

# Speak Your Mind



LEKOREA

# Introduction

**Speak Your Mind** is a new approach to learning English, based on the principle that in the real world people need a flexible command of the language. So, there are no boring grammar lessons or phrases to memorize that have no utility in the real use of English. The publisher's top-selling Express Yourself is aimed at the advanced foreign learners of English. Speak Your Mind is influenced by that book but is simplified and easier to use. Every question has a sample answer, from both sides of an issue, but the aim is still to encourage the intermediate learner to respond with his or her own opinion. There is no single "correct" answer, but there are many ways of saying the same thing. The entire purpose of the Speak Your Mind series is to allow intelligent, experienced human beings to express their judgment in a mature, informed way — in English rather than their native language.

Duane Vorhees

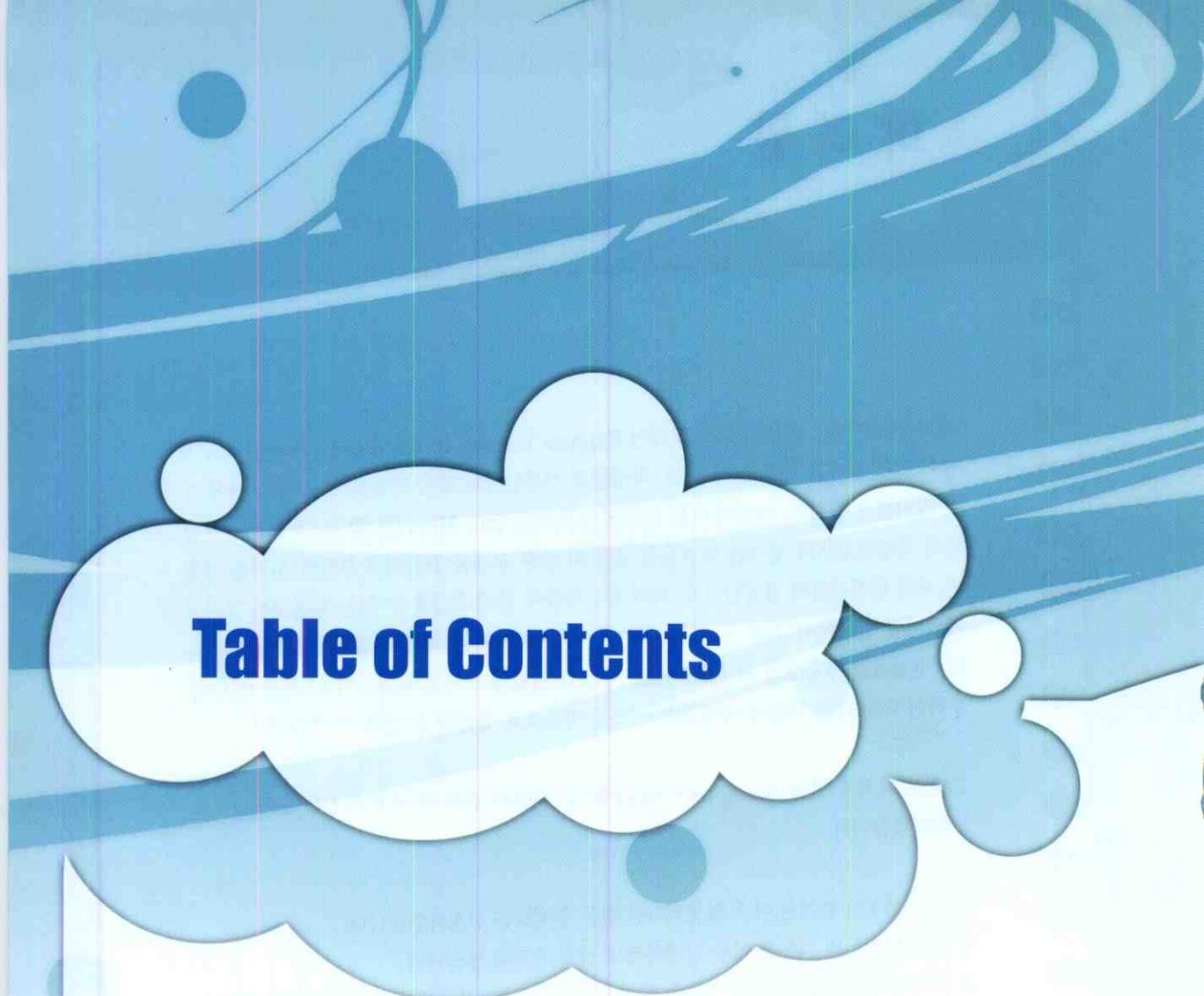
## 머리말

리스 코리아에서 출판한 토론 교재인 Express Yourself (1) (2) 와 Let's Talk (1) (2) 가 깊이 있는 영어를 배우 고자 하는 학생들과 선생님들의 좋은 반응을 얻고 있는 것에 깊은 감사를 드립니다. 이번에 새로 발간되는 Speak Your Mind (1) (2) 는 그 동안 선생님들과 학생들로부터 제기된 의견들을 모아 더 좋은 교재를 만들려고 부단한 노력을 기울인 저희 편집진들의 결실입니다. 특히 중급자들이 쉽게 접근할 수 있는 토론교재 그리고 매일매일 일상에서 접할 수 있는 아주 가벼운 주제들 40 개를 선정하여 수록하였습니다. Express Yourself 나 Let's Talk 가 조금 어렵게 느끼신 독자들이 이 책을 먼저 공부하신다면 다음 책들에 대해 훨씬 가벼운 마음으로 접근할 수 있을 것 같습니다.

그 같은 목적을 위해 Speak Your Mind에서는 다음과 같은 몇 가지 특징을 책에 담도록 노력하였습니다.

