



A cheat's guide to the world's fastest trending wellbeing philosophies

NAME	CULTURAL ORIGIN	IN A NUTSHELL	TAKE HEED BECAUSE	RECOMMENDED READING
Hygge	Denmark	<p>Create a cosy and comfortable environment in which you feel content and at ease!</p> <p>The feeling or mood that comes from taking genuine pleasure in making ordinary, everyday experiences more meaningful, beautiful or special as a (social) protection mechanism from the outside world.</p>	<p>Denmark has been consistently ranked between number one and number three on the UN's World Happiness Index for the past seven years, since the Global Happiness Index first began. The Danes place a strong emphasis on work-life balance (the average work-week is 33 hours – the shortest in the world – and Danish employees benefit from five weeks of paid holidays a year. When polled by the OECD in 2013, Danish workers had just over 16 hours of leisure time per day and as one of the top 10 richest economies in the world by GDP it goes to show that long hours aren't a predictor of performance or success.</p> <p>Denmark is also one of the most egalitarian countries in the world in terms of gender, career opportunities and other social issues. More generally, the social concept known as "trust" is a key factor in the Danes' prescription of happiness, as is its commitment to democracy and wellbeing for everybody – irrespective of power imbalances.</p> <p>Meik Wiking, the CEO of Copenhagen's Happiness Research Institute, believes Hygge could be the secret ingredient to Denmark's world happiness ranking. And whilst we're on the topic of wellbeing, here's another word that exists only in Danish and not in English: arbejdsglæde. Arbejde means work and glæde means happiness, so arbejdsglæde is "happiness at work."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fast Company: Simple office policies that make Danish workers-way more happy than Americans » Workplace mental health Institute: Hygge in the Workplace
Ikigai	Japan	<p>Do what you love, make the most of each day and live longer!</p> <p>Ikigai can be small moments: the morning air, a cup of coffee, a compliment. It can also be based on deep convictions and values: a fulfilling job, lasting friendships, balanced health. Whether big or small, your Ikigai is the private path to success and happiness in your own life.</p>	<p>Analysing data from more than fifty thousand people, one study concluded that those who report a low sense of Ikigai were more likely to be unmarried, unemployed, have a lower educational level, have bad or poor self-rated health, have a high level of perceived mental stress, have severe or moderate bodily pain, and have limitations on their physical function. It is of course not possible to tell whether having Ikigai has led to improved marital, employment, or educational status of the subjects, or, alternatively, whether the accumulation of the various small successes in life has led to an increased sense of Ikigai. But it would be reasonably safe to say that having a sense of Ikigai points to a frame of mind whereby the subjects feel that they can build a happy and active life.</p> <p>Ikigai is, in a sense, a barometer that reflects a person's outlook on life in an integrated and representative way. Intriguing parallels between modern brain science and the ancient teachings of Buddhism exist, as well as with the work of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) and his notion of a hidden stratum of the human mind he called the collective unconscious which, he believed, has influenced behaviour and emotions throughout time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Awakening Your Ikigai <i>How the Japanese Wake Up to Joy and Purpose Every Day</i> By Ken Mogi • A blog on Ikigai in the business context
Lagom	Sweden	<p>Find a more manageable, comfortable, balanced way of doing 'just the right amount'! Less is more!</p>	<p>Sweden, is consistently ranked as one of the top 10 happiest nations in the world, and is also known for having high standards of living. The Swedish national psyche encourages a strong work-life balance – parents receive 480 days of paid parental leave. You'll be hard pressed to find anyone at the office in the evening, with most leaving sharply at 5 pm. In fact, very few employees work overtime, and long hours can be seen simply as a sign of poor time management and inadequate planning.</p> <p>The Swedes clearly know a thing or two about living a balanced life.</p> <p>Lagom is all about letting go of a self-indulgent, consumerist lifestyle and finding balance. It is often described as the Goldilock's principle of "not too little, not too much, just right." It translates into English as 'there is virtue in moderation' – enough, sufficient, adequate or 'just the right' amount. It eschews the notion of more/bigger being best, and is naturally aligned to sustainability and simplicity – 'less is more'. It's a personal journey to find what works for you. By doing so you'll make time for the things that matter most in your life.</p> <p>Lagom encapsulates much of what the world tends to appreciate about Scandinavian culture: functional design, minimalism, and a sense of community over the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lagom: The Swedish Art of Living a Balanced, Happy Life By Niki Brantmark
Ubuntu	Africa	<p>Treat others as you want to be treated!</p> <p>Based on the values of respect, care, compassion, love, solidarity', sharing, reconciliation and reciprocity.</p>	<p>Ubuntu is an African philosophy of 'oneness' – based on an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life and how we interact with other human beings. Ubuntu means something close to an amalgamation of love, truth, peace, happiness, eternal optimism and inner goodness.</p> <p>Ubuntu is extremely important in African cultures as a common guiding principle of human values and as an antidote to greed, selfishness, immorality and pride.</p> <p>Richard Branson embraces 'Ubuntupreneurship' – where his mission is to create organisations that represent a hybrid of social entrepreneurship and capitalism, and where business is a force for good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » How Ubuntu philosophy can have a positive impact on your business » Ubuntu: African Wisdom Part 2 by John Kehoe Mind Power
Coorie	Scotland	<p>Cuddle in or huddle down!</p> <p>Looking for a spot of (emotional or physical) shelter in harsh times.</p> <p>The aim is to lead a less brutal existence where endless hardship of work is balanced by small comforts and escapism.</p> <p>A way to dial down a busy life, gain perspective and some relief.</p>	<p>'Coorie' is a Scottish word traditionally meaning 'to snuggle' or 'cuddle', but it's taken on a different meaning over the years. The author of the 'Art of Coorie' says it's about aiming for a quieter existence where the endless pursuit of work is balanced by small pleasures, swapping the anxiety and stresses of the modern world for something simpler is the crux.</p> <p>In 1775, Dr Samuel Johnson observed that Scots valued only ornamentation of the mind and tended to tolerate small wants. In short he thought we Scots were an ideas-driven bunch who toiled hardships – partly because we had no control over them and partly because we didn't bother much with "fripperies". Most Scots were poor, insecure and owned nothing. The greatest skill in life was simple survival – the greatest pleasure the ceilidh or gathering, with music, songs and companionship.</p> <p>Whether Coorie as a wellbeing philosophy is an old Scottish way of being, embedded deep in our national psyche is a claim disputed by many. It's critics say it's a trumped up and inauthentic abuse of the original word, a modern day invention for purely financial gain in the wake of lucrative Hygge.</p> <p>There can be no disputing the Scots' resilience and fortitude, nor their astonishing reputation for creativity and innovation (despite often harsh and unforgiving conditions). Whilst I have clear childhood memories of my mum stroking my head and telling me to 'coorie down' when I was unsettled or out of sorts, I'm personally not convinced that Coorie can be claimed as a Scottish wellbeing tradition. For me, Coorie is something we do to alleviate discomfort or distress when we are overtired. It's feels more like a wellbeing tactic rather than a philosophy or tradition in the way of Hygge or Ikigai. Certainly, when I try to deconstruct Coorie and map it onto the evidence backed components of our Global Leadership Wellbeing Survey (GLWS) Framework below, it came up short – Coorie seems a bit thin on the ground!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Art of Coorie By: Gabriella Bennett » Critique 1 of Coorie as a wellbeing philosophy » Critique 2 of Coorie as a wellbeing philosophy