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# Leisure as Transformation

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*second edition*

**Christopher R. Edginton**

**Peter Chen**

**SAGAMORE**  
P U B L I S H I N G

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The difficulty lies not so much in developing  
new ideas as in escaping from old ones.

—John Maynard Keynes

# Contents

Preface, second edition .....	ix
Preface, first edition .....	x
Acknowledgments .....	xiii
About the Authors .....	xv
<b>1 Leisure and Transformation.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	1
Living in a Leisure-Oriented Society .....	4
What is Leisure?.....	7
Leisure: Toward What Ends? .....	11
Linking Leisure and Transformation .....	13
Summary .....	15
<b>2 What is Transformation? Why is it Important?.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Introduction .....	19
What is Transformation? .....	20
Why is Transformation Important? .....	25
Summary .....	34
<b>3 The Power of Transformation.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Introduction .....	37
Transformation: Individual Perspectives.....	38
Transformation: Community Perspectives .....	42
Transformation: National Perspectives.....	46
Summary .....	49
<b>4 A Framework for Transformation.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Introduction .....	53
A Framework for Leisure Transformation .....	54
Systems and Transformation.....	56
Development Factors: Social, Cultural, and Economic.....	58
Summary .....	64

<b>5</b>	<b>Leisure and Personal Transformation.....</b>	<b>67</b>
	Introduction .....	67
	Leisure and the Individual.....	68
	Individual Transformation.....	71
	Benefits of Leisure .....	72
	Constraints to Leisure.....	78
	Summary .....	80
<b>6</b>	<b>Leisure and Community Transformation.....</b>	<b>83</b>
	Introduction .....	83
	Livable Communities.....	85
	Community Transformation.....	88
	Summary .....	98
<b>7</b>	<b>Leisure and National Transformation.....</b>	<b>101</b>
	Introduction .....	101
	Indicators of National Quality of Life.....	102
	National Leisure-Oriented Policy.....	115
	National Leisure-Oriented Programs and Services .....	118
	Summary .....	121
<b>8</b>	<b>Transformation and the Role of Leisure Service Providers.....</b>	<b>125</b>
	Introduction .....	125
	Leisure and Social Reform .....	126
	A Framework for Basic Rights: Securing and Affirming.....	129
	Engaging in Critical Inquiry: Promoting Social Reconstruction.....	136
	Managing Leisure Resources .....	139
	Summary .....	142
<b>9</b>	<b>Your Own Professional Transformation.....</b>	<b>145</b>
	Introduction .....	145
	The Advantages of Transformation.....	146
	Practicing What We Preach .....	152
	Transformation and Lifestyles .....	154
	Summary .....	157

<b>10</b>	<b>Enabling Organizational Transformation .....</b>	<b>161</b>
	Introduction .....	161
	Organizations, Managers, and Change.....	162
	Change-Oriented People .....	165
	Changing Organizational Structure.....	166
	Changing Organizational Processes .....	167
	Changing Organizational Culture.....	168
	Summary .....	170
<b>11</b>	<b>Transformation: Creating Hope.....</b>	<b>173</b>
	Introduction .....	173
	The Importance of Creativity .....	175
	What is Hope?.....	176
	Hope and Optimism .....	177
	Hope is an Inspiration.....	179
	Hope and Progress .....	180
	Making the Connection.....	182
	Living in Anxious Times .....	184
	Summary .....	185
	Index .....	187

### **List of Tables**

Table 5.1	Partial List of Leisure Benefits
Table 7.1	Rankings of Happiness
Table 7.2	Happiness Rankings of Geographic Regions of the World
Table 7.3	Annual Hours Worked 2012
Table 7.4	Distribution of Leisure Time 2006
Table 7.5	Life Expectancy at Birth

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1.1	A Continuum of the Leisure Experience
Figure 4.1	A Framework for Leisure and Transformation
Figure 6.1	What Community Services Motivate People?
Figure 7.1	Leisure Time in a Typical Day by Country
Figure 10.1	A Model of Organizational Transformation

# Preface

to the second edition

The second edition of *Leisure as Transformation* extends and amplifies the original purpose of the book. We wanted to explore ways in which leisure serves to transform individuals, communities, and nations as a whole. Issues related to leisure and its relationship to quality of life, well-being, and community livability as well as human happiness continues to be debated and discussed throughout the world. Leisure is central to these concerns and as a rightful and important place in the lives of individuals, as well as the establishment of social policy to support the development of leisure amenities and other resources.

Society may very well be moving through another major paradigm shift as we transition from the technology/information/knowledge-based era to one focused on creativity. Certainly, in developed countries there is a shift away from industrial production to more innovative and creative endeavors as well as a stronger focus on various forms of popular culture including architecture, art, fashion, film, media, music, and the performing arts. Further, the evolution of technology continues to have a dramatic influence on both the work and leisure behavior and patterns of individuals. As technology continues to evolve giving rise to new forms of universal connectivity and networking, the ways in which individuals communicate and connect with one another will change.

