

How to Be Happy (Ep. 345)

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Denmark consistently ranks at or near the top of the U.N.'s annual happiness ranking. Is their secret generous social programs and high levels of social trust? (Photo: [Mstyslav Chernov](#)/Wikimedia Commons)

Our latest Freakonomics Radio episode is called "How to Be Happy." (You can subscribe to the podcast at [Apple Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#), or [elsewhere](#), get the [RSS feed](#), or listen via the media player above.)

The U.N.'s World Happiness Report — created to curtail our unhealthy obsession with G.D.P. — is dominated every year by the Nordic countries. We head to Denmark to learn the secrets of this happiness epidemic (and to see if we should steal them).

Below is a transcript of the episode, modified for your reading pleasure. For more information on the people and ideas in the episode, see the links at the bottom of this post.

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Until a few years ago, [Helen Russell](#) was leading a seemingly happy life in London, working as an editor for the fashion magazine *Marie Claire*. True, she did feel restless at times; also true: she and her husband had been struggling with fertility treatments. That said, she had no intention of leaving the U.K.

Helen RUSSELL: Until out of the blue, one wet Wednesday, my husband came home and told me he'd been offered his dream job working for Lego in Denmark. And we knew nothing about the country, as many people in other countries are fairly ignorant of Scandinavia. We couldn't really have pinpointed it on a map.

They decided to go for it. But as soon as they arrived — in a small town in the rural hinterlands of Denmark, in the dead of winter— she had regrets.

RUSSELL: My husband left to go to work at 7:30 a.m. I didn't know anyone. I didn't speak the language. I was in this freezing cold, dark country all by myself. I did a lot of howling at the moon, thinking I'd made the biggest mistake ever. And I did a lot of eating danish pastries, because as a repressed Brit, I like to eat my emotions.

But Russell had heard — as you may have heard — that Denmark is routinely at or near the very top of the annual [happiness ranking](#) compiled by the United Nations. And the other Nordic countries — Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Finland — pretty much dominate the top 10. Russell naturally wondered: why? What are the causes, and consequences, of this alleged happiness epidemic? Was it for real? What are the downsides? She set out to answer these questions, in a book she called *The Year of Living Danishly: Uncovering the Secrets of the World's Happiest Country*. Along the way, she asked nearly every Dane she met how they would rank their happiness on a scale of 1 to 10. A funny thing happened during this process: Russell herself became quite a bit happier.

RUSSELL: I was maybe — I'd have said a 6 was a good day in London, and now I'm generally on that 8, and sometimes a 9, if I'm lucky.

DUBNER: You're practically Danish.

RUSSELL: I'm practically Danish.

Today on *Freakonomics Radio*: what causes all this happiness?

Jeffrey SACHS: What it is, I think, is a kind of ethos of life.

What's keeping less-happy countries from copying it?

Meik WIKING: The price tag.

And: an economist who thinks we should worry more about well-being and less about traditional measures like GDP:

SACHS: My God. Let's get serious about the quality of our lives, and stop this nonsense of chasing such a poor indicator that is taking us actually farther away from our happiness.

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I recently spent a few days in Copenhagen. There was one person I was very excited to meet.

*WIKING: So my name is **Meik Wiking**, and I'm the C.E.O. of the Happiness Research Institute here in Copenhagen.*

DUBNER: And is "Viking" a common surname here?

WIKING: No. I think we're a handful of people. My dad is called Wolf. I have a brother called Kenneth. I have a couple of nephews, one is called Max Wiking, so he needs to grow up big and tall.

DUBNER: Do you do Halloween here, where you dress up as costumes?

WIKING: I see where this is going.

DUBNER: I'm just curious, were you a Viking every year when you were a child?

WIKING: No. But there was one episode, yes.

Wiking has a background in political science, economics, and sociology — all of which figure in understanding what's called happiness.

WIKING: One of the challenges we have with happiness is to define it and to measure it. And we should first and foremost acknowledge that it's a wide umbrella term. So you have one understanding of what happiness is, and I have another one. So we need to break it down and look at different components. The first is an overall life satisfaction. And here you essentially ask your respondents to take a step back and evaluate their lives.

Happiness researchers also track people's moods in the moment.

WIKING: "How happy are you right now? How happy were you yesterday?" And there we can see that weather, what day of the week it is, impacts our happiness levels. People are happier — no big surprise — on the weekend, than they are on Monday mornings.

