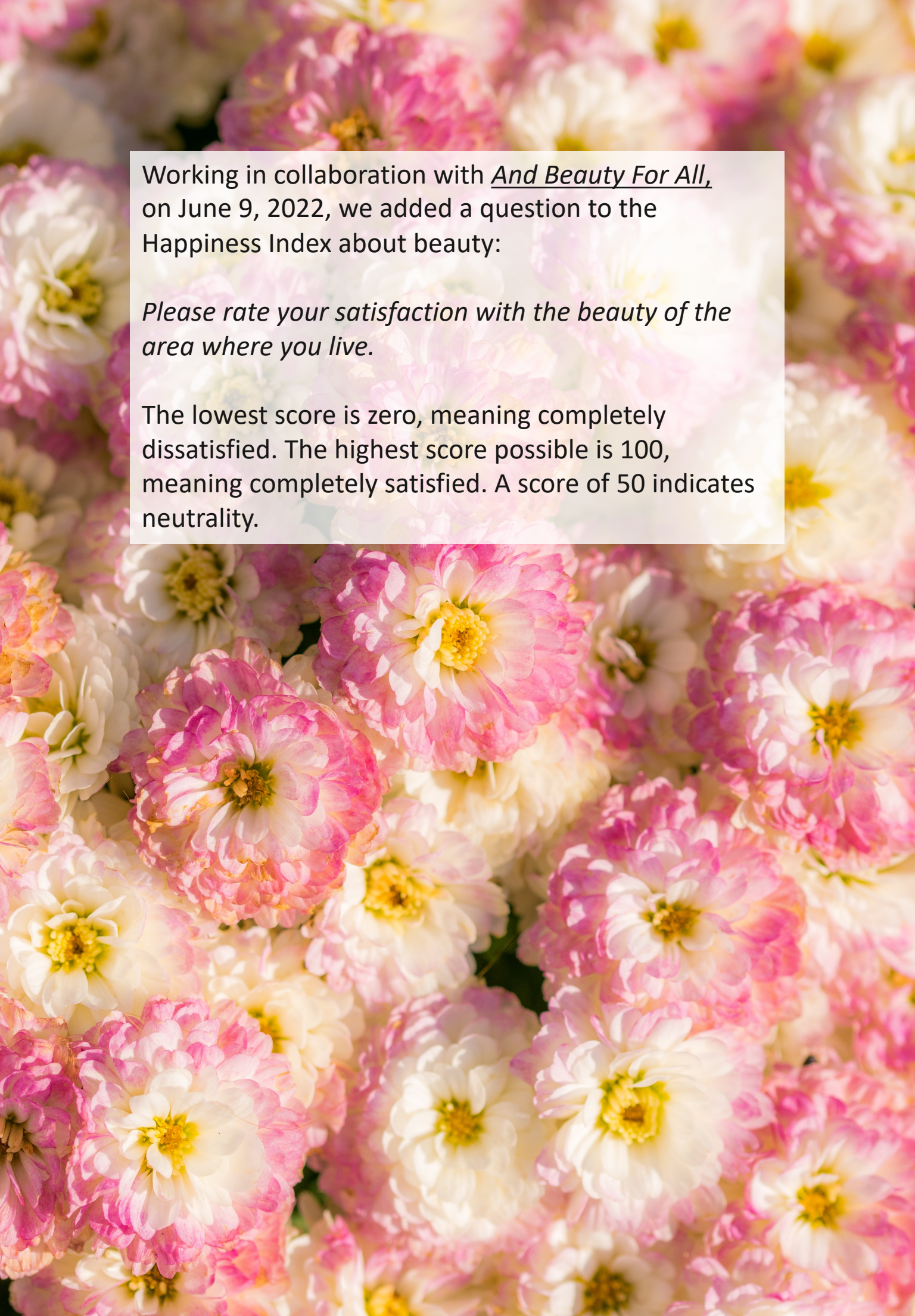


Happiness & Beauty

Making the connection through data


Happiness
Alliance



Working in collaboration with *And Beauty For All*, on June 9, 2022, we added a question to the Happiness Index about beauty:

Please rate your satisfaction with the beauty of the area where you live.


The lowest score is zero, meaning completely dissatisfied. The highest score possible is 100, meaning completely satisfied. A score of 50 indicates neutrality.

