

Happiness Report Card 2018



First Quarter Edition

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Executive Summary

Dear Friend,

The theory goes *Better Data Makes Better Decisions*, but if that is the case, why haven't we reversed global warming, turned the tide on the rich-poor gap, or saved the decimation of countless species?

Maybe it's because we don't take data personally enough. If we have a direct relationship with data because we create and control it, then perhaps we will be more motivated to take action. How to do this? With a survey-based instrument, otherwise called subjective well-being index. In other words, we measure our happiness by asking ourselves if we are happy, as well as many other questions about our well-being, and we get answers about our own happiness that point the way for us individually and societally.

That is the theory behind the power of the Happiness Index.

After months of work, our team put the Happiness Index online in 2011, available for anyone to use. Our first Happiness Report Card was issued that same year. Since then the Happiness Index has been used over 80,000 times, and by hundreds of groups, from cities, states and nations to classrooms and book clubs.

This year we are picking up where we left off in 2011. Every month we issue a happiness report about one aspect of our data in our newsletter. This report is our first for 2018, based on data we collected over the course of 2017. We will be issuing more over the course of the year, and a final report at the end of the year. In this report we cover the changes in our happiness over the years, and focus on issues of love, youth, government and nature. The news is not all good, but all of it points the way for positive change. And we believe in that. Data is not the only answer to making the world a better place for all beings, but in a data-driven world, it is a strong force and, we believe, data yields important information for better decisions now and in our future.

With gratitude to all who have taken the Happiness Index. Keep using it, share this report and join the happiness movement by taking action for yourself and others towards greater happiness, well-being and sustainability.

Laura Musikanski
Executive Director
Happiness Alliance happycounts.org



Happiness Domain Scores

The Happiness Index is a survey-based instrument measuring the domains of satisfaction with life, standard of living (the economy), work, time balance, community, social support, environment, government, health, learning, and psychological well-being (flourishing). Overall scores are at an all time low, with improvements in one domain: learning.



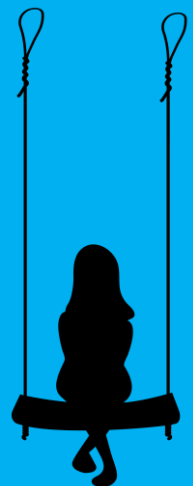
Love and Happiness

Young people, on average, are not feeling loved, with the youngest among us particularly not feeling loved. When we are asked to answer what makes us happy in one word, the commonality in answers is connection to others. These two data points point the way for healing the wounds of those who do not feel loved.



Youth and Meaning In Life

The halcyon days of youth are fading away...for the young. Youth is supposed to be some of the happiest times of life but the data reveals that young people are struggling in terms of anxiety and sense of purpose; not unlike middle aged people.



Government and International Day of Happiness

Our trust in local and national government is low, with only 3% of us having a great deal of trust in government. Young people trust government even less than the rest of us. March 20th is International Day of Happiness, declared by the United Nations as a way to encourage governments to use wider measures of well-being.



Mother Nature and Human Nature

The Happiness Index data indicates a positive connection between access to nature and sense of purpose in life. With caveats, the correlational analysis points the way for action: spending time outdoors.

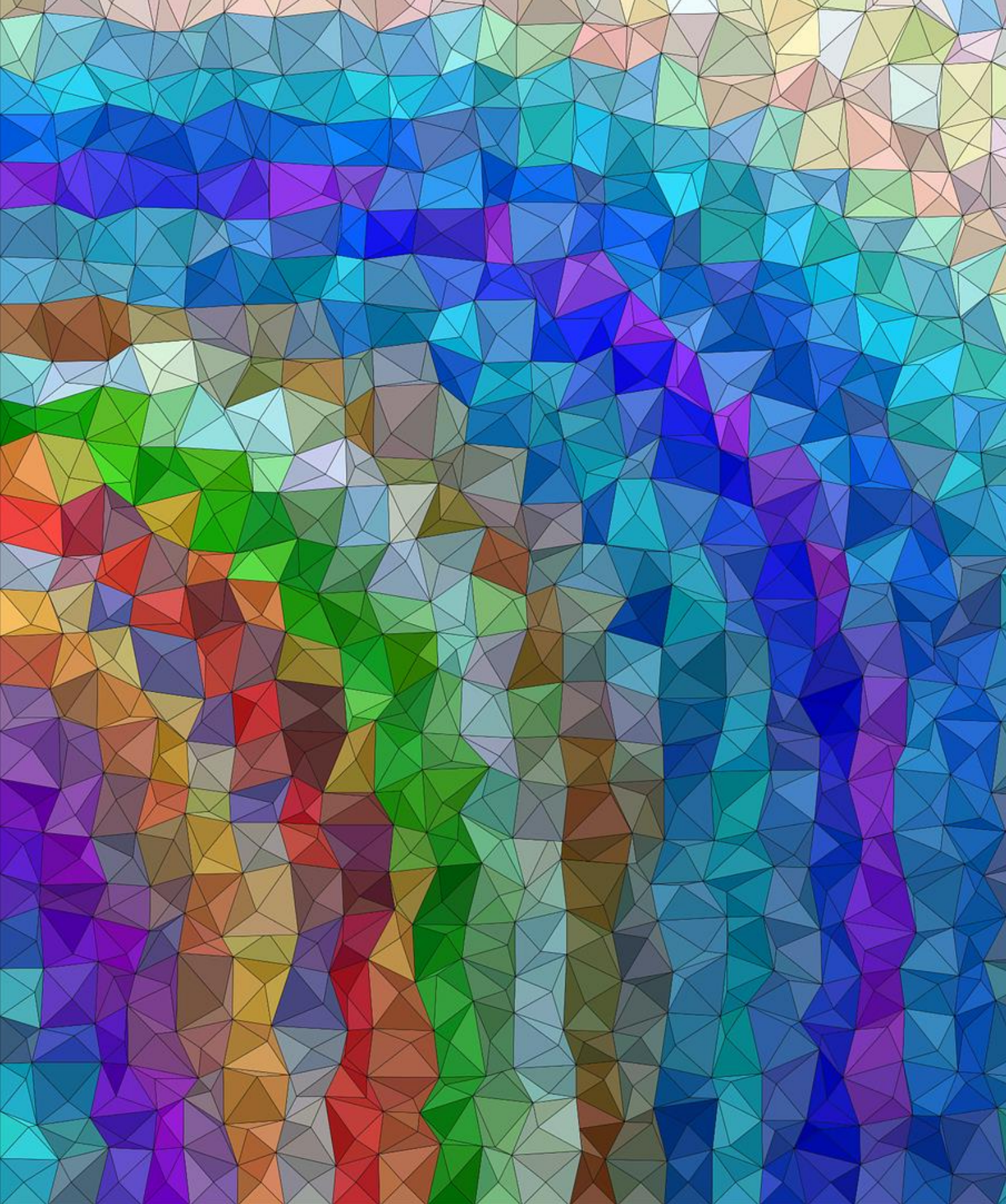


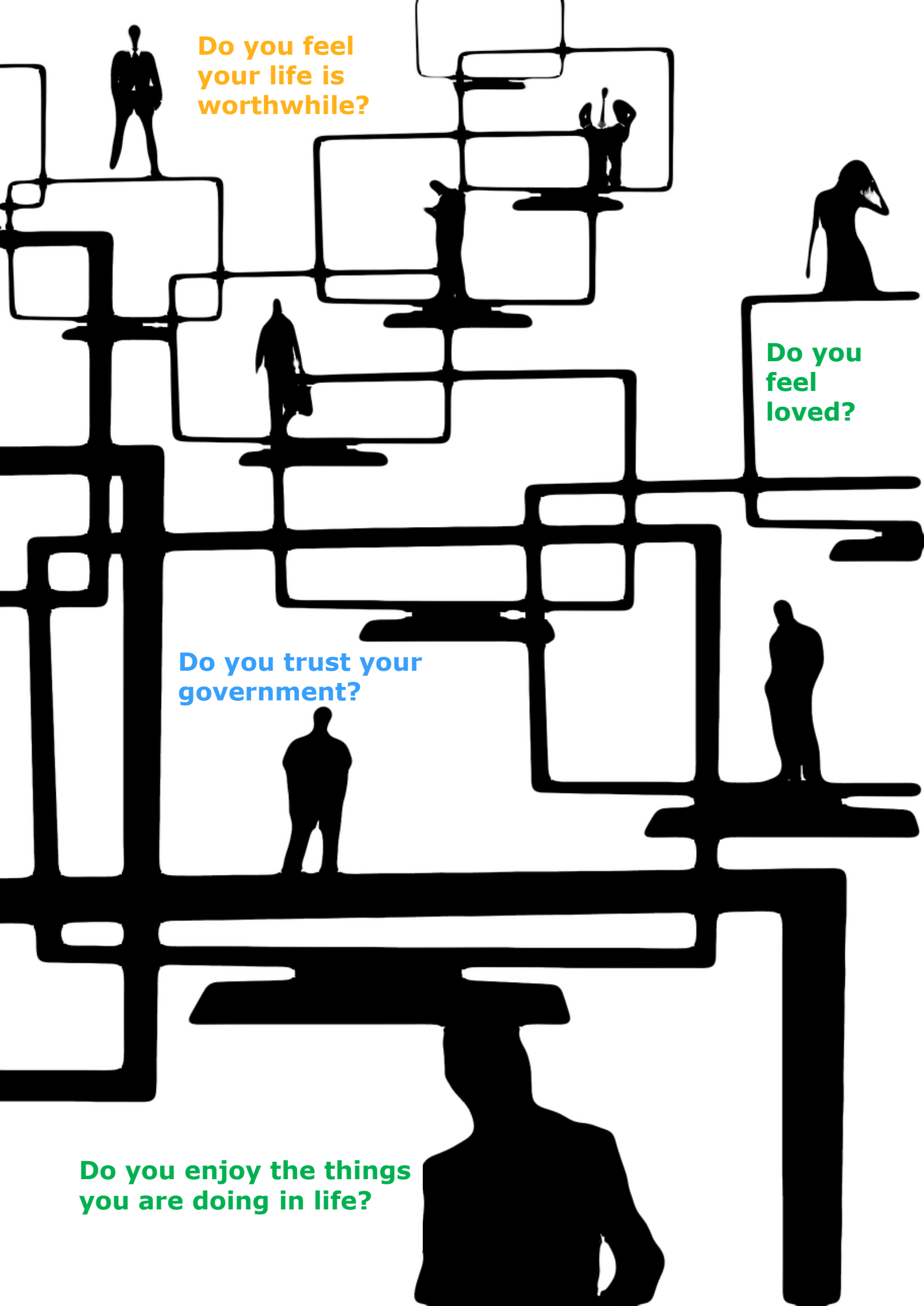
About the Data

The Happiness Index data is largely from a convenience sampling. You can take the Happiness Index survey and use the index for a group at happycounts.org



Happiness Index Domain Scores for 2017
















**Do you feel
your life is
worthwhile?**

**Do you
feel
loved?**

**Do you trust your
government?**

**Do you enjoy the things
you are doing in life?**

The Happiness Index Scores for 2017 are here and the news is not good. At first we were suspicious of the low scores: maybe most of the people who took the survey were unhappy because of the current political situation.