The universal quest for happiness and meaningfulness in one's life continues to be a central theme pursued by individuals throughout the world. Happiness, although subjectively measured, is directly related to one's quality of life, well-being, and the livability of any community. Although difficult to define, we often associate finding happiness and joy with the pursuit of leisure. This occurs because leisure provides individuals with a sense of freedom and the ability to choose, which are key elements in experiencing human happiness.

This edition has been revised to include updated facts, figures, and statistics. New chapter sections have been included emphasizing additional factors influencing leisure such as environmental factors, changing demographics, social media, and universal connectivity and urbanization, to name a few. Additional information regarding the incorporation of a continuum to represent the leisure experience has been included. The continuum suggests that leisure may be seen as casual and informal at one end; and at the other, highly structured and formal. Further, sections discussing hope and optimism and living in an anxious time have been provided in the edition.

# Preface

## to the first edition

The genesis of this book come from a desire to better understand how leisure promotes, facilitates, and enables transformation. Leisure holds infinite possibilities for change. As an expression of individual interest, often reflecting broader social and cultural values, leisure provides individuals, communities, and nations with enlarged opportunities to choose desirable life pursuits. Leisure can serve as a wellspring for the generation of new creative perspectives for living one's life. As such, leisure is an optimal medium for transformation. Leisure provides opportunities for individuals to discover, explore, and create new ideas in response to the need for transformation.

We live in a time when we are subject to great changes on an ongoing and continuous basis. Today, without question, the world we live in is in a state of constant transformation. The ability of individuals and leisure service professionals to proactively address the changes faced on a daily basis may very well be related to one's future success, prosperity, and perhaps even survival. Can we manage the process of transformation? Perhaps. Will individuals and leisure service professionals be the victims of change or its masters? These are difficult questions, yet they require a response if we believe that we can influence our progress as humans in a positive fashion.

We chose *Leisure as Transformation* as the title of this book because we felt that the properties contained within the leisure experience do, in fact, contribute to changing the lives of individuals. Experiencing leisure is transformational in and of itself. Individuals change as they experience leisure. Leisure is a dynamic life experience, not a static one. Even if one is using leisure in a passive sense, one is being transformed. By simply centering one's self, seeking the stillness that comes from the process of calming one's inner self or finding peace within, transformation occurs.

We have blended both Eastern and Western perspectives in the development of this book. A universal perspective of transformation was sought in preparing this work. The process of transformation is as much a philosophical one as it is grounded in practical processes and procedures. What we value and what we believe about the process of transformation is important, but we also sought to ground our thinking in the ideas of others, including many of the great philosophical thinkers of both Eastern and Western cultures. Also, we have offered some practical processes and procedures in managing not only personal professional transformation, but have offered a framework and strategy that can be applied in the management of leisure service organizations, as well.

The authors' partnership in preparing *Leisure as Transformation* emerged as a result of a number of chance occurrences at professional meetings first in Hong Kong and later in Korea. Our mutual admiration for one another, as well as our deep commitment to providing a meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students, led us to this effort. Professor Peter Chen's expertise in philosophy as applied to education, especially physical education, has provided a unique perspective for our professional efforts. Dr. Christopher Edginton's focus on management of leisure service organizations has provided a framework for the discussion, especially regarding processes and procedures that may be employed in the aiding of the transformational process.

Primarily, the book's aim was to assist the newly engaged leisure service provider in framing a response to today's most important and consistent societal phenomena—the ongoing, ever-present factor of change. There is a need to conceptualize strategies that address change and to aid in the process of individual, organizational, community, and national transformation. The pervasiveness of change in contemporary society must be attended to in order for the leisure service provider to be successful. This book offers a perspective for leisure service providers that will assist them in not only their professional transformations, but also in their personal ones.

We have included many quotations from influential thinkers, educators, professionals, and individuals. Drawing from philosophers, politicians, statesmen, social critics, educators, and others, we hope to share their particular insights and wisdom. We believe the key insights, thoughts, and reflections of others will bring greater focus, clarity, and understanding to the subject matter presented. As Oscar Wilde reminds us, "Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation."

# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our colleagues at the World Leisure Organization (WLO) for their inspired leadership for advancing leisure on a worldwide basis. In particular, we would like to acknowledge and thank member of WLO Board of Directors, Dr. Roger Coles, Dr. Miklos Banhidi, Dr. Lawal Marafa, Maliga Naidoo, Dr. Andre Thibault, Dr. Lucetta Tsai, Dr. Jane Zhou, and Dr. Ricardo Uvinha for their continued intellectual stimulation. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. Derek Casey for taking us on a thought-provoking intellectual journey during his tenure as Chair of WLO's board of directors. Derek's ability to abstract complex ideas into simplified concepts that could be effectively communicated to others was one of his very keen skills. Also, we would like to thank our other professional colleagues associated with WLO, including Dr. Iradge Ahrabi-Fard, Dr. Jason Lau, Dr. Steve Anderson, Ian Cooper, Dr. Geoff Godbey, and Dr. Winnie Wong. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of Johanna Smith, Jackie Albrecht, Abubakarr Jalloh, Emma Nie, and Kristina Kofoot to this effort.