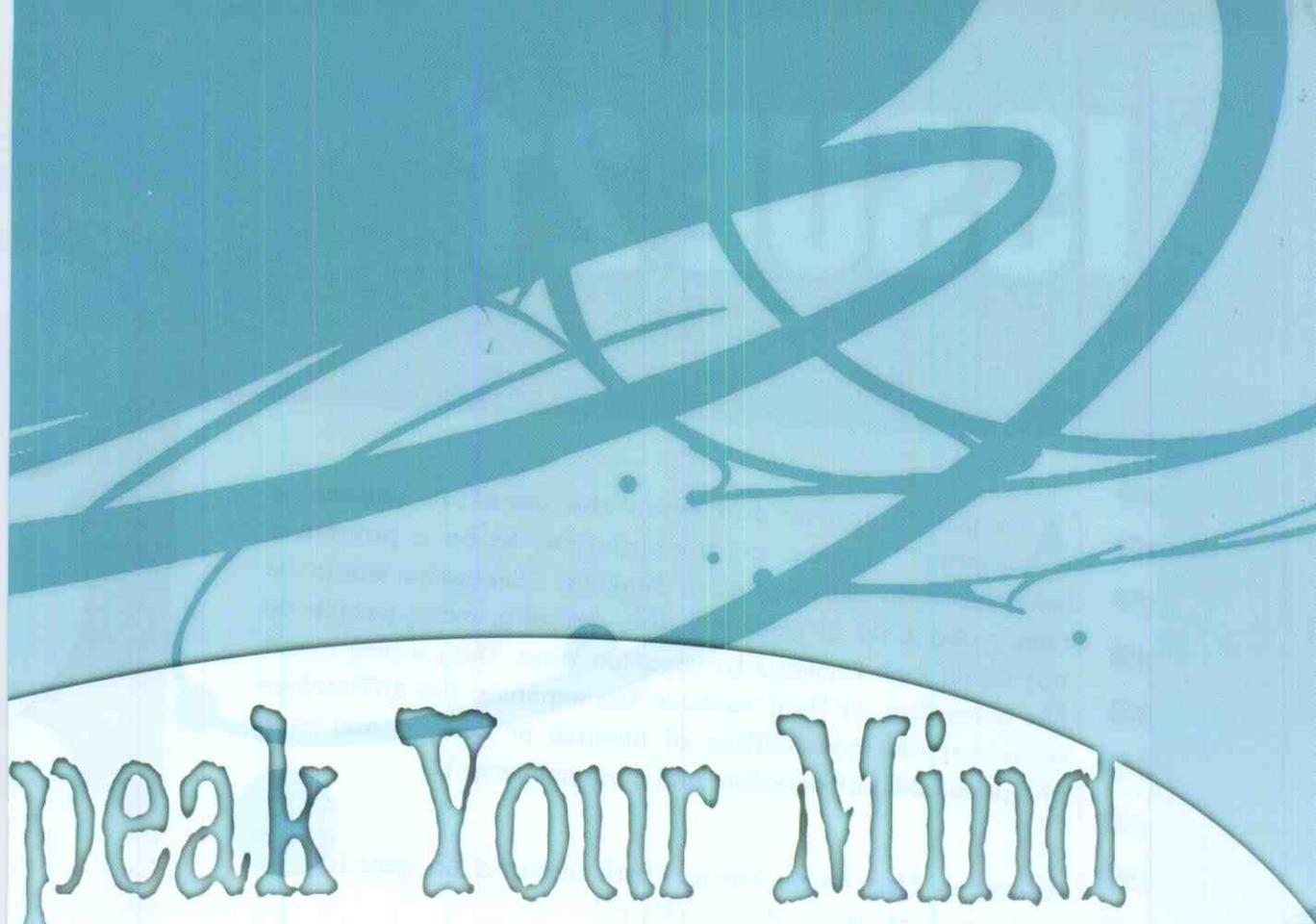
1. 주제 선정에 있어서 아주 일상적이면 쉬운 주제들을 선정하였습니다.
2. 주제 도입부의 지문을 아주 간결하고도 쉽게 쓰도록 했습니다.
3. 주제의 대표 질문에 대한 예들을 많이 제시 했으며 그것들에 대한 찬반의견을 달았습니다.
4. 본 주제에 대한 하부 주제들을 가급적 많이 제시했습니다.
5. 여러 가지 모든 하부 주제들에 대해 찬반의견을 수록했습니다.
6. 중요한 주제에 관해서는 실제 토론의 형식을 빌어 대화형식으로 꾸며 독자들이 실제 토론상황을 접할 수 있게 했습니다.
7. 마지막으로 어려운 문구나 단어에 대해 상세하고도 반복적으로 영어주석을 달아 독자들의 영어실력 향상에 도움을 주고자 했습니다.

리스코리아 편집부



# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	6
Issue 21      Vacation Season is Approaching .....	10
Issue 22      Kids .....	18
Issue 23      Traffic Accidents .....	24
Issue 24      How to Get Promoted .....	30
Issue 25      Pet-people .....	36
Issue 26      Are You Willing to Help Others? .....	42
Issue 27      TV Commercials .....	48
Issue 28      Cosmetic Surgery .....	54
Issue 29      Househusband .....	60
Issue 30      Are Relatives Important to You? .....	66



# peak Your Mind

Issue 31	Who Has the Most Stressful Job? . . . . .	72
Issue 32	Women are Becoming More Powerful . . . . .	78
Issue 33	Teens Who Smoke and Drink . . . . .	84
Issue 34	Poverty . . . . .	90
Issue 35	Internet . . . . .	96
Issue 36	The Quality of Our Lives . . . . .	102
Issue 37	Shopping on the Web . . . . .	108
Issue 38	Socially Discriminated Against . . . . .	114
Issue 39	People are Getting Sick . . . . .	120
Issue 40	Are They True? . . . . .	126

