



The meaning of *Life*  
why purpose matters and how to find it





# Defining *purpose*

**Purpose is having a sense of meaning and direction** — a feeling life is worth living.

**Purpose can help define goals and guide your life decisions.** Whether you find purpose in a specific vocation, in your relationships with friends and family or through spirituality or religious beliefs, your path to finding meaning in life is unique.

Turns out, your **purpose can actually shift and evolve throughout your life** based on your experiences and changing priorities.

Richard Leider, a nationally recognized life coach and purpose expert, defines purpose as the sum of your gifts, passions and values.

**It's about recognizing your own gifts and sharing them with the world.** Your life's purpose is your contribution, and it doesn't have to be a Nobel prize-winning effort. It could be as simple as sharing your art or music talents with your community or bringing a little more joy into the lives of those around you.

• **What do you love doing?**

Gifts + Passions + Values = **Purpose**

• **What do you excel at?**

• **What is important to you?**





# A MATTER OF PURPOSE



## Why having purpose matters

In addition to the emotional and spiritual benefits of feeling you're here for a reason, having a strong sense of purpose can have significant physical benefits, too.

**Purpose can decrease stress**, strengthen your immune system and help you handle the ups and downs of life with resilience.



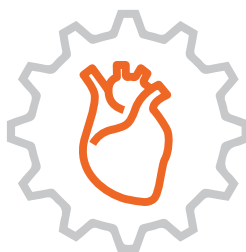
## People with a strong sense of purpose are

