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Negative Emotions Fell Globally for the First Time Since 2014

The world was beset by conflict in 2023 — as the war between Ukraine and Russia dragged on and a new one broke out between Israel and Hamas — but it was in a better place emotionally than it was at the height of the pandemic. Negative emotions dipped for the first time in a decade, and positive emotions rebounded to their pre-pandemic highs.

The [Gallup Global Emotions 2024 report](#) offers a snapshot of Gallup's latest measurements of people's positive and negative daily experiences. The findings are based on nearly 146,000 interviews with adults in 142 countries and areas in 2023.

Gallup's Positive and Negative Experience Indexes measure life's intangibles — feelings and emotions — that traditional economic indicators such as GDP were never intended to capture. Each index provides a real-time snapshot of people's daily experiences, offering leaders insights into the health of their societies that they cannot gather from economic measures alone.

Negative Experience Index Slipped

On a global level, Gallup's Negative Experience Index declined for the first time since 2014. All five negative emotions that make up the index fell between 2022 and 2023, with stress dropping the most. Thirty-seven percent of adults worldwide felt stressed in 2023, down three percentage points from the previous year but well above where it was a decade ago (33%) and the years before that.

Guinea and Israel Led the World in Negative Experiences

Afghanistan no longer scores the worst on the Negative Experience Index. Guinea, which continues to grapple with uncertainty after a military coup in 2021, scored the highest in the world on the index in 2023, with a 53. Stress skyrocketed to record levels in Guinea, rising 10 points between 2022 and 2023.

Israel, which Gallup surveyed two weeks after the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, earned a spot on this list for the first time with a score of 47 — on par with Afghanistan and Liberia. In 2022, Israel ranked among the countries with the lowest scores in the world on this index.

Israel's index score was inflated by record-level surges in negative emotions in the aftermath of the attacks. Majorities of Israelis experienced worry (67%), stress (62%) and sadness (51%) at unprecedented levels. Over one in three Israelis (36%) said they experienced a lot of anger — not a new high, but still the highest percentage since 2013.

Positive Experience Index Rebound Complete

Further reinforcing that 2023 was a better year for the world's emotional health, positive experiences rebounded to their pre-pandemic levels, completing the recovery that started in 2022.



People younger than 30 continued to be the most positive of all age groups. Further, their positivity rebounded faster, with emotions returning to pre-pandemic levels a year earlier than their older peers. Most of the improvement on the index in 2023 took place among those aged 30 and older.

The World Learned Something in 2023

For almost two decades, the percentage of people worldwide who said they learned or did something interesting the previous day has seldom topped 50%. The 54% who did so in 2023 represents a new record high.

India, Iceland, Greece and China saw double-digit increases on this measure in 2023.

More people in all age groups said they had these opportunities in 2023 compared with the previous year, but people younger than 30 continued to be the most likely to say so (59%). Percentages among older age groups also reached new highs (54% for those aged 30 to 49 and 50% for those aged 50 and older).

Afghanistan Slightly Less Bleak, but Still Least Positive in the World

Positive Experience Index scores worldwide ranged from a high of 86 in Paraguay and Panama to a low of 38 in Afghanistan, which posted the lowest score in the world, as it has almost every year since 2017.

Afghanistan's score on the index was slightly higher in 2023 than it was in either 2021 or 2022 after the Taliban's takeover. However, its score of 38 remains the lowest in the world, and most Afghans are still living in misery. Gallup's surveys showed Afghans universally were still rating their lives so poorly that they were considered suffering.

Much of the recent limited improvement in positive emotions has occurred among Afghan men. In 2023, Afghan men scored a 42 on the index, compared with 34 for Afghan women.

Afghanistan has ranked as the least positive country in the world every year since 2017, apart from 2020, when Gallup could not survey the country because of the pandemic. After dropping to a record global low of 32 in 2021, scores have crept upward each year, reaching 38 in 2023.

Over One in Five Adults Worldwide Felt Lonely

Given the substantial threat that loneliness and isolation pose to people's health and wellbeing, Gallup recently added loneliness to the list of negative emotions that it asks the world about.

An analysis of the relationships between loneliness and other emotions reveals that people who said they felt lonely were substantially more likely than those who did not to experience the five other negative emotions and were less likely to experience the positive ones.

Gallup's initial measure in 2023 showed that over one in five adults worldwide (23%) reported feeling loneliness during a lot of the previous day. However, experiences of loneliness ranged widely around the world, from a high of 45% on the island nation of Comoros to a low of 6% in Vietnam.

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About Gallup

[Gallup](#) delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

About the Gallup World Poll

The [Gallup World Poll](#) is the most comprehensive and farthest-reaching survey of the world. The survey connects with more than 98% of the world's adult population through annual, nationally representative surveys with comparable metrics across countries. The Gallup World Poll is used to measure and track progress on several U.N. sustainable development goals and is the official statistic for work and life for more than 55 indexes and metrics associated with the most important aspects of individuals' lives, their communities and their countries.