

FINDING PURPOSE

**The Power of Purpose & Meaning and
how they can help you Live better,
Longer.**



Dr Nikhil Sharma MBChB, MRCP



Proactive Health

helfy.

Introduction: Why Purpose Matters

It intuitively makes sense that a life lived in line with your own sense of purpose will be a happier, more fulfilling life. I suspect that most of us know this on some level and long to live a life that feels filled with meaning, purpose and value.

However, very few of us actually do anything about it. When was the last time you took some time out just to think about what matters to you, whether your life is heading in the direction you want it to and what to do about it?

If you have done so recently then I'm sure you'll already appreciate the benefit of this. If you've never done it, then you're far from alone - most people never take a step back to really look and where life is taking us.

Instead we get swept up by life's currents. Our families, social class, local culture and other outside factors dictate our life's course to us and we go along with it, spectators to our own lives.

There's now an abundance of evidence to show that a life lived with a conscious sense of purpose is a healthier, longer and more fulfilling life.

A strong sense of purpose guides us every day acting as our compass in all we do. It gives us a sense of belonging and meaning. A reason to get out of bed and do things that give us health and vitality. It guides us to align our actions with meaning and to find deeper fulfilment and joy.

Modern science backs this up showing that a strong sense of purpose improves health, resilience, and longevity. In this guide, we explore what purpose means, why it matters, and how you can uncover your own.

The Science: Purpose and Longevity

Scientific research confirms that having a purpose is linked to lower mortality rates and better well-being. Here are some key findings:

Study	Population	Mortality Impact
Cohen et al. (2016)	136,265 adults in a metanalysis of 10 studies	17% reduction (RR 0.83)
Boyle et al. (2009)	1,238 older people living in the community	The top 10% for purpose had 57% the risk of dying of those in the bottom 10%
MIDUS Longitudinal	7,000 adults followed up for 14 years	For every one standard deviation increase in purpose, the risk of dying over the next 14 years diminished by 15%
Shiba et al. (2022)	13,000 US Adults aged >50 followed for 8 years	Reduced mortality by 20% in men and 33% in women

The Cohen study was a metanalysis combining the results of 10 prospective studies (that followed people up over time) accounting for over 133,000 people. Metanalyses are powerful because they combine the results of multiple research studies (after first ensuring each study is of high enough quality). This minimises the risk of bias or error from any one study skewing our understanding.

This showed that those with a higher sense of purpose had a 17% lower likelihood of dying.

After statistical analysis this finding was found to have a p value of <0.01 . This means there is a $>99\%$ chance that the study findings are genuine and not the result of random chance.

A 17% reduction in the risk of death is an effect far more powerful than any pill or supplement you could wish to buy and as shown above this powerful effect has been replicated in multiple studies.

How purpose improves Longevity

The exact mechanism for the amazing effects of purpose isn't clear, but it seems that people with a high sense of purpose are less likely to get anxious and stressed about the smaller things and are more likely to have their eye on the bigger picture. This may mean lower cortisol levels and so less inflammation, less visceral fat and healthier arteries.

Purposeful people are also likely to act in other healthier ways. They move about more, exercise more, eat healthier and smoke less because they literally have something to live for.

What Purpose Feels Like

Purpose is the sense that your life matters and contributes to something greater.

When we do purposeful activity we often slip into a deep concentration state known as the flow state. In flow all time and space seem to disappear and we become fully engrossed in the activity we are doing. This can feel close to a state of meditation or bliss.