**23%**  
more likely



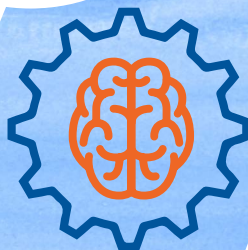
to live longer

**19%**  
less likely



to have a heart attack or stroke

**2.4 times**  
less likely



to develop Alzheimer's



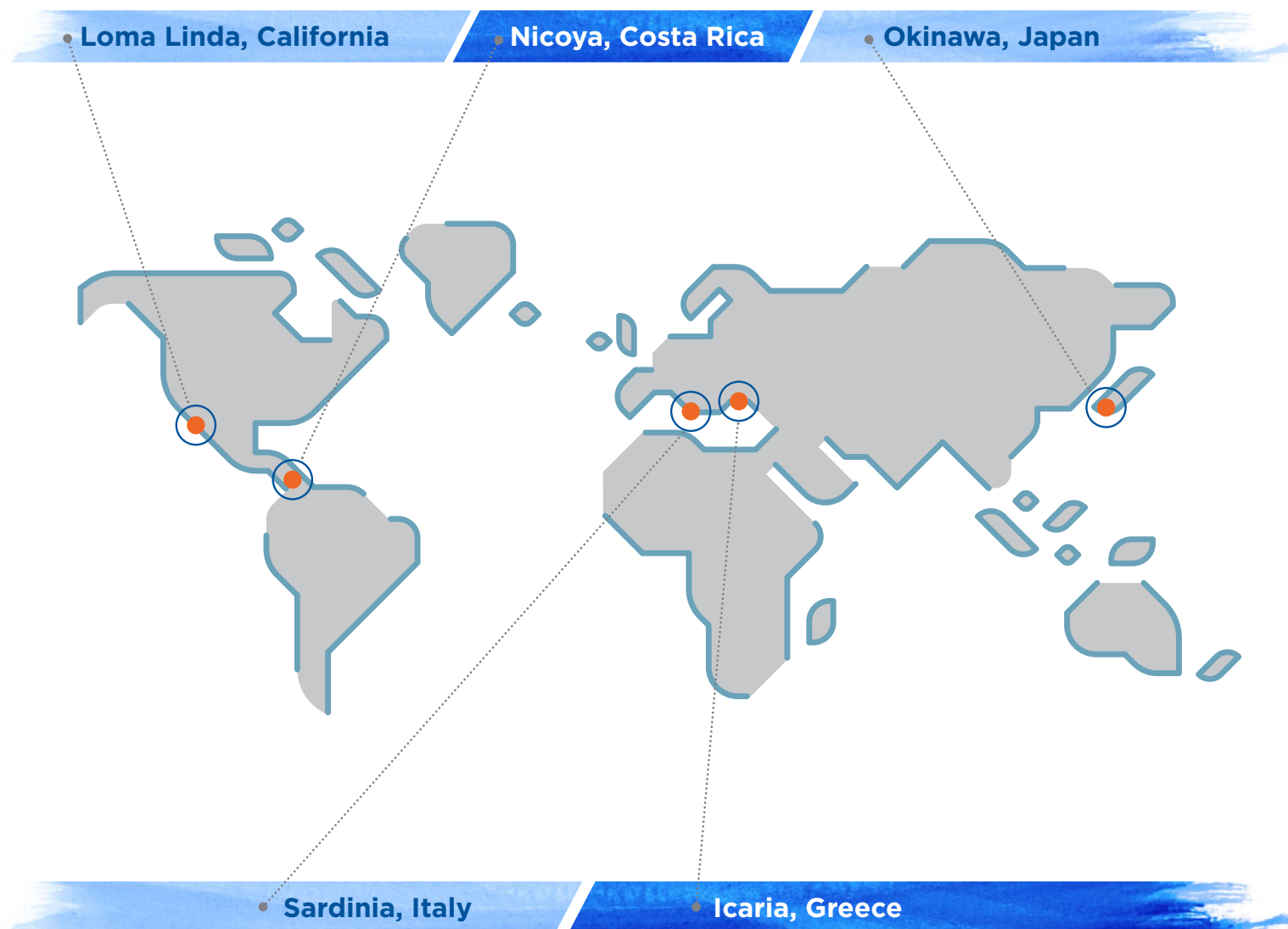
# BLUE ZONES



**Purpose is a key factor shared by those living in Blue Zones.**

Blue Zones are communities where people are more likely to live past age 100. And in his study of Blue Zones, Dan Buettner identified nine key factors most centenarians share, a strong sense of purpose being one of them.

“The Okinawans call it *ikigai* and the Nicoyans call it *plan de vida*; for both it roughly translates to ‘why I wake up in the morning’. Knowing your sense of purpose is worth up to seven years of extra life expectancy,” according to Blue Zone researchers.



Blue Zones ® is a registered trademark of Dan Buettner and Blue Zones, LLC.

Source: BlueZones.com



## Here are the **nine** common denominators found in Blue Zones:

1

**Move naturally:** They live in environments that nudge them into moving without thinking about it.

2

**Purpose:** Knowing your sense of purpose can add seven years to your life!

3

**Down shift:** They have daily routines to shed stress, a key contributor to the chronic inflammation associated with every major age-related disease.

4

**80% rule:** They stop eating when their stomachs are 80 percent full, which can be the difference between losing weight and gaining it.

5

**Plant slant:** Beans and lentils are the cornerstone of most centenarian diets.

6

**Wine at 5:** People in Blue Zones drink alcohol moderately and regularly with friends and with food.

7

**Belong:** Centenarians usually belong to some faith-based community. Research shows attending faith-based services four times per month will add four to 14 years of expectancy.

8

**Loved ones first:** People in Blue Zones put their families first.

9

**Right tribe:** The world's longest lived people choose or are born into social circles that support healthy behaviors.

For more information on Blue Zones, check out [bluezones.com](http://bluezones.com).

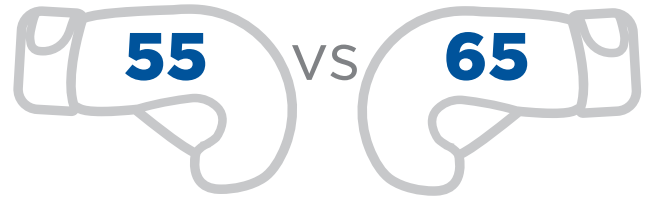
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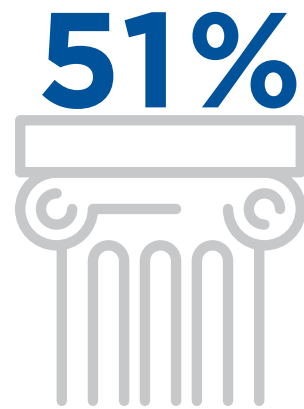
## The retirement effect

A study of retired employees from Shell Oil found that men and women who retired early at **age 55** were more likely to die earlier than those who retired at **age 65**.