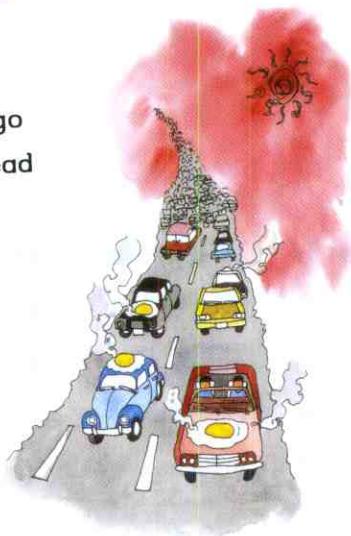
# ISSUE 21

## Vacation Season is Approaching

"Are you happy or sad when the vacation season is coming?" seems, at first glance, to be a pointless question; you are probably thinking: "Everyone would be happy about it, of course." But, actually, many people do not at all look forward to vacation time. They worry about the disruption of their routine, the expense, the difficulties of travel, the possibilities of disease or danger, and even the possibility of boredom and disappointment!

What is the first thing that occurs to you in connection with a vacation?

- (1) Traffic jams
- (2) Footing the bill
- (3) Uncertainty about where to go
- (4) Preference for working instead
- (5) Desire to just stay home



# Sample Answers

(A) As soon as one vacation is over I start planning for the next one. As a result, every year I have an *affordable* and convenient but highly exciting trip. I find the best deals on travel and *accommodations*, I know exactly what I want *to do* (and how to do it) in advance so I don't waste any valuable time off, and I come back home with a wonderful memory.

(B) Vacations would be better if everyone *didn't* take theirs at the same time. I like going to the beach, and I like going to the mountains as well. I get re-energized by being *in tune with* nature and not having the regular nine-to-five schedule to *contend with*. But, unfortunately, I have to share the experience with too many other people, so the beach is overcrowded and the mountains are full. The main value of being away from the city is completely *negated* if the whole *populace* merely moves to the country. So I've started staying at home when I'm *off*; sometimes there are fewer people left in the city during a holiday than there are in the *rural* areas.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Vacationing *requires* money and time and leads to *fatigue*. So, do you still think it is worth while going out?
2. Which do you prefer — going abroad or traveling in this country?
3. What is the best season for taking a vacation?
4. Who plans your vacations? Why?
5. What do you usually do if you can't take a vacation?
6. What is the ideal vacation?
7. Describe the most impressive vacation you've ever had.
8. Would you *sacrifice* your vacation in order to make more money at work?

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

### 1. Vacationing requires money and time and leads to fatigue. So, do you still think it is worth while going out?

(A)

I know that taking a trip leads to a lot of *hassles*. Sometimes people work harder "relaxing" than they do on their jobs. But I would not trade the vacation experience for anything. It doesn't matter what one does on vacation, as long as it is not something that one does every day. So by doing something new and different, we change our *perspective*, we expand our self-awareness, and we *recharge our batteries* to *get through* the rest of the year with more energy and sense of accomplishment than we otherwise would.

(B)

I stopped taking vacations years ago. They just aren't worth the trouble. *Don't get me wrong*: I take the time off from work. But I spend my time off doing things I enjoy at home. I *take in* a few movies, I take nice long walks in the neighborhood, I reorganize my living space and maybe buy some new furniture, or I devote myself to my hobbies. All of these activities appeal to me more than spending a lot of money and time to exhaust myself in a *frantic* effort to "have fun" in some strange place.

### 2. Which do you prefer — going abroad or traveling in this country?

(A)

I'm always amazed when I talk to my fellow countrymen to find out how little of their own nation they have ever been to. Of course, there are a few popular vacation spots that nearly everyone has visited *multiple* times; but few people go anywhere else. So I plan on visiting every island and every mountain and every town in the country at least once before I die. I'm well *on the way* to accomplishing my goal, and as a result I think I know my own land more than anyone else does, from the inside — but not more than everyone else should know it.

(B)

I like to *vary* my vacation locations. So, one year I will travel *someplace* at home, even if I've been there before, and the next year I'll travel abroad, especially to some new place. So I'm able to compare the way people live here in my country — what they do, what they think, what they eat, how they dress — with the ways people live in other places. As a result, I'm learning a lot about both kinds of people, my own and others.

→ **hassle** : trouble or bother → **perspective** : view → **recharge (one's) batteries** : rest or relax in order to recover one's energy → **get through** : manage to deal with → **don't get me wrong** : don't misunderstand me  
→ **take in** : go to (an entertainment or sport) → **frantic** : done in a very urgent way → **multiple** : consisting of many  
→ **on the way** : in the process → **vary** : change often

### 3. What is the best season for taking a vacation?

(A)

Like most people, I prefer summer vacations. It's hot at work and *temper*s often *flare*. But the days are long. So if I can go somewhere else, I can spend a lot of time not only relaxing but changing my routine. Summer vacations are thus more efficient than holidays at any other time of the year. And I enjoy being part of the crowd; it adds excitement to the occasion.

(B)

By accident one year, I started taking my vacations in the late fall. And I'm glad that happened, even though I had not planned it. Since it is not peak season it is easy to find a place to stay. Whatever transportation I need — boat, train, bus, whatever — is easy to find, and comfortable since it is not crowded. If I drive, there are few traffic jams. And the weather is still very pleasant, so I can enjoy myself while avoiding the problems that *plague* most people's vacations at other times of the year.

### 4. Who plans your vacations? Why?

(A)

I have a friend who's a travel agent. She keeps me constantly informed about good travel deals and helps plan my *itinerary*, so I always get the maximum benefit from my vacation.

(B)

I let my wife handle the details. I'm always busy at work and don't really mind where I go, but know she greatly looks forward to our annual trip. So, to make her happy, I let her decide what we're going to do. And, I must say, she always does a wonderful job. We've had some great vacations together, much better than if I had done the planning myself. I'm very lucky.

