

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1521 Where Do You Rank When it Comes to Happiness?

How happy are you? Would you say that you are pretty happy? Reasonably happy? Sort of happy? As happy as can be expected? Less happy than I used to be? Unhappy? Or, "I'll be happy when you stop asking these questions?" Well, the World Happiness Report has been released, and we're about to find out where you stand. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's happily coming next on The Extra Point.

Finland steps into the winner's circle for the seventh year in a row, as they have been determined to be the happiest place in the world. In a related story, Disneyland is once again demanding a recount.

Those sneaky people at The Gallup Organization seem to be behind this, along with numerous sponsors and organizations.

Participating countries are asked to imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life. The question they ask is, "On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?"

There were concerns right off the bat. Were they referring to wealth and overall financial well-being, or was it family, friends and mental health? In the end, they replaced "best possible life" with "happiest possible life". There was apparently little guidance beyond that, and the data came back.

We already know that Finland again wears the crown, but what about the rest of the world? 143 countries reported, and here we go:

Afghanistan was at the bottom. Africans are basically all unhappy. South Africa was #83, but most others came in towards the bottom of the list.

Egypt is 127; India, a bit of a surprise, is listed at 126, which is behind some of the African countries, as well as Jordan (125), Cambodia

(119), Pakistan (108), Ukraine (105), and Palestine (103).

Iran is at 100; Iraq is 92; Hong Kong used to score pretty well in surveys like this, but now settles in at 86. That's behind places like Armenia (82), Bulgaria (81), Indonesia (80), Venezuela (79), Columbia (78), and the happier outpost known as Mongolia (77).

Ecuador is 74, Bolivia 73, Russia 72, Dominican Republic 69, Peru 68, and Jamaica bobsleds in at 67 — one place ahead of Libya. Yes, Libya is happier than Jamaica. How is that possible, Mon?

Greece makes the list at 64; Mainland China is way happier than Hong Kong is, in at 60; Malaysia (59); Thailand (58); Paraguay (57), Portugal (55), and then a curious set of four in a row from Asia — Vietnam at 54, the Philippines (53), South Korea (52), and Japan is at 51. That surprised me. I was there in November and even in impossibly hectic Tokyo, people seemed pretty...happy. On we go.

The Japanese won't be so happy to know that they were beaten out by Kazakhstan (49), Argentina (48), Uzbekistan (47), Slovakia (45), Brazil (44), Nicaragua (43), and Guatemala (42).

Italy is 41; Spain (36), Poland (35), El Salvador (33), Romania (32), and Taiwan is 31. This got me to thinking. It's very possible that the Communist Chinese Party wants Taiwan not because it was once a part of China, and not for strategic reasons, and not even for the semiconductor factories. No, they probably want Taiwan because it's twice as happy as China is and that can only help them.

Singapore is #30, Saudi Arabia (28), France (27), Uruguay (26), Mexico (25), Germany (24), and you've waited patiently...the USA is #23.

You know who is happier than we are? The United Arab Emirates, that's who. They're #22, followed by Slovenia at 21. Got that? Slovenia is happier than you are. (Con't.)

So is the the UK at 20, Lithuania (19), Czechia (18), Ireland (17), Belgium (16), Canada (15), Austria (14), Kuwait (13), Costa Rica (12), and New Zealand (11), and Australia (10).

The rest of the top 10 all require a heavy coat this time of year, with the exception of one. Switzerland is 9, Luxembourg (8), Norway (7), the Netherlands (6), Israel is the only place that isn't so cold (5), Sweden (4), Iceland (3), and just behind Finland, at number two, is Denmark.

Back to the question: "On which step of the 10-step ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?" From zero to ten, how happy are you?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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