Letter from John de Graaf

I'm excited to report that the Happiness Alliance's [Happiness Index](#) survey now contains a question helping to measure the connection between beauty (landscape and built environment) and happiness or wellbeing.

I've argued for some time that this is an important connection. An extensive Gallup study ([Soul of the Community](#)) and another by the University of South Carolina ([Untangling what makes cities liveable: happiness in five cities](#)) and [The Beauty-Happiness Connection](#) have established a strong connection between the "aesthetics" of a community and the life satisfaction and attachment to the place of its residents.

A study in Vienna, Austria found that people walking through areas of parks and green spaces report higher happiness and have lower cortisol levels ([Green Space and Stress: Evidence from Cortisol Measures in Deprived Urban Communities](#)). Another extensive study using the [Mappiness app](#) in the UK showed higher levels of everyday life satisfaction in places thought to be aesthetically pleasing by a large study of preferences using photos of places ([Happiness is Greater in Natural Environments](#)). And a series of studies in Philadelphia ([To Combat Gun Violence, Clean Up the Neighborhood](#)) showed a major drop in crime, decrease in mental illness and increase in community trust where ugly, littered, lots and abandoned homes in the city were converted to parks and gardens. And there's lots more evidence. [John de Graaf](#)



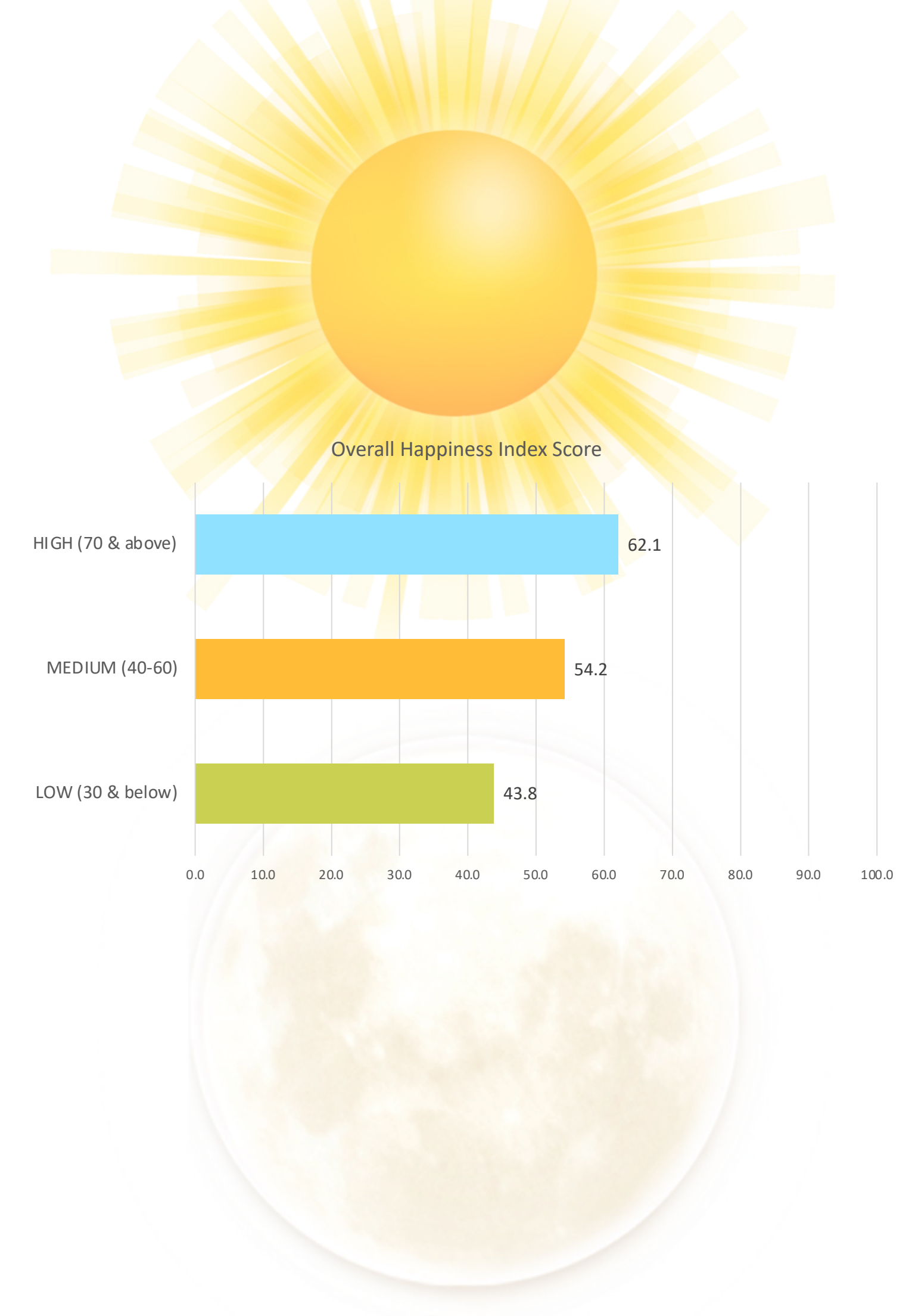
What does the data say about Beauty and Happiness?

