

A life that is long, a sense of purpose and deep happiness – what if these three basic concepts arise from the exact same place?

These book chapters talk about the Japanese concept of ikigai, which comprises what you live for, your life purpose and your source of longevity. You'll find out how you can have a long, full and joyful life by discovering your ikigai and using a few basic health clues.

Chapter 1 - The key to longevity is a profound purpose in life.

Do you wish to live a long, healthy and satisfying life? Who doesn't want that?

The secret to attaining that just may be seen on the island of Okinawa found in southern Japan, home to the top concentration of centenarians in the universe.

Also, the people that live in these island secret to longevity may come down to only a phrase: ikigai, which closely means to your purpose for living – or your inner drive for a certain professional activity.

Also, it can be explained as a connection between four separate elements: what is your passion, where your abilities lie, how you can make a living and what the universe requires. A lot of Japanese assume that everybody possesses an ikigai or destiny, that they were born to achieve.

But, although some people discover their ikigai fast, other people have to look for it out over time. If you belong to the latter group, it's vital to carry on; nevertheless, ikigai will eventually be what inspires you to leave your bed in the morning.

This is the reason why Okinawans usually realize a high degree of specialization and attention to detail in their day to day work. For example, in an Okinawan paintbrush factory, the authors came across an experienced craftswoman who had used her whole life mastering the art of joining individual hairs to a brush. At this point in her profession, she was able to do her work with remarkable dexterity and ability.

Also, ikigai is key to longevity. Hence, if your ikigai is your work, you should not retire ever. Also, if your ikigai is an interest that gives you significance and happiness, don't ever give it up.

Okinawans stuck by these rules and, due to that, stayed active late into their lives. If they're enforced into retirement, they still look for means to stay active, like doing gardening or other work in their societies.

The advantages of this commitment are clear. Medical studies done on Okinawan centenarians have discovered very low rates of both dementia and heart disease.

In the following chapter, you'll discover how precisely an engaged mind permits a long life.

Chapter 2 - The secret to a long life is an active mind as well as low stress.

Any type of doctor can say to you that a healthy mind, as well as body, are vital to age with grace; but, in reality, the former is usually disregarded. That kind of prevalent negligence of the mind is a shame, as it's only as vital to a long life as your physical health.

As a matter of fact, in the same manner, that a sedentary lifestyle harmfully affects your body and feelings, an absence of mental work deteriorates your neural connections, which is the reason why it's significant to work out your brain in various manners. Shlomo Breznitz, the neuroscientist even claims that the elderly people lose brain flexibility due to the fact they get stuck in patterns and routines, declining to attempt new activities.

Hence, how can you exercise your brain?

Well, it can really be quite easy; any mind game, such as chess or cards, will work out. However, if you wish to carry on, leaving the house, meeting others and encountering social relations are about the best work out you can give your brain.

Avoiding stress is another key to longevity. As a matter of fact, premature aging has been associated with stress in a few scientific research, because stressors create unnecessary wear

and tear on the body and the mind. For example, in a research that was conducted at Heidelberg University, a lot of exhausting job interviews were given to an upcoming young doctor, whereby he was told to solve difficult mathematical equations.

When the young doctor's blood was sampled, it showed that the stress of the interview had brought about the production of antibodies, just as if he had been infected by a bacteria or virus. If that kind of danger had existed, this immune response would be vital to eliminating it—however, antibodies also invade healthy cells, making the body to age faster than it ought to.

Hence, minimizing stress is a secret to living a long life and that can be done in a number of pleasant means. Just attempt practicing mindfulness, taking time to work out or doing yoga, all of which offer you an opportunity to relax and study your body and mind very well.

However, in the end, these are just preventative, long-term measures. In the following chapter, you'll discover what to do if you're already really stressed out that you're on the edge of a complete breakdown.

Chapter 3 - An intensive Japanese therapy technique known as Morita therapy assists people to reduce stress.

Anxiety, burn-out, stress; these circumstances are getting more and more prevalent in contemporary life, and just a small number of people can run away from them. As a matter of fact, Japan is not omitted, and the nation's working culture can really be somewhat intense.

With that being said, Japan has a technique that other nations do not have. It's known as Morita therapy, and it can assist you to handle stress.

This routine was created by Shoma Morita, a psychotherapist, and Buddhist practitioner. Initially, it was made to handle chronic anxiety, obsessions, as well as compulsions. But, it works perfectly for stress and burnout as well.

Different from some Western therapies, which have a tendency to concentrate on making use of thoughts to influence emotions and behaviors, say through positive thinking, Morita therapy works in the opposite way.

During Morita therapy, patients are told to listen to and embrace their feelings, without trying to alter them. From that point, they take certain actions to form new feelings, which slowly substitute the old ones.

There are four phases of the therapy, starting with a stage of total rest. For about a week, the patient stays in bed, free of every distraction. She isn't permitted to use media, accept any visitors or even talk, and the only human contact she has is a little amount of supervision by a psychotherapist. In this phase, the patient basically observes her feelings as they come and go.

