



Having a reason to get up in the morning can add both years and quality to your life. GETTY IMAGES

Living with purpose adds quality years to your life

Blue Zones Project - SWFL

Finding out your *why* can add years to your life, as well as improve the quality of your life. Longevity researchers have determined people who live their purpose can add up to seven quality years to their lives.

In one of the world's original Blue Zones®, or places where people live the longest and healthiest lives — Okinawa, Japan — they call this their “*ikigai*” or their reason to get up in the morning. It makes sense. Having a reason to wake up can increase the likelihood you wake up more mornings and greet your day with enthusiasm.

Dan Buettner, National Geographic Fellow and best-selling author of “*Live Longer, Better*,” found that having a strong sense of purpose is one of the nine commonalities of people around the world who live longer, healthier lives. These nine common traits are called the Power9™ and are the foundation of the Blue Zones Project®.

Your sense of purpose can be transient throughout your life as we all go through life's many changes. What we

defined as our purpose in our school days likely changed when we became parents and began building a career. Retirement, divorce, loss of a loved one or even a move to Southwest Florida can be game-changers, as well.

It is not uncommon for someone whose purpose has been defined by a career to retire and suddenly feel aimless and adrift. Sadly, this can result in someone's “golden years” being troubled by depression and isolation instead of the vitality and sense of fulfillment for which we strive.

Understanding how important it is to stay connected to your sense of purpose, Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida offers free purpose workshops to help people discover and reconnect with their unique gifts, talents and passions and how they may be able to apply them at different stages in their life.

These workshops, created by Richard Leider, author of “*The Power of Purpose*,” “*Repacking Your Bags*” and “*Whistle While You Work*,” have helped more than 2,500 individuals throughout SWFL in the past three years. The

two-hour, interactive workshops are available in English, Spanish and Creole.

Although Blue Zones Project hosts these workshops at public locations throughout Southwest Florida, any organization — including businesses, homeowner's associations and faith-based organizations — can request a workshop. Like everything Blue Zones Project offers to the community, there is no cost to attend the workshops.

The next workshops will take place March 19 at 5:30 p.m. at NCH North Naples Hospital in the Brookdale Boardroom and April 23 at 10 a.m. at the Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.

If you're interested in hosting a workshop at your organization, please call Rafael at 239-537-5022.

Whether you are a young person looking to align your career path with your purpose, someone in midlife looking for greater meaning, or are post-retirement and wanting to stay engaged and make a difference, you might want to consider attending a purpose workshop. It might just change your life!