process of successive non-participation often connects with the process of gradual demotivation of employees." As mentioned in the quotation above, the leaving of employees represents one of the significant parts and activities of personal management. It requires not only a more consistent and careful application of psychological methods and knowledge but also the knowledge from other scientific disciplines when compared to their other activities. This requirement is crucial because this process of employees` leaving is not about a sudden interruption of all professional and social contacts between employees and the employer. It is instead a gentle and gradual "deactivation of employees". We would like to add that, before leaving to retirement, employees still follow and fulfil the common organisational objectives, adapting their strategies to the company strategies. For this reason, it is indispensable so that the employer's approach is correct and not causing difficult, frustrating or stressful situations or any other negative phenomena that could lead to negative psychological states, such as anxiety, the inferiority complex, or the feeling of failure. To avoid these negative phenomena, employers could make use of the following recommendations: to elaborate a timetable of employees` adaptation to the finishing of their active working life and to talk with them about their leaving. They should also inform employees about their further possible activities, whether at the same workplace or in other civic organisations and foundations. The retirement can initiate the following consequences: the loss of profession connects with the change of identity (people identifying themselves with their profession suddenly change into "retired" people, what can decrease their social status). Other consequences are: limitation or loss of their social contacts with colleagues, decreasing of their material standard, a radical change of their lifestyle and the necessity to acquire a new life standard, the need for the reorganisation of their free time with new activities. Effective adaptation to new conditions depends on several personal and social factors, such as the individual need for work, professional effectivity, social and financial needs, pre-retirement work conditions, the real situation and plans related to the own retirement or partner's retirement. The social policy of the given organisation represents a significant factor in this process. It derives from the set of rules valid in State politics in the care about employees. This area of employer's activity deals with bespeaking of employees` needs which are not related only to their working performance or results. This obligatory (legal) care about employees consists of the creation and maintenance of suitable conditions for them during all periods of their working life, including the last period as well.

3 Chosen personal determinants in the employees` leaving process

It could seem that a smooth leaving of employees to retirement depends only on the quality of their leaving process. However, this process reflects the way of life employees have much earlier than at the end of their working career. Ageing is running through all human life from birth to death. In this context, we can talk about the preferences in current values. Many people think that the cause of the crisis in spiritual values is in the preference of satisfying material needs and the importance of financial profit. This life attitude often leads to the ignoring of the Work-Life Balance during the productive life. This phenomenon is related to workaholism and burn-out syndrome.

Employees with workaholic tendencies who reach the retirement age require a specific approach. "Workaholism is considered to be a professional deformation or illness with a common addiction to work." (Capponi, 1997, p. 58). The topic of

workaholism appeared in Slovakia as well, mainly in the last ten years. People often perceive workaholism as a destructive "lifestyle". (Nešpor, 1999). Essentially, workaholism is an exaggerated maladaptive effort to be accepted and praised by others and to acquire control by excessive working activity. Paradoxically, this hyper-compensation leads to their alienation from others. They often lose their control of the situation at work as well. They deal with so many issues that they are not able to handle them anymore. In their mind, these people with workaholic tendencies are motivated with ideas such as "Be strong, reliable, perfect and fast! Work hard!". They often have the following attitudes to work and other people: "If people do not work hard, they are lazy", "People judge others by their success and performance", "I have to use every moment in a useful way" or "The best work is the work I do myself". For people who want to change their workaholic tendencies we recommend, for example, the cognitive-behavioural therapy. This therapy primarily aims at changing more deep-rooted attitudes that push people to hyper-compensation. Another useful strategy is the training of assertive abilities such as refusing excessive requirements of others or requests for doing a favour, applying delegation of tasks, and accepting of own mistakes. Workaholism is frequent by personalities with anankastic features, with the need for perfection, control and success. It more often arises by men than by women. Mainly people with higher education can have these workaholic tendencies (Pešek, Praško, 2016). Occupations that require power, decision making and manipulating are riskier for workaholics because they include higher work tension and constant working. If employees with workaholic tendencies do not have their usual workload, they are anxious about the given situation (Nešpor, 1999). Let us imagine how these workaholics will cope with their leaving to retirement. How should the leaving process of employees with workaholic tendencies run? Who should the employer cooperate with to achieve a smooth ceasing of their participation? Our article wants to focus on these and many other questions as well.

