

Have a Purpose— You'll Live Longer

Do you know what your purpose is in life? If you do, research shows that you may add up to seven good years to your life. The Blue Zones Project has found that having a sense of purpose is critical to enjoying good health.

“When we have a sense of purpose, we feel good about ourselves,” says Deb Logan, Executive Director of the Blue Zones Project for Southwest Florida. “When you connect with your purpose, you get a lift in your well-being. We know through polling from Gallup Healthways that if people have a sense of purpose, they are happier and healthier. It’s absolutely linked to well-being. It can keep people from falling into a lack of self-worth or even depression.”

Logan explains that there are five elements of well-being:

- Financial
- Community
- Physical
- Social
- Purpose

“Even if we have the other four but no purpose,” Logan says, “well-being is going to be challenged. Purpose really is very important.” She adds that the year people retire is a time when they are susceptible to losing their sense of purpose. If they really enjoyed their career and didn’t have a plan for when



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it ended, they may start to see their health decline rather rapidly, she says. If you or someone close to you is in this

position, now is the time to start trying to identify something purposeful to pursue.

How can you find your purpose? It may be a passion or talent that you had to put aside while you were busy making a living and raising a family that you can return to now. Or it may be a recent discovery that you want to try. “It doesn’t have to be profound,” Logan says, “though it can be. Maybe you like being out in nature but you aren’t able to have a garden. Try volunteering at the botanical garden. Or you love animals but aren’t able to have one for whatever reason. Donate some time to the humane society or an animal shelter. You may decide to take an art class or learn a language.”

To help with your process, the Blue Zones Project offers Purpose Workshops about once a month. “They are free and open to the public, and we host them all over,” Logan says. “They are really fun and one of the most popular activities we offer. They’re two hours long—about as long as a movie—and it’s a great investment in yourself, to see whether you can connect with some activity that you can feel passionate about.”

To find out when the next Purpose Workshop near you is, see <https://southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com>. **NH**