Over time, we have been blessed with the thinking and writing of our colleagues who have influenced our professional ideas and concepts. In particular, we would like to thank John Williams, Dr. Joe Bannon, and Dr. Don DeGraaf for their continuous support over the life of the senior author's career. The coauthor would like to thank several of his colleagues in Asia and New Zealand, including Dr. Jasson Chiang, Dr. Norman Lin, Dr. Frank Fang, Dr. Tae Won Jun, Dr. Mario Imson, Dr. Kazuhiko Watanabe, Dr. Tim Chen, Dr. Margaret Tang, Dr. City Hsieh, Dr. Ellen Fan, Dr. Frank Tsai, Professor Horace Chen, and Professor Alex Chen for their support and encouragement. In New Zealand, we wish to thank Dr. Roger Green, Mr. Mike Cowell, and Dr. Mike Boyes for their support as well. Both authors would like to thank Dr. Ming-Kai Chin. He has been a driving force for much of our professional work in recent years, providing multiple opportunities for speaking and publishing works internationally.

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Most importantly, the senior author would like to thank his wife, Susan, for her continued support throughout his entire academic career. She has provided unwavering encouragement and support. I would also like to thank my children, Carole and David. I am very proud of both of their accomplishments. Carole is an instructor at the University of Northern Iowa and Mt Mercy University, teaching cultural anthropology. She is simply a great teacher and has the knack for bringing ideas and concepts alive in ways that are stimulating, dynamic, and thought provoking. David is a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State. His tours of duty have taken him to the Middle East, South America, and Oceania. He represents the United States of America exceedingly well. Carole has two daughters, Hanna and Lily. Hanna now attends high school, and Lily is in elementary school. David has two sons, Jacob and Joseph. They are both whip smart, personable, and very good looking. They will both be great catches some day.

As in the past, the coauthor offers his sincere appreciation to his wife, Jean, for her continued support and encouragement throughout his entire married life. Standing in tandem with the coauthor over the past 56 years, she has worked tirelessly with great enthusiasm and a sense of purpose continuing to support his initiatives. To his daughters: Annie, Mindy, Angel, and Mai, and his sons-in-law: Ralph, Ross, and John, he also extends his sincere gratitude. As citizens of the world, his grandchildren, James, Joanna, Esther, Zachary, Deborah, Rebecca, Andrew, Max, and Jack have had the advantage of learning and living in a mix of Eastern and Western cultures. They represent the coauthor's lifetime dream of 55 years of melting together Eastern and Western thinking.

# About the Authors

**Christopher R. Edginton** is a professor in the School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services at the University of Northern Iowa. While serving as Secretary General of the World Leisure Organization, he advanced leisure on a worldwide basis. He founded the nationally award-winning Camp Adventure™ Child & Youth Services program, providing high-quality, high-impact child and youth services on a worldwide basis. The program serves over 500,000 individuals annually and has been offered in 30 countries. Some of his recent books include *Leisure Programming: A Service-Centered and Benefits Approach*; *Youth Programs: Promoting Quality Services*; *Leisure and Life Satisfaction: Foundational Perspectives*; *Leadership for Recreation and Leisure Service Programs and Settings*; *Managing Recreation, Park, and Leisure Services*; *Leisure: Basic Concepts*; *Leadership for Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services*; and *Youth Work: Emerging Perspectives in Youth Development*. Among his honors are the Distinguished Fellow Award and Innovative Teaching Award, Society of Park and Educators; J. B. Nash Scholar Award; National Literary Award, National Recreation and Park Association; Honor Award and R. Tait McKinzie Award, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; Biennial Distinguished Scholar Award, International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance; Charles K. Brightbill Award and has been named a Legend in Parks and Recreation by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. He has been elected as a Fellow in the Iowa Academy of Education; Academy of Leisure Sciences; American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration; American Leisure Academy; World Leisure Academy; and North American Society for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport, and Dance.

**Peter Chen** is professor in the Graduate Institute of Sport Coaching Science at Chinese Culture University, Taiwan. He also holds an appointment as a professor at The National Taiwan Normal University. Professor Chen formerly served as principle lecturer in the Dunedin College of Education at University of Otago, New Zealand. His university experience has reflected 25 years of service in the west and 26 in the east, teaching in the areas of coaching leadership, training methodology, pedagogy in physical education, philosophical perspectives in physical education, and philosophical perspectives between east and west. His awards and honors include Outstanding Teacher Award, Chinese Culture University; Biennial Distinguished Scholar Award, International Council of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance; Distinguished Scholar Award, University of Northern Iowa, USA; and Outstanding Alumnus Award, National Taiwan Normal

University. Among his recent books are *Leadership in Teaching Physical Education Beyond 2000*; *Wisdom Formulas in Action*; *Evolution, Education and Physical Education*; *Wisdom of Eastern and Western Thoughts*; *Unlimited Challenges*; *Powerful Inspiration*; and *50 Years of Teaching Between East and West*. Professor Chen serves as a member of the board of directors of the World Leisure Organization; International Advisor, Asian Council of Exercise and Sport Science; and has served as vice president for Oceania International Council of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport, and Dance.