The result of low workload can be the bore-out syndrome. On the other side, the result of excessive and longterm stressful work and the imbalance between the personal and private life can be the burn-out syndrome. In this context, Pešek and Praško (2016) say that people who are not able to notice their physical feelings have tendencies to work excessively. This attitude can quickly lead to the burn-out syndrome or other psychosomatic difficulties which alert people that they should slow down. A negative consequence of workaholism can be a significant limitation or distortion of important interpersonal relationships, activities and interests. In this way, these people gradually start feeling the burn-out syndrome. Freudenberger (1974), was the first one who defined the burn-out syndrome. He describes the life of a prospective architect who has many ambitious ideas, expectations and illusions about life. However, in his practice, the architect meets with unexpected and meaningless problems. He fights against them, but he gradually loses his enthusiasm. Finally, being completely frustrated and demotivated with the absurd life of the current society, he leaves his job and escapes to the African jungle. After the definition of this concept, there were elaborated many scientific studies about people with symptoms mentioned above. Currently, this concept has more meanings. Several authors think that burn-out syndrome is an expression of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and decreased personal performance. People who work with other people and they deal with their needs often experience this syndrome. Other authors add other statements to this definition. "It is a formally defined and subjectively experienced state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by longterm dealing with situations that are emotionally hard. A combination of two factors has the most frequent impact on these emotional requirements: high expectations and chronic situational stress." (Manoukian, 2009, p. 14 - 15). The following statement also specifies this concept. "The burn-out syndrome reflects the evident emotional and cognitive deterioration, exhaustion and tiredness connected with emotional distance and indifference to work problems and a sharp decrease of working performance." (Kalwas, 2007, p. 119). Summarising the definitions mentioned above, we can say that burn-out syndrome represents a loss of

professional and personal interest. This condition is a result of a process where people are very intensively involved in specific tasks to such a level that they lose their enthusiasm and motivation. The burn-out syndrome is the reaction to the situations that provoke excessive stress. It is a state of physical, emotional and psychological exhaustion often connected with the feeling of own failure, meaningless effort, lack of necessary energy and increasing depressions. Its beginning can have several reasons. They are related mainly to the working performance, the ability to cope with stressful situations and solve problems. Moreover, personal character also plays an essential role in burn-out syndrome. The external environment does not have to have a significant impact on personal reasons for employees. Employees with low self-confidence, low tolerance of workload and low resistance to stressful situations represent a group at highest risk. They do not have clarified their personal life goals, and they are not able to communicate with other people adequately. However, also "strong" individuals can experience burn-out syndrome in certain situations. These are mainly such employees who think that they do not need any relax, and they can handle everything without the need of other people (Stock, 2010). For this reason, it is crucial for everybody to pay adequate attention to the prevention and to plan regular joyful activities. If people have a full work timetable, it seems quite impossible to introduce these activities in it. However, not having enough free time can result in their gradual exhaustion, dissatisfaction or illness (Praško et al. 2006).

4 Possible aspects of self-management

From the facts mentioned above, it is evident that people who have kept a balance between their working and personal life during their productive period should not have a fundamental problem with their adaptation to retirement. To have a satisfying lifestyle, working people should try to achieve a reasonable balance between their working and personal life. (Bedrnová, et al., 2009). This attitude is the so-called work-life balance (W-L B). This concept appeared already in the '70s of the last century, and it dealt with the need for higher balance between working and family life. The issue of W-L B is a conflict because of the time spent at work to the detriment of time employees should dedicate to themselves within the time off work (Pisoňová, 2012 This time should consist of the time for relax and the time for family and friends. Pešek and Praško (2016) emphasise the emotional significance of work when the job and work stop being only the tools for financial security. More and more people seek a meaning of life and fulfilment of their emotional needs at work. They want to "belong somewhere", "be accepted" and "be useful and praised". Many people who live alone or in dysfunctional relationships perceive the organisation they work for and their colleagues and clients as the second /substitutional or, in some cases, as the only one family they have. As a result, there arise many problems because relationships at work cannot substitute family, and they cannot fully satisfy the unfulfilled emotional needs from childhood. Despite this fact, it is necessary to develop and cultivate relationships with colleagues at work. Work and all the working environment can be the source of satisfaction, joy, fulfilment as well as emotional stress. When being in stress, people are in the "doing mode" (see Picture 1). Incessant thinking about problems, planning and acting represent the typical features of this psychological attitude.