→**temper** : particular emotional state or mood, esp. anger

→**flare** : suddenly become angry or violent →**plague** : cause a lot of problems for (sb/sth)

→**itinerary** : plan for a coming trip, including information about when, where, and how

# Speak Your Mind

## Helpers!

### 5. What do you usually do if you can't take a vacation?

(A)

If for some reason I can't go on vacation when I want to, I make it very clear to my boss that I'm extremely unhappy about it. But I continue to do my job as well as I can, as I am expected to do, even though I am not happy. This situation has come up from time to time, but I've always managed to convince the company to let me have some time off at a later date. So I guess I don't have anything to complain about (and neither does my boss).

(B)

Oh, I don't care if I have a vacation or not. Even if I take time off, I seldom go anywhere. I just like to stay home and spend more time with my friends.

### 6. What is the ideal vacation?

(A)

The perfect vacation would be two weeks in Florence before the Italians all take their vacations (because then everything is closed); luxury accommodations in a centuries-old *winery*; a lovely, knowledgeable guide who could show me all the art treasures during the day and all the hot spots at night; eating at wonderful restaurants every day; and someone else to pay all the bills!

(B)

Most people are too *materialistic*. They want to take some *frantic, status-laden* trip to some famous, *exotic* place where the *in-crowd hangs out*. But for once I'd like to make a voyage of self-discovery. Perhaps the best way to do this would be to join the lifestyle of a *monastery* in Tibet or India or Europe: wake up early every morning and pray or *meditate*, engage in simple manual labor during the day, eat *spare* but nutritious meals, *fast* from time to time, and then pray or meditate again before going to bed. I'm sure an experience like this would change my entire life, not just waste a week or two of it while doing expensive, foolish things.

## 7. Describe the most impressive vacation you've ever had.

(A)

Last year I took the trip of my life! I finally visited India after many years of dreaming about it. The country is too big to do everything in one vacation, so there's plenty more to experience later. But I spent a few days at either end of the country, in Kolkata and in Mumbai. The two cities are very different; Kolkata seems more *chaotic* and traditional, while Mumbai is more orderly and modern. But neither city was like any other place I've ever been; everywhere, there is an ever-changing mix of cultures, religions, nationalities, languages, customs, costumes, *castes*, economic classes, and attitudes. It's confusing but *invigorating* at the same time. However, the best part of the trip was a journey by train I took to a small village a couple of hours north of Kolkata, where Rabindranath Tagore *founded* a college. It was *serene*, quiet, traditional, and intellectually stimulating all at once, and I'd like to go there every time I visit India.

(B)

Don't laugh, but the most vivid vacation memory I have was when I was about three years old. I lived in a small country town, but suddenly found myself in Chicago. I'd been to small cities, but I *had* never seen even one *skyscraper* before, *let alone* blocks and blocks of them. I was *utterly* amazed by the *hustle and bustle* of the people around me, as well as by the wide variety of nationalities and races. The noise and the *congestion* of the city were *disorienting*, but the *shoreline* of Lake Michigan was like going to the ocean. I was an *impressionable* toddler from the countryside, and the buildings and the beaches have stayed in my memory for a long time.

- chaotic** : happening in a confused way and without any order or organization
- invigorating** : making one feel more energized
- skyscraper** : very tall building
- congestion** : situation in which a place is crowded
- shoreline** : edge of an ocean, lake, or large river
- caste** : social class that one is born into
- found** : establish; set up
- serene** : calm and peaceful
- utterly** : completely
- hustle and bustle** : lot of noisy activity
- disorient** : make (sb) confused about location or direction
- impressionable** : capable of being easily influenced

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 8. Would you sacrifice your vacation in order to make more money at work?

M : I don't know what to do. Maybe you can give me some advice.

F : If I can be of any help, I'd be glad to offer my services. What's wrong?

M : I'm supposed to go on vacation in two weeks. I've already made plans and *reservations*, and my family is looking forward to it. But my boss offered me a chance to do some extra work. It's not a lot of extra money, but the experience would look good on my *résumé*. I don't know what to do.

F : Hmmmm. Can you *postpone* the vacation, do it later on?

M : Not really. There's a set schedule of classes that I have to teach, so basically I'd have to wait until next year for another vacation opportunity.

F : Can you get your money back if you *cancel* your plans?

M : I'd get some of it back, but not much. I had to get my tickets well in advance, and there's a strict penalty for any changes or cancellations.

F : Would the extra money cover your losses?

M : Well, almost. But it's not *primarily* about the money.

F : What about the extra work? Would there be some other opportunity later on, when it wouldn't *interfere with* your family vacation plans?

M : It's hard to say. But if I *turn it down* this time, the boss probably won't offer it to me again. It looks like it's either "take it" or "leave it."

F : Well, what do you think your wife will say?

→ **reservation** : accommodations or transportation scheduled in advance

→ **résumé** : outline of one's professional history and experience

→ **postpone** : do (sth) at a later time    → **cancel** : decide that (a planned event) will not take place; call off

→ **primarily** : mainly    → **interfere with** : prevent (sth) from happening

→ **turn down** : refuse to accept an offer or request    → **take it or leave it** : have or get (sth) or do without it

**M** : I know she's looking forward to this trip. We've talked about visiting New Zealand for years, and we finally got the chance.

**F** : New Zealand? Which island, North or South?

**M** : A bit of both, but mainly the North Island. That's the one that interests us the most.

**F** : What if the rest of your family go by themselves and you stay behind to work?

**M** : I've thought of that, but I'd feel jealous if I didn't get to go. It's something I've always wanted to do, too. Besides, I know my wife would need my help with the kids. If she had to do all the work by herself, she wouldn't have much fun either.

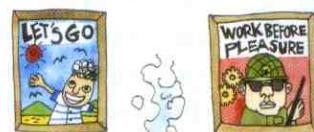
**F** : Then there's only one solution.