# Chapter 1

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## Leisure and Transformation

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### Introduction

We live in a time when leisure, quality of life, enhanced well-being, and community livability are increasingly valued. A basic aspiration of all humans is to pursue one's interest in a fashion that results in greater happiness and promotes meaningfulness, relevance, and values to their lives. Although living in the 21st Century presents many challenges, it also provides the opportunity for individuals to gain greater global and cultural awareness and connectivity to one another.

Leisure provides opportunities to enhance and enlarge choice and freedom in the daily decisions one makes. Leisure is valued for many reasons, not the least of which is the opportunity to engage in freely chosen life experiences. It is through leisure that individuals are able to express, explore, discover as well as create, exchange, and communicate with others in a meaningful fashion. Leisure promotes social cohesion, providing opportunities for individuals to bond or unify with one another. As such, leisure is a powerful vehicle that has the potential for improving, nourishing, and sustaining individuals through their lives.

Throughout the world, the quality of one's life is of great concern to individuals, communities, and nations. A standard today is one of improving one's economic condition, while at the same time improving the quality of life. These twin tenants often frame the individual and collective efforts reflected in society. Achieving quality of life is not only an individual action, but often is reflected in the social policies that are enacted on a local, state/provincial, and/or national level. Quality of life is a subjective measure and often relates to an individual's ability to ex-

press joy, happiness or, on the down side, respond to stress and other anxious life situations. Quality of life and the pursuit of leisure go hand in hand.

The well-being of individuals as expressed in their lifestyle is also a major focus of individuals, communities, and nations. Factors such as rising health costs have created increased emphasis on ensuring that individuals look after their well-being—especially their physical well-being. Individuals seek healthy active lifestyles that are achieved through the activation of their leisure pursuits. The same could be applied to the social, mental, and spiritual well-being of individuals. Leisure provides a medium whereby individuals can, in fact, improve their well-being.

The notion of community livability is also linked directly to leisure. Livable communities are ones that provide opportunities for leisure and, in fact, are built around leisure concerns. The build environment for leisure that emphasizes the crafting of a social, cultural, and physical environment can, in turn, promote greater quality of life and well-being. Today, individuals want to live in environments that are well designed, environmentally attractive, and technologically smart. A livable community is one that is sustainable and features opportunities for leisure in its basic design.

All of the aforementioned elements pivot around and interact with one another. However, leisure can, in fact, be the primary element that enables linkages between each of the factors. Leisure is connected to quality of life, well-being, and community livability. It plays a central function and role in each of these concepts and provides a major element in serving to transform the environment in a holistic fashion.

As individuals and whole societies, we are faced with rapid, random, and discontinuous change. The whirl of change has resulted in a very dynamic, fluid environment that demands from individuals and societies the ability to engage in the process of transformation. To transform or change, one must be free or unencumbered from the constraints that are imposed in seeking a new way of being. Leisure provides an optimal opportunity for such transformation or change.

It is evident that one of the keys to living a successful life is personal continuous growth and development. As Robert E. Quinn has noted “. . . *personal change is a reflection of our inner growth and empowerment.*” The same is the case with communities and societies as a whole. Likewise, social progress in as community or society is often measured by its commitment to continuous growth and development. Personal growth and development are connected to the ability a society to progress and vice versa as Paul Hawken has written “. . . *all is connected . . . no one thing can change by itself.*” Further as Marianne Williamson has suggested, “. . . *personal transformation can and does have global effects. As we go, so goes the world, for the world is us. The revolution that will save the world is ultimately a personal one.*”

Paradoxically, there is also a need for stability and even routine in living one's life as a way of coping with the speed and rapidity of change. In other words, to deal with the rate and speed of change, individuals, communities, and societies are mandated with the need to respond in order to survive and prosper. Yet at the same time, we often seek in our daily lives stability, even routine, in order to live life in a satisfactory fashion. Leisure provides opportunities for individuals to transform themselves and also helps them to maintain routine in their lives. In fact, leisure can assist individuals by helping them maintain a balance between the need to respond to change and the need to maintain stability in their lives.

This book is about leisure as transformation. Its main theme is that leisure can be used to assist individuals as they experience and seek change in their lives. To be transformed implies that one will change, alter, or even convert oneself in a marked fashion; that an individual, community, or society as a whole will change its nature, function, form, appearance, or condition. As Wayne Dyer says, “. . . *Transformation literally means going beyond your form.*” Communities and societies also seek transformation through leisure. To be engaged in the process of transformation is in fact the act of changing, altering, or converting oneself, one's community, or one's society as a whole.

## Living in a Leisure-Oriented Society

Throughout the written history of mankind, there has been the desire to be free of toil, labor, or the activities that come from maintaining daily life existence. The rise of a leisure class during the Agricultural Revolution first provided individuals with the opportunity for such freedom. Lives were regulated in a different way than in, pre-civilized society. People were tied to the seasons and to the land, influencing the organization of social culture in new and more complex ways. There was a need for individuals to act and think in more creative ways, and the social organization of societies was transformed to provide individuals with time to think, reflect, and use their intellectual powers in new ways to solve challenges.

With the rise of a leisure class of rulers, government officials, warriors, and even scribes, we saw greater social organization in the way in which individuals lived. More complex religious, social, commercial, and government institutions emerged. When individuals were free from toiling in the soil, they had the opportunity to think, live, and act creatively; thus social progress occurred.