Picture 1: Psychological modes - Comparison of Being and Doing modes (Lyddy, Good, 2016)

DOING MODE (Mindfulness)	PROPERTY	BEING MODE (Goal-Directed Cognition)
Present	Temporal Focus	Past and future
Non-conceptual	Perception	Conceptual
Direct experience	Locus of reality	Narratives
Acceptance	Judgement	Evaluation
Self-quieted	Self	Self-centred
Goalless	Goals	Goal-directed
Intentional	Agency	Automatic

Segal, Wiliams, Teasdale (2002) describe the mind which we can imagine as a system consisting of several components influencing each other mutually. Between these components, there is an incessant flow of information. They create specific variable patterns which correspond to the needs of the organism and react to the impulses from the environment. One pattern of mental activity is dominant during one period. Subsequently, another pattern substitutes the previous one. We can imagine it as a car going through the city. The transmission gear changes according to the immediate needs. We can compare the given transmission gear speed to a specific psychological mode. Every transmission gear speed has its function, and it is suitable for a specific traffic situation. Similarly, all psychological modes has their function. Changes of psychological modes occur automatically, but we can also change them consciously. As in the transmission gear speed, the human mind cannot operate in two modes at the same time. The activity of one mode hinders the activity of other modes.

As we can see in Picture 1, the mind is in the "doing mode" when it finds out that there exist some discrepancies between how the matters occur or look like and how they should be. This finding provokes a specific negative emotion and mental, physical activity to reduce or remove this discrepancy. This process is running without problems if people know what is necessary to do. However, in some situations, when it is not clear what to do, or when it is not possible to do it, there persists the feeling of dissatisfaction. The attention focuses on the given discrepancy. The human mind permanently deals with possible options of how to remove this discrepancy. In this way, people focus on their future and past. They get only partially aware of their current situation. In general, this process of mental problem solving helps them. For this reason, people almost incessantly go to this mode fully automatically, without realising it. However, in some situations which cannot be easily solved, this mode can lead this activity to a vicious circle and worsen the given situation. The "being mode" represents an alternative to the "doing mode". The "being mode" is a direct and immediate experiencing of the present moment. Our attention focuses on the present moment and accepts the actual situation without trying to evaluate or change it. If we do not have to compare the current state and the desired state, we can fully concentrate on the present moment and experience it fully and deeply. We do not deal with the past nor with the future. We focus only on the presence and its flowing in every moment. In this way, our attitude to our thoughts and emotions changes, and they are perceived similarly as sounds or other expressions of living in the present moment. All appearing transient events just catch the attention of our mind, and then they disappear again. In the doing mode, we judge our emotions as negative or positive ones. The aim is to remove the negative emotions and keep the positive ones. On the contrary, in the being mode, we learn to handle the negative emotions, thoughts and feelings without direct acting to remove this negative experience. Similarly, we perceive the ideas such as "do this or do that" only as events of the mind that do not require our immediate reactions. However, it does not mean that this being mode is a state where all activity stops. On the contrary, people can be active also in the being mode, and they can be inactive in the doing mode. The difference is in the attitude to achieve the goal. For example, people can try to relax so much that they get into the doing mode. Then they are irritated, tense and dissatisfied. On the other hand, they can wash the dishes and focus on conscious perceiving of every movement done in this activity. They do not focus on the remaining time to finish this activity. In this way, they are in the being mode (Segal, Wiliams, Teasdale, 2002).

It is possible to switch between the "doing mode" and the "being mode", but the speed of switching depends on the level of stress and tension, the current psychological conditions, as well as on the amount of relaxing activities, time and the given options. Several activities help people to switch into the being mode where they can experience a pleasant experience of living "here and now". This switching is quite fast if we employ physical activity, sport, playing musical instruments, sauna, muscular relaxation, or we have pleasant meetings with other people. Alcohol and other drugs are generally counterproductive because

they cause only short-term and apparent relaxation. It is just a temporary suppression of tiredness and stress because they will appear again in more significant intensity. All these substances weaken the psychic, and as a result, it is less resistant (Pešek, Praško, 2016). People in the western culture have automatic switching into the "doing" mode, and this mode is activated automatically in ordinary life as well. However, it is necessary to achieve the balance between the "doing" mode and the "being" mode. The first step is that people get aware of other alternatives, and they are free to decide which psychological mode they choose in the given situation (Segal, Wiliams Teasdale, 2002).

