How To Choose Where You Live

There are so many great cities out there and inside those great cities are neighborhoods that have something for everyone. The trick is to find the one that’s right for you. Are you looking for a quiet small town where everybody knows your name or a big city filled with a great night life? Do you want a medium city, where not everybody knows your name, but your neighbors do and have block parties, not group tickets to the ballet? Or do you even *want* to move to another city?

Nowadays, people tend to go where the work is, settle in and make do. It’s possible to be happy, to be very happy, on very little, according to “Thrive” but most of us need the creature comforts, a place to nest. Each person does this differently because every individual has a different idea of what makes their house a home.

Several things factor into this and like the REALTOR says, “location, location, location” is a big part. Don’t want to have neighbors who can see in your backyard or would having neighbors over every weekend thrill you? Looking for that perfect place that reminds you of your childhood? A lot of us use fond memories of childhood to guide us, but remember, childhood memories are wrapped in bubble wrap and cotton and who you were then isn’t who you are now. Studies have shown that we tend to remember the high points and the low points, but not the little things that comprise the majority of our lives. Keep that in mind when you’re contemplating moving to the neighborhood you remember so fondly as a child.

There are major factors can help you determine where you should live and these are also factors that are essential in boosting your ability to live a happy, thriving life.

How close to your work do you want to live? You spend a lot of time at the office, at least one third of your day and it’s important that that space be a factor in where you choose to live. Do you mind commuting or would you rather walk to work? Do you enjoy eating lunch out or does a home cooked meal in a special container make you smile when you open the carton? Most importantly, how do you feel about your work? Do you drag your feet in the morning, sighing over and over again as you get ready to leave or do you wake up and wonder what’s going on there and hurry so you won’t miss anything?

Work is a big part of considering where you want to live.

Social life-is it essential you live close to friends, to be able to meet every day? Or is it enough to be able to talk with them on facebook? If you feel the need to get together with friends and family at least once a week, choose a place that is central to them, easy to hop in the vehicle and meet up at your favorite restaurant or movie theatre. If it’s important to you, it becomes a big factor in choosing where you live.

Also a big consideration is your financial status. In “Thrive” Dan Buettner makes note of a woman who lives in a shack behind her family’s house, is over 100 years old and considers herself blessed by what she has. Most people would rather have a nice four walls and a roof over their heads, so happiness is a relative term. So do you adopt a savings/spending strategy to allow yourself to choose the type of place you’ll will be happiest? Ask yourself what makes you happier-saving or spending. That will lead you in the direction you need to go to choose a place that fits you both spiritually and financially.

Your sense of self is a major factor in choosing where you live. How do you see yourself living? Do you want that loft that offers a great view or a gated community? Do an inner self check on the happiness factor. Will where you choose to live bring about inner happiness, an openness with others that makes you want to give back to the community, make you feel gratitude for what you have? Will that gratitude extend to the people who have helped you along the way?

Choosing where to live is a basic tenet of living a happy, longer life. Traditionally economists in other countries measure happiness by an individual’s fiscal stability, but is not the ‘magic bullet’ that brings happiness.

More than any other factor, more than any other nudge toward happiness, where you live determines how happy you are. Economic free, the possibility of finding the job of your dreams, the lack of tension in your neighborhood and government that is both fair and stable are elements that call to us. We want a place where we can have the opportunity to grow, to feel safe and to enjoy the fruits of our labor, and for that, you’ll have to do a little research.

Research is the cornerstone. Even if you can’t move to Mayberry, find the job that allows you economic freedom and the ability to spend time with family and friends, you can look around where you live. Compare what you have to what you want and then it’s plan making time.

Happiness is the key to a longer life and even if you can’t move to one of the Blue Zones in Dan Buettner’s book, you can make the place you already are a Blue Zone.