In the second stage, the patient starts to incorporate repetitive activities into her day-day activity. These comprise writing in a diary, taking walks and doing quite a number of breathing workouts.

In the third phase, these activities get more physical and creative, adding activities such as woodcutting and painting. This series of tasks create a new set of feelings in the patient; she starts to feel happiness, equanimity, and engagement.

And lastly, after finishing these three stages, the patient is prepared for stage four: reentering the world with a newly discovered sense of calm and purpose.

Getting a lot of rest and space from distractions in this manner is good for your health; however, at a specific point, you'll have to look for something upon which to concentrate your attention. This is where ikigai comes in again, and in the following chapter, you'll discover how.

Chapter 4 - Engaging yourself in an activity can assist you to stay you young.

Assuming you're skiing down a lovely powdery slope. Skiing is something you totally love in the world, and you're in a state of total, blissful, attentive engagement. You feel as though you could carry on with this for the remaining of your life, you just might wish to live for life.

The good news is that doing that kind of activity could, as a matter of fact, increase your life expectancy.

Attaining that kind of a state of flow frequently can make you stay young. Flow in this sense is a technical word invented during the 1970s, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi a psychologist. It talks about a state of enjoyment and concentration really deep it stops every other worry— even time too.

Looking for activities that create that kind of a state will boost your enjoyment of life and, hence, your longevity. This is the reason why those kinds of experiences have to be prioritized over hedonistic ones such as overeating, media entertainment or substance abuse, which people usually do because they are bored.

Also, flow is even shared across various cultures and kinds of people. Due to that, painters, engineers and chess players, all see themselves in a state of flow. However, aside from that, it's healthy for the mind, because it directs you on a particular object for a sustained time. Ideally, your ikigai —which is, your actual life profession — will frequently create a state of flow; however, if it doesn't, be certain your interests do.

With that being said, when setting off to feel a state of flow, it is significant to calibrate the level of difficulty. Nevertheless, if you pick a task that's really simple, you'll become bored and unfocused, preventing you from getting flow. Conversely, if your activity is really difficult, you'll struggle, become stressed out and ultimately give up.

Therefore, begin from where you're at. For example, if you choose to learn a new language, begin at a simple level that lightly challenges you. Say you're bored with an ability you possess already, for instance, computer programming, you can push the limits of your understanding, perhaps by learning about a new coding language. By involving your interests in a new, fun manner, you can get flow once more.

Chapter 5 - A few basic guidelines from some old-timers can assist you to live a longer life.

You are already aware of some habits that can help enhance your longevity; however, eventually, no one understands how to live a long life better than the people who are really living one. Therefore, let's examine the recommendation of the Okinawan centenarians.

The first clue these old people suggest is that you worry as small as possible and make it a habit of greeting other people, even people you don't know, with a smile and an open heart. By doing that, they claim that you'll keep a lot of friendships all through your life and make your grandchildren wish to come and see you regularly. That kind of constant stimulation will make you remain young.

Aside from that, they give a warning that worrying too much about things you can't change just brings about pointless stress. For example, being worried that you're not good enough or haven't had a really successful career will just waste your life energy. Rather, the centenarians cleverly recommend to you to enjoy what you possess. By doing that, they claim, you'll possibly know you have beyond what you thought.

However, eliminating worry isn't the only centenarian advice for long life; the cultivation of good habits is another advice.

For example, waking up very early in the morning is mainly a situation of habit; after doing that for a few years, it will only occur spontaneously. Aside from that, waking up an hour early will offer you more hours of silence in the morning to drink your tea, clean your home and attend to your garden.

The last of these is particularly significant, as Okinawan centenarians accept as true that one of the main causes for their long life is that they plant and grow their own vegetables and cook their own food. This is very reasonable, as a garden-to-table diet is really healthy.

Lastly, maybe the most significant habit of all for a long life is to enjoy and keep your friendships. Knowing this, Okinawans use time talking with their neighbors daily.

Chapter 6 - The magic diet of the Okinawan is based on variety and little servings.

The diet of the Japanese has been in the limelight for several years, since the time Japan made a name for itself as the nation with the highest life expectancy. With that being said, in Okinawa province, people live even longer. To determine the reason why that is the case, a heart specialist from Ryukyus University in Okinawa known as Makoto Suzuki, conducted various studies on the Okinawan diet, starting in the 1970s. This was what he discovered:

First and foremost, the Okinawan diet has a remarkable variety of foods. As a matter of fact, locals of this island eat about 206 various foods on a daily basis, as well as a number of herbs and spices. For example, daily, they consume five different portions of fruits and vegetables. They like to know that they're having sufficient variety by making sure that their plates have the entire colors of the rainbow.

It could be as a result of this variety that the Okinawan diet is otherwise pretty plain. The base of the diet is grains, such as rice or noodles, whereas seasonings such as salt and sugar are used in small quantities. As a matter of fact, Okinawans consume 60% less sugar and 50% less salt than other Japanese inhabitants, who already consume a diet that's quite healthy by worldwide standards.

