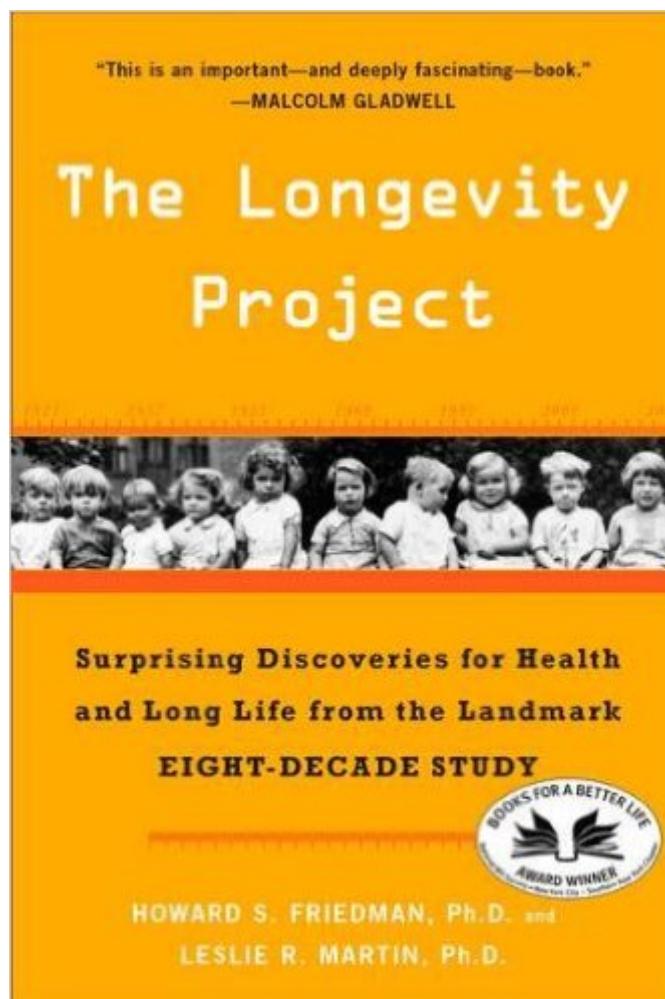


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The Longevity Project: Surprising Discoveries For Health And Long Life From The Landmark Eight-Decade Study



Synopsis

"An extraordinary eighty-year study has led to some unexpected discoveries about long life." -O, The Oprah Magazine For years we have been told to obsessively monitor when we're angry, what we eat, how much we worry, and how often we go to the gym. So why isn't everyone healthy? Drawing from the most extensive study of long life ever conducted, The Longevity Project busts many long- held myths, revealing how: Many of those who worked the hardest actually lived the longest Getting married is not a magic ticket to good health It's not the happy-go-lucky who thrive-it's the prudent and persistent With self-tests that illuminate your own best paths to longer life, this book changes the conversation about what it really takes to achieve a long, healthy life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was an easy read of 248pp. It concerned a continuation of a longitudinal study first begun by Dr. Lewis Terman of Stanford Univ. in 1921. Termin died in 1958 and the authors continued with their interpretation of his original study. The original group of subjects were chosen for what Termin considered to be their high IQ's and they numbered 1548 being born circa 1910. The text is filled with numerous abbreviated self-assessment questionnaires to give the reader an idea of what the original subjects had to answer. I found the book generally informative and definitely written for the lay person, but also somewhat subjective in many of the conclusions reached. The trouble with all self-assessment questionnaires is that they are biased in giving the view of the assessee, rather than an outside observer. The main idea behind the book is that there is no one particular thing that leads to longevity, but that it is simply a result of some genetics modified by lifestyle choices which

are less challenging than those dangerous decisions made by some living closer to the edge [as choosing to smoke or use illicit drugs]. In other words, it was the totality of things done during a lifetime rather than anyone thing that might cause someone to live to be a hundred. The authors determined that the best CHILDHOOD PREDICTOR of longevity was CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, the trait of being dependable and following through on life goals, as they defined it. They also felt that good health leads to happiness and longevity rather than happiness leading to good health. Here is a partial list of some things the authors felt were true:1. Although breast feeding is good for the baby's health it does not of itself lead to a longer lifespan.2.

This was a massive effort by a number of skilled and dedicated researchers written up in detail. So why do I feel cheated? In spite of huge amounts of data, only interpretations of it were passed on to us. We are repeatedly told "many" or "some" or "other participants" or... Every page has one or more such imprecise words but we are not given even simple percentages. Is "many" 52% or 89%, or what? It would have been so easy to specify. I can think of no good reason not to have given this more precise information to the reader. Next, very little effort was made to help interpret the results of the "tests" we took. Or even to say why not. It sounds like their validity was good. But reliability? If they didn't have decent norms, why give them to us? If they did, why didn't they give us more information, such as intercorrelations or cluster analysis? Then, they sidestepped the issue of gay/straight, by saying Terman stayed away from this. Ah, but they didn't have to. Even with no "hard" data, they might have grouped the "not married" subjects with the converse male/female ratings, done some analyses and made some guesses. And had a second sample of the converse male /female ratings with divorced subjects. This might have been fascinating data. These presumed-subjects preceded gay liberation by many years - what was it like for them in terms of longevity, happiness, etc.? I find it very hard to believe that there weren't any gays in this study, and even a guessed-at small sample, with all the caveats the researchers wanted to add, might have been interesting. The researchers were very bright people; their subjects were top-of-the-line. So why do they write as if the reader hadn't gotten past the 8th grade?

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