



COMMUNITY GUIDES

The Identity Transition Workbook

Reflective Exercises for Navigating Who You Are After the Badge

Community-Centered · Experience-Backed · Purpose-Driven

A Note From Geezell

Let me tell you about the morning I retired and didn't know how to answer the question "So what do you do?" That moment changed everything I thought I knew about myself.

For 26 years and 5 months, across two states, the job WAS the identity. Not just what I did — who I was. And then one day it was gone, and nobody hands you a roadmap for who you are when the thing that organized your entire life is no longer there to organize it.

If you are in that disorientation right now — whether it has been one week or three years — I want you to know two things. First: this is not weird, and it is not a sign that something is wrong with you. Second: **the badge was one chapter. You are a whole book.**

This workbook will not hand you a finished answer. Nobody can. What it will do is walk you, one page at a time, through the same questions I had to sit with — so you can start writing your own answer, in your own words, on your own time.

Your time is yours now. Go use it.

Naming What Happened

Before you can rebuild an identity, you have to name what you actually lost — clearly, without minimizing it and without catastrophizing it.

- **The identity void** — the badge was the answer to "who are you," and now there is a blank where that answer used to live.
- **The work family** — the people who understood without you having to explain a single thing. That kind of knowing took years to build and cannot be replaced overnight.
- **The permission gap** — the quiet guilt of resting, playing, or building something for yourself after decades of putting everyone else first.
- **The disbelief phase** — even when you prayed for this day, when it actually arrives, you might still feel uncertain. That is not ingratitude. That is a nervous system catching up to a decision your heart already made.

Read that list again. Which one is loudest for you right now? Circle it, underline it, or just sit with it for a minute before you turn the page.

Exercise: The Badge Was One Chapter

List every role, identity, and relationship that has ever been true about you — not just the job. Nobody is one thing, even when one thing takes up 26 years.

Roles I have held in my life, beyond my career:

Things people used to say I was good at, before the job became the whole story:

A version of me that existed before the uniform — what did she/he/they love?

Exercise: Answering "So, What Do You Do Now?"

This question trips almost everyone up in the first year. It deserves a real answer you have actually thought about — not an apology, not a shrug.

Draft your new answer here (it can change — this is a draft, not a vow):

Your 8 Realization Traits

These are the strengths your career built into you whether you asked for them or not. Read each one. Rate how strongly you feel it right now on a scale of 1 (barely there) to 5 (unmistakably you), and jot one real example of it showing up in your life — past or present.

Unshakeable Discipline

You showed up without exception for 20-plus years. That discipline does not retire when the badge does.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

The Read

You can read a room, a person, a situation in seconds. That is emotional intelligence most people spend a lifetime trying to learn.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

Velcro-Level Loyalty

Once you commit to something or someone, you are all in. That loyalty is rare, and it is exactly what builds real community and real relationships.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

Real Talk Energy

No corporate filter. No performance. In a world full of curated everything, authentic is magnetic.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

Survivor Identity

You made it through something most people could not handle. That is not a burden. That is the foundation of your authority.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

3am Resilience

You survived impossible shifts and impossible days. Whatever this next chapter throws at you, you have already survived harder.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

Strategic Intelligence

You managed complex systems and complex people under pressure for decades. That is a skill set, not a coincidence.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

The New Freedom

You are finally free. No schedule that is not yours. That freedom — however you use it — is the most powerful thing you carry now.

Rating (1–5): _____ Where I have seen this in my own life:

Where Are You Right Now?

Every member of this community moves through three stages. There is no timeline and no wrong pace — just an honest read on where you are today.

NEWLY RETIRED — Just walked out the door. The relief is real, but so is the disorientation. Everything you knew as identity just changed overnight.

SETTLING IN — 3 to 18 months out. Starting to breathe again. Curious about what this chapter can be.

BUILDING & LEADING — Fully in the next chapter. Ready to build something. Wants to become a resource for others coming behind you.

Which stage are you in today, and what would it look like to take one small step toward the next one?

Exercise: A Letter to Your First-Week-Retired Self

Write a short letter to yourself, from right now, back to the version of you in your very first week without the badge. Tell them what you know now that you did not know then.

Your 30-Day Identity Reclamation Practice

Small, repeatable actions — not a grand reinvention. Reclamation is built in ordinary days, the same way discipline was.

- Each morning this week, finish this sentence out loud: "Today, I choose to be..."
- Tell one person a story from your career using pride instead of apology in your voice.
- Do one thing purely because it is fun — with zero productivity attached to it.
- Write down one compliment or observation about yourself that has nothing to do with your old job title.
- Say your new answer to "what do you do now" out loud to a mirror, or to someone safe, at least once.

Come Home to the Community

You do not have to sort through any of this alone. Every single question in this workbook is a conversation already happening inside the Retired and Realizing community — from people who are exactly where you are, and people a few steps further down the road who are glad to reach back.

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