On the other hand, greater social organization also led to competitive behaviors that often resulted in undesirable consequences between people over land ownership, distribution of commodities and livestock, and distinction in belief structures, especially religious ones.

Thus, leisure, work, and other constructs were transformed, philosophically identified, and debated, providing new meanings and insights that reflected cultural biases of the era. For example, the Greeks used the term *aschole* for referring to one's occupation and the term *schole* for activity that is pursued for its own sake. Aristotle proposed that the good or virtuous life is best sought through contemplative activities only available during leisure. Coupling Aristotle's perspective to change, Henry Nouwen suggests that ". . . *solitude is the furnace of transformation.*" These concepts gave way to the rise of a new social class—the leisure class. Class distinctions became evident and leisure became sought and subscribed to by all.

The Industrial Revolution provided new means for the production of goods and services. It also resulted in another reorganization

of society and its institutions. The Industrial Revolution provided for the distribution of material goods on a scale unprecedented in human history. The concentration of industry in cities and towns and the resulting urbanization, as well as the mechanization of labor that freed individuals from toil, resulted in the need for new and different forms of leisure amenities and experiences. Coupled with social labor reforms aimed at humanizing work environments, the Industrial Revolution created opportunities for mass leisure.

The Industrial Era gave way to a technologically inspired and knowledge-based society. Social definitions of work, leisure, and other cultural concepts are being redefined. There is a fusion of work and leisure. At its interface has been the opportunity to engage in creative intellectual activity. We have seen the rise of a new creative class of individuals whose boundaries are not defined by time or place. Ideas are shared in virtual space connecting individuals in new communities across the world, where people are linked together in new social arrangements and structures. It is a time when ideas, concepts, and knowledge are passed freely and with great speed from one individual to another, transforming individuals, communities, and societies.

Again, it appears that we are going through another transition in what Richard Florida (2002) defines as the “creative class.” As he states, “. . . *we are living through an even more powerful and fundamental shift, from an industrial system to an economy that is increasingly powered by knowledge, creativity, and ideas.*” One might ask, “What will the 21st Century workforce require in terms of knowledge and skills to be successful?” Immediately, the ability to operate in a creative fashion, engage in problem solving and critical thinking, and be more innovative and entrepreneurial will emerge as key attributes for success in the future. There will be a rise of new technology, infrastructures, and patterns of living. Leisure will play a key role in this transformation. Our professional challenge is not only one of being a change maker, but finding way to accelerate the change within our communities. As William Jennings Bryan has noted, “. . . *destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for. It is a thing to be achieved.*”

The speed and rapidity of change of living in a creativity-driven society requires individuals, communities, and societies to act in kind. Individuals, communities, and societies as a whole are faced with the need for continuous transformation. There is a need to change so as to remain responsive to the conditions of our time. We all talk about the need for change and the need to be responsive, up to date, and contemporary in our focus and efforts. Such change, whether it is focused on the individual, the community, or society as a whole, is difficult. There is tremendous resistance to newly emerging ideas, concepts, theories, and approaches to living one's life or practicing one's occupation.

On the other hand, we need to be shielded from the ravages that come with change. Often, individuals seek stability, a routine, and familiarity that comes from continued participation in familiar leisure experiences. Individuals seek a reprieve from being bombarded with new and demanding challenges. People seek the opportunity for contemplation, reflection, and even escape from the rapidity of change. The need to sort out the changes that churn in people's lives becomes important and is found through leisure.

Order and regularity are possible and present a counterbalance to the whirl of daily change. As Juliee Jordan Scott says, “. . . *laugh, cry, love, nurture, applaud with passion! Be alive in all things, whether it is in quiet contemplation on raucous celebration and spread that aliveness. Transform your life. Transform your world.*”

Today, leisure is viewed as a fundamental human right. Article 24 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) establishes that “*everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.*” Furthermore, Article 27 states, “*everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.*” Other covenants, conventions, and principles affirm the right of children, women, and older persons to have appropriate opportunities for leisure. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) indicates that “. . . *parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child, and to participate freely in cultural*

*life and the arts.*” The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), in Article 13, states “*parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same right in particular . . . the right to participate in recreational activities, sports, and all aspects of cultural life.*” The United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1999), Clause 16, indicates that “*older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational resources of society.*” These documents affirm leisure as a basic human right.

For many, leisure is a gift. It is an opportunity to improve one’s quality of life and well-being. It represents the freedom to choose and to define oneself in concert with one’s own needs, desires, and interests. One’s leisure lifestyle is a representation of their own unique values or their interpretation of their relationship to the broader norms and customs within the culture in which they live. Leisure has become more and more central in assisting individuals in defining their own identity and sense of self-worth. If you ask a person to tell you who they are or about themselves, they will often define themselves in the context of their occupation or work. However, increasingly leisure has become a more central way of defining individual, even collective, identity. This is reflected in economic shifts from the production of basic survival commodities, products, and services to the production of culture, leisure, and other elements for enhancing individual and community life.