Hence, the variety is vital; however, a small portion size is vital as well. To stick to this second part, Okinawans say that you have to stop eating when you're about 80% satisfied; meaning, you have to stay a little bit hungry.

There's even a term for this idea in Japanese. It's known as Hara Hachi Bu, and easy means to accomplish it comprise of avoiding dessert or decreasing portion size.

To do the latter, Okinawans usually serve their meal with small plates, with servings of rice, vegetables, miso soup, and a little snack, like edamame beans.

They are automatically aware that consuming less food is good for you, and contemporary science has truly verified the advantages of calorie reduction. By consuming lesser calories, you

can curb the level of a protein called the insulin-like growth factor 1. When a lot of this protein is present in the body, cells age faster. Due to that, eating less directly links to a longer life.

Chapter 7 - Foods that are rich in antioxidants are vital for rejuvenation as well as long life.

In current years, superfoods have swept the earth, transforming the manner in which people regard a diet as medicine. There are little Japanese kinds of these foods you won't wish to miss out on

Green tea is the first, a rejuvenating beverage that has lots of antioxidants.

Current studies have discovered that this beverage, one of the most common in Okinawa, is a strong promoter of longevity. Different from a number of other teas, green tea is air-dried and it is unfermented. As a result of this, it keeps its active elements, as well as antioxidants, and has been discovered to reduce bad cholesterol, control blood sugar levels, increase circulation and fight off infection as well.

Okinawans put jasmine in their green tea to even make this miracle drink stronger. This herb boosts cardiovascular health and enhances immune function.

However, green tea isn't for everybody. If you like a substitute, try white tea – it really has more antioxidant levels than green tea.

However, is there an Okinawan superfood that you can really have a taste of?

You have to look no more than shikuwasa, a citrus fruit that's a different antioxidant-loaded Okinawan favorite. This traditional Japanese fruit is really acidic that its juice has to be diluted before you can even think of eating it.

It has a high amount of nobiletin, a plant substance that mainly has lots of antioxidants. Although other kinds of citrus, such as lemons and oranges, has some nobiletin, shikuwasa

have 40 times more than your normal orange. Due to that, the fruit is very common in Okinawa, where it's utilized as an ingredient in a number of normal dishes and even used to bake cakes.

With that being said, you might have a difficult time accessing this obscure Japanese citrus. If that's the case, don't bother. Just attempt other citrus fruits, or choose broccoli, salmon, strawberries or apricots, all of which have lots of antioxidants.

Chapter 8 - Movement, even in basic kinds, is a vital part of a long life.

Have you ever encountered people that are older who looked full of energy regardless of their age? Well, probabilities are that they lived that long due to the fact that they've been physically active in their entire lives.

As a matter of fact, movement, generally, is vital to living a long and happy life, and it doesn't need to be very extreme either; studying the dwellers of Okinawa recommends that sports, as well as fitness, are much less vital than a simple, regular movement.

For example, the elders of Okinawans walk around their neighborhoods, work in their gardens and get on stage at karaoke bars as well. The secret to their movement isn't its intensity; however, the fact that it doesn't stop for once

However, if you don't wish to take their word for it, think of what contemporary science has to say:

As stated by Gavin Bradley, a health expert, sitting adversely affects your health. He discovered that after only 30 minutes sitting in a chair, the metabolism reduces, obstructing the healthy digestion of fat. Also, sitting for more than two hours makes good cholesterol levels to reduce.

But, the good news is that getting up for just five minutes each half-hour is enough to offset these consequences; despite that, the majority of office employees disregard such a practice.

Also, Okinawans take part in a more concerted kind of work out. It's known as Radio Taiso, and it's a simple warm-up popular for Okinawans and Japanese natives as a whole.

It's done in the morning or in the entire day, usually in big groups. It's really popular, and specific Okinawan schools, businesses and old people homes come together as a community to do these workout each.

Initially, the exercise was even broadcast on the radio, therefore the "radio" found in its name. However, nowadays, the majority of people tune into their day-day exercise on television or online.

The workout themselves are basic and direct. For example, one exercise is to raise your arms above your head before taking them down your sides in a circular motion. The purpose is only to slowly warm up the joints as well as the muscles of the arms and shoulders.

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Living a long, joyful and well as a healthy life relies on eating properly and doing lots of workouts; however, longevity goes beyond that kind of basic day-day practices. By discovering a purpose that motivates you daily, you can concentrate your energy and prolong your years in life.

Bask in the beauty of imperfection.

In Japanese culture, there's a view that just objects that are imperfect objects such as cracked teacup, can be really beautiful. This view is called wabi-sabi, and it can assist you to get more enjoyment in your daily life. Hence, attempt to let go of the search for perfection that's really popular in life, and rather embrace the beauty that lies in the entire imperfections of life. The outcome will be more energy, less stress, as well as longer life.

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