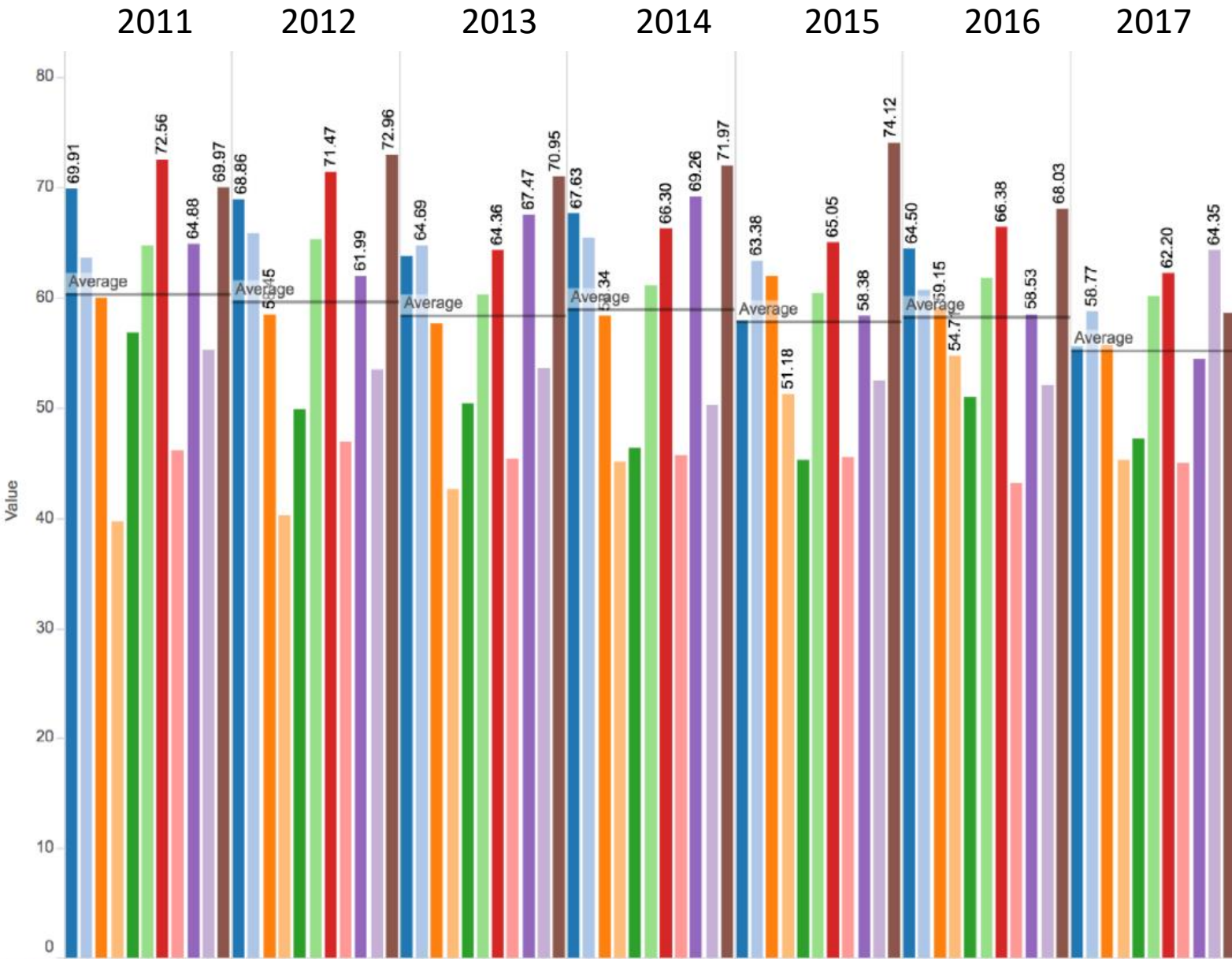
	Satisfaction with Life
	Standard of Living – Economy
	Work
	Time Balance
	Community
	Social Support
	Environment
	Government
	Health
	Lifelong Learning
	Psychological Well-being

We decided to test our data. It turns out that we are not the only ones finding that people's happiness in 2017 took a dip. Gallup, a consultancy group that randomly polls, corroborated our findings, but also affirmed our suspicions: people who do not feel aligned with the current regime in the U.S. White House are suffering.



The Gross National Happiness Average Scores are the lowest in years.

Gross National Happiness Domain Averages 2011-2017



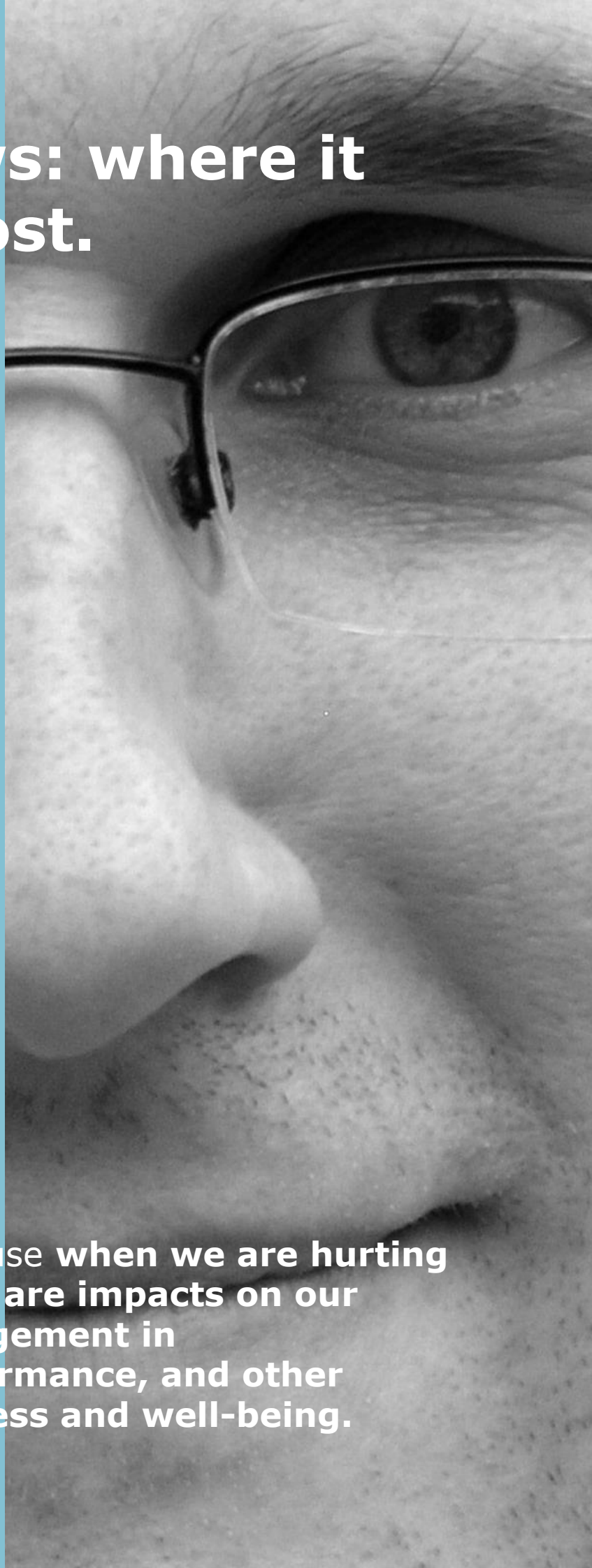
- Happiness Domains**
- Avg. Satisfaction with ...
 - Avg. Standard of Livin...
 - Avg. Work
 - Avg. Time Balance
 - Avg. Community
 - Avg. Social Support
 - Avg. Environment
 - Avg. Government
 - Avg. Health
 - Avg. Lifelong Learnin...
 - Avg. Psychological W...

Satisfaction with Life and Psychological Well-being scores are the lowest since we began tracking them in 2011

The bad news: where it hurts the most.

The bad news about our happiness scores is that we are unhappy where it hurts the most: our psychological well-being and our satisfaction with life. Psychological well-being is measured with a flourishing index that includes questions about **purpose, optimism, and positivity**. Satisfaction with life gets at the question: **are you are living a life that is right for you**. Historically, Americans score high in these areas even when they score low in the other domains of happiness.

This is concerning, because **when we are hurting psychologically, there are impacts on our health, families, engagement in community, job performance, and other aspects of our happiness and well-being.**





All people have an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

There is a strong message right now coming from the field of positive psychology that your psychological health is in large part under your control. The message goes something like this: "If you practice mindfulness, gratitude and generosity on a regular basis, you will be happier. If you don't, it's your own fault you are not happy."

Our view at the Happiness Alliance is that while you do have a choice about how you feel, it is only to a certain extent. Long term lack of time-balance, poor health, living in fear, distrust of your government, businesses you buy from and neighbors, or struggling hard to meet basic needs take a toll on your happiness and your health.



The conditions of your life, also called the domains of happiness, have a big impact -