People who feel satisfied or very satisfied with the beauty of the area where they live are happier by about 18 points in terms of the overall score for the Happiness Index.

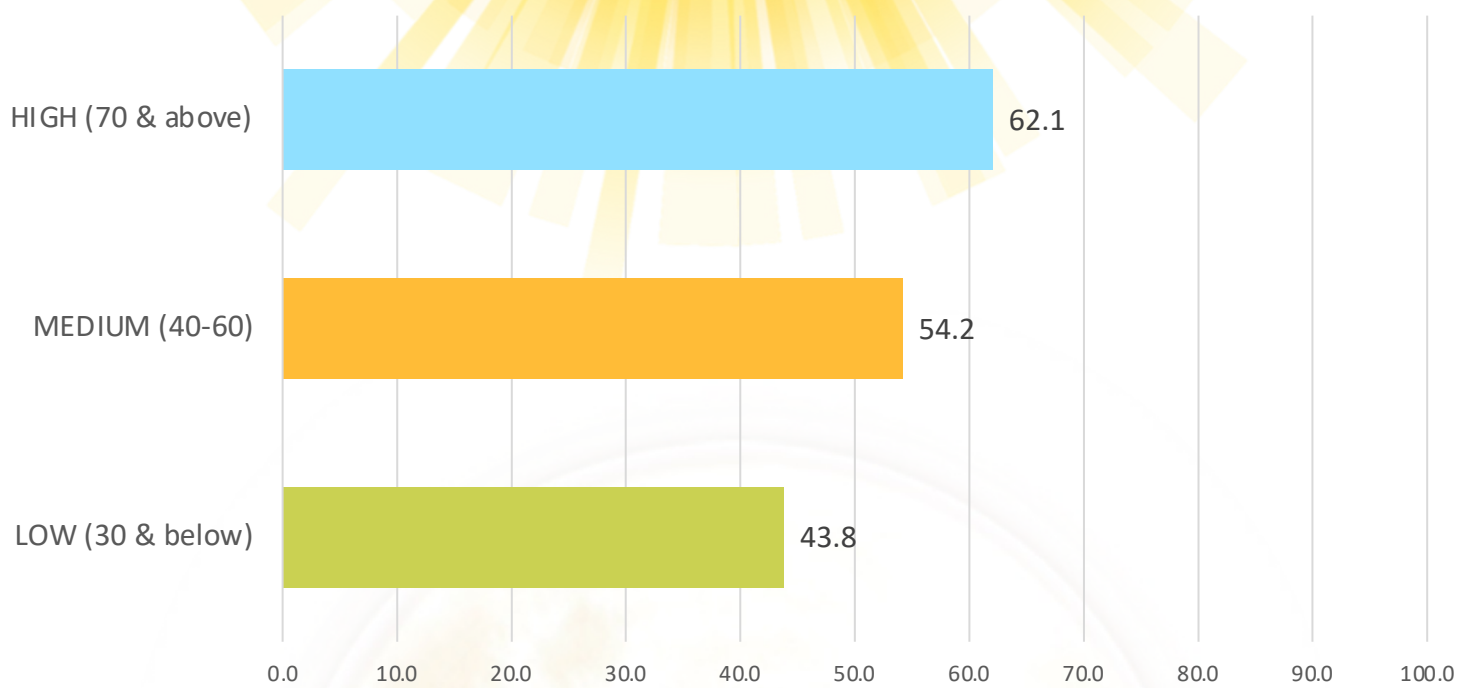
The Happiness Index measures wellbeing in a comprehensive approach along the 11 domains of wellbeing, with 50 questions.