## What is Leisure?

Leisure is difficult to define. The concept of leisure has many different cultural perspectives. In one society leisure may be conceived of as a distinct and separate cultural concept; whereas in another it is connected to one’s work life. Furthermore, leisure is tied to and influenced by cultural norms, customs, and values. For example, the Judeo Christian ethic that “idleness is the devil’s workshop” results in the promotion of strong ties to work, known as the Puritan or Protestant work ethic. However, there are three distinct ways of defining

leisure that have emerged in the past several decades in the literature, suggesting that it may be defined as *time*, *activity*, or *state of mind*.

To define leisure as time is to think of it as a block of unobligated or free time. In this definition we think of organizing one's life into three distinct uses of time—existence, subsistence, and free time. Individuals devote time to maintaining their bodily functions—the time we take to eat, sleep, and care for or groom ourselves. The time we devote to our work or the time we devote to providing for our subsistence is the second use of time. We need work to support ourselves in order to maintain our existence and provide for the material and experiential needs of life. Lastly, we have free time. This is often thought of as unobligated time when a person can voluntarily engage in whatever they desire.

We seem to be obsessed with the concept of time. As Daniel Pinchbeck (2006) has pointed out:

. . . We talk about having enough time, running out of time, racing against time, wasting time, spending time, doing time, killing time, and so on. We speak of time as a quantity 'time is money,' of which there can be enough or not enough. 'Time' in our sense is an instrument we have created with which we are able to shape the three-dimensional perspectival world and permit it to become a reality. (p. 212)

In leisure, we refer to time deepening—packing more and more into less and less time.

The concept of viewing leisure as free time most likely emerged during the rise of the Industrial Revolution. It was during this era that time became standardized, routine, and regulated. The industrial machine required a level of precision in not only the measure of weights, measurements, and standards, but also in the organization of work. Work was attached to a manager, a schedule, or a machine in a systematic, routine fashion. We had work time and we had free time. The opportunity for free time became an individual, community, and societal concern. So did its misuse.

Later, the idea of defining leisure as an activity emerged; that is, leisure consists of distinct activities with unique properties that define them differently from other life activities. For example, contrasting leisure with work we often think of the latter as a paid activity, whereas leisure activities are ones that are engaged in without compensation. There are many different types of leisure activities: sports, outdoor recreation, hobbies, literary activities, performing arts (music, dance, and drama) aquatics, social activities, wellness, travel, and volunteering. Such activities may be organized and offered in many different formats, including competitively, on a drop-in basis, as an instructional class, club, special event, workshop, interest group, or an outreach service.

The difficulty with this definition is that a given activity for a given individual may be leisure and for another it may be work. Take for example basketball as an activity. Certainly basketball is seen and engaged in by many young, middle-aged, and older individuals as a leisure activity. On the other hand, basketball is also an activity that is pursued on a professional basis with individuals receiving compensation. In fact, professional basketball players are highly paid, earning millions of dollars annually. Furthermore, many individuals engage in gardening as a leisure activity; however, home maintenance may also be viewed as part of one's subsistence. We groom our lawns and our homes because culturally it is the norm to maintain a neat, clean, and orderly appearance externally. Thus it is difficult to precisely identify leisure as an activity because we must define other properties that in fact make the activity a leisure-oriented one.

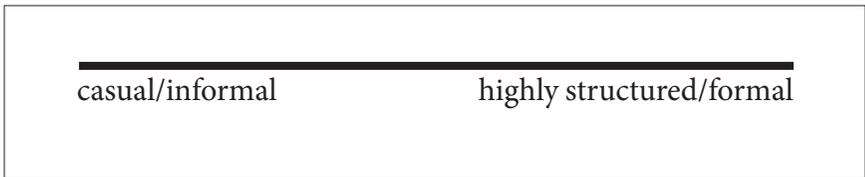
Perhaps the most recently accepted way of defining leisure is to think of it as a state of mind. In this way of thinking about leisure, all of one's life experiences have the possibility for leisure. In fact, it is interesting to note that most leisure experiences occur in casual, social occasions. In other words, leisure often occurs when one is informally engaging others, physical, or abstract objects and even in dialogue with oneself however briefly. This can be contrasted with the more exotic, highly organized forms of leisure, such as organized sports, concerts, community special events, art shows, or other venues.

Key to understanding this concept as a state of mind is the knowledge of the antecedents or conditions required to experience leisure. In other words, what are the conditions that one must hold in one's mind in order to experience leisure? Research has suggested to us that perceived freedom, perceived competence, and intrinsic motivation are important variables that must be present for an individual to experience leisure. Whether a person is actually free is irrelevant, since this is a culturally defined concept; whether he perceives himself as free to choose, free to engage, and free to participate in an experience, is more relevant. The same is the case with perceived competence. Whether a person is actually competent in leisure is irrelevant. It is their perception of their skill, knowledge, or ability to engage that is important. Lastly, intrinsic motivation refers to the desire that comes from within an individual to engage. The opposite of intrinsic motivation is extrinsic motivation, where an individual may be moved by external rewards, recognition, or stimulus.

