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A NEW BLUE ZONE

If you want to live a long and happy life, you may want to move to the newest Blue Zone - Naples, FL. Here, the Southwest Florida Blue Zones Project (<https://southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com>) is championing a community-wide wellbeing initiative to make healthy choices easier for everyone in the area. Several southwest Florida employers (and BKS clients!) are such strong advocates that they have become Blue Zone Approved Worksites. Congratulations to Wyndemere Country Club, Moorings Park and Wynn's Markets for joining this elite group of health-conscious organizations. As for the rest of us, there is much to be learned from Dan Buettner's research on longevity and authentic happiness.

LONGEVITY

In his first study, *The Blue Zones*, Buettner describes life in four dispersed areas of the globe: Sardinia, Italy, Okinawa, Japan, Loma Linda, California and the Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica. What distinguishes these areas is that they all boast substantially large populations over the age of 100. The "blue zones," so named because the term stuck during the mapping process, has absolutely nothing to do with hair color, though many do have full heads of blue hair.

Buettner and his team studied each of these zones to learn what contributes to the longevity of their residents. What they found was that regardless of the geography or the culture, all of the centenarians had very similar lifestyles. Buettner postulates that adoption of some of their habits may contribute to as many as 10 more years of useful life expectancy.



NINE LONGEVITY LESSONS

- 1 Be active without having to think about it. Walk as much as possible and then inconvenience yourself to walk more.
- 2 Eat until you are 80% full. The Japanese actually remind themselves of this before each meal.
- 3 Avoid meat and processed foods.
- 4 Drink a glass of red wine with dinner.
- 5 Take time to see the big picture.
- 6 Take time to relieve stress.
- 7 Make family a priority.
- 8 Participate in a spiritual community.
- 9 Surround yourself with those who share your "blue zone" values.



the supplement
FACILITATING VITALITY

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

In *Thrive*, his second study, Buettner reports on his quest to identify the world's happiest communities. Denmark, Singapore, Mexico, and San Luis Obispo, California reported markedly higher happiness scores than any other places on earth. While these sites are vastly different geographically and culturally, their happiness lessons are within our reach. Buettner cautions that memory and modern life can stand in the way of authentic happiness because:

- 1. Our memories trick us.** We over-remember the highs and lows such as the thrill of a new car or the unpleasantness of bad service. We under-remember everyday pleasures like hanging out with friends or engaging in challenging work.
- 2. Modern life is distracting.** We are endlessly bombarded with information from flickering screens instead of interacting face to face with other people. When we do interface with others, our attention is diverted.

HAPPINESS LESSONS

-  **More income does not necessarily equate with more happiness.** The benefits of having more income tend to taper off after the basic necessities are met.
-  **Where you live can have a tremendous impact on your happiness.** People who live in cities where it is easy to socialize, to walk, and to enjoy quiet and safe surroundings tend to be happier.
-  **Work is a great source of happiness if it is challenging,** engages one's natural talents and provides constant feedback. It helps if one works with congenial colleagues.
-  **Friends contribute mightily to happiness.** Having one additional happy friend increases cheeriness by 9%, whereas each additional unhappy friend drags it down by 7%.
-  **Spending money on experiences rather than things** tends to contribute more to wellbeing.
-  **Volunteering boosts happiness.** People who volunteer weigh less, feel healthier, and score higher in every happiness domain.
-  **Music** provides a lifetime of enjoyment.



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 18 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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