Another study of 17,000 healthy Greek men and women showed that the risk of death increased **51 percent** after retirement.

Researchers suspect that the end of a career is perceived as an end to a purpose in life, which affects health and well-being.



According to Blue Zone researcher Dan Buettner, the **most vulnerable times** in a person's life are the first 12 months after birth and **the year following retirement.**

## THE TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

There may be some risk in only finding meaning in a career. After retirement, it's important to re-examine what drives and defines your sense of purpose.







## So how do you find or expand a sense of meaning and direction for your life?

1

**Explore the things you love to do** and what comes easy to you. According to Jack Canfield, author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*®, you can begin to discover your purpose by considering two questions:

**What do you love to do?**

**What comes easily to you?**

2

**Think about the times you've experienced the greatest joy in your life.** Set aside about 30 minutes, and make a list of all the times you've felt true happiness, enthusiasm and highly motivated.

3

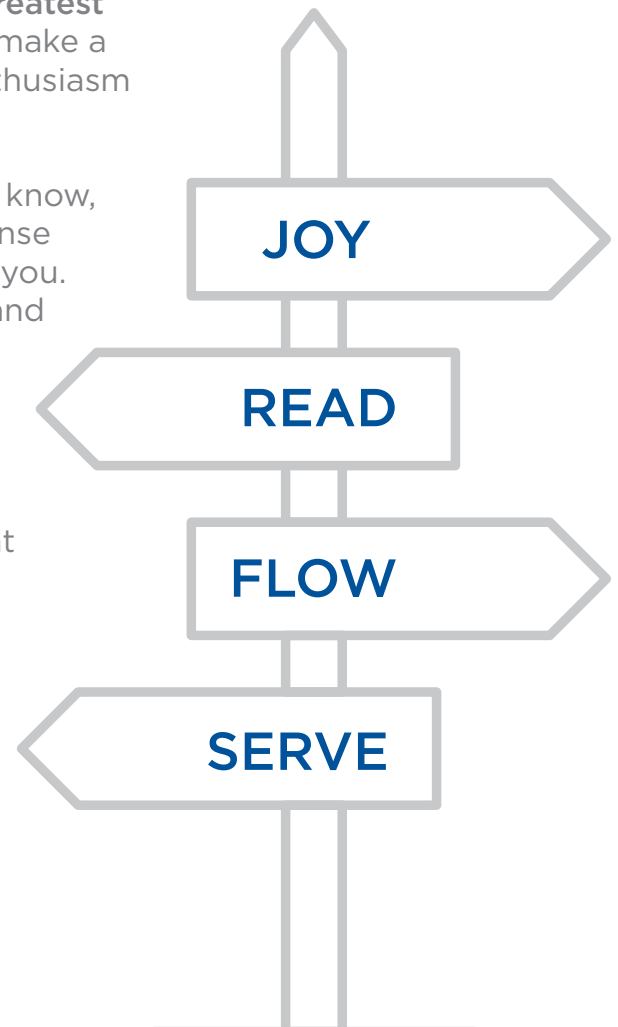
**Read.** Reading connects us to people we'll never know, an experience that research says is linked to a sense of meaning and purpose. See what books call to you. They may be clues to what really speaks to you and gives you a feeling of connection to yourself.

4

**Do the thing that creates flow for you.** What were you doing the last time you were so absorbed in an activity that you lost all sense of time? You were probably doing something that was related to your sense of purpose.

5

**Serve others.** Uncovering your gifts and sharing them with the world — that's purpose. Find your passion, and use it to make a difference through volunteering or teaching.



# WANT TO KNOW MORE?



Check out these tools and resources for more on how to unlock your sense of purpose.

## Resources

- **The purpose check up**  
[richardleider.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-Purpose-Checkup.pdf](http://richardleider.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-Purpose-Checkup.pdf)
- **A guide to unlocking the power of purpose**  
[richardleider.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Power\\_Of\\_Purpose.pdf](http://richardleider.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Power_Of_Purpose.pdf)
- **10 tips to help you find your purpose from Jack Canfield, the author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*®**  
[jackcanfield.com/blog/finding-life-purpose/](http://jackcanfield.com/blog/finding-life-purpose/)





## Sources

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