They also measure people's sense of meaning.

*WIKING: That builds on what **Aristotle** thought the good life was. To him, the good life was the meaningful life. So here we try to understand, do people have a sense of purpose?*

A sense of purpose. A self-evaluation of life satisfaction. You may think all this sounds a bit squishy — especially to an economist, yes?

SACHS: I'm going to answer anything you're going to ask me.

Okay, we'll ask some questions. First one's easy: would you please introduce yourself?

*SACHS: **Jeff Sachs**, a university professor at Columbia University. And I am special adviser to the United Nations Secretary General on the Sustainable Development Goals. One part of that is human well-being. And so I am a co-editor each year of the World Happiness Report.*

The World Happiness Report — that's where Denmark and the other Nordic countries always come out on top. Jeff Sachs, just so you know, isn't some woo-woo feel-good witch doctor. You may have heard him on our [program before](#), talking about his work as an interventional economist for governments in crisis:

SACHS: I worked in Poland and in Russia after the communist system collapsed.

Also in Bolivia, trying to tame its hyperinflation.

SACHS: And I worked in Latin America very extensively for several years after the work in Bolivia.

The calls kept coming.

SACHS: And then in 1995, another quite decisive turn for me was an invitation to go to Zambia and to see what this experience and these lessons might mean for Africa.

Over time, and because of those experiences, Sachs came to believe that his fellow economists had left something out of their worldview. Something, in fact, quite vital.

SACHS: The economics profession took a very bad turn roughly 150 years ago when it decided that since it wasn't possible to measure happiness or to compare happiness across individuals, we would look basically at consumer preferences.

The inspiration to incorporate happiness into economic modeling came from a rather unlikely source.

SACHS: So back in 1971, the fourth king of Bhutan — who also brought democracy to the country — was an extremely, extremely wise leader, he raised the question already, why are we pursuing Gross National Product when we should be pursuing Gross National Happiness? You know it's such a wonderful phrase. And GNH entered the vocabulary of a small niche of economists and a small niche of Buddhists, and others who are dreaming of this, already, decades ago.

But Bhutan went ahead as a very poor country and actually set up the mechanisms for detailed survey measurement of dimensions of Gross National Happiness. It set up a Gross National Happiness commission. It ordered that all legislation should be an evaluated happiness benefit-cost ratio.

Sachs began meeting with the king, and they brought more world leaders and economists into the happiness conversation. This ultimately led to the creation of the U.N.'s World Happiness Report. The concept was jarring to many of Sachs's colleagues, particularly in the U.S.

SACHS: Well, in our country, we don't talk about almost anything else in the public space. It's all about growth, GDP, incomes. Of course, there is a massive industry of happiness studies, self-help manuals, helping people to overcome all sorts of unhappinesses, trying to help people find meaning in their lives, trying to help people make better decisions about their lives.

To Sachs, the booming self-help industry in rich countries like the U.S. reveals a disturbing paradox.

SACHS: We have the paradox that income per person rises in the United States, but happiness does not. And it's not that that's because humans are humans. It's because the

U.S. is falling behind other countries, because we are not pursuing dimensions of happiness that are extremely important: our physical health, the mental health in our community, the social support, the honesty in government. And this is weighing down American well-being.

Like the Danish happiness expert Meik Wiking, Sachs finds wisdom in the ancient Greek model.

SACHS: I go with Aristotle — he's my guy, my favorite philosopher. And he pointed out in the [Nicomachean Ethics](#), 2,300 years ago, that to be happy requires the good benefit of having material needs met. So don't deny those, he said. But he also said, only aiming for wealth, single-mindedly pursuing a higher wealth, is certainly no way to happiness and after a certain point of income, work on other things — work on your friendship, work on your mental health, work your physical health. Work on good governance, work on your charitableness. Because in this kind of world, a good life is a balanced and a virtuous life. Not a single-minded pursuit of income.

Okay, if these are the factors that supposedly generate happiness — community, good mental and physical health, good governance — and since Denmark and the other Nordic countries top the happiness rankings, let's take a look at how they address those factors. Let's start with the social-safety net; Meik Wiking again:

WIKING: There is obviously universal healthcare. There's also free university education. In fact, now —

DUBNER: Up through university — I mean, along — from the lower level, too — it's always free, yes?