**M** : Really? What is it?

**F** : Stay here and work. This will open up opportunities for you, so you will have a better future. You can take your dream vacation next year. I know your family will be disappointed, but it's really just a temporary *setback*, not the end of the dream. You can do something for your wife to *make up for* the loss, like getting her a nice present or something, and next time, due to your new job situation, you might be in a position to take an even better trip.

**M** : OK. But what should I do with my tickets?

**F** : Since you can't use them and you're going to lose your money anyway, give them to me. I've always wanted to go to North Island!



→ **setback** : problem that delays or stops progress or makes a situation worse  
→ **make up for** : compensate

# ISSUE 22

## Kids

When I got married, I thought my life had changed forever. I was right, of course, but those changes did not compare to the ones that happened as a result of having children. When my wife and I were first married, we had lots of opportunities to enjoy ourselves, but those times diminished fast after we had kids. Even a simple thing like going to the movies became a major task; we not only had to pack food, diapers, spare clothes, teething rings, bottles, and a baby buggy, but we also had to be prepared to leave the theater before the end of the movie to keep from bothering other members of the audience due to crying babies. As the children grew, the problems became more serious: teaching them everything they need to know in life such as how to behave and even how to dress, worrying about their safety and social status, advising them on schoolwork, dates, and their future. By the time they were truly independent, my wife and I were too old to want to go out and enjoy ourselves any more.

### How have your kids changed your life?

- (1) They have made me more mature.
- (2) They have made me more understanding.
- (3) I found out that children are expensive.
- (4) I learned that children are incomparable treasures.
- (5) Now I'm always tired.
- (6) They taught me how to laugh.
- (7) Because of them, I learned how to keep from losing my temper.
- (8) I now know how difficult it is to be a good parent.
- (9) I'm sure being childless is better.



→diminish : reduce or decrease

→baby buggy : baby carriage; stroller

→lose one's temper : become very angry

→teething ring : object for an infant to bite on while teething

→incomparable : such that nothing else can compare

# Sample Answers

(A) Nobody ever told me how much kids cost. The initial doctor and hospital bills were staggering amounts *in their own right*, but the health care expenses never seemed to go away: vaccinations, colds, flu, chickenpox, dental work, and so on, until graduation; fortunately, we never had to face any serious medical problems. Then, there were school costs and fees for private lessons; athletic and musical equipment; clothes; insurance; allowances; and savings for future expenses to come, like college *tuition* and *dowries*. But, now that most of it is over, I have to say that the investment was worth every bit.

(B) I want to enjoy my life. My husband and I don't need kids for self-fulfillment. Instead, we can eat out as often as we please, go anywhere we like *on the spur of the moment*, stay out late, and travel the world. Meanwhile, even though we aren't very careful about money, we are avoiding the enormous costs of child-rearing, so we're actually able to buy whatever we want and still have money left for our eventual retirement.

## Speak Your Mind

1. How many children would you like to have?
2. Is having boys any different than having girls?
3. In what ways can our children make us sad?
4. Why is it difficult to be a good parent?
5. Why is it difficult to be a good child?
6. What have you learned from your parents?
7. What is the most important thing you should teach your child?
8. What do you think is the ideal relationship between parents and children?

→ **staggering** : extremely heavy

→ **in one's own right** : in and of itself

→ **tuition** : fee for instruction, esp. at a college or private school

→ **dowry** : money or property brought by a bride to her husband at marriage

→ **on the spur of the moment** : without planning ahead of time; spontaneously

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. How many children would you like to have?

(A)

I would like to have one boy and one girl, just to balance things out and to experience all the problems and joys of parenthood.

(B)

I am *nostalgic* for big families. Both of my parents had lots of brothers and sisters, but none of my cousins are interested in *following suit*. When my aunts and uncles get together to *reminisce*, I learn how exciting and unpredictable life can be growing up with such a *motley* of siblings. I think today's young people are too spoiled and too *conformist* in their behavior, largely because they don't have to compete for attention from their parents.

## 2. Is having boys any different than having girls?

(A)

People may think I'm old-fashioned, but I can't help believing that our society absolutely depends on having a male *heir* to carry on the family *lineage*. I have nothing against women, and treasure my own daughters *immensely*, but I think they should be *subordinate* to men. It is easy to find foreign women to marry and have our children, and many of them are much better suited for these roles than our own, native females, who have gotten spoiled by feminism.

(B)

From experience, I know that raising boys is not the same as raising girls. It isn't so much that one gender is harder than the other to raise, but the process is different because we expect the *outcomes* not to be the same. At first, little boys are harder to take care of. I think they are more *frail* than their sisters. But by the time they start going to school, they are more independent and don't require as much *supervision*. Girls, on the other hand, are largely trouble-free until they reach *adolescence*; then they need lots of personal attention and psychological counseling. Then, an amazing thing happens: the boys suddenly become *rebellious*, and parents have to start devoting a lot more time to controlling their behavior, while the girls become mature, responsible adults all at once. Raising kids is like being on a roller coaster that runs on two opposing cycles.

### 3. In what ways can our children make us sad?

(A)

We all want our own children to be better than we are. They should be smarter, healthier, better looking, happier, and more successful than we; and then, when we find that that is probably not going to happen, we feel like we have somehow failed to do our parental job correctly.

(B)

Because of our experience, we know how to approach life's problems. And we think we can guide our children in ways to avoid our mistakes. Sometimes they listen to us, but many times they have to test our judgment and find out for themselves. When the *inevitable* happens, we can't help but feel sad that they didn't take our advice and avoid some unnecessary unpleasantness in their lives.

### 4. Why is it difficult to be a good parent?

(A)

Parenting doesn't come with a user's manual. Every mother and every father has to rely on *on-the-job* training rather than *prior* experience. It is all a process of trial-by-error, and we all make lots of mistakes along the way.

