

# Estero

Life Magazine

# 2020

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

## LOOKING SUNNY

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## LIVING THE BLUE ZONES LIFE!

BY KARAN ILOWITE

Your lifestyle is comprised of all the things you choose to do throughout your day. Every choice you make has a bearing on your health, wellness and peace of mind. This is why introducing the Blue Zones Project to Southwest Florida in 2014 had such an astonishing impact on the people who live in this magnificent corner of our beautiful country. As Southwest Florida focuses on becoming a Blue Zones community, its residents and business owners have a potentially life-changing opportunity to work together to learn how to make the choices to create a healthier, happier place in which to live, work and play.

The heart of the Blue Zones lifestyle is this: it's not how long you live, but how **well** you live. This statement strikes at the heart of what retirement has come to mean to so many people who have worked hard all of their lives in order to reap the benefits of years of hard work. But what are the specifics of living the Blue Zones lifestyle, and how can you benefit from them?

**Having a purpose** is an integral part of living a longer, healthier life. Ask yourself: "Why do I wake up in the morning?" Dedicate a place in your house to display your passions, accomplishments, and the things of which you are most proud. Whenever you walk by them, you'll be reminded of your purpose and how you add to the world and enhance the lives of the people around you.

**Moving naturally** throughout the day — walking, gardening, actively doing your daily chores — is a core part of the Blue Zones lifestyle. The idea is to keep moving without having to think about it. We're blessed with good weather all year round, which really makes it easy to adapt this principle to our lives. Take a walk along the beach instead of just sitting back to view a sunset. Park at a distance and walk to the store instead of fighting to find a closer spot. Your goal needs to be to add more incidental activity, along with focusing on the physical activities you enjoy. Exercise increases longevity — so, find one you love because the best exercise plan is one that you will do, joyfully and consistently!

Living to 100 doesn't require depriving yourself of the opportunity to eat, drink and be merry! A healthy, stress-free life includes happy hours, time spent with family and friends and the occasional glass of wine with a delicious dinner. The trick is to **drink one to two glasses per day with food and friends!** The Blue Zones lifestyle is not a vegan or vegetarian one; however, the study revealed that meat (mostly pork) was eaten about five times per month. Serving sizes were about the size of a deck of cards.

*"The people you spend time with will affect your well-being either positively or negatively."*

Blue Zone research also teaches us that those who live the longest were part of **social circles that promote healthy behaviors.** This is called having *The Right Tribe*. The people you spend time with will affect your well-being either positively or

negatively. The lesson here is that if you want to enjoy good health and longevity, you have to surround yourself with supportive individuals who make you happy and motivate you to become a better person. If you think about it, "The Right Tribe" is actually the concept behind living in an active adult community. In fact, the majority of the Blue Zones concepts are embodied in the lifestyles created for those living in these amenity-rich paradises.

**About the author:** *Karan Ilowite is the Lifestyle Director at Tidewater by Del Webb in Estero. She has over 15 years' experience in the lifestyle industry and writes two weekly Bible studies for Grace Bible Church in Somerset, Mass. Karan lives with her husband, Gerry, in Bonita Springs.*