

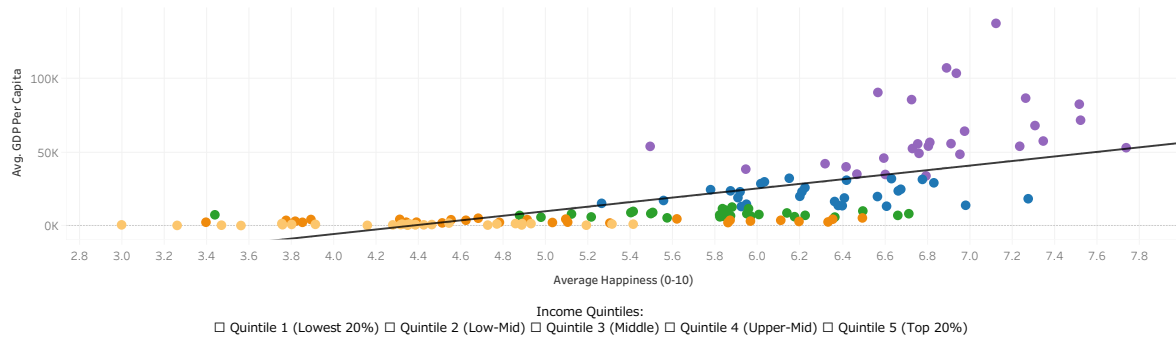
True Factors of Happiness

A lot of controversies around the topic of "how to be happy".

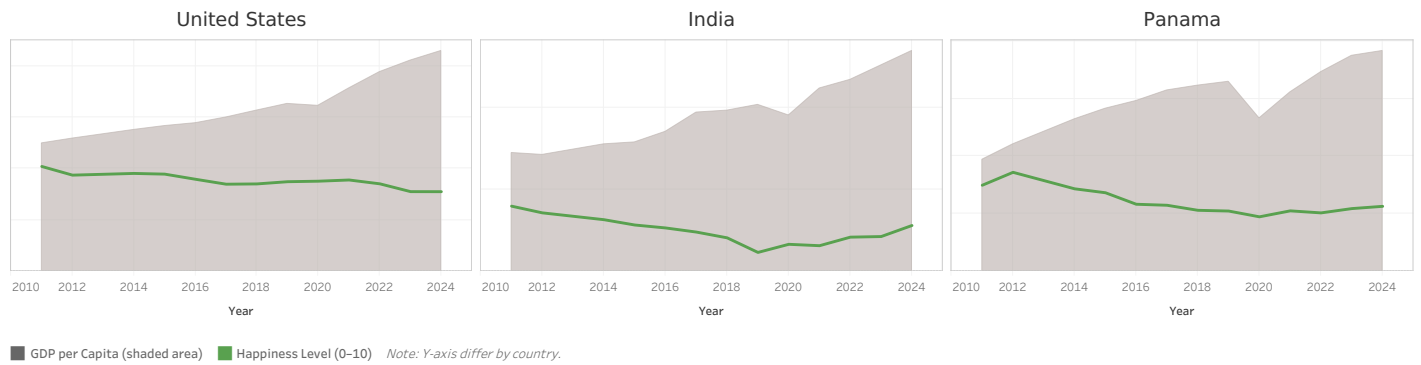
Evolutionary Psychology (EP)- field that explores human psych through the lens of evolution- attempts to answer the question.

Is Money the Biggest Factor to Get Happier?

GDP seems to have positive relationship with happiness — Wealthier countries tend to report higher levels of happiness.



But when we track countries over time, a surprising trend emerges.