Time planning (planning of activity and relax)
In general, people who work too hard can stay longer hours at work and then handle the housework or study. In the evenings or at the weekends, they spend most of the time relaxing or sleeping. They think that they will feel better in this way. Praško et al. (2006) think that this model of behaving is frustrating because these people do not have enough time for themselves and for pleasant activities they like. As a result, they stop meeting with their friends and family, and they give up exercising and other hobbies. When people do not have enough time for themselves, this can lead to such consequences as the feeling of tiredness and reduced ability to concentrate. Tasks they enjoyed before, become for them unpleasant duties. They get more irritable than before, and they have more conflicts with other people. If they want to change this situation, the most crucial strategy is to create a harmonious lifestyle.

The correct time management has significant psycho-hygienic importance in the prevention of stress. This skill is essential mainly at this time when people are in a constant hurry and time stress. We can acquire more free time with a more rational management of time we have to our disposal. We can elaborate an annual, monthly or weekly plan (Ďurdiak, 2001). It is crucial to plan events once a week in such a way so that there is enough time for pleasant activities, contacts with other people, exercising and relax every day. In this way, we can reduce the overload during the day and week as well. The measure of effectivity is not the amount of work done or the number of entertaining activities. It is rather our feeling of satisfaction that we have managed our time well. When we can manage our time well, we experience less stress, and our mind is much calmer. We feel to have our life under control (Pešek, Praško, 2016). Reduction of time loss represents a significant part of the time management. For example, long superficial dialogues or meaningless watching of TV "steal" our time (Ďurdiak, 2001). Many people have difficulties in managing their time. For this reason, they often experience problems such as chaotic activities, unbalanced time plan, delaying of tasks or excessive working. In this case, it can help them to take notes of planned activities during 14 days. They should also mark whether they fulfilled the given activities during each day. The analysis of the obtained results can help us in evaluating whether we can manage our time in a realistic and structured way. Creation of the daily regime means that we introduce time order in our activities. This regime helps us to create a certain rhythm which favourably influences our body. On the contrary, sudden changes in this rhythm exhaust our body.

For rational time management, Pešek and Praško (2016) recommend the following steps: (1) *We should have a balanced daily time plan. It should contain performing and relaxing activities* (it should contain at least 30% of activities aimed at performance such as work or study. This daily time plan should also contain at least 30% of activities focused on delightful, relaxing activities and fun), (2) *It is good to reward ourselves with a short relaxing activity after the time of doing activities aimed at the performance* (it is useful to plan less appealing or performing activities at the beginning of the working day. After a particular time, we can reward ourselves with a short 10-minute relaxing activity such as tea or coffee break, snack or listening to music we like. In the afternoon, the number of performing activities should reduce, and there should be more delightful activities), (3) *It is useful to divide longer tasks into*

smaller parts (it is good to do just one task at the same time and do not switch between several activities or start another activity immediately after finishing the previous one. We should have short breaks between activities), (4) *It is useful to write the monthly, weekly or daily plan in advance with a realistic schedule and time reserve* (it is enough to write just keywords and colourfully differentiate the planned activities, (5) *This time plan is not an order; it is just our guidance* (in case when we are not successful in fulfilling it, we can analyse possible reasons of this failure without being angry at ourselves), (6) *The set amount of time for performing an activity is more important than the amount of work done* (if we plan that we want to do one activity for one hour, it is necessary to perform this task only one hour regardless the amount of work we managed to do. In this way, we learn to accept the self-discipline, and we reduce the risk that we will not have enough time for other planned activities).

To manage the time correctly, we should assess the importance of the given tasks, duties and activities. We can classify them in four categories*: important – urgent, important – not urgent, not important – urgent and not important – not urgent* (see Picture 2) We will mainly focus on the important activities. However, we should not forget the activities which are "important – not urgent" because these activities are satisfying, meaningful and their neglecting can lead to stress. In order to increase the time for "important" activities, we can reduce the time for activities we have assessed as "not important and not urgent". In practice, it means that we will assess the importance of tasks. If the tasks are less important, we will not do them at 70%; we will learn to modify them, to delegate them to other people or to refuse them. The time reserve for planned activities can help us to solve important and urgent tasks (Pešek, Praško, 2016).

