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ALL IN

My older friends understand what it means to go *'All In'* and we're not talking about playing poker or of being exhausted. For them being *'All In'* is being fully committed to whatever group or cause that they choose to support.

Recently we have seen some renewed interest in the phrase thanks to one Gian-Paul Gonzalez who used it as part of a speech designed to inspire the New York Giants as they got ready for the Play Offs. It seems to be working --- just ask the Green Bay Packers! Going *'All In'* is a poker term that is the equivalent of *'Betting the Farm'*. In poker it is betting all your chips on one last hand.

Most of us diversify and hedge our bets in order to play it safe. *'All In'* almost sounds a little irresponsible --- but sometimes it is the best choice. During World War II your enlistment was for the *'duration'* --- now how's that fpr being *'All In'*! However long it took for the war to end is how long you would be in!

These days it seems as though a great many people avoid commitment at every turn. We like the safety of being on the sidelines instead of taking the risks of being out on the field. These days I see more and more older people leaving the comfort of the stands and heading onto the field! I'm inspired by people whose passion for life is so great that it is almost contagious.

Back in the *'old days'* people used to get very tentative about their retirement. Some would go into complete denial about their age as though it was something to be ashamed of. These days it is very common for older people to take pride in their age and in their retirement lifestyle. Being *'retired'* is no longer a bad thing to be!

What's the difference? Today I find more and more people taking charge of their retirement and not settling for what has gone before. They won't tolerate being treated as a *'number'*. They custom design their retirement to fit their

needs! I'm very fortunate to be surrounded by older friends who don't wait for permission before taking advantage of opportunity for an activity. They learned early on the old Jesuit saying*: "It is better to beg for forgiveness than to ask for permission"*. Younger people are sometimes afraid of failure – so much so that it keeps them from trying something new. Older people know that they have already survived all kinds of failure and have no reluctance to taking chances on trying something as yet unproven. That old stereotype of older people being stuffy and unwilling to try new things is just not true! It is older people who are the backbone of our churches and most every not-for-profit. These are the people who not only participate – but they commit. They don't just show up at meetings --- they bring the ideas that make things happen! It's not that younger people don't care --- they certainly do --- but they don't always know how to translate it into action. The *'Occupy'* groups have plenty of enthusiasm --- but I don't see a clear connection to how that translates into the commitment it takes to actually work for change. Protesting what you don' t like can be good if it creates an awareness of a problem ---- but it takes commitment to turn that awareness into a solution.

For those of you who are middle aged – or maybe even a little older – you have some exciting times to look forward to creating. It's not going to be a retirement that you have to fit into --- it's going to be one that you design, experiment with, keep or maybe toss out and start over! It will be a lot of things – but it won't be boring!

Embracing retirement means committing to making it work – not hoping that the right things will happen at the right time. It means being impatient, assertive and as pushy has you have to be to make things happen. You have a choice --- you can play it safe and hope for the best --- or you can go *'All In'* and make it something wonderfully special!

I vote for going All In!

Age Well!

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