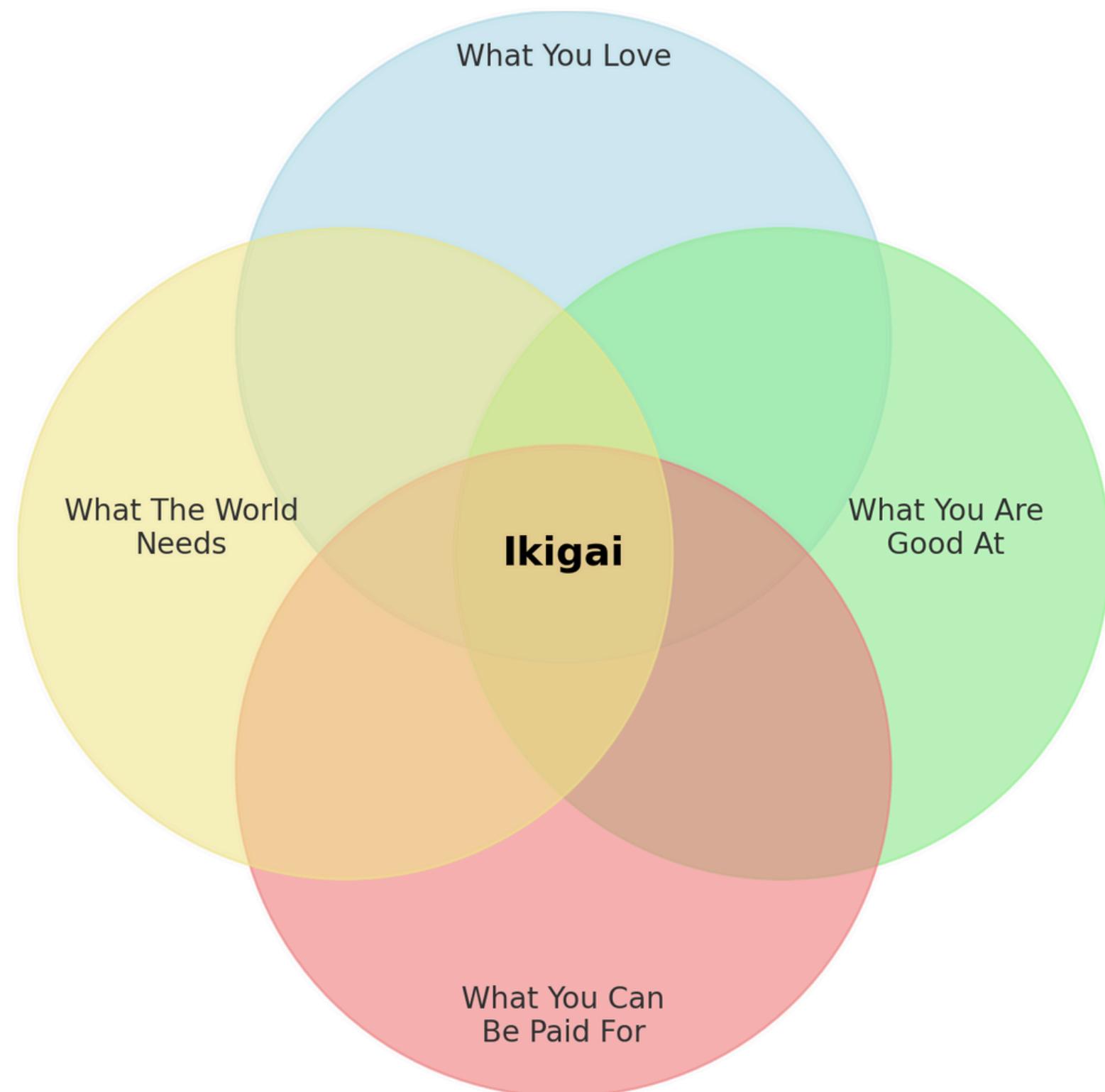
Ikigai

Ikigai (生き甲斐) is a Japanese concept that means "**a reason for being**" — the thing that gets you up in the morning. It's a holistic framework that brings together **purpose, passion, and practicality** in everyday life.

Originating from the Japanese island of **Okinawa**—a renowned Blue Zone where many live well into their 90s and beyond—*Ikigai* is often linked to greater longevity, resilience, and life satisfaction.

Ikigai is seen as the intersection of 4 key life pillars:

- What you love
- What the world needs
- What you can get paid for
- What you are good at



How to Find Your Purpose: A Step-by-Step Guide

You'll need a notebook and pen to work through this section. Or if you don't want to use a notebook you can print out this workbook. Don't think too deeply about each question Often your first instinct will be right. If you later realise you didn't quite get it right, you can always change things later.

Step 1: Define Your Core Values

Reflect on what truly matters to you. Write down 3–5 values that deeply resonate.

You can use the below list as inspiration, but the options are limitless and need to be about what truly matters to you.

- Family
- Independence
- Achievement
- Service
- Love
- Adventure
- Travel
- Growth
- Knowledge
- Fitness

Step 2: Identify Your Role Models

Think about people you admire. These could be celebrities, colleagues, friend or family. What is it about them that you admire?