Picture 2: Examples of four categories of tasks and activities according to their importance and urgency

TASKS ACTIVITIES	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	*My colleague suddenly gets ill and it is necessary to substitute him. My car which I need, breaks down. I am in an unpleasant emotional state.*	*Preparation of an important presentation.* *To spend time with family and friends.* *Sport, hobbies, learning of a foreign language.*
	To manage it personally as soon as possible	To plan and carry out these tasks continuously
NOT IMPORTANT	*Tidying of a flat Doing homework with children Updating of the catalogue of social services for the Regional Office*	*Reading of tabloid newspapers and magazines Watching TV Playing PC games*
	Delegate to somebody else or to do it just at 70%	To do it only a short time for relaxing or postpone it

Many people have a problem with time management because they are fully occupied with activities from the categories "urgent and important" and "urgent and not important". When they want to relax, they often choose activities only from the category "not important – not urgent". At the same time, they postpone or forget activities that are in the category "important and not urgent". These activities are important for our general satisfaction, and they give a deeper meaning to our life. If we neglect these activities, they slowly become "important and urgent" activities or problems, and we get in the stress. For

example, longer neglecting of our physical condition and nutrition can lead to health problems in higher age. Longer neglecting of our partner because of excessive working can lead to our separation when he/she finds somebody else. Subsequently, the person with workaholic tendencies will have to deal more time with conflicts and divorce (Pešek, Praško, 2016).

Plan for the weekend belongs to the weekly plan. It should contain at least one sport activity (minimally one-hour long, such as running, swimming, cycling) and one contact with friends (at least, a two-hour-long meeting). At the end of the week, it is essential to revise the plan and its fulfilling. There should follow some kind of rewarding (e.g. appraisal, small reward) after this controlling. Introducing an order in our issues means that we can use our energy better. On the contrary, disorder leads to distractibility and unrest. We can save our energy when concentrating on what we are doing and if we know the purpose of our actions. (Ďurdiak, 2001).

Relax and relaxing activities
Research results show that people who set only the longterm aims are less happy than people who set short-term and more specific aims. The clearer is the objective, the earlier we concentrate on the given activity. At the same time, we avoid the possible distraction of our attention (Jackson, Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). It is necessary to plan also the relaxing activities and include them in the day plan (small pleasant activities), the weekly plan (meetings with friends, physical activities) and the annual plan (e.g. a holiday). In this context, Pešek and Praško (2016) recommend to divide delightful, relaxing activities into "pleasure" and "satisfaction". "Pleasure" contains all activities that provoke mainly intense and momentaneous emotional or sensual experience (e.g. eating). "Satisfaction" includes our more prolonged activities. These activities take our energy, and they weaken our conscience. We focus on other issues, e.g. we deal with some tasks, we learn something new, or we do a favour to a friend who needs our support. Both types improve our mood, and they lead to the feelings of meaningfulness and general relaxation. Research done by Csikszentmihalyi (2015, in: Pešek, Praško, 2016) confirm that free-time activities which require our effort, creativity or skills represent the most physically and psychologically relaxing activities (activities such as sport, games, artistic activities and hobbies). According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), these activities together with developing of symbolical skills (poetry, philosophy or mathematics) can help us to achieve optimal living - the state of "flow". In this state, some activity can absorb us so much that nothing else seems relevant to us. Living itself is so joyful that we will do this activity despite the costs related to it. Just this activity is essential for us.

We would like to emphasise that longterm inactivity is not a relax because it does not fasten our regeneration, but it leads to atrophy (e.g. by insufficient moving our striated muscles begin to atrophy. A similar process occurs with the nerve cells as well.) Active relax depends on the type of work people perform. People who work mentally relax by physical activities and, on the other hand, physically working people enjoy relaxing by mental work. To improve relaxing, we recommend to change the surroundings. An ideal situation is when we spend two or three hours doing outdoor activities every day. The best surrounding for relaxing and recovering is nature (e.g. hiking, sport, manual work). During the week, at least one day we should devote to relax. Otherwise, we can get chronically tired (Ďurdiak, 2001). More permanent and better relaxation of our body starts after several days what we have left the surroundings connected with our "doing" mode or stress. For example, this type of relaxation occurs when we have an extended weekend at the cottage or longer holiday (Pešek, Praško, 2016).