One's leisure experiences can be perceived to exist on a continuum (See Figure 1.1). At one end are those experiences that are casual, requiring no special planning or organization in order to enjoy or within which to participate. In other words, such leisure experiences often occur in an informal fashion without the desire of definite or serious intentions or outcomes. Stebbins (2008, xii) refers to these as *casual leisure*; that is experiences that are immediate, intrinsically rewarding, short lived requiring little or no preparation. Godbey (2013) offers these types of leisure experiences can be referred to as *core activities*. These types of activities are "done on a regular basis, usually at home or close to home, inexpensive and sometimes loosely organized" (p. 22). As one can see, there are many types of leisure experiences that are short term in nature that require little planning and are engaged in on a casual or occasional basis. Simply walking down the street and talking with a friend can produce a stimulating and pleasurable leisure experience. Most leisure experiences are of this nature: casual, informal, and spontaneous without a great deal of planning or organization.

At the other end of the continuum are leisure experiences or activities that require a great deal of planning and organization. They are *highly structured*, requiring a high level of engagement before

the experience occurs. For example, taking a vacation often requires identifying a series of end destination attractions, booking accommodations or lodging, arranging transportation, and securing admissions to events or attractions. Highly complex, highly structured, highly organized—the planning of such events is not done in a spontaneous way, but rather is more systematic in nature. Again, Stebbins speaks to this phenomena referring to it as project-based or serious leisure (xii). He uses terms such as *reasonably complicated*; *systematic*; and *requiring special skills, knowledge, or experience* to explain this phenomena. Likewise, Godbey (2013) refers to such experiences as balanced leisure activities. He notes that such activities have a cost factor and are done away from one's home on an infrequent basis. One can think of these types of experiences as planning a trip to an amusement park or resort, attending a festival, or even going to a museum or sporting event.



**Figure 1.1** A Continuum of the Leisure Experience

## Leisure: Toward What Ends?

A fundamental question for individuals, communities, and nations as a whole focuses on what ends should be pursued during leisure. Leisure is often equated with the notion of freedom. To be free from life's everyday constraints to pursue one's desired ends is a long-standing pursuit of mankind. Often, our life reflections are framed in the context of statements such as, "*If only I had more freedom to pursue my life interests, unfettered from the obligations of work and other necessary activities to sustain one's life.*" Or "*If only I had more time, more money to pursue those ends that are of high interest to me.*" These are, indeed, challenging and perplexing questions that impact how one views and frames leisure.

In reviewing various philosophical statements and concepts of leisure, it is evident that there are varying perspectives as to what ends should be pursued during one's leisure. For example, if leisure is equated with freedom in its broadest context, then we should be prepared to support the notion that leisure may have no directed ends. In other words, one should be able to pursue in leisure any desirable end. Leisure may, in fact, have no utilitarian value or prescribed end other than its pursuit for its own sake. On the other hand, leisure is often equated with assisting individuals, communities, and nations in their pursuit of happiness and/or their general well-being or quality of life.

How can these two divergent perspectives of leisure be reconciled? Is leisure to be pursued in a fashion that promotes no direct ends, or, does leisure provide an opportunity for the advancement of the individual, his or her community, and the nation as a whole? The answer to this question is probably both, but it must be viewed in the social cultural context of a given society. Many suggest that leisure can lead to frivolous, inconsequential ends, especially those activities that support narcissistic, hedonistic types of behaviors. The pursuit of such ends may in fact limit the uplifting potential of leisure in the lives of individuals, communities, and nations. Entertainment, diversion, and amusement are often viewed as having less positive impact than leisure opportunities that support creative ends leading to greater self-awareness, building of self-worth, and self-actualization.

However, lessons from history strongly suggest that how leisure is perceived and acted on will, in fact, have a significant and dramatic impact on a given civilization. Leisure holds the promise for providing opportunities to uplift, nourish, enhance, and support the well-being of individuals, communities, and nations. Leisure provides the opportunity for individual exploration, reflection, and growth—socially, culturally, psychically, intellectually, and spiritually. It is through leisure that new knowledge, skills, and attitudes may be obtained, focused, and brought to bear in life's endeavors. For a community, leisure provides a rallying or standing point upon which the collective spirit of the community and its aspirations for a higher quality of life are reflected. For nations as a whole, the crafting of

policies and the allocation of resources to enable a higher quality of life for its citizens through the provision of leisure is a sought-after goal. A community or nation that is committed to improving and enhancing the quality of life will thrive as its citizens prosper because of the opportunities to grow, develop, and enjoy life through leisure.

## Linking Leisure and Transformation

Why link leisure and transformation? This seems rhetorical and self-evident. There is no question that leisure provides an optimal environment for individuals to seek new experiences, experiment, and to learn and grow anew. Certainly, leisure provides opportunities for individuals to gain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. It provides opportunities for individuals to gain new insights and awareness. The opportunity to seek out new and different experiences opens a vast array of self-exploration wherein individuals can reinvent, refocus, or renew themselves. In other words, leisure is an environment that provides a medium to enable individuals to change or to be transformed. Also, leisure can be viewed as an end in itself; pursued for its own sake. The quest for nothingness actually creates the opportunity for transformation through leisure.