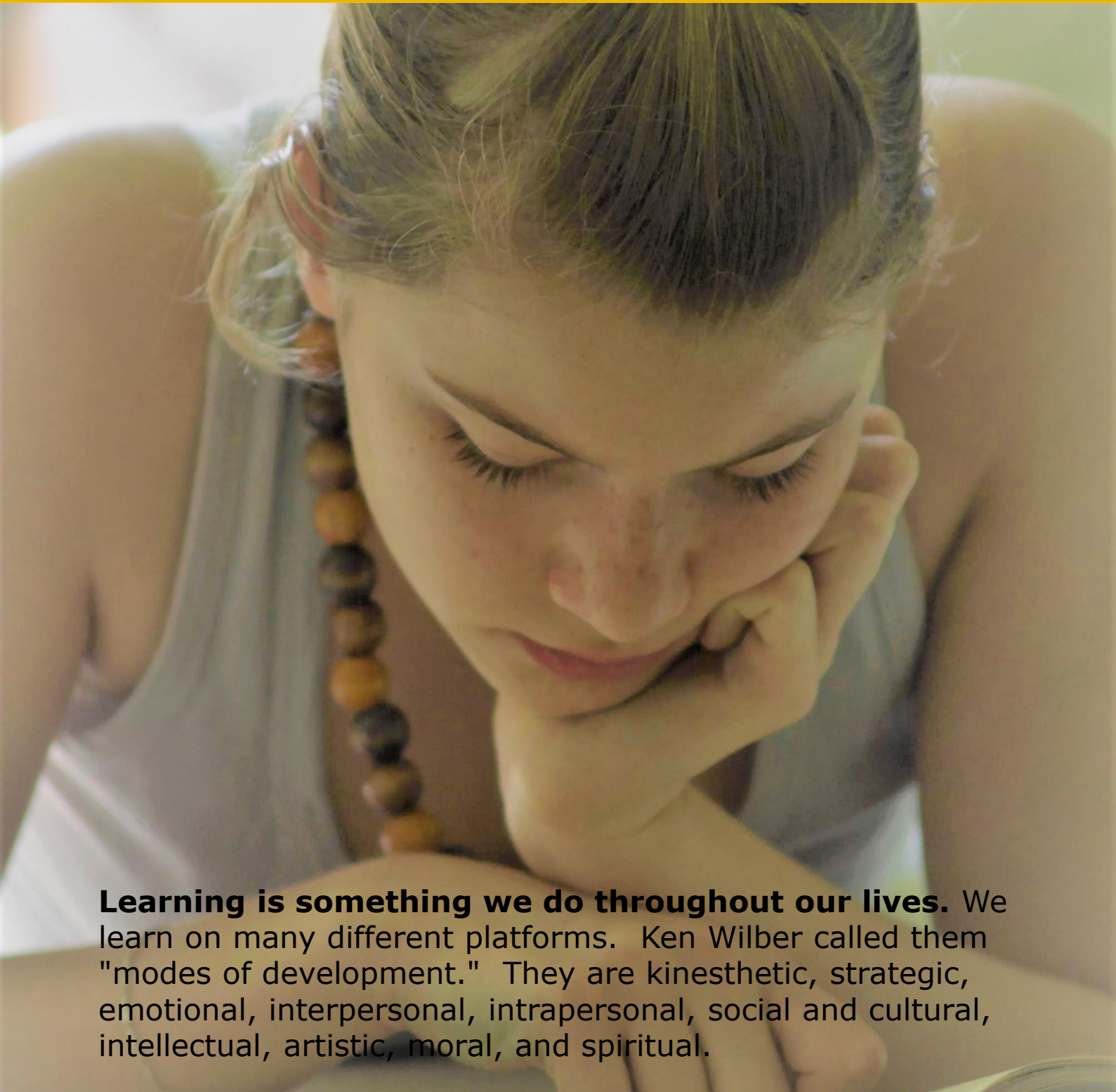
particularly big when they are depleting instead of supporting your psychological well-being and satisfaction with life. So while it is good to develop your happiness skills, it is also crucial to do what you can to bring about the exterior circumstances that support your well-being. Having conversations about life's circumstances and the implications on your happiness and the well-being of others is the first step towards changing those conditions that are causing you to hurt. Then comes activism.

Happiness Index: Measuring What Matters



You can use our happiness index to spur conversations about what really matters and inspire action for happiness. You can use our policy tools for taking action in your community for system change.

The Good News



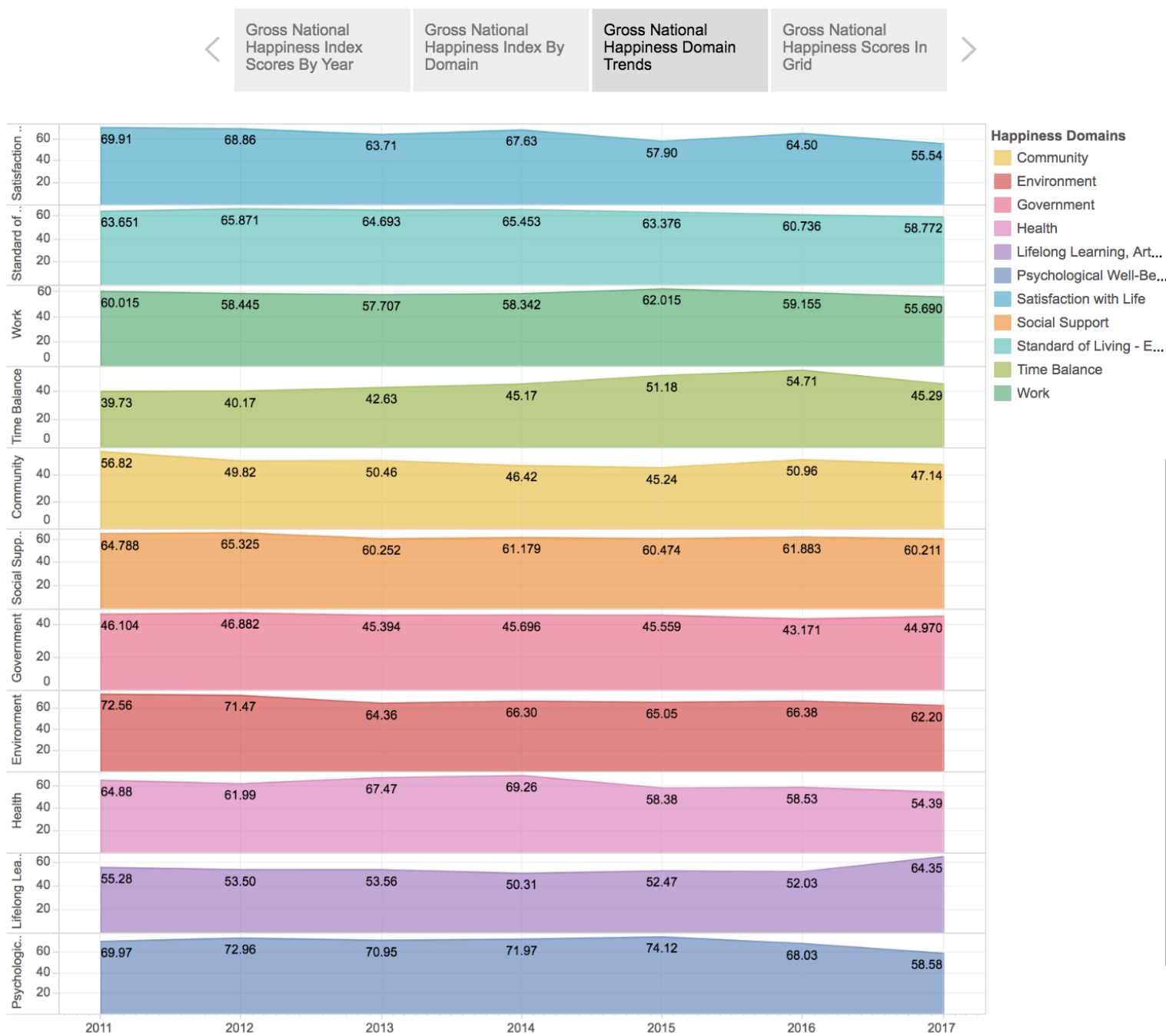
Learning is something we do throughout our lives. We learn on many different platforms. Ken Wilber called them "modes of development." They are kinesthetic, strategic, emotional, interpersonal, intrapersonal, social and cultural, intellectual, artistic, moral, and spiritual.

Learning empowers us to make change happen.

One area that our scores have increased is in lifelong learning.

This is great news because it means we are engaging in ways that are increasing our capacity for taking action.

Gross National Happiness Domain Averages 2011- 2017





Love



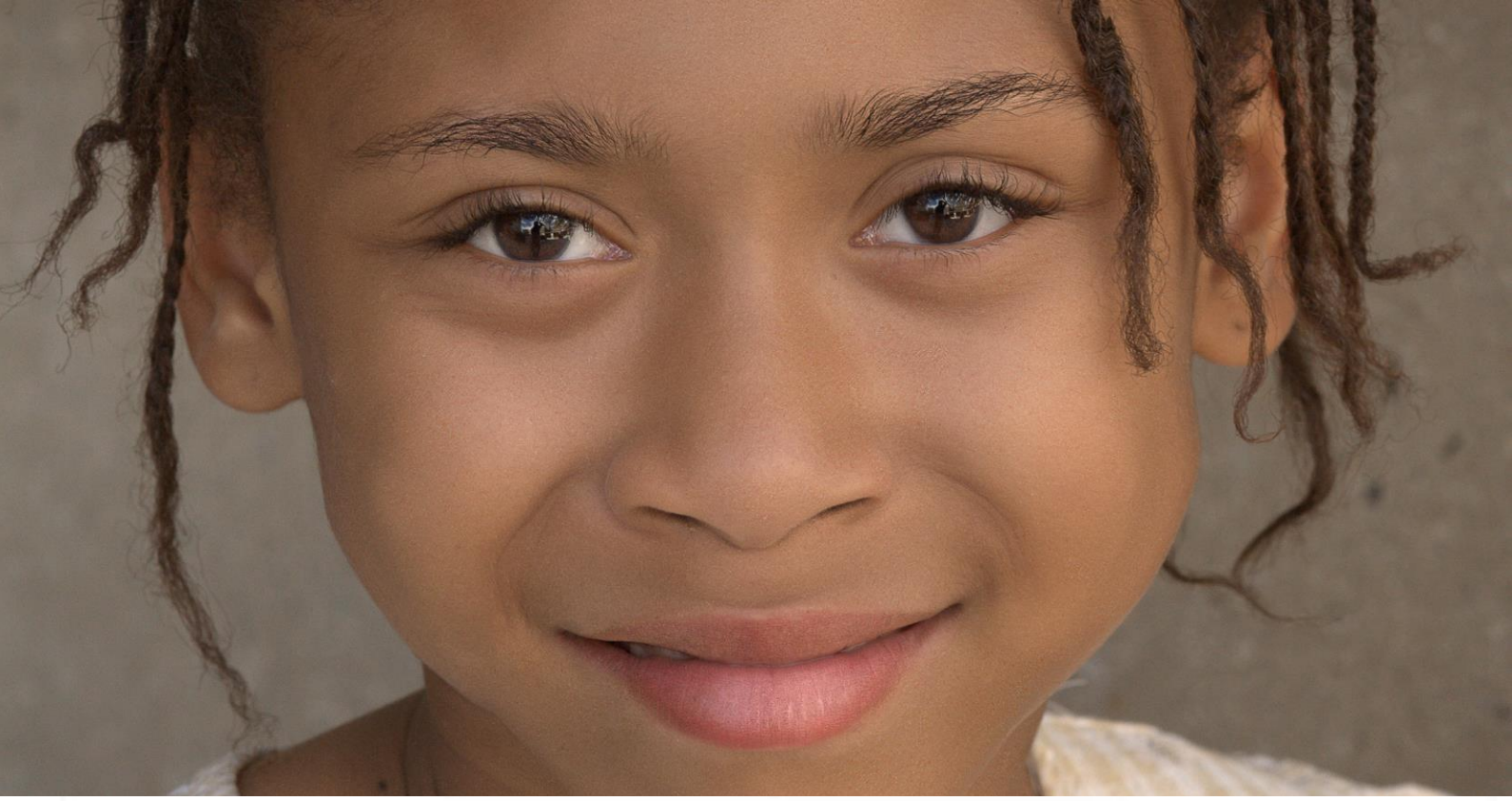
“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” -Dalai Lama

Do You Feel Loved?

