

Turning Points in Middle Age: Life Stories of Early-Retirement Teachers

ONOE Miyako

Graduate School of Science for Human Services, Ritsumeikan University

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Abstract

This study examines how early-retirement teachers experience turning points in their middle age, how they made sense of them and how they incorporated these experiences into their lives.

I have explored the life stories of three early-retirement teachers who retired in their middle age. By examining their stories as well as a variety of past research and studies on this issue, I found three aspects of turning points. First, turning points are not points in life but a gradual process of making sense of life change. This process involves an inner reorientation and a redefinition of self. Second, turning points include ambivalent feelings and emotions which may cause conflicts between two incompatible feelings. Third, experiences in turning points can bring inspiring awareness of one's life and self.

Nowadays, the lifetime employment system is crumbling. Therefore, middle aged employees are experiencing turning points differently than before. Turning points are becoming more common and more significant for those going through their transitions or middle age. Therefore it is relevant to reflect on their lives using **the** concept of "turning point".