

# Unlocking happiness

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What is the key to happiness? More to the point, is there a universal skeleton key that city dwellers could use to unlock happiness? Writing in the aptly named *International Journal of Happiness and Development*, a Canadian team finds the answers.

When it comes to [happiness](#), it is difficult to predict what might make a person feel that way, regardless of the received wisdom with regards to wealth, health, and other factors. Indeed, Kenneth Cramer of the Department of Psychology at the University of Windsor in Windsor Ontario and Rebecca Pschibul of Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, suggest that higher creativity, optimism, longevity, and lower hostility and self-centredness, are good markers of happiness. But, they wonder whether such factors are universal. As such, they have carried out a study of several large urban centres around the world to find out.

The team looked at various elements of city life including economics, culture and education, income, safety, living conditions, city administration, health, city pride, and the self-reported level of happiness. It seemed that each urban centre had a different overall makeup in terms of these antecedents to happiness. Apparently, there is no universal key. In general, health was the greatest common predictor of happiness (especially among men) with pride in one's city second on the list, and, perhaps surprisingly, [household income](#).

Ultimately, the team did not find a skeleton key to unlock happiness, there is, they explain "little support for the invariance (generalisability) hypothesis". They point out that rather than attempting to find a one size fits all solution across the globe, much within reach is a greater understanding of the relevant elements that could be used to promote greater quality of urban life in specific regions.

**More information:** Finding the skeleton key to happiness: evaluating model invariance of subjective well-being in a comparison of large urban centres worldwide, [DOI: 10.1504/IJHD.2019.103402](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJHD.2019.103402) , [www.inderscience.com/info/inar...cle.php?artid=103402](http://www.inderscience.com/info/inar...cle.php?artid=103402)

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