WIKING: So, heavily subsidized kindergarten, primary school free, high school free, and university free. And you get a government grant. And that creates also a lot of social mobility. So —

DUBNER: As does health care not being tied to a job, which we have mostly in the States.

WIKING: Exactly.

Danes also work [fewer hours](#): on average, 27.6 hours per week, compared to 34.4 in the U.S. To Helen Russell, moving here from Britain, that was a big change.

RUSSELL: There's no stigma to clocking off — people work mainly from 8 until 4 in offices. There's no stigma to leaving at 4 because you've got to go pick up your kids from daycare, you've got to go make supper, or you just need to get on with your hobbies.

Denmark strives toward egalitarianism on the gender front, and its parental-leave policies are famously generous.

RUSSELL: So there's 52 weeks — both parents can share it between them. And you can defer, I think, 13 weeks of this for, I believe it's up to eight or possibly nine years. I have a friend whose family are — she has two children and the youngest one is now five, but she's

taking 13 weeks off next year to go on a big trip around Australia. And I was outraged by this, like, “Goodness, isn’t this taking the mick a little bit?” She said, “No, it’s perfectly acceptable here.” So yeah, it’s just a different mindset, I guess.

SACHS: The basic idea of social democracy is to pay attention to social cohesion, to provide ample social goods like healthcare available automatically for all, education at all levels available for all, vacation time available for all.

Jeff Sachs argues this strong social support in the Nordic model contributes to a number of healthy outcomes.

SACHS: The life expectancy is higher. Our obesity epidemic does not exist in those countries. Our opioid epidemic does not exist in those countries.

WIKING: There is also a high level of trust towards the government. And that goes hand in hand with the Nordic countries being at the low end when it comes to corruption, or perceived corruption. We have a different perception of the state. So what I see from over here, you feel you need to be protected from the state. Is that a fair assumption?

DUBNER: It’s a fair assumption for a significant fraction, at least, of Americans, let’s say — not all, certainly, but yeah.

WIKING: And people in the Nordic countries will feel that the state protects us from things. The high level of social security is one element, that there is a notion that if you fall, you will be picked up. So I think we see more the state on our side, and helping us create good conditions for good lives.

Scandinavia also gets high marks on interpersonal social trust.

WIKING: So if you ask Danes and Norwegians and Swedes, do you feel that most people can be trusted, or can you become too careful when it comes to strangers? Three out of four would say, “Yes, you can trust most strangers.” The global average is one in four.

RUSSELL: So you may have heard of — there was a **story** in New York a few years ago of a Danish woman who was there, who left her child sleeping outside in a pram, which is what you do in Denmark, and was arrested for child neglect. And lots of people in Denmark didn’t understand why it was such a fuss, because in Denmark people trust most people. And this plays into everything. You are not anxious if you trust the people around you, you’re not scared they’re going to rob you to put food on their table.

DUBNER: And have you become more trusting as well?

RUSSELL: Yeah, I think so. I don’t want to reveal too much about where I live, but I regularly forget to lock car and/or house.

DUBNER: But considering the very high level of support in Denmark for citizens from prenatal, really, until literally after death, my question — which is maybe unanswerable — is, would you say that the very high level of social trust is a result of such a generous social security system, or the cause of it?

RUSSELL: That's a really interesting question, and it's something that academics in Denmark are still very much grappling with. Some of the economists that I spoke to for The Year of Living Danishly put it that, actually, these high levels of trust have been here, that pre-date the social services and social welfare system. Other people argue it's the other way around.

There's something interesting about the experience of living Danishly that increases your levels of trust. So immigrants to Denmark also end up adopting Danish values, or their levels of trust rise as the experience of being around Danes and being in this environment starts to sort of filter in, and bed down. So it's a real debate, actually — there's a bit of both.

Russell enumerates several other factors that may contribute to a relatively high state of Danish happiness. Most people belong to at least a few clubs or community groups; they spend a lot of time on fitness and outdoor activities; and they don't put too much emphasis on material possessions.

WIKING: Yes, it's frowned upon to flash your wealth, to flash your success.

Meik Wiking again.

WIKING: That is quite common in the Nordic countries. So it also sort of puts a lid on conspicuous consumption.

DUBNER: So do you believe that that is a driver, major or minor, of overall happiness, that people feel less compelled to compare themselves to others?

WIKING: Yes, a minor one, but I think it's one. And yeah, there's so many studies out there that show that inequality is bad for health, for crime rates, for murder rates, and all sorts of things.