What traits or achievements inspire you?

Write at least 2 people and 4 traits down now.

Step 3: Write Your Own Epitaph

This one may be a little morbid, But it is incredibly good at sharpening the mind and clarifying what *really* matters to you.

Copy or print the template below.

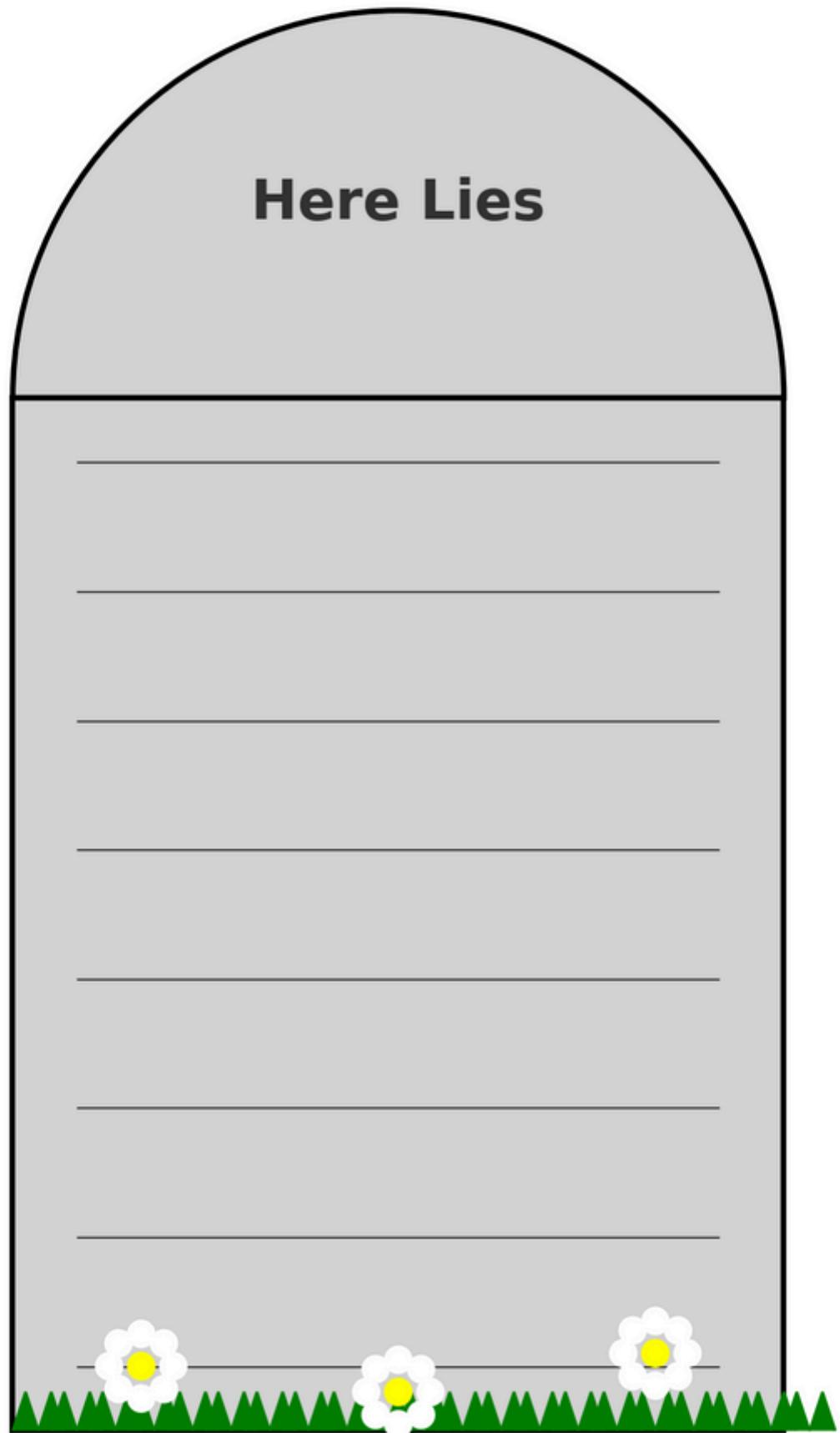
Write your name at the top and then your date of birth and a date 2 years from now.

