

In praise of ... country dancing

The Guardian, Friday 30 January 2009 - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/30/country-dancing>

In these difficult times, it is more important than ever to remember what makes for a happy life. Naturally work and financial security are important. But the top influences are community, exercise, listening to music and doing things in a group. These are the top four predictors of contentment. Counterintuitively, perhaps, they are all found together in country dancing

It seems unimportant whether it is Scottish, Irish or English, line dancing or the polka, the effect of all that twirling with family and friends while responding to the music produces a sense of well-being hard to replicate in any other single activity. It may be at odds with other known attributes of country dancing - the quasi-martial atmosphere of barked commands, the withering look of your partner when you go up rather than down the line, the pipes at what seem unnecessarily close quarters, and other people jumping on your toes. Yet the cumulative impact defies the individual elements.

Economists who have made a business of studying happiness, such as Richard Layard and Richard Easterlin, might point to the larger impact of cohesive, broadly equal societies - Scandinavia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand show up most strongly on the happiness heat map - but those of us condemned to the miserylands of Britain know that, in a community hall near us, happiness awaits in the shape of friends and strangers, old and young, all ready to share in a common activity. It is quite pointless, except that we feel better afterwards.

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "danceflurryorg" group.

To unsubscribe from this group, send email to danceflurryorg-unsubscribe@googlegroups.com
For more options, visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/danceflurryorg?hl=en>