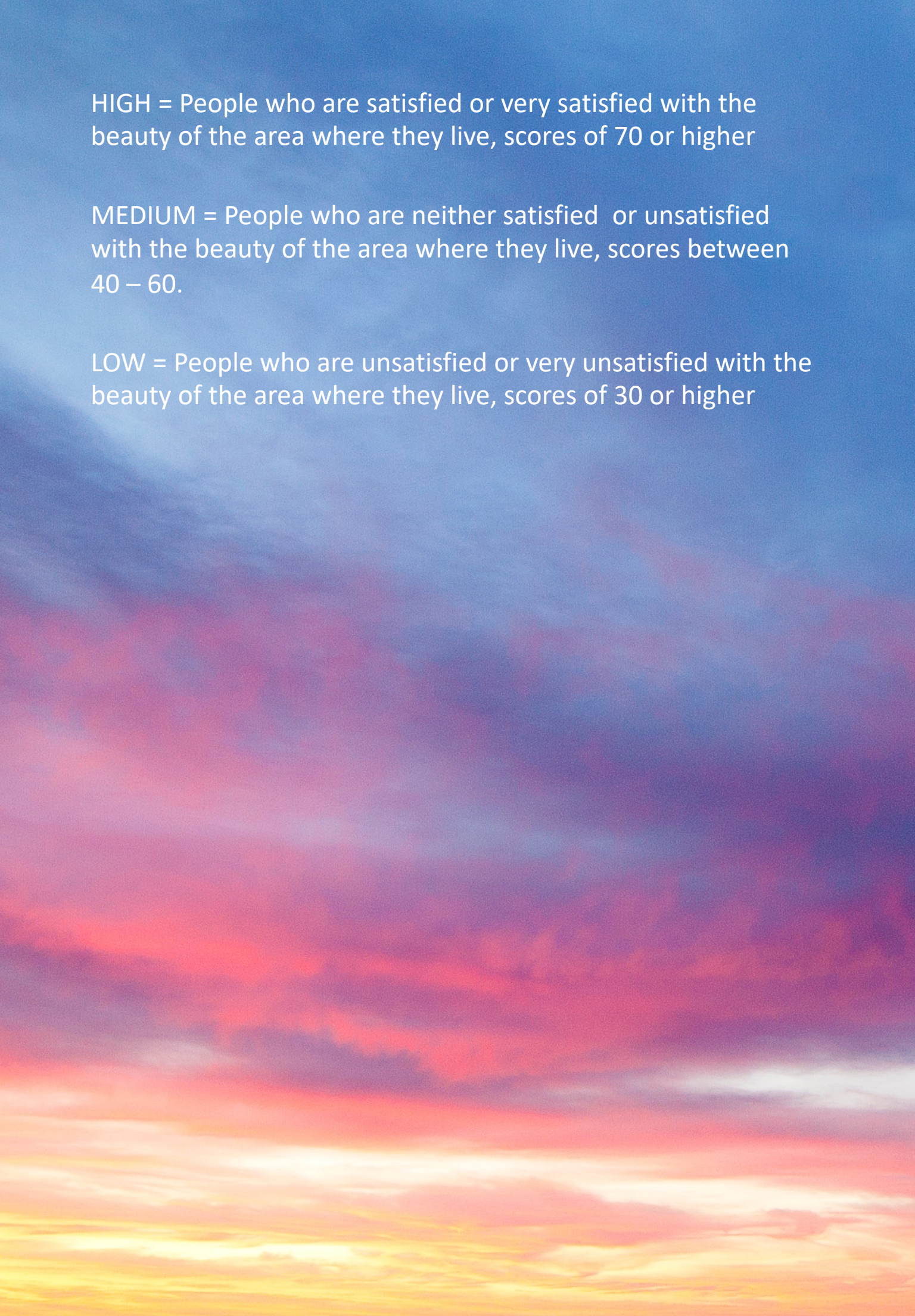
Overall happiness scores are the average for all the questions in all the domains.