RUSSELL: It's really interesting. So I — literally this morning, I've just come from an independent coffee bar and there's an equality there. There is not a difference between the person who is serving me coffee and the person buying the coffee. You can talk as equals, because you know that you are both probably, after tax, taking home around about the same amount. And everybody is having a sort of decent life.

On the flip side, there's not the same service culture. I was just back in the U.K. for work. Oh my goodness, everyone was so nice to me. And when I go to the States, that's even more so, and I have to remind myself, "Oh, they're being nice to me because there's a financial imperative." And there is more of a service culture in some places than others. In Denmark, that's not the case. You don't expect bells and whistles. But I'm kind of fine with that now.

There is one more Danish attribute that's said to greatly contribute to happiness.

WIKING: So it's pronounced "hooguh."

DUBNER: Hygge.

WIKING: Well done. So I think the best explanation of what hygge is, is the art of creating a nice atmosphere. So it's about togetherness. It's about pleasure. It's about warmth. It's about relaxation. And that is a key cornerstone of Danish culture. To Danes, hygge is perhaps what freedom is to the Americans.

DUBNER: But I gather there are also physical components of it that are specific — a lot of candles, good lighting, and good pastries and so on. Pillows.

WIKING: Right. Because hygge is about atmosphere, lighting is important. Lamps are important. Candles are crucial. So we're — so Danes burn twice as much candle wax as number two in Europe, which is Austria.

Wiking is the author of an international best-seller called ***The Little Book of Hygge***.

WIKING: And I receive a lot of letters from readers saying, I've been having hygge all my life. I just didn't know there was a word for it. So I think what we did with hygge was, we gave a word or a language for people to appreciate something they were already doing.

RUSSELL: It's in every area of Danish life. And I'm working with UNESCO right now to get it put on the World Heritage Intangibles List. Studies show that if you are practicing hygge, it's a bit like self-kindness, but without the woo. And it makes you nicer to other people. This has a ripple effect out into society. So it really does contribute to happiness.

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I was recently in Copenhagen, speaking with Meik Wiking who's C.E.O. of the Happiness Research Institute. I'd been hearing about all the factors that make Denmark and the other Nordic countries rank so high on the U.N.'s World Happiness Report — the generous healthcare and child-care and education benefits, the strong levels of social trust; and the hygge! It was all sounding a bit too good to be true.

DUBNER: Wouldn't you think that more governments around the world would look at the Scandinavian model and say, "Wow, they are thriving economically, and they're thriving on a happiness-and-life-satisfaction level, let's just do what they are doing." Why do you think it hasn't happened even more?

WIKING: The price tag. So I think that the tax level is what scares politicians. But I do sense a larger and larger interest. I get visits on a weekly basis, especially from South Korea. We do see a lot of interest in trying to understand what is it that is working so well in the Nordic countries, that seems to have a positive impact on people's lives.

SACHS: Now one thing that those countries do, which is unimaginable in the U.S. context as of today — they tax themselves, and tax themselves.

That, again, is the economist Jeff Sachs, an editor of the World Happiness Report.

SACHS: And they end up paying, oh, 45 to 50 percent of national income.

RUSSELL: A lot of people are paying around 50 per cent.

And that's the recent British transplant Helen Russell.

RUSSELL: I'd say most things — if you're doing your grocery shop, it's maybe 20 percent more. Goods and services are very expensive. So yeah, life is more expensive. There is not very much extra when you've paid for everything.

But the data show that high taxes and prices are generally considered worthwhile.

WIKING: Nine out of ten Danes are happily paying their taxes. There is an acknowledgement that we collectively invest in the public good, and that is fed back to people in terms of quality of life.

RUSSELL: There is something about the taxes. When you're paying that much tax, you have to trust that this is all going to be worth it. And like life, you know, we're all trapped by something — we have to choose what we're going to be trapped by. And for me, that seems quite a good thing to put my chips on.

DUBNER: One counterargument is that well, if you have that, you have that, what you don't have are the huge rewards for innovation and invention. So there are a lot of things that we complain about in the U.S., including income inequality, including the lack of a lot of the social-service network that a lot of European countries have. But we are the country that makes Apple and Google. And on and on and on and on. It seems that there's an upside to status-seeking, as well as downsides.

