

The Caretaker

Understanding What Drives You

Yellow is the color of your dominant archetype – The Caretaker. Caretakers are perhaps the most conscientious of all the archetypes. Caretakers value organization and punctuality and they seek out that quality in others. The Caretaker is dependable, task-oriented, and responsible. Systems are their friend. They like clear, definable goals at the beginning of a task and everything works to accomplish those goals. The Caretaker is an ideal person for managing projects because they are patient and value a “common sense” approach to both problems and life in general.

Preserving and maintaining family traditions is an important role for the Caretaker and they seek to pass these traditions on to the next generation. Caretakers believe in following rules and are more likely to set an example for younger people by showing proper respect for authority.

The Caretaker gives help, but does not want to receive it. They are more likely to be a giver rather than a receiver. The caretaker not the one cared for (thus the name for this archetype). If you are the Caretaker child in a family, you will probably be the one taking care of an elderly parent or a sick child. The Caretaker will be decisive when difficult decisions need to be made. Decisions are not difficult for the Caretaker because they have a clear vision of right and wrong, good and bad. They both understand and value being practical.

The motto of the Boys and Girls Scouts (Be Prepared) was probably coined by someone whose primary archetype is the Caretaker. Caretakers like being prepared. If they commit to a task or project, they will make sure it is done correctly. Caretakers have excellent follow-through and feel comfortable in organizations - Civic clubs, religious organizations, and PTAs to name a few. Caretakers have a strong work ethic. They are the very definition of the “work before play” model.

Speaking of work ethics, from an occupational standpoint Caretakers are often in jobs requiring attention to detail or service to others, namely: Teachers, CPAs, bankers, health care professionals, managers, insurance agents, and caregivers. The Caretaker has no problem working in highly structured organizations such as a school system, the military, a corporation, or a medical institution. In fact, they thrive in these situations and feel very comfortable.

From a social standpoint, Caretakers are typically among the first to arrive at an event. (It really bothers them to be late). A part of their enjoyment is helping the host serve refreshments and clean up afterwards (always a welcome guest!) Acting “your age” is important. Caretakers do not want to look foolish by behaving like they are younger than their age.

Security is very important to the Caretaker. More than likely their job benefit packages included a pension. Caretakers are savers by nature and are likely to have invested in secure options to ensure a comfortable retirement. Being financially secure has always been a priority dating back to teen years spent babysitting or mowing lawns.

What Does Retirement Look Like to The Caretaker

Sometimes others see Caretakers as impersonal and rigid. Retirement can be a difficult transition for a Caretaker if they go from a highly structure situation into an ill-defined lifestyle.

As you navigate retirement or semi retirement you might want to consider the following:

The Caretaker's Rx for Retirement

- ❖ You have spent the past 40-50 years being very responsible and prepared. Is it possible to lessen your grip on the reign of responsibility even a bit? It might be time to engage in a little playfulness, something that lightens the load of responsibility. You have been the grownup for a long time, now it's time to interject some fun.
- ❖ Your pre-planning has more than likely resulted in financial security for you and your family. Your saving strategies have earned you the right to indulge yourself at least occasionally- take that vacation you dreamed of during times of work stress and strain; upgrade to the nicer hotel room; purchase that camera or table saw you have fancied for years. You have earned it.
- ❖ Your conscientious genes will probably urge you to offer help in caring for grandchildren. Grandparenting is the one thing that is not over-rated and of course you want to be an integral part in the lives of those you love. But manage to keep a few days sacred for your own dreams and desires. They may have been put on hold for a long time during which you were busy checking off items on your to-do lists.
- ❖ Volunteering will come naturally to you in your post-career years. Planning and managing events and fund-raisers is right up your alley. Your attention to detail is invaluable and can be put to good use.
- ❖ Use your innate skills to plan fun vacations. Whether you are inclined to go on major adventures or not, at least try mini-adventures.

- ❖ Your attention to detail will make the creative arts attractive to you. Knitting, sewing, quilting or other fabric art might suit your precision skills. Drawing or music classes might be attractive as well. Let those talents you had in younger years, re-emerge in these later years.
- ❖ You may have to reach a point health-wise when you have to accept help from others. You are accustomed to being the caregiver. People may want the opportunity to return the favor for all the generosity you have given over the years. It's time to let them give back to you.

The Caretaker In a Nutshell

Caretakers at their core are:

Conscientious
Punctual
Organized
Responsible
Respect Traditions
Have strong work ethic
Practical

How Do You Spend Your Time?

Where does your time go? List your five major activities in the last week. How much time did you give to each one? Which were what you wanted to do and which were obligations or activities you felt you were expected to do? How much of your time is spent devoted to the needs of others at the expense of your own desires?

List five activities you enjoy doing. These are activities that nourish and lift your spirits. When was the last time you pursued these activities? How might you incorporate these activities into your schedule, even for short amounts of time? Time is one of our most precious resources. The following is a discourse on time written by Peter Beagle in *The Last Unicorn*...

“When I was alive, I believed-as you do- that time was at least as real and solid as myself, and probably more so. I said 1:00 as though I could see it, and “Monday” as though I could find it on a map...Like everyone else, I lived in a house bricked up with seconds and minutes, weekends and New Year’s Days, and I never went outside until I died, because there was no other door. Now I know that I could have walked through walls.”