**FINANCIAL AWARENESS**

Who says money can’t buy happiness? More than half (54%) of Americans agree buying loved ones something they’ve wanted for a long time is their happiest spend.

A survey of 2,000 adults aged 18–55 discovered the definition of happiness hasn’t changed much since pre-pandemic times. Forty-five percent said that before 2019, they associated joy with having free time to spend with friends and family, and a similar amount (46%) continues to do so.

However, Gen Zers experienced a shift in priorities, as more of them associate happiness with their loved ones being healthy now than they did before the pandemic began (45% vs. 33%).

Conducted by OnePoll on behalf of [Happy Money](https://happymoney.com/) for National Financial Awareness Day, the survey found that overall, more than half (55%) of respondents are outsourcing some of their chores to open up their schedules for friends or family.

Over the past three years, people have hired a cleaning service (56%), ordered groceries instead of shopping in-store (54%), moved closer to work to reduce their commute (52%), and ordered takeout instead of cooking (48%), all in the name of enjoying more time with loved ones.

And with cooking taking up an average of 1.5 hours each day, that’s a potential 1,095 hours gained per year.

That may be why nearly two-thirds (65%) believe money can buy happiness.

Despite the ups and downs of the current housing market, purchasing an apartment or house (52%) was the top milestone people associated with their happiness journey, followed by paying for their child’s education (48%) and buying the perfect gift for a friend or loved one (45%).

When it comes to smaller, recurring purchases, the average person spends about $53 each week on things or experiences that bring them joy.

And if there were a recipe for happiness that included purchasable things, a monthly cleaning service for a house or yard (41%) and a month-long family vacation (40%) were preferred “ingredients” over a spa day (29%) or a book club subscription (28%).

People also shared some of their life’s happiest spends, including “buying new furniture,” “living abroad,” “paying off my loans,” and “finally going on a vacation I’ve always wanted.”

"One of the keys to the money and happiness equation is figuring out how to use money as a tool – whether you have a little or a lot of it," said Dr. Chris Courtney, vice president of science at Happy Money. "And given the chaotic macroeconomic environment, it's an opportunity to rethink old spending habits and make a shift toward spending money on what is truly essential to our well-being.”

Overall, 67% are happy at the moment. But while only 29% described themselves as “very happy,” 45% of these respondents said it will take one or a few weeks for them to reach that level.

As for purchases that will make them happy in the future, 59% said paying for their kids’ schooling will put a smile on their face, while 56% look forward to the joy home remodeling brings.

"As people look at their financial pictures and evaluate their spending, it is also an opportunity to consider what financial products they're using," said Dr. Courtney. "People tend only to associate loans with burdensome debt, but the right loan can actually help pay off your credit card and boost your credit score at the same time.”

**PEOPLE’S HAPPIEST SPENDS**

* “My first car.”
* “Leadership books."
* “My German Shepherd puppy."
* “A travel experience to the U.S. as an immigrant from my home country, Nigeria."
* “A Disney cruise.”
* “My house.”
* “Pizza and chicken.”
* “Buying all the essential needs of my family: a home, good food, quality insurance."
* “Paying off my loans.”
* “My wedding.”

1.5 hours cooking daily x 365 days in a year = 1,095 hours

ENDS