RUSSELL: You're right in terms of accomplishment. There isn't the same incentive perhaps to go the extra mile that there might be in the U.K. and the U.S., I'd say. So I know that in some places of work, for instance, if your team is working on something but it's 4 o'clock, they're going to go home. That can be a frustration for people coming from other countries who are used to people staying there, to really impress the boss or just to do that extra bit. I think for me and from weighing up the pros and cons, there are always trade offs. And the idea that you can have most of the people doing okay and fairly happy — well no, pretty happy actually — that feels sort of worth it, rather than a couple of tall poppies and everyone else in the gutter.

WIKING: I think perhaps Danes have lower materialistic ambitions than in some countries. But in terms of having an interesting job, having a happy family, having a healthy hobby and keeping fit, I think there is a lot of, sort of, expectations that people want to live up to.

DUBNER: Okay, so you've told us that Denmark and the other Scandinavian countries are relatively very high on social trust compared to the rest of the world. And you've told us that social trust drives happiness. We also know that social trust decreases when diversity increases. At least, that's what a lot of literature that I've seen has to say. And we know that Denmark and other Scandinavian countries are — relative to other rich countries, the U.S. and the U.K. in particular — are not very diverse. How much do you think the social trust in a place like Denmark is driven by some version of homogeneity? I've read that something

like 85 percent of Danish citizens are not only born here, but are ethnically derived from Danes. So how much of it is just a sort of comfort with belonging to a club that you belong to?

WIKING: Yeah. So it's true, in some of the Nordic countries, there is a high level of homogeneity. In Sweden it's much less — they've been much more welcoming to refugees and immigrants, in the past years, than for instance, Denmark and Norway. But then again, if you see the level of trust, that has not declined.

DUBNER: In Sweden, yet, you're saying?

WIKING: In Sweden, in Denmark, in Norway, in those countries that have accepted immigrants.

DUBNER: Has it been long enough, though, to know? Like with the refugees, coming primarily from Syria and Iraq, that's relatively recent.

WIKING: That's true. But —

DUBNER: And I also wonder — when I see those numbers, I wonder whether those refugees are part of the survey on social trust? Do we know?

WIKING: They are. But now it's refugees from Syria. But when I grew up, it was refugees from Vietnam. Then, in the '90s, it was refugees from Bosnia. Then also in the '70s, it was not refugees, but migrant workers from Turkey. So we've had a lot of different waves of migrants, it's not a new phenomenon. And I don't see evidence that trust had fallen in the Nordic countries, in that time.

DUBNER: I've read and heard from people who move here either as highly skilled workers or as refugees, that Denmark works great if you're Danish. And that it's much harder — and granted, most countries are this way — but one particular complaint in Scandinavia is that even when you're being treated fairly and given opportunities, economic and educational opportunities, and so on, it can be very, very hard to break into the society.

WIKING: Yes. And that's what I hear also from expats living here, from my international friends, that it's very, very difficult to penetrate the social circles in Denmark and Scandinavia. So it takes a lot of effort, it takes a lot of time. It's a really, really tight-knit network, and it's also a very small country. And people still live down the block from people who they know from, they were in kindergarten together.

SACHS: I believe that social, linguistic, ethnic, religious homogeneity probably is conducive to the social democratic model, but I don't believe that diversity is a barrier to it.

The economist Jeff Sachs again. The 2018 edition of the World Happiness Report focused on migration and happiness. One finding, he says, jumped out at his team of researchers.

SACHS: People who move from a poor, unhappy, violence-filled country to a happy Nordic country become like the Nordic citizens in the country. They do carry some of the legacy of the country that they came from. But the adjustment is remarkably fast.

But of course the adjustment depends on how welcoming a new country is.

SACHS: It matters to go to a country where people are desirous and accepting of immigration. I'm happy to say that, despite what might appear to be the case in Trump-land right now, Americans rank rather high on acceptability of migrants and still do, and I think that's a wonderful thing. What I find fascinating about the social democracies — and Denmark is a good example of this — there's a very strong anti-migrant party in Denmark that is also very economically and socially left-of-center.

So it's basically social democracy, but for the Danish people, not for migrants. Whereas in the United States — and in many other countries — we tend to think of anti-immigrant also as being right-wing. But Scandinavia has, "Yeah, we love our social democracy, but it's just for us."

WIKING: It's also important to say here that, you know, Denmark, as you have seen, is by no means a utopia.

Meik Wiking again.