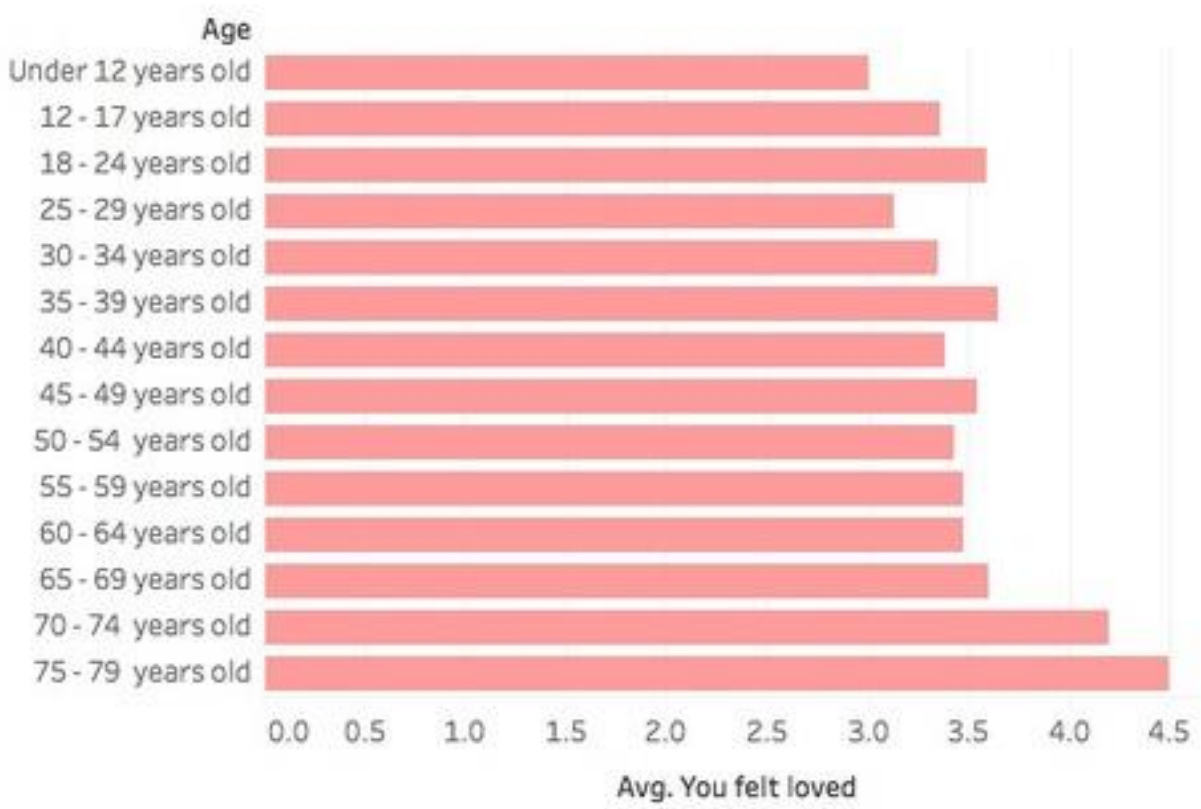
This is one of the questions in the Happiness Index. We analyzed the data from November, 2017 for 968 people answering the question between November 1 and 30th on a five point scale. An answer of one means "I never feel loved" and an answer of 5 means "I feel loved very often or always."

The most frequent and the average answer is "I feel loved sometimes" (290 people). 266 people responded that "I feel loved often," and 244 responded "I feel loved often or always." One out of twenty - 5% said that they never feel loved.

So how about you? Do you feel loved never, rarely, sometimes, often, or very often or always. Your answer might be partly contingent on your age.



< Sense of Feeling Loved What Makes You Happy >



Of respondents taking the survey in November, 2017, those under 12 years old felt the least loved, while those 75+ felt the most loved.

Love & Age Takeaway

If you have a young person in your life (actually for anyone in your life), take some time to **reflect** on how you can interact with that person so they feel that they are loved.

Set the intention to spend a little time each day demonstrating love, and do it. Pick up when you lapse. Everybody does. It's no big deal as long as you start again.



How you express love matters.

What feels loving to you may not to another person. Use the list below, gathered from the book, *The 5 Languages of Love*, to identify the way that means the most to you. Then use it to understand what means the most to the person you want to express love to.

Ways to Express Love:

Listen attentively without offering advice.

Doing something nice for them.

Give a small gift periodically out of the blue.

Taking time to **hug or cuddle** if they want that.

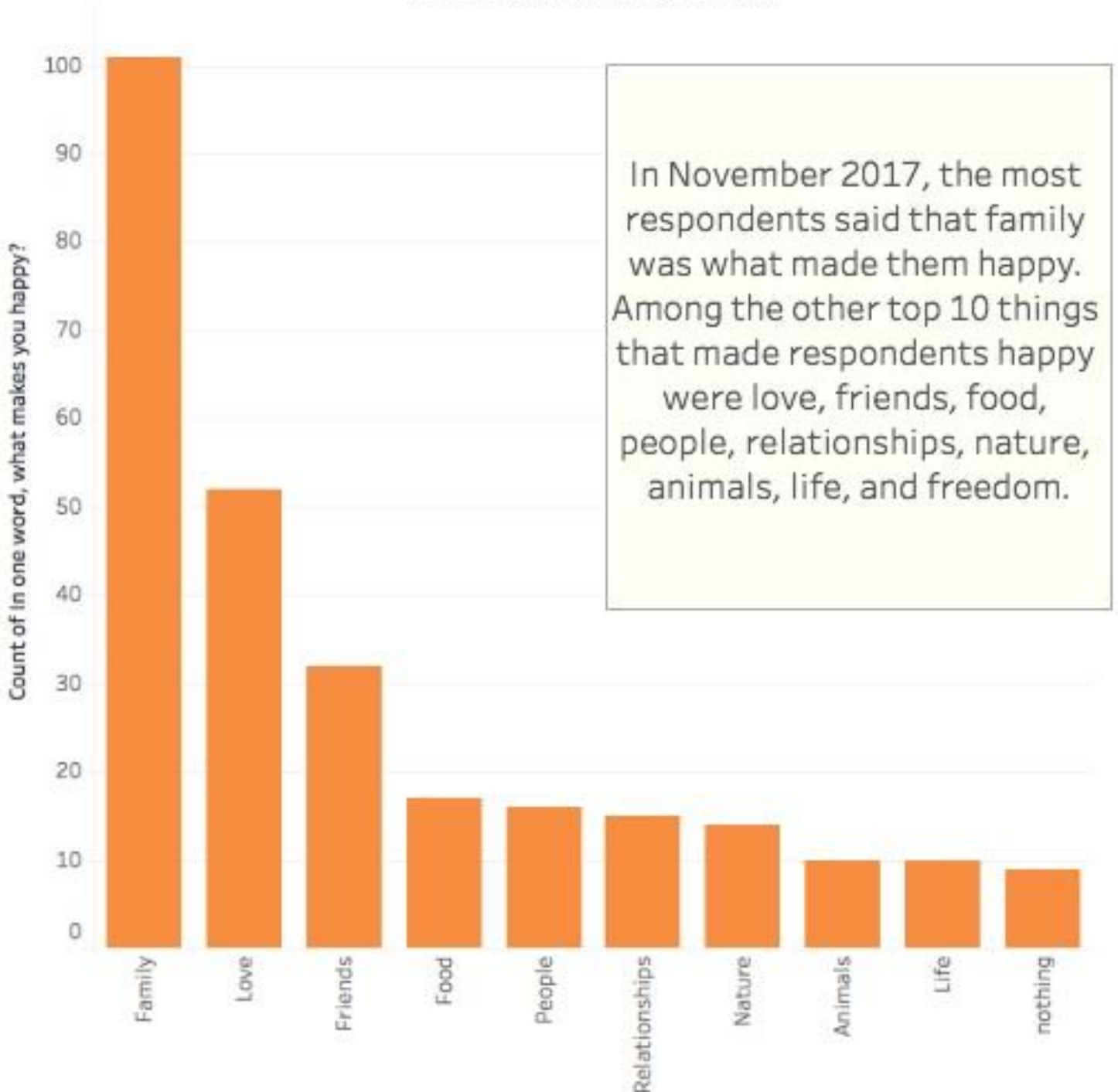
Tell them good things about them.

Take this to the person to whom you want to express your love. Ask if them if it is a good time to talk (and if not, ask to set a time when it will be). Explain how you have expressed love and ask what you can change so that your expression of love is more meaningful to them. Listen! Then ask them if you can repeat what they said, to make sure you go it right. Tell them what you understood them to say. Get feedback and revise your idea. Do this until they say you do understand them. Then express love in the way that is meaningful to them.

In one word, what makes you happy?

< Sense of Feeling Loved What Makes You Happy >

In one word, what makes you happy?





The overwhelming majority of things that made people happy can be summarized in one word: Connection.

The things that made people happy involved their connections with other people primarily (family, love, friends, people, relationships), but also included our surroundings (nature) and animals.

One outlier was that food made the #4 spot in November for "in one word, what makes you happy?" It would be interesting to know if those that answered "food" think of food in context with connecting with others -- is this about eating ice cream alone at home or a celebratory meal with friends and family?

Also interesting is that this data supports the concept that building community and connections with others is among the top thing that can be done to prevent suicide. If you know of someone who might be lonely, maybe invite them to a meal and give them a little food and connection at the same time.



Youth



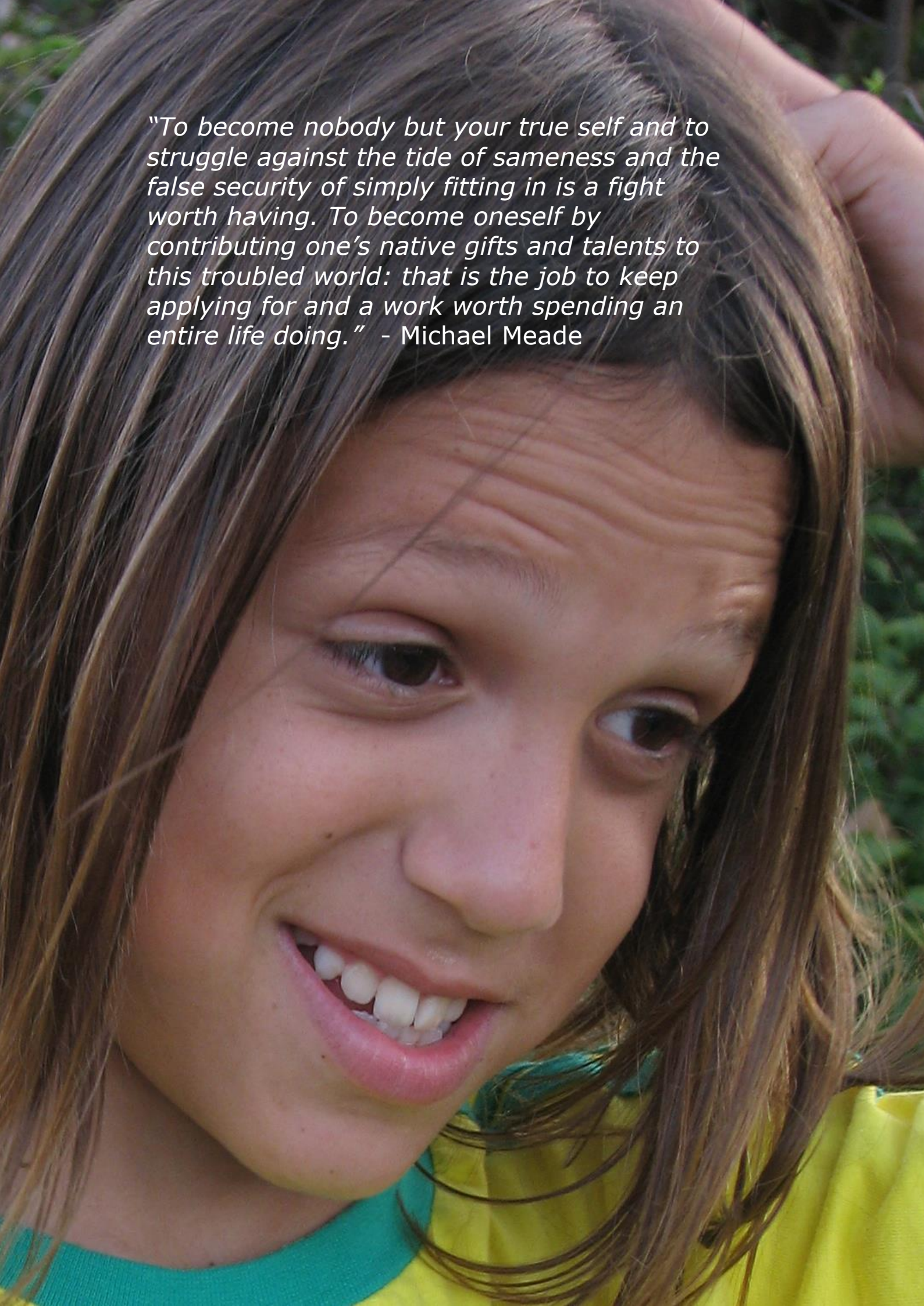
"If we are to reach real peace in this world... we shall have to begin with children." — Mahatma Gandhi



