

This Could Be The Secret To Happiness

A sure-fire way to achieve long-term dissatisfaction in life is attempting to keep up with the Joneses.

Using your friends and neighbours as a benchmark for your financial success will inevitably lead to poor financial decision making.

New research by insurer SunLife has found that perceived disposable income affects happiness more than actual wealth.

After months of being primarily confined to our homes and gardens, we are probably more aware than usual of what our neighbours have got in their life.

Perhaps we have watched deliveries to our neighbours, even spotting some 'status symbol' purchases arriving on their doorsteps.

In their Finances After 50 report, SunLife found that 19% of those surveyed describe themselves as 'very happy'.*

The study of more than 3,000 over 50s UK households found that this 'very happy' cohort rises to 31% among those who think they have more disposable income than their peers.*



For those who believe they have less disposable income than others, happiness falls to 10%. So, it's our perception of relative disposable income which appears to influence happiness.*

For those over 50s households who have high incomes but don't believe they have more than their friends and neighbours, they are typically less happy than lower-income families who think they are wealthier than their neighbours.

Those who think they earn less than their peers are unhappier than those in the lowest income households.

In short, to be happy is not about what you earn, but believing what you earn is more than those around you!

The happiness index is calculated based on the average of these three questions:

-All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

-How happy did you feel yesterday?

-Thinking forward to the next 5 years or so, how happy do you feel about your future?

Asking yourself these three questions, where do you currently stand?



Ian Atkinson, Marketing Director at SunLife, said:

"We all know the expression 'Keeping up with the Joneses' and how important perceived wealth and financial success can be, and our research shows that not only is it a real phenomenon, but it is the most powerful effect money can have on our happiness."

Source: <https://www.sunlife.co.uk/siteassets/images/finances-after-50/finances-after-50.pdf/>

