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## How the Three Blue Zones Project and a Longer Life Are Related in Dan Buettner's Speech How to Live to Be 100+

In Dan Buettner's speech, "How to live to be 100 +", he talks about specific ways to achieve life longevity and the myths that have been presented by many studies. In order to explain his theories about how to extend life expectancy, Dan uses, what he calls "Blue Zones": areas where there is abundance of people who have lived to be 100. Buettner's goal for his "Blue Zone" project was to "find the four demographically confirmed areas that are geographically defined." Although Buettner's goal was to find four regions, he only was able to find three. He teamed up with National Geographic and the National Institute on Aging in order for him to thoroughly research his "Blue Zone" project.

The first Blue Zone is on the island of Sardinia, located 125 miles off the coast of Italy, is a place where the elderly are celebrated and appreciated for their wisdom as they grow older. Diet in the Sardinia lifestyle is important, but more importantly is how they set up their society so that it is based around how they treat the older people. Buettner said, "The older you get, the more social equity you get, the more wisdom you are celebrated for", showing that the older they get in this society the more important they are to the city and their family and friends.

The second "Blue Zone" is 800 miles south of Tokyo, on an island called Okinawa, where the value of friendship and family aid them to leading a life to 100 or more. The northern part of the main island is home to the oldest living population of females. In the Okinawa society these women are "born into a system where you have a half-dozen friends who you travel through life with." The companionship of these women and their group of friends is their key to living to be 100.

Lastly, Buettner was asked by his editor at National Geographic to find the place in the United States with the largest population of people living a long life. He found it to be in a place called Loma Linda in California. This area has a huge population of Seventh Day Adventists, where the women live, on the average, nine years longer and the men eleven years longer than the average American. The Seventh Day Adventists' Sabbath is 24 hours where they only focus on their religion, good social network and going on power walks. These men and women commit to a healthy diet and moderate exercise, which is apart of their religion, and making time for rest and reflection.

All three of these areas that Dan researched have many of the same concepts in common. These people tend to move naturally, everyday-type activities, have a positive outlook, have a

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clear purpose in life, eat wisely and connect with others. Although Dan Buettner's research is interesting, the lifestyle that he has documented as key to living a long life is not a reality for the average American. The American pursuit of happiness and success has caused many Americans to replace the value of family, friends, the elderly and their health with material items and personal gain. This modern value system, in contrast with those seen in Buettner's examples, has proven to work against our desire to live a long healthy life.

In America, simple values such as treasuring the elderly, is not a priority in our everyday lives. Our society is set up so the focus is on younger people. Having the older people be the focus of society would be nearly impossible in the United States. "The period after World War Two [was when we started to see] great mobility in America, which led to the break-up of large extended families. The old person was no longer seen as a useful member of a family team, but [was] rather [bringing the family down financially]" (Life in the USA). In America it is uncommon for the entire family to live in the same, or even in the same state. Due to the majority of Americans career oriented mind-set, family is put at the bottom of the list, in order to reach the top, in terms of where they work. This makes it hard for the entire family to get together, or even set aside the work and make time to connect with the people around them. When older people reach a certain age in the work place, the younger population automatically assume that they are "unable to work, [because they are] behind the times [as far as technology goes], slow-thinking, [and] useless financial burdens on society "(Life in the USA). Therefore, they are either pushed out or content knowing that the next step in their life will be doing whatever makes them truly happy, such as traveling, playing golf, learning a new language or exercising. In the USA NEWS' article, 25 Things To Do When You Retire, it says that number 13 is to visit family. Not only is family not a priority for most people when they are in their mid-life, but after they retire and begin to grow old, they are sent to live in segregated communities instead of the setup that other countries have, like Sardinia, where their extended families take care of them. Lastly because of the distance between family members, it makes it difficult to therefore learn from the elderly people in your family, resulting in the unknowing of our family history.

Not only is family not a priority in our life, but apparently neither are our friendships. Due to moving, want for independence or change of values in America, many of the friendships do not last. In Okinawa it is their lifelong friendships that proves to help them grow longer. But due to our fast-pace, large country and the demand for money and power, our friendships do not last long. For many people, their job requires them to move. This causes more problems for people with children because then those children are losing friends as well, teaching them that having a long lasting relationship is not likely in their life. Not only would it be hard emotionally to keep those friendships, but financially, traveling, whether it is a plane or gas for a car, it costs quite a bit of money as well. Free time for many American families is often spent within the small immediate family group or is regulated by extracurricular activities like sports. For me, I see my grandparents, aunts and friends, more often at my games than I do at their homes. It is a way

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that we can all get together without having the hassle of cleaning, cooking and entertaining them at our own homes.

Diet and health for Americans is based on fads and trends. "The U.S. is an instant gratification country. The wealth of the nation allows average people to get what they want when they want it" (Ireland, 1). The fast and easy mentality is what Americans are all about, especially when it comes to food and diet. Get thin quick seems to be like a broken record in the U.S. It seems that every time that I turn on the T.V., radio or computer, there is a new way to get fit fast. Ways to lose weight, exercise and maintain that often takes months to years, but people of the United States have been trained to search for the fastest and easiest ways to do this. All three of the areas that Buettner talked about either lived off the rare veggies and resources of the land or took their diet straight from the bible so that it is pure for the body. However for many of the Americans that live in cities, it is just not possible to eat local.

ARGUMENT

CONCLUSION: I am going to take a break and think about this.. but feel free to add or give some notes.

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