WIKING: First and foremost, it's important to note that the World Happiness Report, that is based on a national average. So you have people above that average and below that average.

DUBNER: And the suicide rate here, for instance, is not wildly low — in fact it's somewhere in the middle, correct?

WIKING: Yeah, you would expect that the happiest countries in the world have a suicide rate of zero.

*DUBNER: Although truthfully, the data show that there is a **paradox**, in that suicide increases with well-being and prosperity, yeah?*

WIKING: So, if you look at the U.S. states, the individual states, the higher level of life satisfaction, the higher level of suicide rates.

DUBNER: The most compelling explanation of suicide I've ever heard about — discussed with the fellow who promulgates it — because we don't really know that much about suicide, because it's taboo, the research is very distant and so on. But he calls it the "no-one-left-to-blame" theory. Which is that if you have problems in life, but you've got a toxic environment or a nasty government, you can always imagine that life will get a lot better. But if you're surrounded by happy, shiny people and you're not happy and shiny, it can be — so can you talk about that notion in a place that's so happy?

WIKING: Yeah. So there is a term, "the happiness-suicide paradox," that talks about exactly that — that it might be more difficult to be unhappy in an otherwise happy society. If everybody around you feels that life is great, that are oh-so-happy, and you yourself feel unhappy, then that could create a stronger contrast and maybe you start to blame yourself. And more developed countries have reduced the reasons why we should be unhappy. You

know, eliminate poverty, have eliminated lack of education — then if I have all these opportunities, why am I still unhappy? We start to internalize that cause and blame ourselves.

Helen Russell, the British expat, has now lived in Denmark for six years. You may recall that she and her husband had been trying, unsuccessfully, to have children back at home.

RUSSELL: We had been trying to start a family for years, trying many different types of fertility treatment. But it never quite worked, and the only feedback I kept getting from various medical professionals was, “Oh, you know, we don’t know what it is, but you’re quite stressed, and” — but everyone in London is stressed. It’s city life, it’s what you do. So you just carry on. Life is busy. We just carry on.

DUBNER: Then you moved to Denmark. I understand now, you have not one, but three children. So is Denmark also somehow a fertility engine — how did that work?

*RUSSELL: I am now riddled with children, you are quite right. I have a litter. Yeah, I think — so, full disclosure: child number one, Little Red, I found out I was pregnant six months after moving here. And so, he — yeah, that is a result of being more relaxed, and that is an incredible thing. Also the work-life balance is more conducive to being relaxed enough to conceive, and also to having a family here. Women can have a career and a family because everything’s shared a bit more equally between the sexes, and there is this heavily subsidized child care. I actually had I.V.F. for my twins who were born last year. But again, it’s cheaper to have I.V.F. here than it certainly would have been in the U.K.. And interestingly, Denmark is one of the biggest **exporters of sperm**, so there’s a lot of genetically Danish babies that will be coming around the place in the next few years.*

This suggests a nice study for some demographer out there — to see whether all those genetically Danish babies will go spreading happiness around the globe. In the meantime, Helen Russell has also adapted to the Danish style of parenting.

RUSSELL: I do leave my children outside to sleep.

DUBNER: Not overnight, presumably.

RUSSELL: Not overnight, no. I mean, I might forget one day, but no, just for nap times. And they do sleep really well, because of the fresh air, and they’re all bundled up in their old-fashioned prams, Mary Poppins-style.

Thanks to Helen Russell, Jeffrey Sachs, and Meik Wiking for speaking with us.

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Here's where you can learn more about the people and ideas in this episode:

SOURCES

- [Helen Russell](#), journalist and author.
- [Jeffrey Sachs](#), economist at Columbia University.
- [Meik Wiking](#), author and CEO of The Happiness Research Institute.

RESOURCES

- "[World Happiness Report 2018](#)," edited by John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard and Jeffrey D. Sachs (2018).
- [The Year of Living Danishly: Uncovering the Secrets of the World's Happiest Country](#) by Helen Russell (Icon Books Ltd 2015).
- [The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living](#) by Meik Wiking (William Morrow 2017).

EXTRA

- "[The Year of Hygge, the Danish Obsession with Getting Cozy](#)," Anna Altman, *The New Yorker* (December 18, 2016).
- "[Trust Me](#)," *Freakonomics Radio* (2016).
- "[The Dark Side of Happiness](#)," Meik Wiking, *TEDxCopenhagen* (May 10, 2016).

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