For our focus on **happiness and youth**, we drew data for youth from 12 to 24, and then compare it to happiness levels for middle aged and to the "silent generation" (70-74 year olds).

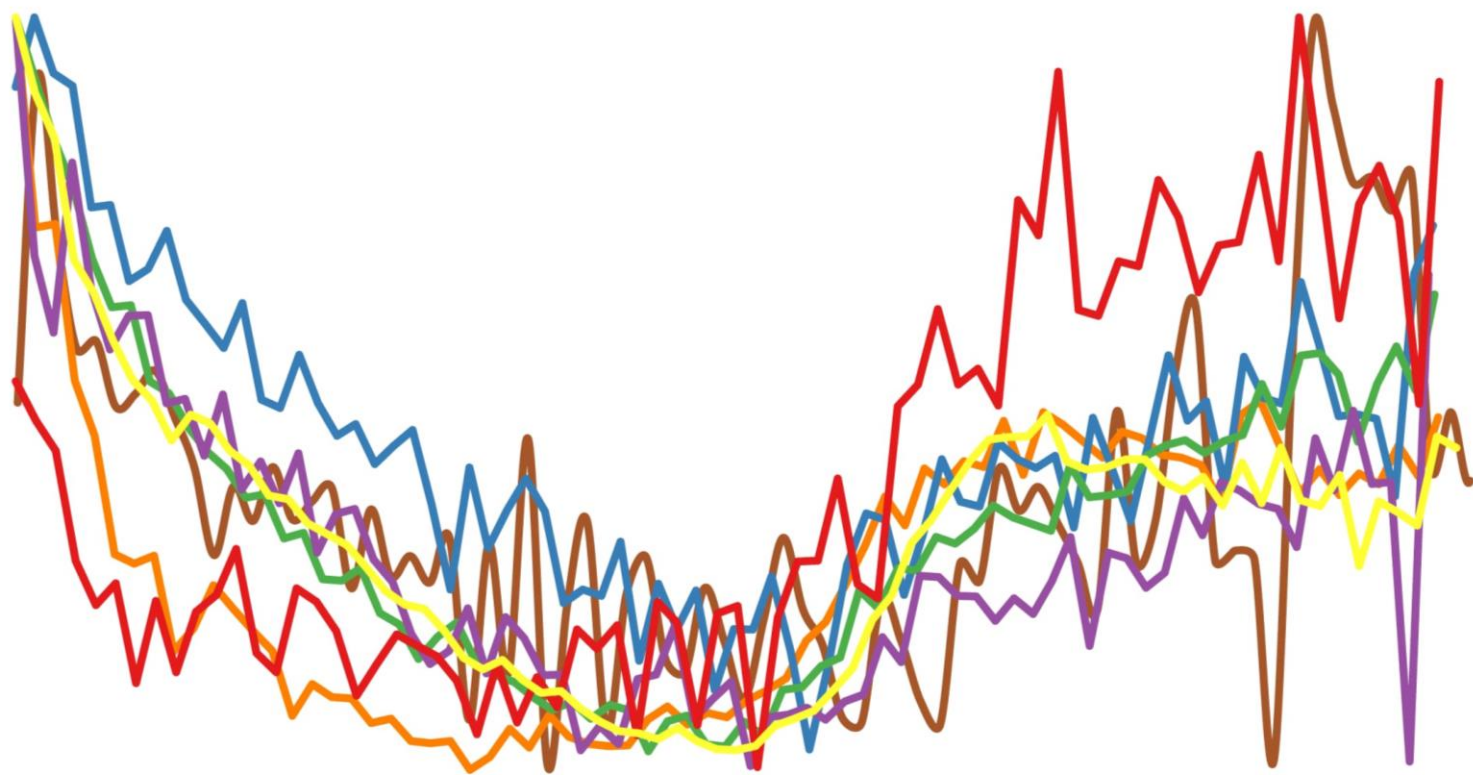
Our findings are consistent with our very first Happiness Report Card issued in 2011

Our findings are disconcerting, just as they were in 2011.



"To become nobody but your true self and to struggle against the tide of sameness and the false security of simply fitting in is a fight worth having. To become oneself by contributing one's native gifts and talents to this troubled world: that is the job to keep applying for and a work worth spending an entire life doing." - Michael Meade

Happiness



16 19 22 25 28 31 34 37 40 43 46 49 52 55 58 61 64 67 70 73 76 79 82 85 88

Age

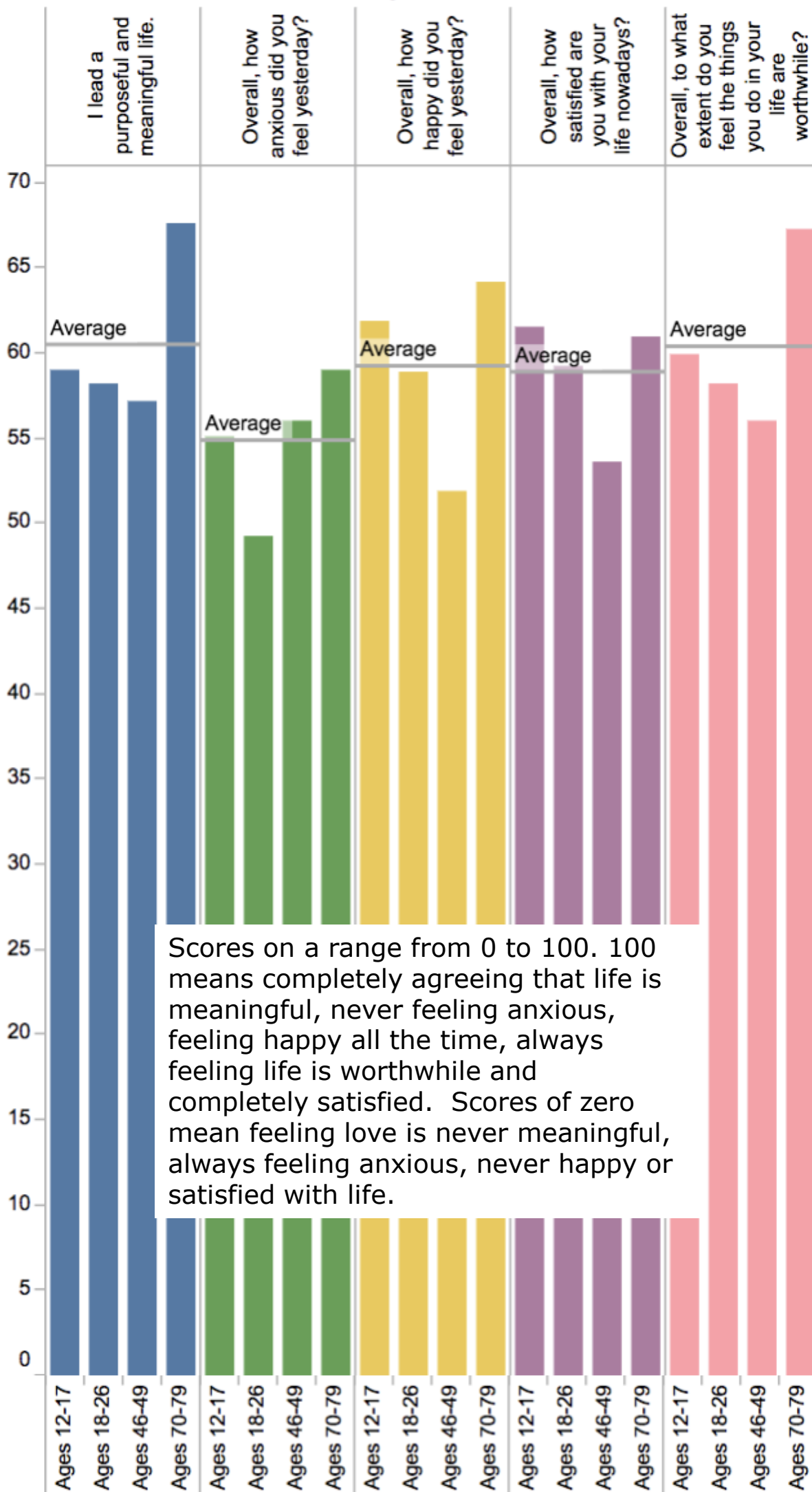
Typically happiness happens in a U-shape, with the happiest times in life being our youth and our old age. Typically our lowest times are the middle ages.

Source: Blanchflower and Oswald, 2017

The problem? **Young people's happiness levels for feelings of worthiness, anxiety, purpose and meaning similar to that of middle aged.** Happiness and satisfaction with life scores were better, but the worry is that if other aspects of well-being worsen or do not improve, feelings of happiness and sense of satisfaction could be dampened.