The properties that constitute leisure in and of itself provide a powerful medium for transformation. As mentioned, the antecedents or conditions that must be present to experience leisure include a sense of perceived freedom. To be free to explore, to test, or to remake one's self lends itself to the process of transformation. Without the opportunity to pursue those experiences of interest that provide opportunities for self-discovery as well as the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and attitudes, transformation is not possible. In a world where individuals are increasingly confronted with change, they will need time and space in their lives to rethink, renew, and reinvent themselves.

Is leisure a means for transformation? Or should it be argued that leisure may be one of the major ends as one seeks to improve their quality of living through the process of transformation? In a sense, this is like asking the question, "*Did the egg precede the chicken or the reverse?*" This question may not be resolved given our current

understanding of the universe. However, it may very well be that leisure is both a mechanism and product of transformation. Leisure as transformation implies that leisure is a mechanism that brings about the opportunity for change in one's life. However, in transforming one's life with an aim toward improving one's quality of living or well-being, the product of that process may be the opportunity for an enhanced leisure lifestyle.

As the character and nature of society changes from an industrialized one to one increasingly focused on creativity, acquisition of knowledge, and use of technology, the communities in which we live will also need to be transformed in order to reflect and accommodate new and different work, play, and living patterns. Increasingly, individuals desire the opportunity to work in environments that are conducive to more open, fluid, creative, and flexible lifestyles. How do we create such work environments and communities?

Work environments can be designed in such a way as to promote a more creative, playful, and open social and physical environment. It is interesting to note that many technology-based corporations create work environments that parallel college and university campuses. Their intention is to create work environments that have a similar ambiance to what is found in these types of environments. Clean, attractive, open work environments supporting freedom of action and interaction between and among individuals is sought. In addition, such work environments are often pleasing physical spaces located in park-like settings. Could it be said that the work environment is taking on the vestiges of leisure-oriented environments?

Likewise, the livability of communities has become a central theme in the promotion of cities to attract businesses. Individuals want to work and live in environments that are alive with leisure and cultural opportunities. It is simply not enough to have access to the typical infrastructure that a community would provide in attracting a business, such as an educated work force, utilities, transportation, and high-speed technological connections. Today, when locating commercial enterprise, businesses look hard at the livability of a community. It can make a significant difference in the decisions that are made by businesses to locate in a given community.

What exactly is the contribution of leisure to a livable community environment? What are the components of a livable community? We can think of livable communities as ones that enhance the lives of individuals and contribute to their well-being; community attributes and amenities that enable them to enjoy life, pursue happiness, and develop their interests. Livable communities reflect the following: environmentally sensitive practices; attractiveness, as reflected in aesthetically enhanced designs, promoting pleasing architecture, floral decorations, street sculpture, landscaping, tree plantings, etc.; engaged citizens; preservation of historical buildings and areas; and opportunities for leisure and cultural appreciation. This livability mix, at its core, has a focus on creating leisure-oriented social and physical environments, this will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Communities can transform themselves by focusing on the development of these components.

Societies as a whole can become more leisure-oriented by creating social policies that enable in the development of leisure resources, programs, and services. Furthermore, societies can transform themselves by reorganizing the working life of individuals. Today people seek fulfillment not only through their work but also through their leisure. There has been a universal movement to a five-day work week, resulting in the opportunities for individuals to seek greater enjoyment through leisure as well as other benefits. Additionally, societies can support the creation of a comprehensive leisure industry and the resulting infrastructure as reflected in new leisure-oriented social structures and systems. Many countries emphasize their tourism industry by supporting its development and promotion. It is often viewed as a way of significantly enhancing the social and economic development of local communities, regions, and nations as a whole.

## Summary

Leisure plays an increasingly important role in the lives of individuals, communities, and societies. It provides an opportunity and vehicle through which individuals gain satisfaction. Leisure is pursued for diverse and varying ends. On an individual basis, leisure is

directly related to an individual's social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and psychological well-being. People seek joy and happiness in their lives, and leisure experiences are one of the most significant opportunities through which this may occur.

It is interesting to note that communities and societies as a whole are increasingly concerned with creating leisure opportunities as a way of contributing to livability. A focus on leisure promotes greater concern for creating aesthetically pleasing environments and finding ways to engage individuals in a variety of venues including community celebrations, festivals, and other leisure events, activities, and programs. Communities increasingly understand the value, and importance of ensuring that there are opportunities for individuals that are outside of work that are engaging, satisfying, and that promote a sense of well-being. Nations are affirming the importance of leisure through the establishment of social policy that result in the provision of new social structures and systems that encourage people to find satisfaction through leisure.

## Points to Ponder

1. Why do you think that leisure is increasingly valued throughout the world?
2. Why link leisure and transformation?
3. Compare and contrast work and leisure during the Industrial Era with living in today's knowledge-based society.
4. Why is leisure so difficult to define?
5. Why is leisure often equated with the pursuit of happiness, general well-being or quality of life?
6. How can individuals, communities and nations benefit from focusing their efforts on leisure?
7. What does it mean to create a leisure-oriented, social, and cultural economic environment?
8. What types of social policies must be enacted to facilitate leisure-oriented environments?
9. How are work and leisure environments similar today?
10. How does leisure support the creation of more livable communities?

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