

Take 5 **WHAT ARE THE BLUE ZONES?**

Let's face it, we're all getting older. But we can continue to stay healthy and active as we age. There are several communities around the world where individuals live beyond 100 years of age at 10 times the normal rate. Author Dan Buettner, in partnership with the National Geographic Society, identified these regions as "Blue Zones", circling them with a blue pen.

And it's not just about living longer, it's about living healthier for longer as these centenarians do. They have a good quality of life, are functionally fit, independent and part of a community.

These communities are:

Ogliastro, Sardinia (Italy)

Okinawa (Japan)

Nicoya Peninsula (Costa Rica)

The Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California (USA)

Icaria (Greece)



Centenarians in the Okinawa community.

Genes most certainly play a role as these areas are largely isolated. But there is another explanation. They share common traits, called the Power 9™, that could partially account for their long lives. The

following are traits that each of the Blue Zone communities have in common and strategies to implement in your life.

POWER 9™ TRAITS IN THE BLUE ZONES	IMPLEMENTING THE POWER 9™
Move naturally – Garden, tend livestock, walk	Walk, take the stairs, exercise, dance
Know your purpose - Know why they get up in the morning	Create goals or family mission
Down shift - Take daily breaks to pray, rest	Find tech-free time to socialize, meditate
80% rule - Eat only to 80% fullness	Practice mindful eating away from screens
Plant slant – Consume mostly beans, rice, little meat	Introduce Meatless Monday
Wine @ 5 - Wine with food and family	Drink in moderation or not at all
Belong - Faith-based communities	Join a church, club or volunteer
Family first – Care for multi-generations	Make a point of keeping in touch with family and friends
Right tribe - All community members embrace healthy practices	Surround yourself with those who have healthy habits and instill healthy practices in family members

While there are no guarantees in life, these 9 principles, when applied, can lead to a happier, healthier and longer lifespan. And several communities in the U.S. who have adopted these Power 9™ principles reported:

- Significant decrease in obesity, smoking, and BMI (body mass index)
- Millions of dollars of savings in healthcare costs
- Measurable drops in employee absenteeism