Overall Happiness Index Score





HIGH = People who are satisfied or very satisfied with the beauty of the area where they live, scores of 70 or higher

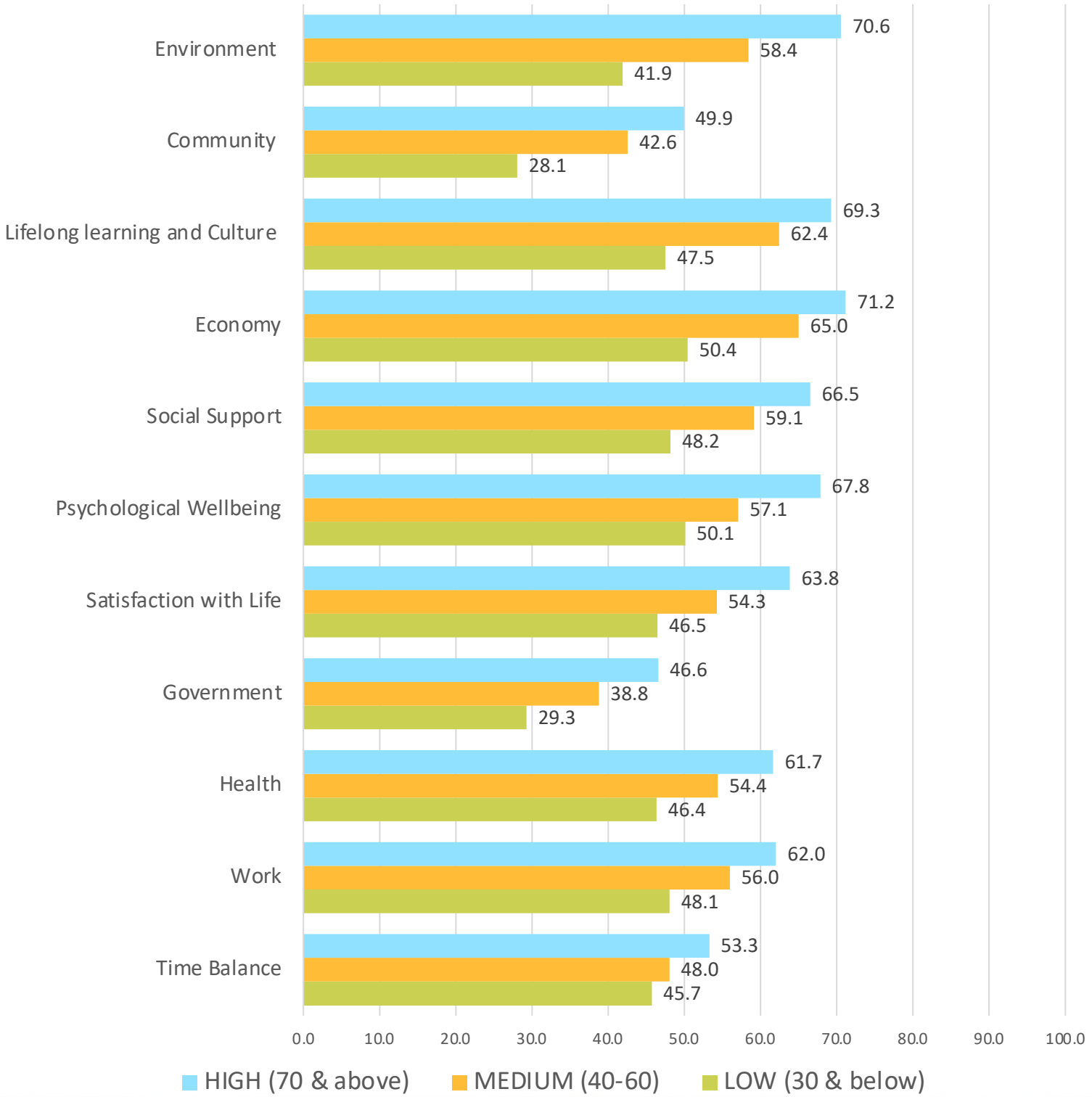
MEDIUM = People who are neither satisfied or unsatisfied with the beauty of the area where they live, scores between 40 – 60.

LOW = People who are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the beauty of the area where they live, scores of 30 or higher

The domains with the largest differences are Environment and Community. This makes sense when beauty is defined by nature.



Domain Differences For Beauty



Does this mean that to be satisfied with the beauty of the area where you live you need to live where there is a lot of nature?