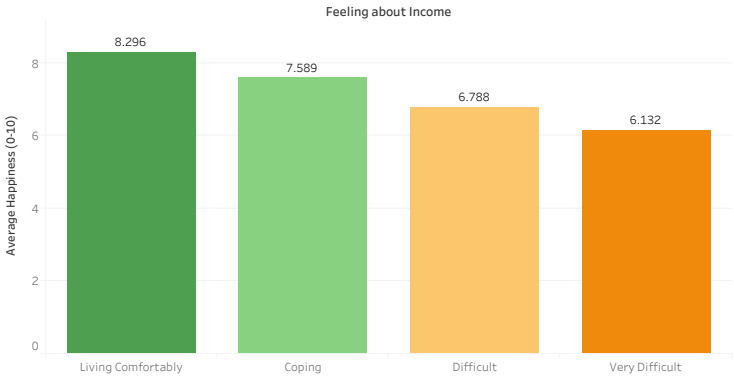


Even though GDP per Capita has steadily increased over time in all these countries, happiness has remained flat or even declined.
This shows that economic growth alone isn't enough to improve happiness.

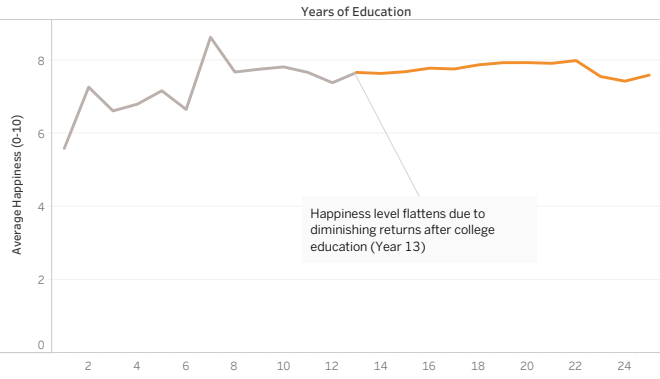
Then what really drives Happiness?

It is not just income or degrees.

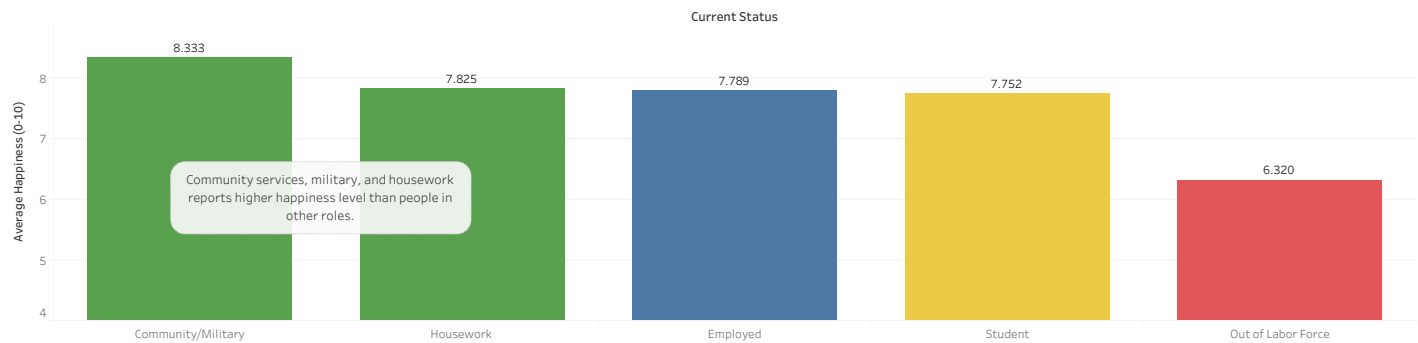
People who 'feel' comfortable are happier.



More schooling doesn't always lead to more happiness.



Purpose matters more than income or position.



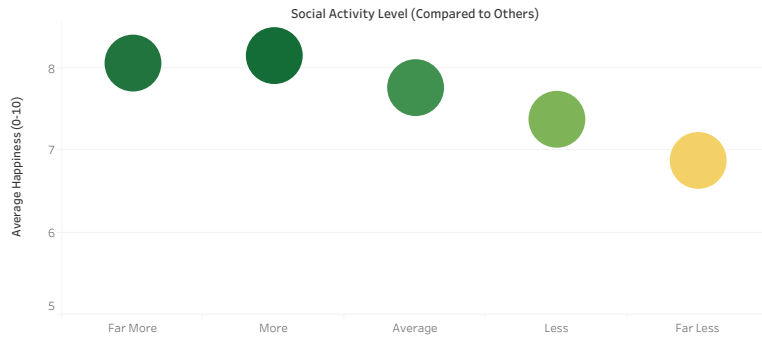
People feel happiest when their lives are devoted to others.

