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Guest Columnist

Try transit as an alternative to driving everywhere

I had the pleasure of meeting someone who recently moved to Collier County after living and working in India for three years. He informed me that while living there, he and his family did not drive. They were either driven by a personal driver or shared rides. It wasn't until he returned to the United States that he realized how much his stress level was reduced by not driving.

In keeping with the Blue Zones Project Power 9 principles to move naturally and downshift, I offer you an alternative to driving and instead take public transit.

To use transit, you will be required to move naturally by walking to the nearest bus stop. For some people, the distance to the closest stop might be as much as a half-mile. Some may access the nearest bus stop with the aid of a bike or other wheeled device. Your walk or ride to the closest bus stop will be your choice toward better or sustained health.

At least once a month I like to take public transit to work. Sometimes I'll ride my bike to the stop, and on clear, cool days I enjoy the walk. It's amazing how much more I observe when I'm on my walk. My walk takes about 15 minutes, and it allows me to plan my day or just enjoy the beautiful place where I live. Often, I run into the same people on my walk: a mother packing the car full of kids for the trip to school or a neighbor taking the dog for their morning walk.

When I board the bus, I am greeted by a friendly driver who waits for me to find a seat before he starts the bus to the next stop. Depending on the day, I might listen to music on my headphones, catch up on Facebook or maybe start the work day by answering emails. Similar to my walk, I often see familiar faces on the bus ride. The bus route I take gives me a couple of options, so I run in to a variety of folks. Riding the bus really allows me to downshift, in the morning and then again at the end of the day.

Choosing transit has not only allowed me to practice moving naturally and downshifting, but it gives me a further appreciation of the community that I live in. I encourage you to make that choice every now and then — or from now on! You will surely benefit, and you might come to love it.

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