No. There are many ways to define beauty.

The presence of art.

The manifestations of a culture.

The buildings and structures around you.

The way social, economic and governmental systems care for people and the environment.

Your relationships.

Your community.

Your inner life.

If you live in a place that does not feel beautiful to you, you might ask how you can create beauty in your home, your neighborhood, and your relationships.



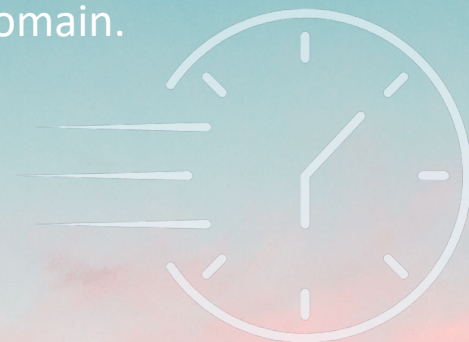
Each domain of the Happiness Index has distinct questions, also called indicators. They are called indicators because the data from them tells you something and points the way for positive change.



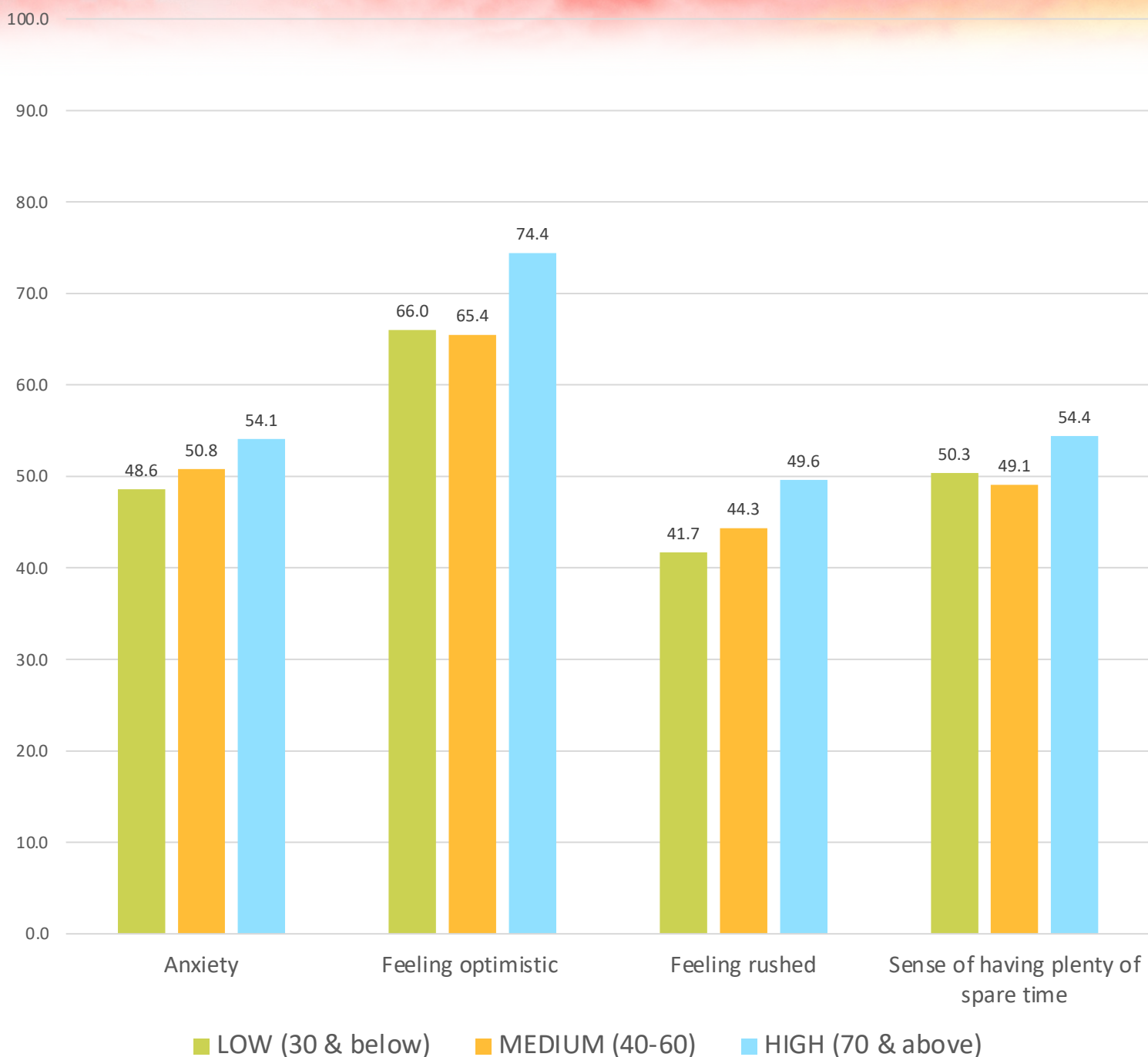
How might this data point the way?