(B)

The main reason that parenting is so hard is because we care so much about the *end product*. If we were only talking about some *commodity* like a radio or *abstraction* such as money, we could afford to be more *lackadaisical* about an occasional *lapse* in performance. But we always realize that we are dealing with our own children, whom we love and cherish and want even more than the best for, so we are always hyper-critical of our own job performance. Every *error* is a *glaring* failure, from our exaggerated *perspective*.

### 5. Why is it difficult to be a good child?

(A)

It is always hard to *live up to* our parents' expectations. They always want us to be better than we really are and to do better than we actually can. They *mean well*, but they just aren't content to let us be ordinary people.

(B)

There is much that kids don't know about life, love, work, and society, so they make a lot of mistakes as they grow up. It's not because kids don't try to be good, and they certainly *crave* their parents' respect, but they don't know all the right answers yet.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

And even when they have the correct answer, they don't always know how to achieve it. It's like doing really hard calculus problems at home, before the class reviews them.

## 6. What have you learned from your parents?

(A)

A few years ago, I would have said, "Absolutely nothing." I thought my folks were *clueless* about all the important things in life and knew that my own view of things was far superior to theirs. That was when I was nineteen. Now that I'm twenty-six, I'm amazed at how much they have learned in the last seven years.

(B)

It's hard to put into words, but actually what I have learned from my parents is "everything." They taught me to be the person I am today, with my ideas of what is right and what is wrong. They taught me how to succeed in society and how to get along with people. They taught me how to balance my selfish desires with my generous *impulses* so that I am useful both to myself and to the world I live in. No matter what I achieve, it will all be because of my parents.

## 7. What is the most important thing you should teach your child?

(A)

If we can teach our *children* to be *resilient* in tough times, we will have done our job well. One kid will be serious about everything, and another will find joy in anything, but both need to know that life can be full of big obstacles to overcome. There will be good days and bad days, but they must learn from experience and go forward. Their parents won't always be there to pick them up and dust them off if they fall down, so they *have* to be able to perform that function on their own.

(B)

Every child must know what it means to be a member of our culture. Our values, our aspirations, our various roles, correct social *intercourse* — all of these aspects define who we are, and if we don't learn them properly we cannot be real people in our society.

-*clueless* : stupid, knowing nothing

-*impulse* : sudden strong feeling that one must do (sth)

-*resilient* : having the ability to recover quickly, as from misfortune

-*intercourse* : communication between people or activities that people do together

## 8. What do you think is the ideal relationship between parents and children?

F : I'm always amazed when I see you with your kids.

M : Why? Don't you think I'm capable of having kids?

F : No, silly. But you never seem like a Parent! All I ever see is a bunch of friends of different ages, rather than a father with his children.

M : Why, thank you. I find that to be a real *compliment*.

F : Well, you're welcome. But I'm not sure you should be so happy about it. I don't think it is wise to be a *buddy* to your kids. They need adult guidance from their parents, not mere friendship.

M : I'm not at all *convinced* that I know enough to be their guide; you know as well as anyone how imperfect I am. I've got too many bad habits of my own to want to be any kind of role model for my children, but since we're all friends together they can *overlook* my faults and love me for who I am. For *that* I am very grateful.

F : No one expects you to be perfect; no one *is*. But you are expected to teach your children *filial* respect. There's a huge difference in your ages and experience, and there should be a similar difference in how you relate to each other. Being a father is a serious job, and a father should behave just that way.

M : It's not that my kids and I all like the same things; we don't. I *detest* hip-hop music, and they don't much like fishing. But it isn't what we do that matters; it's how comfortable we feel in each other's presence. I don't want my kids to be afraid of me or to show false respect for me. I just want them to enjoy *my* presence as much as I do theirs.

F : But what about when they need to be disciplined? A father can punish his children without *jeopardizing* his status, but a person never could punish his friends without destroying their relationship.

M : Hmmmmmm. You might be right about *that*. But so far the issue has never come up. We've always been able to solve any problems they have come up against by *talking* them *out* and sharing our views. I guess we've been lucky.

F : You certainly have! In my family it's been a constant struggle to maintain the proper tone. My husband and I insist that our kids must know how they're supposed to behave at home and in school. We want to make sure that they grow up the right way, so they can get ahead in society and also take care of us when we're old. If we *let up* in our training, we're afraid that they'll make too many wrong choices and won't be happy or satisfied. When they grow up and have families of their own, maybe then we can become "friends," since we will all be adults together, but meanwhile we insist on the proper inequality.

M : I'd rather be the friend of my children now while I can. "Someday" may be too late.



→compliment : (sth) nice that is said in praise of (sb)

→buddy : close friend

→convinced : certain that (sth) is true

→overlook : fail to notice

→filial : children's relationship to their parents

→detest : hate (sb/sth)

→jeopardize : put (sb/sth) at risk of loss or injury; endanger

→talk (sth) *out* : discuss a problem in order to solve it

→let up : put less effort into (sth)

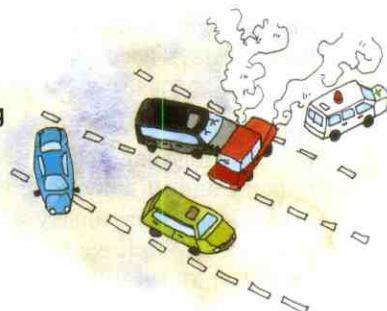
# ISSUE 23

## Traffic Accidents

It's amazing how a nation's culture is revealed by its traffic patterns. I don't mean just whether one drives on the left or right side of the road. In Japan, cars move in nice, neat little grid patterns. It is nearly always orderly, and precisely controlled. In England, it is more individualistic, but polite: for instance, people mostly stay in one lane and maintain a uniform speed, whatever people in other lanes are doing. Somehow, Americans seem to combine a defensive driving strategy with one that freely violates the law, in terms of speed limits in particular. I remember my Canadian friends laughingly referring to a "Yankee stop" to describe slowing down for a stop sign but not quite coming to a full halt before driving through the intersection. In Korea, I guess the best description of the competitive way most people drive would be to call it Traffic Tetris — any gap between speeding motorists will immediately be filled, as though there's something in the Korean nature that abhors a vacuum.

