

Podcast Transcription

Hi everyone, this is Paris Taylor, and I'm the host of the National Geographic podcast. On today's episode, I'm going to be talking about a Netflix documentary that I just watched called "Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones." I've been hearing about this limited series documentary for a couple of months now; it came out mid-2023, probably. And I've finally had some free time to get around and watch it. It's a pretty quick watch; it's only four episodes, about 40-minute episodes.

So, I just watched the first episode, and oh my gosh, did it pull me in. It is absolutely fascinating with what this guy comes up with. So, a little bit of background on the show so you guys know what I'm talking about if you haven't seen it. Basically, it's about this guy named Dan Buettner, and he has had an interesting life. He started biking, like mountain biking and cross-country biking, when he was pretty young. He became obsessed with it and wanted to bike around the whole world. So, he set five world records for biking across five continents, which is so crazy. He's also actually a National Geographic author. After he set all these records for biking, he was trying to come up with a purpose in his life because he didn't know what to do after that because that just consumed so much of his life.

One thing led to another, and he heard about these places called Blue Zones. Basically, these Blue Zones have taken over his life for the last 20 years. He's been going around researching them, talking to the people, journaling about them, and whatnot. A Blue Zone is basically a concentrated zone in the world where there's a large number of centenarians. That means that people in these zones, a huge number of them, live to 100 and over 100, which just means their life expectancy is much more than other places right around them, but for some reason this specific place the life expectancy is just through the roof. So, the show kinda starts off with saying what we all honestly kind of know. That what people are doing to try and live longer is wrong. Diets, gyms, supplements, all this stuff, is not going to extend your life expectancy. I'm a big believer that you're not going to do anything to extend your life expectancy. Right now about 2/3rd of people on earth are on track to die prematurely from a disease, and our life expectancy is also dropping all over the world, which hasn't happened in the last 100 years. That's a little scary. There's a great quote at the beginning that I love, and he says that life is not about preventing death but it's about learning how to live, and I just absolutely love that quote.

The first place he visits is Okinawa, Japan, and this is basically the place with the longest-lived people in the world. What makes a Blue Zone typically is people are living longer without even trying, which is the fascinating part. Okinawa isn't saying, "Okay, we're going to try to live forever"; they just are. They just are, from their lifestyle that they've had for centuries and centuries, centuries. So, first, he talks to a 101-year-old, and she gives some great advice. He

asks her, "How do you live to 101 and still be active and happy?" She says, "Have fun, don't get angry, make people happy, forgive quickly, and that laughter equals longevity," which is amazing.

Okinawa has the lowest rates of diabetes, heart disease, and dementia in the world, I believe, or they did. So, a little bit about what he found from Okinawa that he thinks might contribute to them living so long, other than their mindset because that's a huge part of it. If you're happy and you like your life and you're not stressed, I think that, for sure, is going to make you live longer. So, the first thing he found is it's a pretty warm climate there, which could mean that there's more growing seasons. So, he found that these people in Okinawa eat so many fruits and vegetables, and their diet, all their caloric intake, pretty much comes from those. They only eat about 1 to 2% of their caloric intake from meat and eggs, which anything that supports being vegan is great to hear because I'm vegan. That was something I already knew, but these people ate an insane amount of purple sweet potatoes. That was kind of where all of their calories came from. I think about 60% of their caloric intake was from these sweet potatoes that they have been growing forever because they were on a little island, so it prevents them from getting washed away.

Also, everyone there has a garden, is active, they're gardening when they're 100, and they grow all their own stuff. These people's lives are not very sedentary; they don't fall because they have such strength and balance from moving around. Falling is such a big cause of death in old people in the US. These people aren't lonely; they have social circles, friends, they're doing so much to stay happy, stay active, and that's kind of what he found. So, that kind of sums up the episode. Thanks for watching, and I hope that you're going to go home and watch this series because it's amazing. Goodbye!