If we deal only with activities we "should" or have to do, we gradually lose the joy in our life. We can forget experiencing the joy if we do not use our emotions. They weaken significantly. Without feeling the joy, our performance will be weaker as well. In this way, the activity gets harder, and the amount of tasks does not decrease. On the contrary, there are more and more

tasks we have to do. If we do not have time for our delightful activities, we get into a vicious circle: the less delightful activities we do, the more unhappy we feel. The less joy we experience, the less we will involve in delightful activities. If we want to stop this vicious circle of losing the joy in our life, it is essential to find the balance between the tasks (duties), delightful activities and relax. We will know that this process has been successful if we handle less pleasant tasks more quickly. We will notice that we are not angry, we are kinder to other people, and we have more vitality and energy. (Praško, Prašková, 2001).

Some people say that they are in permanent stress, and they should relax more, but they do not have time. These people often have tendencies to the perfectionism, saying that they "have to" work all the time, look after their household and do other tasks. Otherwise, they would feel empty and guilty for doing nothing. Stressful attitudes can also hinder the relax. It is essential to get aware of these attitudes, think and doubt about them. Subsequently, we have to substitute them with more rational attitudes (see Picture 3) (Pešek, Praško, 2016).

Picture 3: Examples of inadequate attitudes and their possible alternatives

AN INADEQUATE ATTITUDE	A MORE BALANCED ATTITUDE
I have to work all the time; otherwise, I am lazy.	*Regular and sufficient relax contributes to higher working performance*
I have to do something useful all the time to use the time productively.	*Many tasks are not so important, I can do them only at 70% and then I can relax. Relax supports the regeneration of my energy.*
I do nothing in time.	*I have much work. However, if I organise my time correctly, I will do what is necessary.*
I have to be successful in everything.	*I am happy if I am successful. However, if I fail in something, nothing wrong will happen. On the contrary, this experience of failure can enrich me.*
Small negligence or mistake can result in a catastrophe with far-reaching consequences	*Small negligence usually results in small or no negative consequences*
The value of individuals depends on their success and working performance	*Their success and working performance can determine the value of individuals, but there are also other criteria, such as how they handle their problems and adversity.*

One of the main characteristic features of stressful attitudes is that they are factually incorrect or unrealistic. They often represent excessive requirements for oneself and other people. They are not constructive, i.e. they tend to hinder and not help us in fulfilling our aims. They influence our perception in a way that we selectively notice those events that will confirm our attitudes. At the same time, we ignore those facts that will question these attitudes. Behaviour that allows us to fulfil our attitude leads to strong positive emotions. On the contrary, behaviour disturbing our attitudes leads to intense emotional stress (Pešek, Praško, 2016).

To achieve physical and mental relaxation, we can use different forms of muscle relaxations, calm breathing or other relaxation techniques. It is also essential to keep the rules of sleeping hygiene as well as the rules of correct nutrition.

Mindfulness
A tool that helps us to switch consciously from the doing mode into the being mode is mindfulness. This concept is a translation of the Indian word „sati". Mindfulness is based on the ability to focus on the present moment. It requires full participation in that

experience and an attitude of nonjudgmental acceptance. It is an significant concept in both Western psychology and various Eastern spiritual traditions (Marlatt et al., 2004). If we are able to decide what we will perceive and how we will perceive it, we get the so-called „leading gear lever" which allows to change psychological degrees according to our needs (Segal, Wiliams, Teasdale 2002, see also Šlepecký, Praško et al., 2018). Currently, there does not exist a common definition of mindfulness. Some authors understand it as a situational characteristic feature or a quality of conscience. Other authors define it as a layout of personal features or abilities. For others, it represents a way of processing the contents of experience (Látalová, Pillárik, 2014). Western psychology defines mindfulness as a cognitive skill or a metacognitive state of detached awareness (Marlatt et al., 2004). Kabat-Zinn (1994) describes mindfulness as a form of meditation in everyday life. It means that we focus our attention in a certain direction, consciously at the present moment and without judgement (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Benda (2007) emphasises that mindfulness is a common ability of mind and all people are equipped with this quality (to some extent). We can train and develop it, e. g. the skill to concentrate. In contrast to metacognitive skills, mindfulness does not include awareness at the level of concepts. When compared to observation, mindfulness is passive and receptive. Mindfulness (as the ability to record objectively all mental and physical phenomena experienced at the present moment) has an open, accepting (non-judging), as well as kindly curious attitude (Benda, 2011).

