



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout May 16, 2021

The Power of Nine (Blue Zone Study)

Live Longer Live Well



This is not the first time I have written about the results of the Blue Zone Study and the Power of 9. The term Blue Zone came about because the original researchers used blue magic markers to circle areas on a map where people lived longer and lived well.

I just thought it might be a good time to repeat the outcomes of this important longitudinal study of the 5 regions in the world where people live long healthier lives than the rest of the world. The Blue Zone study concept grew out of demographic work done by Gianni Pes and Michel Poulain outlined in the *Journal of Experimental Gerontology*, who identified Sardinia's Nuoro province as the region with the highest concentration of male centenarians. **Blue Zone** is a non-scientific term given to geographic regions that are home to some of the world's oldest people. It was first used by the author Dan Buettner, who was studying areas of the world in which people live exceptionally long lives. He and his collaborators gave them official Blue Zone status: **Ikaria**, Greece; **Okinawa**, Japan; Ogliastra Region, **Sardinia**; **Loma Linda**, Calif.; and **Nicoya Peninsula**, Costa Rica.



The Original Blue Zones

The Blue Zone Study has spawned many books, articles, recipes, and cities that want to become a Blue Zone. Dan Buettner, one of the authors and lead investigator of the Blue Zones has created the “Power of 9.” These are the 9 major findings of the original study of the 5 regions in the world. The Power of 9 answers the question – what are the characteristics of the 5 original blue zones leading to people living longer AND living well?

The Power of 9

1. Move Naturally. Moving naturally throughout the day — walking, gardening, doing housework — is a core part of the Blue Zones lifestyle.

2. Purpose. The Okinawans call it *ikigai* and the Nicoyans call it *plan de vida*. Knowing why you wake up in the morning makes you healthier, happier, and adds up to seven years of extra life expectancy.

3. Down Shift. Stress is part of life, but Blue Zone centenarians have stress-relieving rituals built into their daily routines. Adventists pray, Ikarians nap, and Sardinians do happy hour. Humor is essential to longevity.

4. 80% Rule. People in Blue Zones areas stop eating when their stomachs are 80% full and eat their smallest meal in the early evening.

5. Plant Slant. Beans are the cornerstone of most centenarian diets. Vegetables, fruit, and whole grains round out the rest of the diet and meat is eaten in small amounts.

6. Wine @ 5. Moderate but regular consumption of wine (with friends and/or food) is part of the Blue Zones lifestyle.

7. Belong. Being part of a faith-based community or a group with a common interest and focus adds four to 14 years to life expectancy.

8. Loved Ones First. Having close and strong family connections (with spouses, parents, grandparents, and grandchildren) is common with Blue Zones centenarians.

9. Right Tribe. The world’s longest-lived people have close friends and strong social networks.

Performing T'ai Chi has many of these properties- moving naturally, down shifting, a sense of purpose. Perhaps even a sense of belonging and being supported by people who are like minded about health and wellness.



Our Tai Chi Intensive with Master Teacher Clifton Gore

2019

Here's to creating your own Blue Zone

Peace,

Linda