YOUR HOME   YOUR WORKPLACE   YOUR HOLIDAYS

YOU CAN CREATE YOUR OWN IDEAL LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We first read A PATTERN LANGUAGE in 1980. It changed our lives, and was most instrumental in designing and building Hippocrates Health Centre of Australia in 1990. We have lived and worked here ever since, and have no intention of ever leaving.

A PATTERN LANGUAGE: TOWNS, BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTION is a 1977 book on architecture, urban design, and community liveability. It was authored by Christopher Alexander and several others. Decades after its publication, it is still one of the best-selling books on architecture.

The book creates a new language, what the authors call "A pattern language derived from timeless entities called patterns." As they write in the introduction, "All 253 patterns together form a language." Patterns describe a problem and then offer a solution. The authors intend to give ordinary people, not only professionals, a way to work with their neighbours to improve a town or neighbourhood, design a house for themselves or work with colleagues to design an office, workshop or public building such as a school.

A Pattern Language was influenced by the new 1970s emerging language to describe computer programming and design. "A pattern language has the structure of a network," the authors write. Thus, each pattern may have a statement that is referenced to another pattern by placing that pattern's number in brackets, for example: (12) means go to the Community of 7,000 pattern. In this way, it is structured as a hypertext.

It includes 253 patterns, such as Community of 7000 (Pattern 12) given a treatment over several pages; and states: "Individuals have no effective voice in any community of more than 5,000–10,000 persons." It is written as a set of problems and documented solutions

The book uses words to describe patterns, supported by drawings, photographs, and charts. It describes exact methods for constructing practical, safe, and attractive designs at every scale, from entire regions, through cities, neighbourhoods, garden, buildings, rooms, built-in furniture, and fixtures down to the level of doorknobs.

HAVE A STRESS FREE HOLIDAY!

You've been working hard on the job and now have some vacation days to use. Your boss was chafed when you suggested taking two weeks off so you settled for one week, which you believe is still more than enough time to unwind and relax. Wrong! Not only will a vacation not relax you but it will create more stress than work.

The first day of your vacation is spent travelling to the destination. If you're lucky, it will take only two hours, but odds are it will take at least six. You're either crammed on an aeroplane or driving on a road full of other people who want to relax just like you. Already, tension is building.

After finally arriving at your vacation spot, things start to go wrong. The hotel room doesn't have a good view. The wireless internet is too slow. You forgot your beach towel at home. You picked a bad area of town to stay in. You take off your shoes and try to relax, but now you're hungry. You find a restaurant that sells you a bland pizza that is priced more than your favourite pizzeria back home. You go to sleep on a strange bed with pillows that are way to big, and then you wake up the next day with nausea and painful stomach cramps. You're sick! And what are those itchy red marks on your ankles? Bed bugs! Only six more days to go.

Now imagine you have children. The stress will increase by a factor of ten. By the end of the first day, you need a vacation from your vacation. Things will go much harder than the work you tried to take a break from.

As your "vacation" proceeds, you feel obligated to pack in as many activities as possible. Tours. Excursions. Watersports. Sightseeing. Clubbing. Selfie taking. You must not miss out on anything, because it took time and money to get here, and you may never return.

Soon your legs get weary. You're walking more in one day than you normally do in a week. That bed is impossible to sleep in, and you can't seem to get the room climate right. Now you're running a sleep deficit. There are bags under your eyes and holy cow, the vacation is almost done. Check-out is 11am tomorrow!

The pictures and souvenirs are proof that you went on vacation, but really the vacation went on you. On the way back home, you almost drive off the road because you're so tired, and when you do make it to your bed, you immediately crash and enjoy the best sleep you've had all week, and then before you know it, the alarm clock is blaring at 8am. Back to work!

Relaxation is the absence of activity, not an exchange of one set of activities for another. Reducing stress means you must reduce the stimuli that your senses receive. A vacation accomplishes the opposite. It's merely a commercial method to part money from office workers who want to feel relaxed in a novel, exciting way, when what they should really do is vegetate at home for days as if getting over the flu.

You can't force your body to relax. All you can do is put it in a boring, calm, and familiar environment where it has no choice but to do so. Travel is meant to see things you want to see and be stimulated by new experiences. Going on vacation to relax is like drinking a double espresso to help you nap. If you insist on a vacation that involves travel, we hope you're staying in a cabin in the middle of nowhere, but even then, the tension of going and coming from an isolated location will nullify the couple of days you experience nothingness.

When it's time for me to relax, I plant myself on the couch and watch mindless entertainment. Anything else will simply be too much.

By Roosh

Maximum Health? Live in the Mountains!

It's no surprise that where you live can affect your health. People who live in big cities often have to contend with higher rates of pollution than country dwellers.

People who live in cold climates often have lower levels of vitamin D than those who live near the Equator. We typically imagine that people who live in tropical paradises have lower stress levels than the rest of us. Even living close to a golf course can affect your health, as the pesticides used to keep the grass green may increase your risk of neurodegenerative disorders. (Unfortunately, the relaxation and exercise benefits you may be getting from living on the course won't be enough to counteract this.) So location really does make a difference. But not only does where you live matter, how high you live matters as well.

Believe it or not, simply living well above sea level can decrease your risk of developing metabolic syndrome, characterized by high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol, and obesity. This syndrome, as you can imagine, contributes to a number of diseases, particularly heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. But according to research published in Frontiers in Physiology, you can decrease your risk of all these issues simply by moving into a mountain home.

Specifically, the researchers found that living between 457 and 2297 meters above sea level lowered your risk compared to living 0 to 121 meters. The higher you go, the lower your risk. The researchers evaluated data from thousands of individuals, which helped them rule out coincidences related to living near cities or heavily polluted areas or having a family history of heart disease. Even if you're genetically predisposed to metabolic syndrome, living at a higher altitude can help you avoid it.

The researchers believe these results have to do with the lower amounts of oxygen at higher altitudes. There's a reason that Olympic athletes often train up in the mountains. As your body adjusts to having less oxygen available, it's able to use it

more efficiently and circulate it through your body better. Your heart and lungs function better, you're able to lose weight more easily, and insulin sensitivity improves.