It might tell us to slow down and take time for doing nothing, having fun, and engaging in more leisure. Doing this may help to increase your optimism, which makes you more resilient and a better problem solver, and... maybe better at creating all kinds of beauty in your life.

The indicators where there was the least amount of difference between people who are satisfied with the beauty of the area where they live and people who are not satisfied are Feelings of Anxiety, Sense of Optimism, and two of the three indicators in the Time Balance domain.

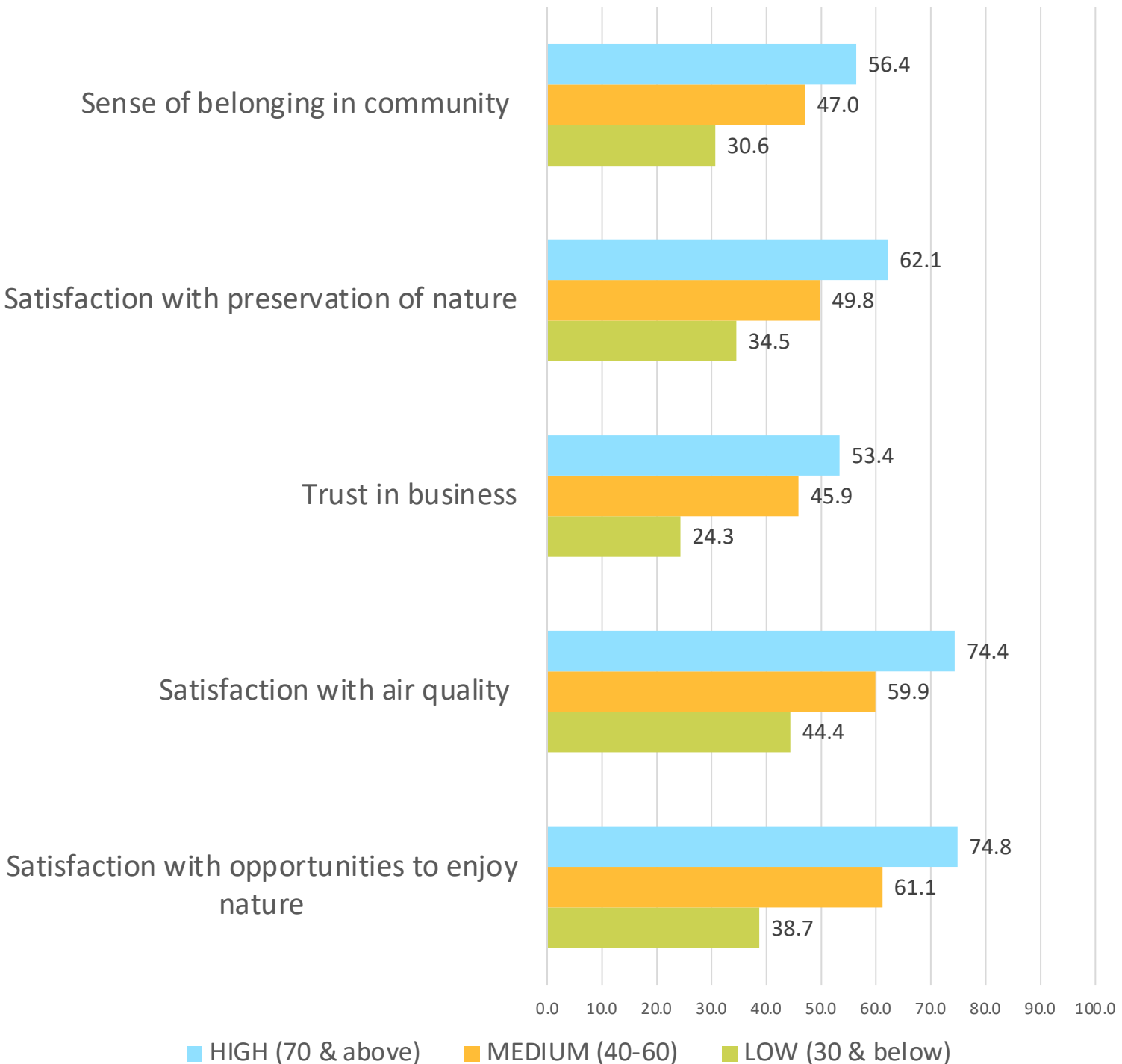


Smallest Differences (10 or less)



The indicators where there was the greatest amount of difference between people who are satisfied with the beauty of the area where they live and people who are not satisfied include those for the Environment as well as Trust in Neighborhood Businesses, Sense of Belonging to Community, Satisfaction with Cultural Activities and Sense of Safety.

Biggest Indicator Differences for Beauty



How might this data point the way?

It might tell us just how important our “In Real Life” (IRL) community is. This does not mean you have to give up your virtual community, but that it may be beneficial to your wellbeing to invest in your IRL community.

Getting to know your neighbors and looking out for each other are ways to create community beauty.

Buying locally and connecting with the small businesses and entrepreneurs in your area are also ways to create social beauty.



Cleaning up the trash on your block and talking with the people you encounter is a small but potentially important way to create beauty and contribute to greater sense of safety.

Biggest Indicator (Question) Differences for Beauty

Indicators (Questions) in the Happiness Index	LOW (30 & below)	MEDIUM (40-60)	HIGH (70 & above)	Difference between High and Low
Satisfaction with opportunities to enjoy nature	38.7	61.1	74.8	36.1
Satisfaction with air quality	44.4	59.9	74.4	30.0
Trust in business	24.3	45.9	53.4	29.1
Satisfaction with preservation of nature	34.5	49.8	62.1	27.6
Sense of belonging in community	30.6	47.0	56.4	25.7
