

MARCH 2017 HYGGE

Have you filed your tax return yet? I just did. Maybe it's my accountant past, but each spring my tax return tells a story. It reminds me of the economic events that have shaped the last year. It especially reminds me of how fortunate I am. I have two great exemptions—I mean kids. I have some legitimate deductions—I mean a home and several charitable organizations. And I got to have some fun. I have enough, a decidedly un-American sentiment.

Here in the US, we are in perpetual pursuit of more. More time, more money, more happiness. We are constantly connected, frenetic, dissatisfied with the status quo. It's fairly ordinary to see someone rushing through life with a Starbucks latte in one hand and a cell phone in the other. Now let's head across the pond to Denmark. The temperature is 32°, down from a high of 37°, and there were four hours of daylight. Many stores were closed today because it was too unpleasant to go out. After 7-8 hours of work, everyone went home to hunker down with loved ones. Candles lit, warm beverage in hand and a good book beckoning, there isn't an electronic device in sight. The Danes have made an art of being at home. They call it hygge.

hygge

a sense of comfort,
togetherness,
and well-being

- CANDLELIGHT
- TEXTURED FABRICS
- THROW PILLOWS
- MUSIC
- BAKING BREAD
- SWEETS
- FLOWERS
- BOARD GAMES
- SUNDAYS
- BOOKS

Hygge, pronounced hoo-ga, translates to the art of intentionally creating intimacy or coziness. Its origin is primarily Norwegian with root words meaning comfort, consideration and wellbeing. It is a highly sought-after quality whether selecting hygge-socks or a restaurant with a hygge atmosphere. The more hygge, the better. While some of it can be attributed to the often cold and dark days that force people inside, there is a contentedness to hygge. Danes look forward to it, they seek it outside of their homes, they cherish and celebrate it. This isn't just a snow day, it's a belief system.

The 5th Edition of *The World Happiness Report* will be released on March 20, 2017, International Happiness Day. And once again Denmark will rank as one of the happier, if not the happiest place to live in the world. To paraphrase a previous report, once baseline living standards are realized, happiness varies more with the quality of human relationships than income. While all of the Nordic countries work hard at providing fair living standards for everyone, Denmark always ranks higher. The conclusion is that hygge is the social glue that consistently nudges them over the top.



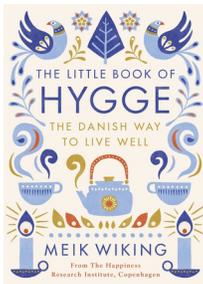
the supplement
FACILITATING VITALITY

Some accountant-type will now state that with a 55.8% tax rate, how could Danes possibly be happy? Well maybe they aren't jubilantly happy, but perhaps they are the least unhappy or they have reduced the possibility for extreme unhappiness. Or maybe the strong social welfare state reduces the uncertainty, worries and stress that keep Americans rushing all of the time.

When you get home tonight, move your supporting tax documents from your favorite chair and cuddle up with a good book and a cup of tea. If that sounds impossible, start small. Light a candle.

HYGGE-STATS

		
CANDLE WAX 13 lbs/year	CAKE 18 lbs/year	COFFEE 4.4 cups/day



THE LITTLE BOOK OF HYGGE, BY MEIK WIKING

Hygge, the Danish practice of savoring the simple pleasures in life, is popping up all over the popular press. One of my colleagues recently shared an article about a growing wellness trend –staying home. It appears that the Danes have been doing it for years. This is a lovely little book that could remind you how health promoting it is to slow down and smell the coffee.



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