Age Bracket

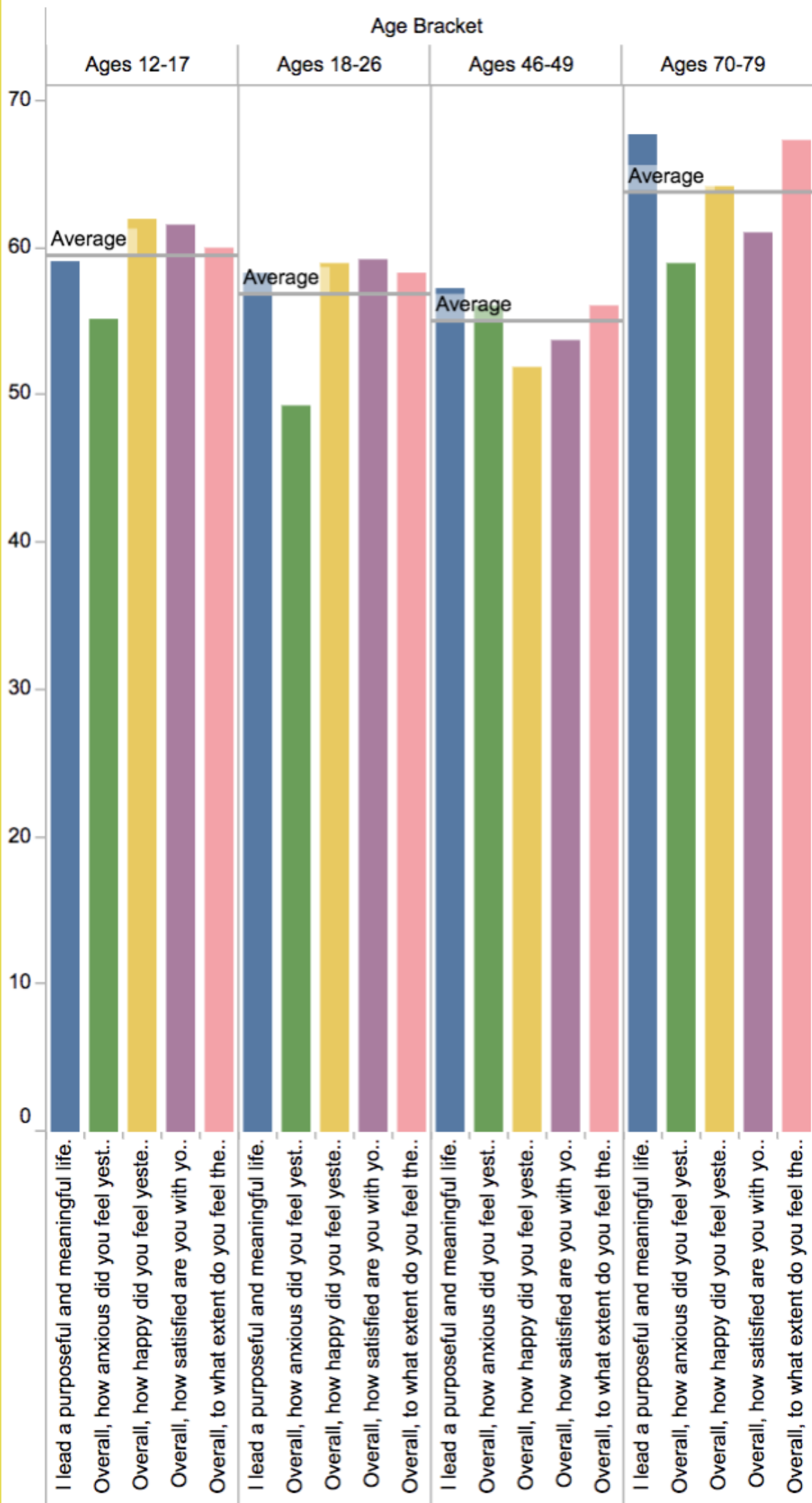




- Do you lead a purposeful & meaningful life?
- How anxious do you feel?
- How happy do you feel?
- How satisfied are you with your life?
- Do you feel your life is worthwhile?

About the data:

We pulled data for five questions from the Happiness Index, our online subjective measure for well-being. The five areas are: The data is for 1,350 people aged 12-17; 2120 people aged 18-24; 490 people aged 46-49 and 96 people aged 70-79 year olds. It is a convenience sampling, with people learning of the Happiness Index survey mostly from Google Nonprofit Grant Ads and in part from world of mouth.



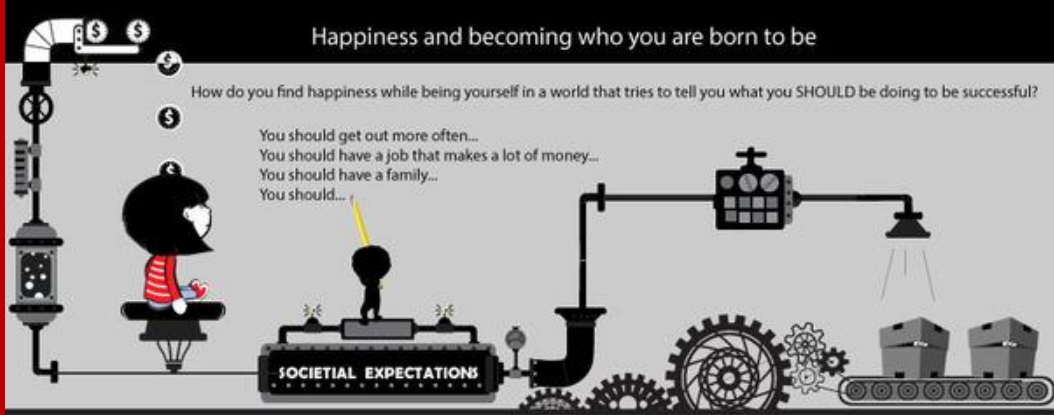
What to do?

It is a complex question with complex answers, but one thing you can do is to set an example, and **help children and youth find their happiness**. Every child, youth and adult has the capacity, need and right to **feel worthy, have a sense of purpose and meaning**, and to not be visited by anxiety on a regular basis. You can help children find greater levels of self-worth, purpose, and inner happiness, by developing your own self worth, finding and following your life's purpose, and cultivating your own happiness.



Happiness and becoming who you are born to be

How do you find happiness while being yourself in a world that tries to tell you what you SHOULD be doing to be successful?



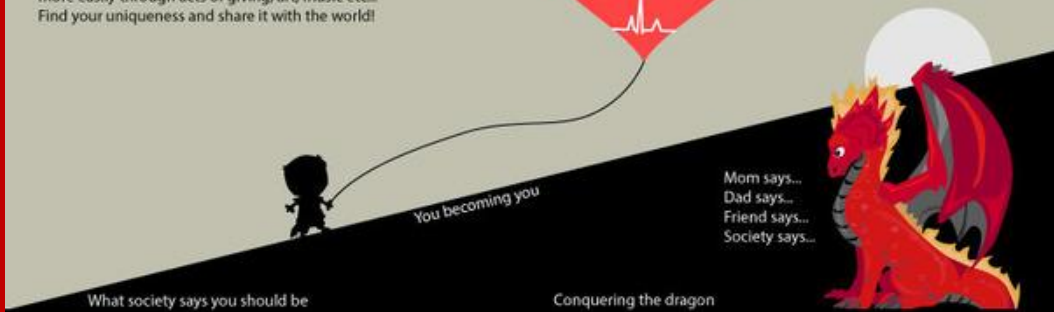
Joseph Campbell called it the Hero's Journey

Happiness is found in being who you are born to be

People communicate and express themselves in different ways. While words may come easily to some, others may communicate more easily through acts of giving, art, music etc... Find your uniqueness and share it with the world!



Michael Meade says
Everybody has their genius.



Mom says...
Dad says...
Friend says...
Society says...

How do you know you are on the right track for being who you were born to be?



Does what you do bring you joy and energy?

Introverts get drained from too much interaction.

Extroverts get energy from being with people and get drained when left alone for too long.

Everybody is different. What is too much for one person is different than what is too much for another.

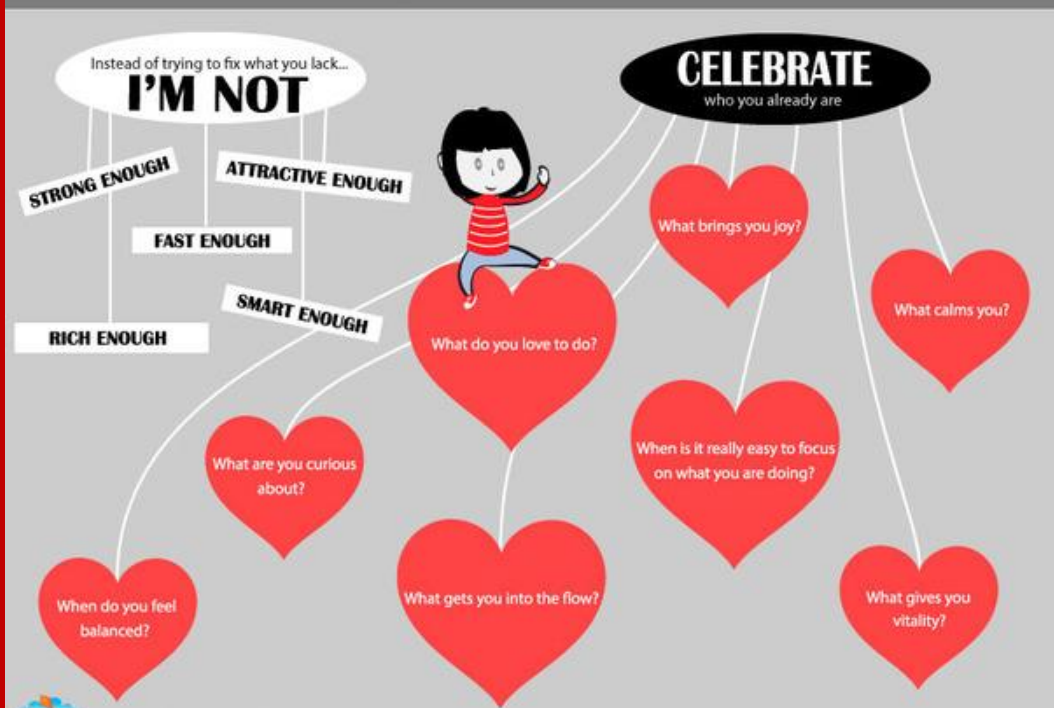
What if you enjoy being alone all of the time vs. being around people all of the time?

Everybody needs some interaction with people, as well as some time alone.

What is your personal balance?
Learn about yourself: what can you handle?
What can you do?


Introverts: spend some time with people who value you.
Find your balance regarding how much time to spend with other people.

Being your true authentic self



Government





"The aggregate happiness of the Society, which is best promoted by the practice of a virtuous policy, is, or ought to be, the end of all government." – George Washington

"The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government."

- Thomas Jefferson



**March 20th is
International Day of Happiness**



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 July 2012

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 14

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 28 June 2012

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/66/L.48/Rev.1)]

66/281. International Day of Happiness

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 65/309 of 19 July 2011, which invites Member States to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and well-being in development with a view to guiding their public policies,

Conscious that the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal,

Recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives,

Recognizing also the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and the well-being of all peoples,

1. *Decides* to proclaim 20 March the International Day of Happiness;
2. *Invites* all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, to observe the International Day of Happiness in an appropriate manner, including through education and public awareness-raising activities;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and civil society organizations for appropriate observance.