Imagine you die 2 years from now. How would you want to be remembered?

What would you want people to write on your gravestone or say at your memorial?

Write it down now.

Here Lies



Step 4: Define your Ikigai:

Think about the 4 pillars of Ikigai:

What you love

What you are good at

Things you can be paid for

What the world needs

Write these 4 headings on a piece of paper (It could be the back of the headstone page).

Now write as many things as you can think of as relates to yourself for each heading.

Look carefully and circle or highlight the areas that seem to overlap across multiple and ideally all 4 headings.

Step 5: Set Your Life Goals

So far you have reflected on and contemplated your purpose from multiple different perspectives. Now it's time to use that clarity to identify clear goals that matter to you.

Define 2 goals in the following key areas.

Try to limit yourself to just 2 goals per area. The idea is to force yourself to prioritise rather than to spread yourself too thin:

Personal

Family

Work

Community

Any other area that is important to you

Step 6: Craft Your Purpose Statement

Reflect on your Ikigai, your headstone statement and your values.

Begin with the word 'To...' and then describe your mission.

Something that sums up what matters to you and will make you feel complete.

Use the below examples as inspiration, but ultimately make sure the statement you end up with is uniquely yours.

Real-Life Purpose Examples

- To improve the wellbeing of people and businesses throughout the world.
- To pursue lifelong learning and inspire others to do the same.
- To innovate and transform healthcare to benefit as many people as possible.
- To be a loving and present parent, partner and friend.
- To leave the world better than I found it.

Step 7: Take your purpose for a test drive and tweak it as needed

Write your purpose somewhere you will see it every day. That might be on a post it note by the mirror, or in your diary or stuck on the fridge - or all of the above!

If you can create a visual depiction of your purpose do that too and stick it next to your purpose statement.

Recite your purpose statement to yourself every morning right after you wake up.

After 7 days take 20 minutes out to reflect on your purpose statement.

Does it feel right? Does it fit you? If the answer is yes - Great! Get on with living your purpose and just review it every 6 months, ideally as part of a life review and planning session.

If it doesn't fit feel free to tweak it and repeat the above process until it feels right for you.

This is likely to be the most important thing you can do for yourself so don't accept nearly right - you need it to be spot on.

Final Thoughts: Purpose as a Compass

True success is about alignment between your inner values and your outer actions.

Reflect on your purpose every time you make a significant decision.

Ideally you should have a weekly planning ritual. As part of the ritual reflect on your values and purpose and use this to guide your plans and goals for the week ahead.

Let your purpose be your compass to guide you toward a life of meaning, vitality, and fulfilment.



Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to reflect on your life's purpose. This is the first step toward a longer, more meaningful life.