Mindfulness as a means to, or form of, acceptance is an ancient concept (Fruzzetti, Iverson, 2004). It is directly related to the emotional balance, pro-social ethical values and learning about the four immeasurable qualities: compassion, loving–kindness, empathetic joy and equanimity (Wallace, 2006, in: Látalová, Pillárik, 2014). Several empirical findings confirm the positive influence of applying strategies of mindfulness during the last decades. They observed a positive influence of mindfulness on improvement of health and the immune system (Baer, 2007), increasing of well-being (Baer, 2007), emotional experiencing and emotional regulation (Kabat-Zinn et al., 1994), memory (van Vugt, 2015), positive workplace impacts (Lyddy, Good, 2016), improvement in the area of interpersonal relationships (Hayes, 2004), reduction of stress (Shapiro et al., 1998), prevention of the burn-out syndrome (Carson, Langer, 2006). In fact, there are seven "miracles of mindfulness" that involve attention, understanding, and transaction or transformation (Nhat Hanh, 1998, in: Fruzzetti, Iverson, 2004. Here is their definition: (1) *mindfulness is a means of experiencing* (full awareness, contacting) *of everything what is in our presence*, (2) *mindfulness is a means of facilitating other people's presence* (awareness), (3) *mindfulness is a means of nourishing or supporting objects of our attention*, (4) *mindfulness of others is a means of ameliorating their suffering*, (5) *mindfulness is a means of "looking deeply" or observing the relationships and interdependence among us*, (6) *mindfulness is a means of understanding, or becoming aware of connections between individuals and their histories, environments, and us*, and (7) *mindfulness is a means of transformation of suffering into being, into effective action, into acceptance, into freedom, and/or into peace and joy*. These principles of mindfulness were successfully translated into individual psychological skills. They have important treatment effects across many studies (Fruzzetti, Iverson, 2004).

According to Segal, Wiliams, Teasdale (2002), the ability to act with mindfulness allows us to switch off the „autopilot" and get aware of the state of our own mind. In this way, it is possible to switch between the „doing" mode and the „being" mode. The contents of ideas is not important. We passively observe them, we do not judge their validity, we only accept them together with their emotional impact. The basis is the observation and acceptance of our own ideas and emotions. We have to adopt the position of „an overview of a distanced non-participating observer". Linehan's mindfulness skills (1993, in: Fruzzetti, Iverson, 2004) consist of two separate, but very connected subsets: the *"what" skills* (what to do to be mindful) and the *"how" skills* (how to engage in these behaviors). The "what" skills include: (1) *observing, noticing, or becoming aware of what is present* (inside the person or outside), (2) *describing what has just been observed. The used language is truly descriptive,* and (3) *participating fully in the behavior (feeling, thinking sensing, acting), without many self-conscious mental activities; letting go of extraneous verbalizations* (e.g., descriptions, evaluations, judgements). The "how" skills include: (1) *being non-judgemental, without right–wrong, should–shouldn't, and good–bad evaluations,* (2) *paying attention to one thing at a time in the present*, and (3) *putting energy only into actions or activities that are in accordance with one's values and life goals* (e.g., "describing" a fire burning out of control would not be mindful. However, getting to safety, warning of others, or attempting to extinguish it safely would be mindful).

5 Conclusion

Following the facts mentioned above, it is evident that society should pay much more attention to the issue of preparation for life in the old age and leaving of employees to retirement. The current bibliography offers detailed information dealing with characteristic features of seniors` personalities and the periodisation of the human life cycle. It describes the physiological, psychological and social changes happening to people in the old age, as well as the endogenous and exogenous determinants of seniors` personalities. However, the society should more thoroughly implement this system of preparation of adults for retirement into practice (Határ, 2011). At the same time, this idea represents an appeal for the social-political agenda of every state which should take into consideration relevant scientific findings and recommendations when satisfying the needs and interests of seniors.

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