Satisfaction with access to cultural activities	40.3	54.3	65.0	24.7
Satisfaction with safety	45.4	60.4	69.5	24.1
Sense that people are trustworthy (will return your lost wallet)	18.7	35.5	42.5	23.8
Engagement	45.8	58.8	69.5	23.7
Sense of having enough money	44.4	60.1	67.8	23.4
Happiness	42.9	54.1	66.0	23.1
Trust in neighbors	21.1	35.4	43.6	22.4
Feeling lonely	29.9	41.8	51.9	22.1
Trust in local government	23.9	36.5	45.9	21.9
Just getting by	49.3	63.4	70.5	21.2
Sense of a healthy environment	50.0	62.8	70.9	20.9
Feeling positive about yourself	40.8	49.7	61.6	20.8
Satisfaction with access to informal education	48.6	61.0	69.4	20.8
Satisfaction with life	45.0	54.5	65.5	20.5
Life is worthwhile	48.5	56.9	68.6	20.1

ABOUT THE DATA

The data in this report comes from the Happiness Alliance's Happiness Index, a comprehensive survey of wellbeing. People who took the survey chose to do so. This is called a convenience sampling. Convenience samplings may or may not represent a populations' wellbeing, and do represent the wellbeing of those who took the survey.

The data in this report was gathered from 752 survey takers out of 1012 who took the Happiness Index between June 9, 2022 and July 20, 2022. Not everybody who took the survey in that time frame answered the question about beauty.

Beauty scores	LOW (30 & below)	MEDIUM (40-60)	HIGH (70 & above)
Count of Survey Takers	72	238	442

The Happiness Alliance (1) never sells the data gathered with the Happiness Index, (2) only uses the data in ways aligned with its mission *to contribute to the transformation of economies and societies so that the happiness of people, the well-being of communities and the sustainability of ecosystems is the primary aim of governance, enterprise and people*, and (3) follows to GDPR to safeguard the anonymity of all people who take the survey.

What you can do:

Take the [Happiness Index](#), even if you have already taken it!

Share the link for the Happiness Index with your friends.

When you take the Happiness Index, you contribute towards a happier and more beautiful today and tomorrow.