### What are the main causes of traffic accidents?

- (1) Violating traffic rules
- (2) Speeding
- (3) Driving drunk
- (4) Using a mobile phone while driving
- (5) Outdated traffic system
- (6) Being distracted
- (7) Being over-confident of one's driving skills



# Sample Answers

(A) Violating traffic laws is the biggest cause of accidents. They can be broken many ways: by not following speed limits, by not obeying traffic signs, and so forth. The rules are designed to protect us, not to punish us, even though sometimes they seem inconvenient. Nevertheless, if everyone would obey them, there would be far fewer accidents.

(B) Overconfidence is a serious problem. Unless people are careful, they think they cannot ever make mistakes — and then they start making more of them! While it is important to have a strong belief in one's own ability, having a *sense of perspective* and self-criticism is also important. No one is perfect, and knowing our limitations is extremely important. So, people who are overconfident don't care where they are going when they drive, they don't notice that they are going too fast, they cannot be patient behind the wheel, and they cause a lot of accidents by not paying attention.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you always *obey* the traffic rules?  
Why or why not?
2. Have you ever driven 150 km per hour or faster?  
Why or why not?
3. What are the traffic rules people break most often?
4. Why do some people drink and drive?
5. Are there too many cars on the road?  
How could car ownership be *curbed*?  
Would there be any bad side effects if that happened?

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 1. Do you always obey the traffic rules? Why or why not?

(A)

Sometimes I *absent-mindedly* fail to pay attention to how fast I'm driving. I'll suddenly *catch myself* going way over the speed limit. Then I immediately slow down. It isn't a *deliberate* attempt to break the law, it's just being absent-minded.

(B)

The only way to drive in this country is to *ignore* the law, because no one else is obeying it. If I actually followed the rules in a strict manner, I'd probably end up causing an accident. But by knowing that *anarchy* is the only law of the highway here, I'm able to take advantage of the *shifting* opportunities and arrive at my *destination* quickly and safely.

### 2. Have you ever driven 150 km per hour or faster? Why or why not?

(A)

It's very hard to even think about such speeds in the crowded urban setting I drive in. There simply is no space available, though almost everybody is slightly over the speed limit. But every once in a while I take a drive on a rural expressway and I can drive as fast as my car will go. It's an *exhilarating* sense of freedom to glide down the highway in that manner.

(B)

Anyone who would even think about driving that fast must be crazy. Neither our roads nor our engines are engineered for that kind of speed. But, even more important, neither are our driving habits. On the Autobahn in Germany, people are used to driving as fast as they can, and not only the highway itself but also the powerful German cars are designed for that purpose, and people are taught to drive accordingly; but here, we are more *cramped* in our geography and attitudes.

- **absent-minded** : forgetting things or thinking about (sth) that is not relevant at the moment
- **catch (sb) doing (sth)** : find (sb) doing (sth)      - **deliberate** : intended, not done by chance or by accident; intentional
- **ignore** : pay no attention; disregard      - **anarchy** : situations without rules      - **shifting** : changing
- **destination** : place where (sb/sth) is going      - **exhilarate** : make (sb) feel extremely happy, excited, and full of energy
- **cramped** : small and crowded; feeling uncomfortable in a space that is too small

### 3. What are the traffic rules people break most often?

(A)

Almost everywhere, I think speed limits are pretty uniformly ignored. We are all impatient to get where we are going as soon as we can and dislike having our impulses controlled. We also know that most of the time we can *get away with* speeding, since there are not enough highway patrolmen available to regulate it completely.

(B)

The most dangerous habitual traffic violations are at the *intersections*. There is a yellow warning light to inform drivers to stop, but it *serves* only to *spur* them to speed up instead, so they can drive through before the light turns red. What I see most of the time is that when the light turns red, one or two — or more — cars at the front of the line will keep going anyway instead of stopping. What makes the situation worse is that the stopped traffic (and especially buses and motorbikes) will anticipate the changing light and begin before the signal turns green. So we get people violating the traffic light at both ends of the cycle. It's a wonder we don't have even more traffic accidents than we do.

### 4. Why do some people drink and drive?

(A)

The reason people should not drive after they've had some alcohol is because their judgment is seriously *impaired*. But, because their reasoning is improperly functioning, they don't properly consider how dangerous it is to drive under the influence of alcohol, and so they do it. If they had not been drinking, they would know not to drive drunk, but because *they* are drunk they don't know anything very well.

(B)

A lot of people fail to realize just how *inebriated* they are. As far as they can tell, their vision and *reflexes* and judgment don't seem to be impaired at all, so they don't think they are a threat to themselves or others. They falsely believe that they are superior to the blood-alcohol content, not understanding that even small *deteriorations* of our hand-eye coordination can be *fatal*.

- get away with** : manage to do (sth) bad without being punished or criticized for it
- intersection** : place where two or more roads cross      -**serve** : be used for a particular purpose
- spur** : cause (sb) to do (sth)      -**impaired** : damaged      -**inebriated** : intoxicated; drunk
- reflex** : involuntary or instinctive response to a stimulus      -**deteriorate** : become worse
- fatal** : capable of causing death

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

5. Are there too many cars on the road? How could car ownership be curbed? Would there be any bad side effects if that happened?

M : Whew! Traffic sure is terrible today. It seems like we've been parked here without moving for a half hour.

F : Well, we've moved a bit I suppose, but we sure haven't gone far. There must be an accident ahead.

