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Bio

John F. Helliwell is in the Vancouver School of Economics at the University of British Columbia and is Distinguished Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. His books include *Well-Being for Public Policy*, *International Differences in Well-Being*, all editions, 2012-2026, of the *World Happiness Report*. He was a founding director of the International Positive Psychology Association.

Keynote address on:

Positive Psychology and Global Happiness

Abstract

The *World Happiness Report* relies upon and exemplifies positive psychology research and practice, using people's own evaluations of their lives to measure and rank how lives are progressing around the globe. These data are then used to explore what makes for a good life. The results show the relative importance of different aspects of life, thereby guiding policy-makers who are trying to make lives better. For example, in *World Happiness Report 2026* we use student life evaluations in 47 countries to show that to improve the sense of school belonging is several times more valuable than to correspondingly reduce average hours of social media use. Similarly, a chapter in *World Happiness Report 2024* studied the life satisfaction of older adults in India, finding satisfaction with living arrangements to be several times as important as being subject to depression, ill-treatment, or discrimination.

In all parts of the world, and at all stages of life, a balanced assessment of different aspects of life shows the value and importance of building trust, belonging, and other positive elements of life, just as research in positive psychology has been showing for several decades.