

Justin Dyer

Long Life

Susan Pinker discusses a place called the blue circle, where people tend to live longer and there is no life expectancy distinction between men and women. She touches on many attributes of the resident's lives that I personally would not have thought increases life expectancy. Through interviews and researching studies conducted on the area, she narrows the sources that cause residents to live longer to two characteristics. These characteristics include relationships, having friends and family nearby that are truly there for you and want the best for you, and social integration, socializing throughout your daily life with people outside your main group. There are some major differences of the place she describes and the United States of America. I believe there is some room to grow and knowledge to be learned from this.

In the United States, it is common for people to leave their family to follow work, school, or even a significant other. I personally moved a few hundred miles away from my family to follow my dream of being an engineer. The cause of this is not directly the person's fault in my opinion. The opportunities for one's life are uncountable. In America alone, there are roughly 12,000 different career opportunities for any given person. This does not include international careers. The odds that one chooses a job out of those 12,000 that is local to their family is almost unfeasible. This is why I believe there is not a very strong family connection in America. It is hard to maintain a relationship with distance. I believe this can and will improve. The United States is constantly growing and opportunities are not so far away.

Friends. Everyone thinks they have friends. The question is, are they good/reliable friends? This is a question I personally struggle with constantly. It is hard to tell if the friends you have are truly going to be there for you when you need them. I think the United States of America struggles with this. There are way too many people that desire a

lot of “friends” or to be “popular”. I believe the popularity part is the part that America struggles with the most. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok, you name it. Every single one is based on how many followers, likes, or friends you have. This is a misconception I believe America struggles with in modern times. Meetings, social gatherings, everything is digital in America. There is no need to go even just shopping with your friends anymore when you can have anything shipped to your home. This correlates to a study researched by Pinker. The brain activity of digital versus in-person interactions is immensely different. There is hardly a comparison. America can improve on this by not making everything digital and forward the social values to real world experiences with good people.

The friends and family interaction covers the relationship attribute of living a long life. Having this ultimately relies on the person. One must push people and themselves to get up, and be more social. Pinker stated that the main health risk of modern times is social isolation. It is easy to get focused on a phone or computer all day; yet no one realizes the harm this does to their life. Being social in the real world has tremendous value. America just needs to get up and be social.

The second attribute is social integration, socializing throughout your daily life with people outside your main group. This can include talking to your mailman, the person who makes your coffee in the mornings, people who are in your life daily. These interactions grow not only your spirit but others around you too. In America, these actions are uncommon. People stay within their circle and it is like it is against the rules to socialize outside of it. It is crucial to one’s well-being to be alert and social with not only those inside your group but people outside of it as well. Growing these attributes in America will be difficult but I think the benefits of it is way too valuable to overlook. Be friendly and happy.