

Why Is Finland the Happiest Country in the World?

Frank Martela, Finnish psychologist and philosopher, says that it is no accident that his homeland has for six years now been ranked the happiest country in the world. He cites three factors and four that make Finland a happier land.

Finns are connected by a strong sense of community. “Having people around you who care about you, and whom you care about, makes people happy,” Martela says. “Luckily, that can be true even in very dire material conditions.” Even without a stable home, people can find happiness by hanging out with friends, visiting families and connecting with others over card games or other fun activities, **studies show.**

Doing Good for others makes them feel good. “When you help someone, when you [have a] positive impact on others, your own happiness and sense of meaningfulness increases,” says Martela. “In situations of crisis, opportunities to help each other are typically plenty, and this helps also to build a sense of solidarity.”

Their sense of purpose builds resolve & perseverance. “A strong sense of purpose also makes it easier to tolerate bad conditions,” Martela says. “In fact, focusing on changing those conditions is one obvious source of purpose that could animate the person and help to find meaning in their present situation.”

And their government promotes their happiness. Martela also notes that there’s another key aspect to Finland’s sense of well-

being, and it is not one that every nation has at its disposal: Well-functioning governmental institutions. “I tend to say that governments can’t make people happy,” observes Martela, “but they can remove many sources of unhappiness.”

Affordable health care and education, for example, are impossible dreams in many countries, but the people of Finland have made them part of their reality. “If you’re surrounded by economic, political or social unrest,” says Martela, “no amount of mindfulness or gratitude diaries or other popular interventions will significantly impact your happiness.”