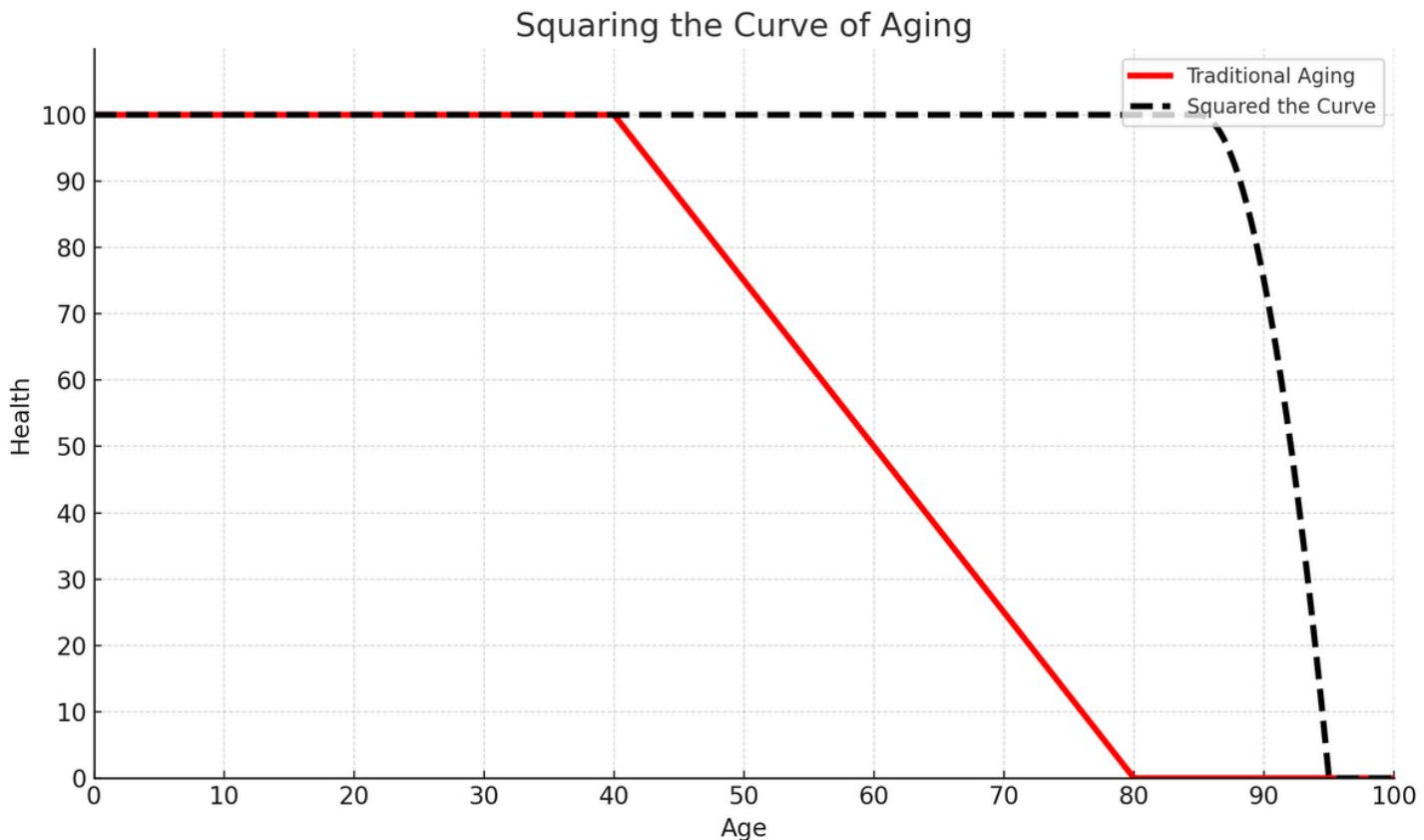
If you have any thoughts on how I can improve this document to serve you better please get in touch via the e-mail link on my website: www.proactivelongevity.co.uk

I'm passionate about my purpose which is:

To prevent a million years of illness by helping people to take a proactive, science backed approach to their health.

Throughout my career as a doctor I've seen too many people suffer catastrophic heart attacks, strokes and other conditions that could have been prevented and I believe Longevity medicine holds the key to preventing this.

Longevity medicine is all about extending your years of healthy, happy and fulfilling life.



Proactive Longevity

At Proactive Longevity we take a 4 step approach to helping you improve your Longevity.

Discover

We begin with deep understanding – not just of your body, but also your ambitions and goals. Through advanced baseline testing (including bloodwork, cardiovascular fitness, ECG, and more), a comprehensive survey and an in-depth consultation, we map out your current health status across physical, emotional, and lifestyle dimensions – from diet and sleep to stress and purpose.

This is distilled into a personalised, easy-to-use digital dashboard and action plan.

Transform

With your goals clearly defined and rooted in what truly matters to you, we co-create a strategy for change. Whether it's improving your nutrition, fine-tuning your sleep regime, upgrading your exercise, or rebalancing your work-life balance – we make it achievable. Our coaching leverages cutting-edge behavioural science, helping you stay on track and turn good intentions into lifelong habits.

