

Lesson 40: Regret

Tyler, who has recently graduated from high school, is talking to his uncle Brad. Listen to their conversation while you try to answer the comprehension questions below:

Listening Comprehension

- 1. What did Brad give Tyler as a graduation gift?**
 - a. books
 - b. a car
 - c. money
- 2. Where is Tyler in the college process?**
 - a. he hasn't applied yet
 - b. he hasn't decided where he wants to go
 - c. he's definitely going to the University of California
- 3. Brad thinks Tyler should...**
 - a. listen to his parents
 - b. study law
 - c. take his time to decide
- 4. When Brad was young, he...**
 - a. didn't get good grades
 - b. rebelled against his parents
 - c. was in a band
- 5. Brad's one regret is...**
 - a. living a crazy lifestyle
 - b. not thinking for himself
 - c. losing contact with high school friends
- 6. Brad also suggests that Tyler...**
 - a. take up a musical instrument
 - b. get a girlfriend
 - c. play a sport

Conversation Text

Brad: Hey, Tyler! How's my favorite nephew?

Tyler: Doing great, Uncle Brad! And thanks for the graduation gift. That cash will really **come in handy**.

Brad: You're quite welcome! So, have you decided what college you're going to yet?

Tyler: Um, I'm still sort of **on the fence**. I mean, I had to **scramble** to get all my applications in on time, and there wasn't really any time to think about which school I really *wanted* to go to. **I'm leaning toward** the University of California, but I'm **not completely sold on it**...

Brad: Hey, don't **get so worked up** about it. You know, **there's no harm in** taking some time off to **mull it over**.

Tyler: But **the clock is ticking** and my mom's been **bugging me** about the decision...

Brad: Well, there's no law that says you have to start college at seventeen. You could **skip** a year

Vocabulary

come in handy = be useful

on the fence = undecided

scramble = move in a fast and disorganized way

I'm leaning toward = I have a preference for in this decision

not completely sold on it = not totally convinced / certain

get so worked up = get so upset / agitated

there's no harm in = there's nothing bad/wrong about

mull it over = think about it slowly and carefully

the clock is ticking = time is running out

bugging me = annoying me

skip = not do something you had originally planned to

and take some time to figure out what you want in life. Heck, there's no law that says you have to go to college at all!

Tyler: With all due respect Uncle Brad, that sounds a little **kooky**. If I told my parents I wasn't going to college, they'd **hit the ceiling**.

Brad: Your parents don't get to **dictate** how you live your life, though. I had the same problem when I was your age – my parents expected me to be a **straight-A** student, **on the honor roll** and all that. I **caved to the pressure** and I didn't go for what *I* actually wanted.

Tyler: Oh... that's too bad. So what *did* you want?

Brad: Well, it's all in the past now. But have you ever heard of a band called Demon Seed?

Tyler: Yeah, uh, big rock band in the 80s, right?

Brad: That's right. And guess who was supposed to be their drummer?

Tyler: You?

Vocabulary

kooky = crazy

hit the ceiling = get very angry suddenly

dictate = command/control

straight-A = getting the best grades

on the honor roll = in the top group of students

caved to the pressure = stopped resisting the pressure and decided to go along with it

Brad: Yup, you guessed it. Those guys were my **buddies** in high school. But because I went to college, I had to leave the band before they **made it big**.

Tyler: That's cool, though! You kind of got to be a rock star for a while! Do you ever **look back** and wish you'd done things differently?

Brad: That's the thing, Tyler. I have no way of knowing how things would have **turned out**. It's possible that I **wouldn't have been cut out for** the rock and roll lifestyle. But I do wish I'd given it more thought instead of just feeling **compelled** to do what my parents wanted.

Tyler: Hmm. That's kind of sad.

Brad: Well, like I said, it's all in the past. The important thing is that you should learn from my mistakes. Don't rush into anything. Make sure you're doing it for the right reasons. You got that?

Tyler: I sure do. Any other advice?

Brad: Yeah. Learn how to play drums. It's a lot of fun, girls love it, and you might even make a little money, too.

Tyler: Sounds good to me!

Vocabulary

buddies = friends

made it big = became very famous/successful

look back = reflect, think about the past

turned out = finished

not cut out for = not compatible in personality and preferences

compelled = forced, required, pressured

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with an expression from the box. Two are not used.

come in handy

hit the ceiling

mulling it over

skip

compelled

leaning toward

on the fence

sold on

cut out for

looking back

scrambled

turn out

1. I absolutely loved the idea for the kitchen redesign, but my husband wasn't _____ it.
2. Let's bring a map - it'll _____ if our GPS can't get a signal.
3. _____, it was the best decision I could have made at the time.
4. She's very shy, so she's not _____ a job that involves lots of socializing.
5. That book had a lot of interesting information. I'm still _____.
6. Don't you feel _____ to help when you see someone suffering?
7. This election is very close and there are still many voters who are _____.
8. We're going to _____ the first few chapters and start with chapter 4.
9. Your girlfriend will _____ if she finds out you've been flirting with other women.
10. The kids _____ to put all the toys away before their parents came home.

Speaking Task

What's one thing in your life that you wish you had done differently? Describe the situation and explain why you now regret it. Record your answer at

www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish - or, if you prefer, you can e-mail me the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback on your spoken English.

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. b
6. a

Vocabulary Quiz

1. sold on
2. come in handy
3. looking back
4. cut out for
5. mulling it over
6. compelled
7. on the fence
8. skip
9. hit the ceiling
10. scrambled