*118th plenary meeting
28 June 2012*

What is International Day of Happiness all about?

International Day of Happiness is about raising awareness for the need "for a more **inclusive, equitable and balanced** approach to economic growth that promotes **sustainable development, poverty eradication**, happiness and the well-being of all peoples."

It's about the use of **wider measures of well-being**, like our happiness index, instead of GDP, by governments in our nations and in our neighborhoods.

It's about governments, businesses, and academic **institutions making happiness, well-being and sustainability their goal** and their measuring stick.





It's about raising awareness for the need for government to put our happiness, well-being and sustainability first.



Why is this so important now?

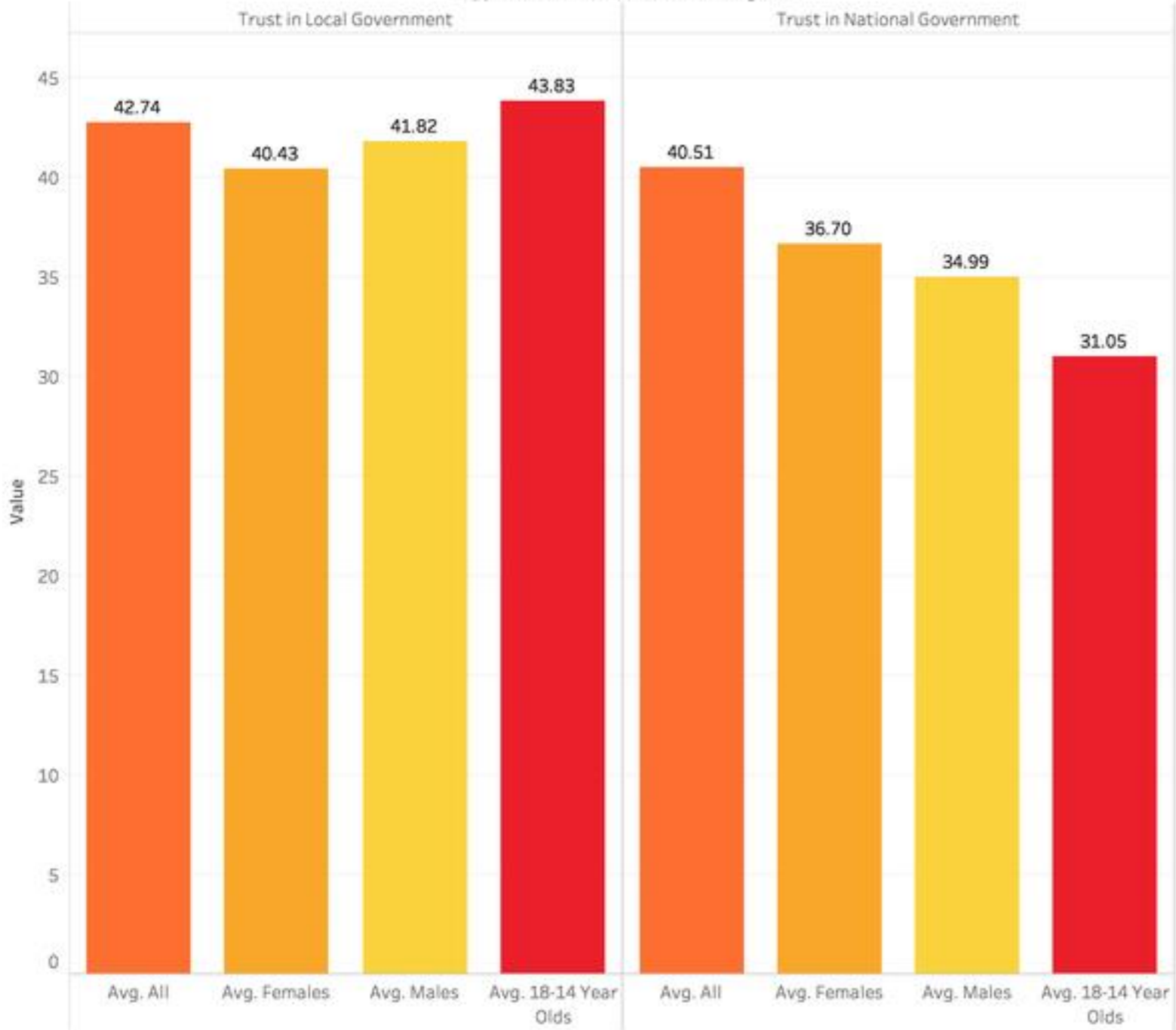
We Don't Have Much Confidence in Our Government

In general, we trust our local government a little more than our national government, but the differences are small except for youth, who trust local government more than others, and who have even less trust in national government than others.



Trust in Government

Happiness Scales: 0 lowest to 100 highest





Our happiness data report is for 8,148 people says that 1,858 of us have no confidence in our government, and 3,089 have very little confidence in our national government. Trust in Local government is a little better, but not much: 2,147 people have very little trust in local government, and 3,761 people have a fair amount of trust.

Only 3% of people who took the Happiness Index have a great deal of trust in Local Government. Only 2% of people have a great deal of trust in National Government.





A Happiness Challenge

We challenge you to imagine what would it be like to live in a country where you felt deep trust in your government?

What would be different?

What would be the same?

What would your role be in relation to your government?

We challenge you to share your thought with your neighbors, your friends, your family, and to listen to theirs.

We challenge you to raise awareness about the importance of happiness as the goal of government.

You can make a difference.

Educate yourself and others: people in your family, at your work or school and in your life. Let them know about the efforts being made in other communities, countries and companies.

Use the Happiness Index scores to spark conversations about what matters and what you can do for a happy life for yourself and others.

If it is your calling to be citizen activist, jump into it.

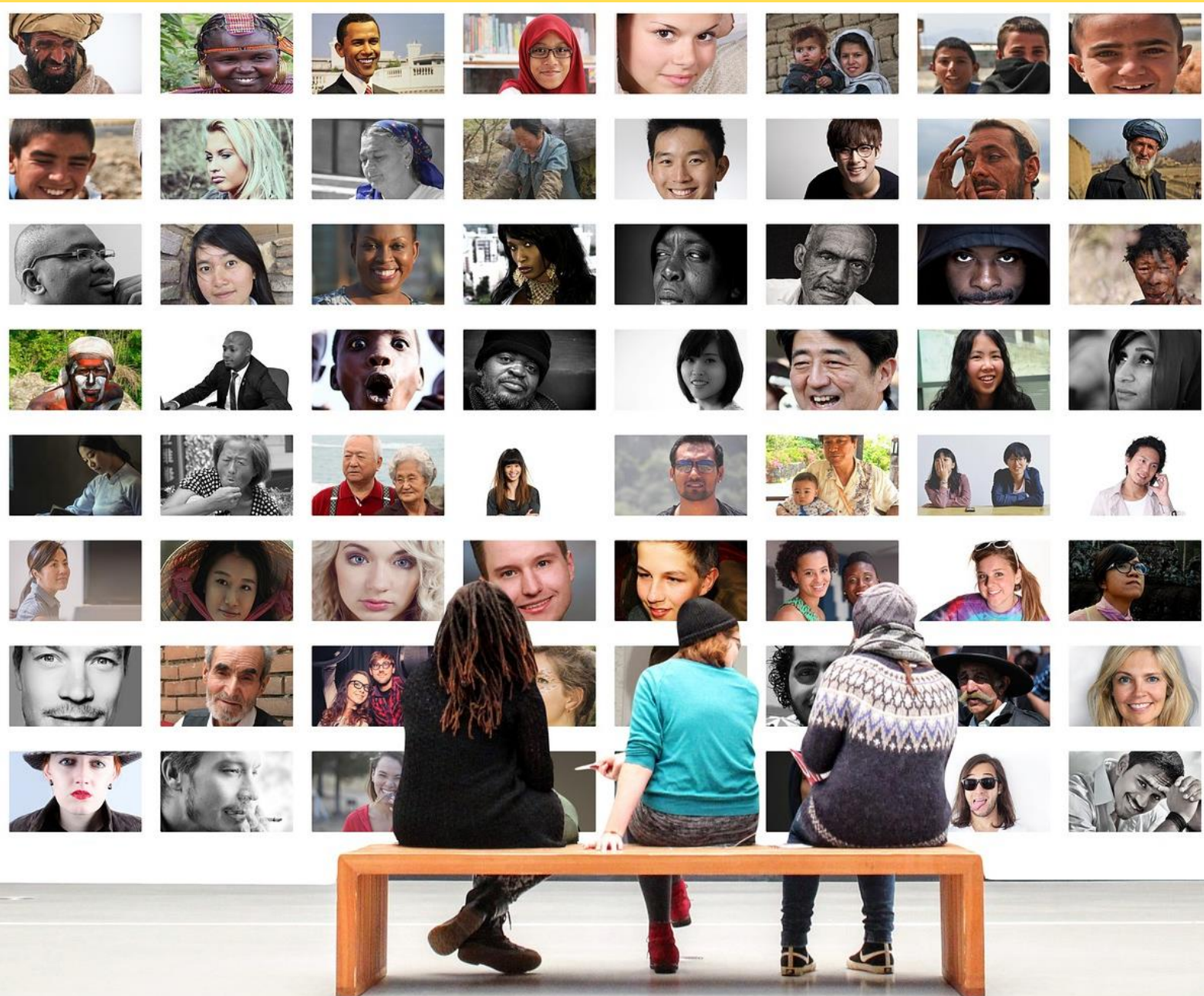
Gather Tools from our Happy Community Toolkit at www.happycounts.org/happy-community-toolkit.html



International Day Of Happiness is about us creating a world where all beings experience the right to a good life, to a secure sense of liberty, and to equal opportunities to the pursuit of happiness.

Surprisingly, it is not about being happy for one day. Many of us have lots to be happy about, but many more of us have real reasons that contribute to our misery. One of them is our distrust in government. **We can change** that. It takes many and **lots of different paths**.

The Happiness Alliance is just one small non-profit providing tools, knowledge and resources so you can **take action for a happy world with a sustainable future in which all beings experience well-being**.



Be the Change You Want to See.





