

# Building Resilience: One Step at a Time

## Strategic Wellbeing

Wellbeing does not simply happen to us; we make regular investments in our physical and emotional health that add up over time. The outcome is a better, more strategic approach to health, wellbeing, and impact. Following are a few areas of strategic activity to consider in developing your intentional wellbeing lifestyle.

**Invest relational time and energy into the "Right Tribe."** Your tribe is the collection of people who influence your lifestyle and choices affecting wellbeing. We often do not think of the influence those around us may have on the outcomes of our lives, but perhaps we should. The *Blue Zones* researchers have determined that the collection of family, friends and associates around us impacts our overall wellbeing. That can be a positive impact, a negative one, or a mixture. Those who invested the most time in the tribe members who supported and encouraged wellbeing lived longer with less stress and fewer disabilities.

One does not need to drop all the unhelpful people in their lives, but perhaps limiting their influence on your lifestyle and choices is good. Instead, identify those who nudge you toward health and wellbeing and ensure you invest reciprocal time with them. If necessary, find new tribe members and be as much an encouragement to them as they are to you.

**Live with a larger purpose.** Purpose-driven living is shown in the Blue Zones studies to increase the quantity and quality of one's life overall. Richard Honaker, MD, who works with Your Doctors Online, says, "*Purpose is related to happiness, and happiness is associated with better health than sadness or indifference.*" Purpose gives us something bigger than ourselves to live for, which is healthier than living in a self-preoccupied world. According to the researchers, it adds life to your years and years to your life.

**Manage stress.** Chronic stress is a strongly negative influencer of health and wellbeing. Managing your stress reactions is a foundational strategy for health and wellbeing. "*The Longevity Plan*" author John Day, MD, says about our stress: "*We all have stress. The key is how you perceive your stress. If you view stress as something that is making you stronger or refining you, it can be a good thing. If you view stress as something destructive then it probably is.*" Dr. Day's research in China indicated that simple lifestyle habits such as eating nourishing foods, being physically active, getting good sleep, and socializing with family and neighbors all helped negate the adverse effects of stress. Mindset is vital, for the external stress triggers around us have no necessary impact on us unless we allow them to do so. We can influence our habits of mind to reduce the impact of stressful situations.

We tend to react to stress in a "auto-pilot" frame of mind. We do not have to do so. In every stressful situation, we can choose our responses in choosing lies our freedom from negative impacts.