Even without income, happiness comes from feeling valued, purposeful, and particularly when their lives are used for other people.

We evolved to be Social.

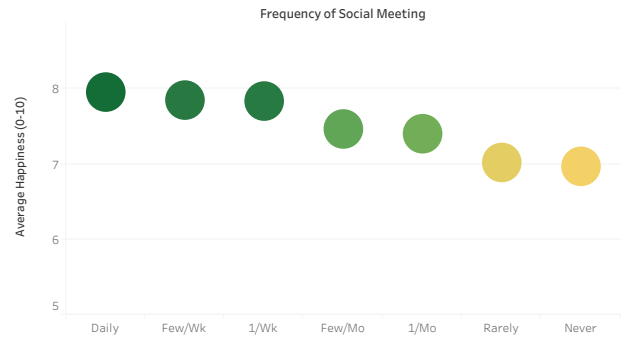
Extraversion — being active, outgoing, and socially connected — is deeply linked to happiness.

Socially active people are happier.



Note: Self-reported activity level compared to peers of similar background (e.g., age, gender, country).

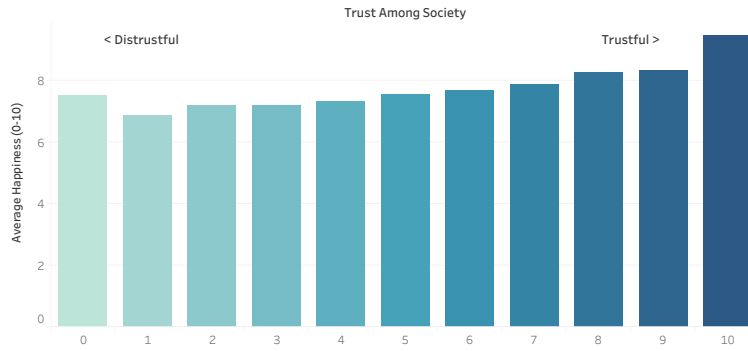
Frequent social interaction boosts happiness.



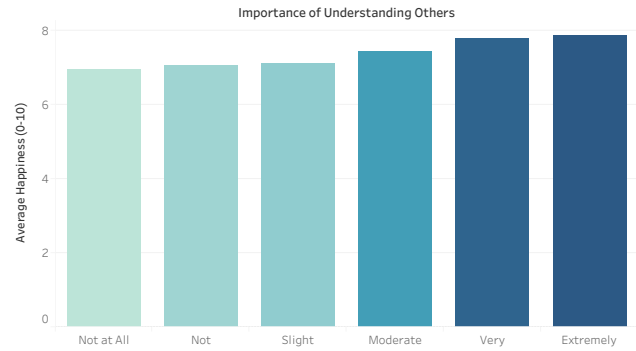
Individualistic values support greater happiness.

Humans thrive when they feel psychologically free. Freedom aligns with **trust and respect for individual differences**.

Trust in others strongly predicts happiness.



Respecting differences hugely contributes to happiness.



In cultures that prioritize openness, respect, and understanding to individual differences, **people report significantly higher happiness**.

References

▣ Data Sources

- European Social Survey (ESS11, 2022) - <https://europeansocialsurvey.org/news/article/third-round-11-data-release-published>
- World Happiness Report 2024 - <https://www.worldhappiness.report/data-sharing/>
- World Bank Open Data - <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?>

▣ Conceptual References

Evolutionary Psychology & Happiness:

- Nesse, R. M. (2004). *Natural selection and the capacity for subjective well-being*. In Positive Psychology in Practice.
- Buss, D. M. (2019). *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind*.