**Mother Nature +
Human Nature (can) =
Happiness**



"A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." — Albert Einstein

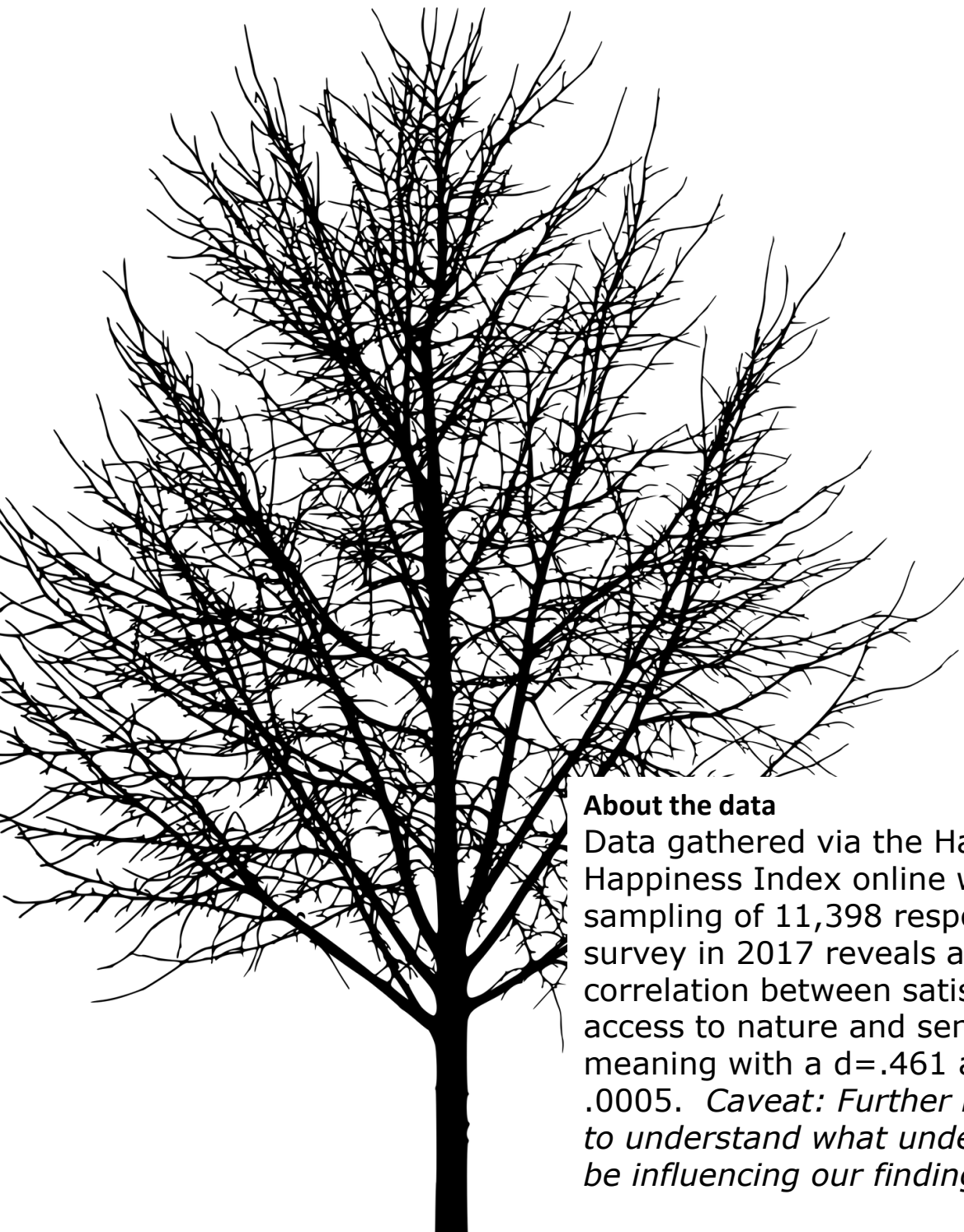
Some say the happiness movement represents a jump from sustainability, but we say that our happiness is founded on sustainability, and intrinsically tied to our natural environment. And our happiness data backs us up.



Did you know the Happiness Alliance, and our happiness index, is born from the sustainability movement? We got our start in 2010, as a project of Sustainable Seattle (Sustainable Seattle is the first community based non-profit to create regional sustainability indicators).



We wondered if **people with a greater access to nature have a greater sense meaning in life**. Data from over 11,000 people who took our happiness index tells us that people who are satisfied or very satisfied with their access to nature have a greater sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.



About the data

Data gathered via the Happiness Alliance's Happiness Index online with a convenience sampling of 11,398 respondents taking the survey in 2017 reveals a positive correlation between satisfaction with access to nature and sense of purpose and meaning with a $d=.461$ and $p<.0005$. *Caveat: Further research is needed to understand what underlying factors may be influencing our findings.*



Somers' d was run to determine the association between perception of having enough nature access and sense of purpose and meaning amongst 11398 Happiness Index survey takers in 2017. There was a positive correlation between having enough nature access and sense of purpose and meaning, which was statistically significant ($d = .461, p < .0005$).

Directional Measures

			Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Somers' d	Symmetric	.456	.007	64.882	.000
		Enough Nature Access Dependent	.452	.007	64.882	.000
		Purpose & Meaning Dependent	.461	.007	64.882	.000

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

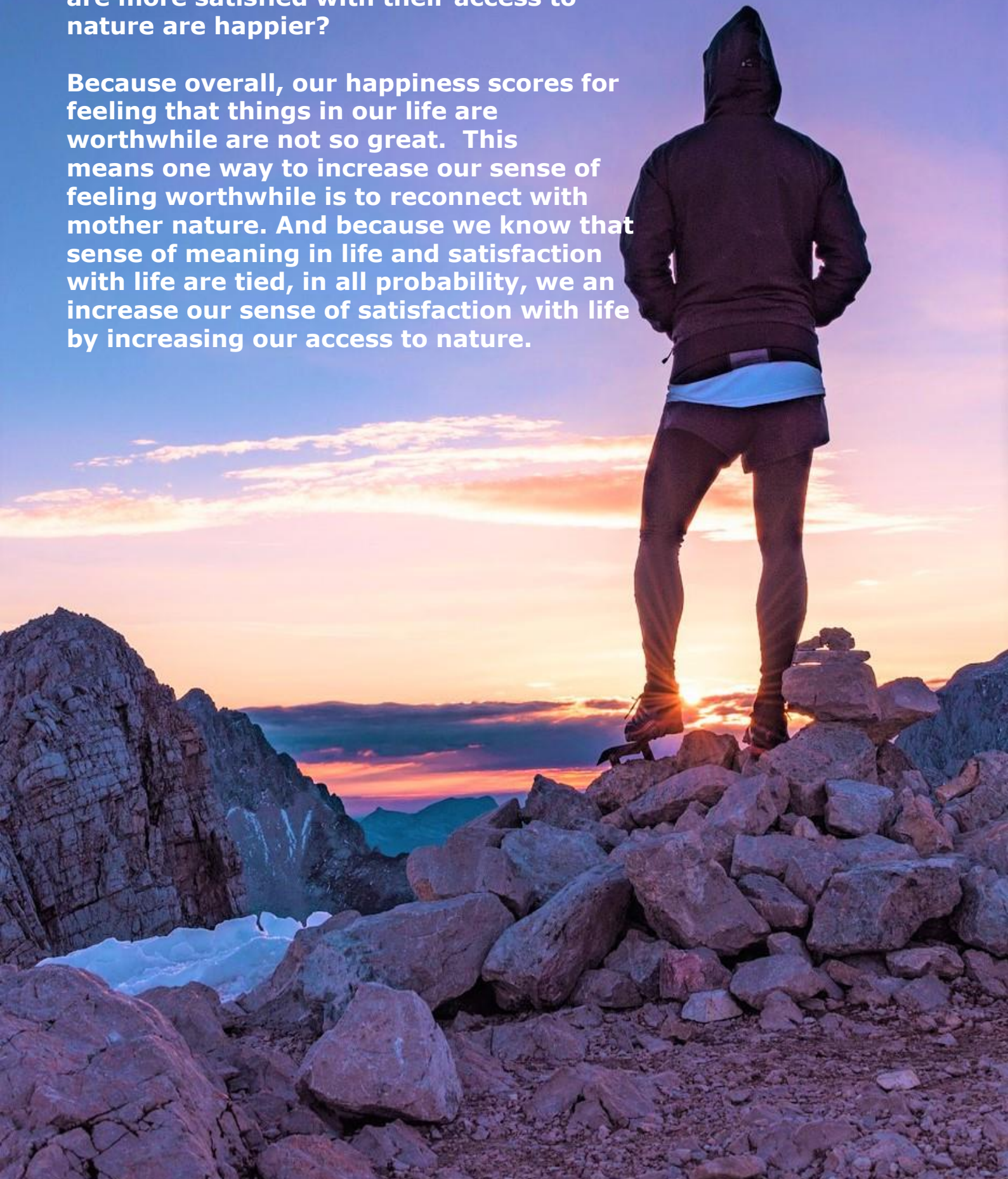
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.



Why Getting Out into Nature or Bringing Nature to Your Life will bring you Happiness

So why should you care that people who are more satisfied with their access to nature are happier?

Because overall, our happiness scores for feeling that things in our life are worthwhile are not so great. This means one way to increase our sense of feeling worthwhile is to reconnect with mother nature. And because we know that sense of meaning in life and satisfaction with life are tied, in all probability, we can increase our sense of satisfaction with life by increasing our access to nature.



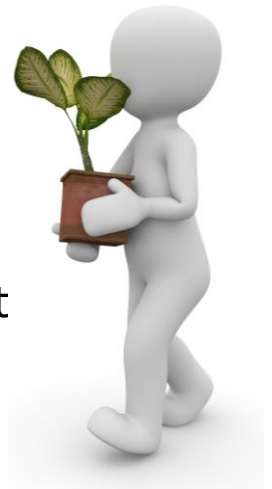
What You Can Do For Mother Earth & Your Happiness.

We hope our happiness data report inspires you to take action to increase or maintain your happiness by connecting to nature.

Teaching and talking about our connection to nature is a great way to remind yourself about **how important mother earth is to our happiness.**

Take a walk in a park, just 30 minutes a day walking fast enough to get your heart beating will not only make you happier, it will help stave off depression and increase your health.

Bring a plant into your life. Believe it or not, just seeing a plant has an impact on your happiness – and if you can't bring plants in the office, a picture of a tree, a field, or other natural settings can do the trick!



About the Data

Happiness Index data is from a convenience sampling raised through word of mouth and GoogleAds granted to the Happiness Alliance as a non-profit. Gender scores do not included are those who did not answer the question of gender. All data is for 2017. The Happiness Index is a freely available survey instrument at happycounts.org





About 900 people a month take the Happiness Index survey. A little over half are women. The majority are between 25-65 years of age. Over 95% are from the U.S.A. although groups of people in Beirut, Kuwait, Japan, and Canada used our survey in 2017. Many educators also use it.

That said, most of the people who took the survey learned about it from a google ad, as we are the recipient of a grant from google. Our plan for 2018 is to expand our reach to include people we had not reached before.

Our mission at the Happiness Alliance is to improve the happiness, well-being, and sustainability of all beings on our earth. We realize our mission by contributing to an understanding and appreciation of the factors that lead to life satisfaction, resilience and sustainability. In addition to economic status, we focus on examining sectors that span social, environmental and governance quality.

We provide tools, resources and knowledge for a new economic paradigm. We foster grassroots activism for a world where all beings flourish. We are innovators in the happiness movement. We collaborate and share with community organizers and our fellow organizations in the happiness movement.

You can gather tools, resources and knowledge, including access to the Happiness Index, at happycounts.org

For attribution, please cite:

Musikanski, L., & Edwards, A.V.(2018). The Happiness Report Card 2018 First Quarter Edition.
Happiness Alliance happycounts.org



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You Deserve to be Happy
Your Happiness Counts
Count Your Happiness



happycounts.org