Enhance

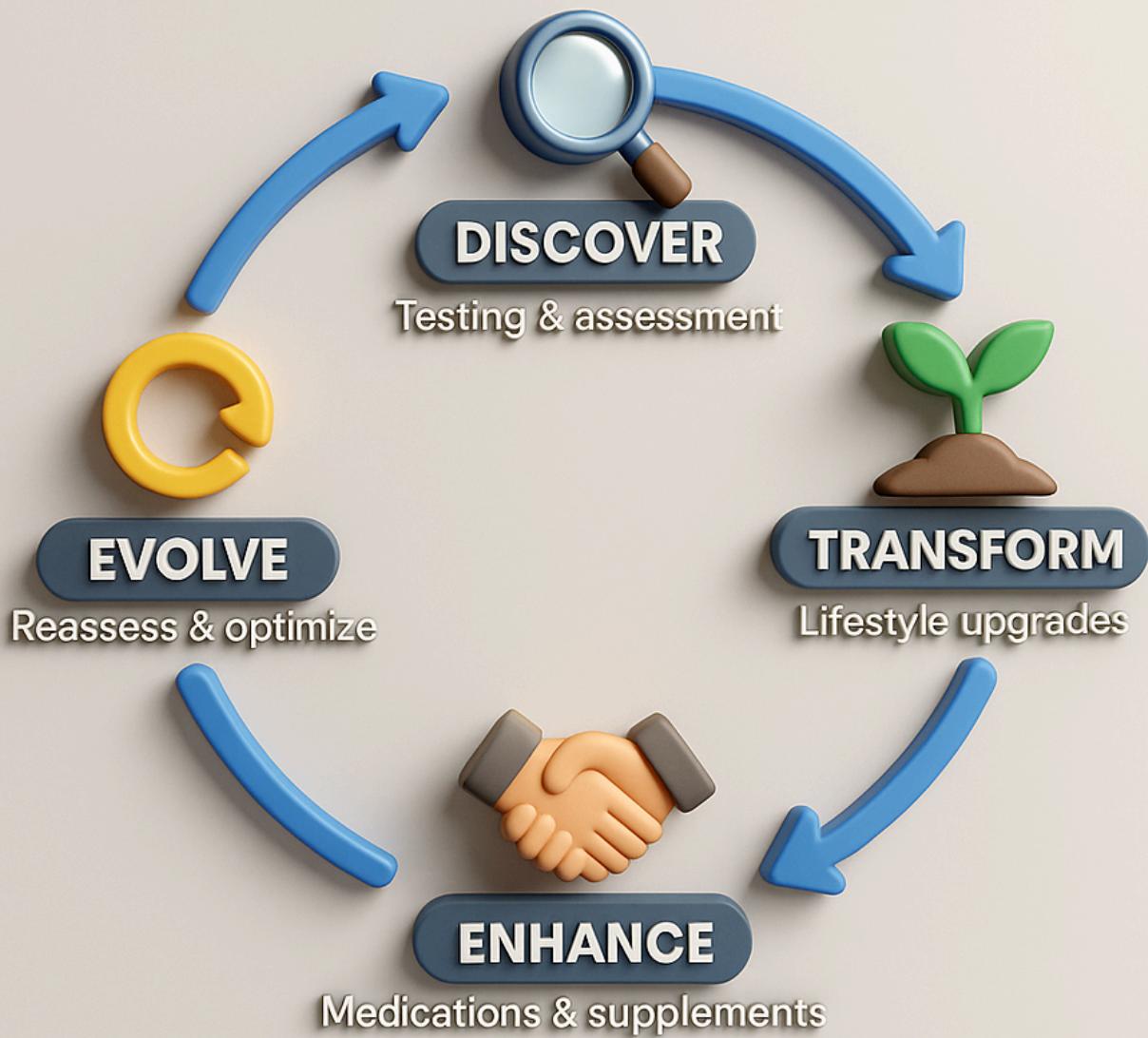
When lifestyle changes aren't enough – or you need a catalyst to accelerate progress – we explore evidence-based enhancements. This may include carefully considered medications or supplements like creatine, testosterone, statins, blood pressure control, or GLP-1 agonists. All options are discussed transparently, and chosen together based on your goals, values, and biological needs.

Evolve

Longevity is a journey, not a one-off intervention. At regular checkpoints, we reassess your progress – tracking improvements, refining your routines, and reconnecting with your deeper purpose.

We evolve your strategy as your life evolves – so you continue to feel energised, in control, and on a trajectory toward a longer, more vibrant life.

THE LONGEVITY LOOP



To find out more or to book a Longevity clinic appointment please visit

www.proactivelongevity.co.uk

To save typing you can click the link below or scan the QR code:

[Proactive Longevity | Longevity Medicine Clinic](https://www.proactivelongevity.co.uk)



Quote offer code: Purpose10 to get 10% off an initial Longevity consultation and baseline bloods.

Dr Nikhil Sharma MBChB, MRCP

Proactive Longevity | Helfy