

Dear Friends of True Wellness, Happy September.

I know that we here at True Wellness offer a lot of information both in the office, at workshops and via emails regarding health and wellness. This is something we have always been committed to in order to give our clients a deeper awareness and a greater ability to take more control over their long term health and wellness. Good information is vital no matter what endeavors we may wish to undertake. If you wanted to hang-glide you would surely want to have some professional instruction before taking to the sky. It would seem ridiculous if I where strap on a parasail and leap off a cliff on the advice of a friend who heard from a friend how to hang-glide. Yet so many people do exactly that with their health. The internet, our modern know-it-all friend has contributed to this to a great extent.

However, this is not the biggest stumbling block I see for people regaining their health and wellness. What seems to be the biggest barrier for so many is making changes. Making changes in diet, in habits, changing from negative thinking to a more positive outlook, changing bad unsupportive relationships into supportive ones or purging such relationships and so on seems to be the hardest thing for us to do. The remedy for this still eludes me. If one is unwilling to take action and make some changes and only wishes to only take that one magic pill which will make all the symptoms disappear without making some changes in what got us to the place of illness, then conventional thinking and medicine is for them.

Having clients' live longer, healthier and happier lives is the goal for True Wellness when it comes to our clients. With that in mind I am excited to give some very interesting information on how you can begin to do just that. After much research it has been found that among the healthiest and longest-lived people in the world happen to be the people of Okinawa. Okinawa is on of the islands in the chain of islands which make up Japan. Okinawa has more 100 year olds than anywhere else in the world. Approximately 33.6 per 100,000 people, compared with 10 per 100,000 in the U.S. live to be 100 years old. A 25-year study discovered that compared with Americans, Okinawas' have an 80% lower risk of breast and prostate cancers. A 50% lower risk of colon and ovarian cancers and 40% fewer hip fractures and a minimal risk of heart disease.

What is the secret to their longevity?

Number one: An accepting attitude. While many Americans have Type "A" personalities, Okinawans believe that life's trials will work themselves out. The average American might be said to suffer from *hurry sickness*. Okinawans prefer to work at their own pace, referred to locally as Okinawa time. They don't ignore stress...but they rarely internalize it. Stress signals your body to secrete large amounts of cortisol and other stress hormones. Those stress hormones damage the heart and blood vessels as well as accelerate bone loss. So let us work at reducing stress.

Number two: Okinawans consume an average of 1,900 calories a day, compared with the 2,500 for Americans. Studies have shown that animals given a diet with 40% fewer calories than the diets of free feeding animals live about 50% longer. I have always felt that most Americans are literally eating themselves to death. **Cut your food intake by a third and live longer.**

Free radicals are created every time the body metabolizes food for energy. Because the Okinawans take in fewer calories, their lifetime exposure to free radicals which damage cells in the arteries, brain and other parts of the body is reduced.

Number three: About 98% of the traditional Okinawan diet consists of sweet potatoes, soy-based foods, grains, fruits and vegetables. This is supplemented by a small amount of fish. These plant foods contain phytonutrients. These are chemical compounds that reduce free radical damage. **A plant based diet** is also high in fiber, which lowers cholesterol and reduces the risk of diabetes, breast cancer and heart disease.

Number four: The waters surrounding Okinawa is an integral part of the of the residents daily diet. Fish supplies omega-3 fatty acids. This thins the blood and reduces the risk of clots-the main cause of heart attack. Omega-3s also inhibit the body's production of inflammatory chemicals called *prostaglandins*. Omega-3s may lower the risk of inflammatory conditions such as arthritis and bowel disorders such as Crohn's disease. **So choose a diet with the main dense protein source as wild cold-water fresh fish, high in Omega-3s.**

We Americans can get similar benefits by eating fish at least three times a week. Cold-water fish, like Salmon, mackerel, and tuna contain the largest amounts of omega-3s. The traditional Okinawan **diet is low in fat and processed foods**, as well as calories so obesity is rare in elder Okinawans. This means their risk of weight-related health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, is much lower than that of Americans.

Number five: People are healthiest when they **combine aerobic, strengthening and flexibility exercises**. Okinawans often get all three by practicing the martial arts.

Number six: People who have spiritual or religious beliefs live longer than those who don't. Spirituality and religion are a part of daily life in Okinawa. **People pray daily for health and peace**. They look out for one another in a help thy neighbor ethic called *Yuimaru*. Moderation is also a key cultural value.

So if our intent is to live longer, happier and healthier lives naturally, then maybe by adopting the good habits and diet of the Okinawan people will be a very powerful way of doing just that. However, it will take change and change is the first step in moving closer to true health, wellness longevity.