M : I guess so. But the main problem is that there are just too many cars on the road. I have no idea where they all park at night!

F : I can remember when hardly anybody had a car here. And now it seems like everyone does. It's not just one car per household, it's like one per adult.

M : Right. And the result is not just bad traffic, like now, but also higher gasoline costs and more pollution. These cars are killing us!

F : Yes, and not only by way of crashes. We should be able to do something about the situation, though.

M : Sure! Raise the taxes on cars and license plates. That should reduce the demand.

F : But wouldn't that be unfair if only the wealthy could afford an automobile? How would poor people get to work then?

M : Just like before: they could take the bus or subway.

F : Not to mention the massive unemployment that would result among auto workers, gasoline attendants, mechanics, construction workers, insurance salespeople.....

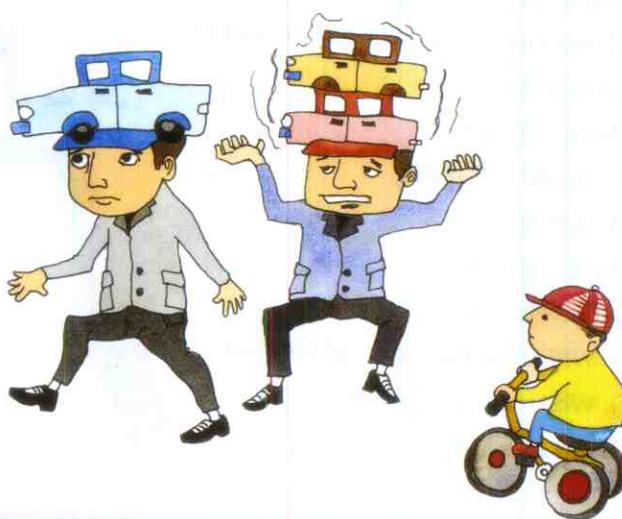
**M** : Well, they'd find other jobs. Just like when typewriters became *obsolete*; now people work in computer companies instead.

**F** : I don't think people would like to have their status symbols taken away from them by such a law. If the government made any serious attempt to *deprive* them of their cars, that government wouldn't last long.

**M** : Maybe you're right, after all.

**F** : Hey, I think we're moving! The *traffic jam* seems to have cleared suddenly.

**M** : Well, at least talking about the traffic problem let us pass the time pleasantly while we were stuck in traffic, even though we didn't solve the problem itself.



- **obsolete** : no longer in use or in fashion

- **deprive (sb) of (sth)** : take (sth) from (sb)

- **traffic jam** : long line of vehicles that cannot move along the road, or that can only move very slowly

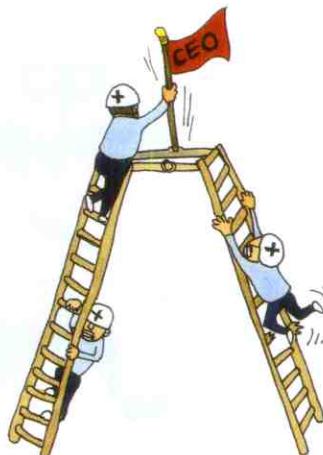
# ISSUE 24

## How to Get Promoted

Connections are often viewed as being the most important single factor in getting promoted. On the other hand, some people say merit — what you know, not who you know — is the key to success. Yet others say that seniority counts the most, but to achieve seniority one needs to have a long record of achievement. Maybe, in the end, everything depends upon luck.

### What is the most important factor in getting promoted?

- (1) Competence
- (2) Working relationship with the boss
- (3) Popularity among colleagues
- (4) Command of a second language
- (5) Computer skills
- (6) Appearance
- (7) Company loyalty
- (8) Diligence
- (9) Intelligence
- (10) Family name
- (11) Which school one attended
- (12) Where one is from
- (13) Luck



→connection : relationship between people or groups  
→count : be important or have influence

# Sample Answers

(A) There is no such thing as luck, only opportunity. Once in a while, an unqualified person will get a job or promotion but will not be able to keep it long *due to* lack of preparation. The best advice I can give anyone is to train for the job you actually want, master it, wait until it becomes available, and then *grab* it! You will be surprised how soon you will have it, once you are truly ready for it.

(B) No one can deny *packaging* is important. Unfortunately, one may have all the proper skills and still *get passed over* for a promotion due to lack of attention by the *personnel* officer. So, less *relevant criteria* such as appearance, schools attended, personal connections, or family background may serve as the *foot in the door* to being noticed and then evaluated properly.

## Speak Your Mind

1. They say good-looking people are more likely to get promoted than *plain* people. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. What does "working relationship with the boss" really mean? Do you think it just means "*flattering* the boss"?
3. Does a second language have any value in the business field you work in or wish to work in?
4. What specific skill is the most important in your line of work?
5. Who is generally better positioned to get promoted, a man or a woman? Defend your answer.
6. Where does a woman have an advantage over a man in terms of employment and promotion?
7. Which do you think is more important in getting a promotion, seniority or competence?

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

1. They say good-looking people are more likely to get promoted than plain people. Do you agree? Why or why not?

(A)

It's hard to answer the question because we don't agree what "good-looking" means. It is a very subjective element. There are many movie stars who I don't think are especially attractive, but my friends go on and on about how beautiful or handsome they are. At least with criteria such as IQs or GPAs there are objective, universal factors to plug into an employment equation.

(B)

Many studies have shown a pretty strong correlation between success and good looks. The higher one's attractiveness rating, the better chance one has of getting a good job and being promoted faster and higher. We never really graduate from college, where popularity is equated with success and depends mainly on looking good and having a good personality (the may be mutually supporting factors).

2. What does "working relationship with the boss" really mean? Do you think it just means "flattering the boss"?

(A)

Only a fool would go out of his way to tell his boss that she was doing poorly on the job. The boss needs to have confidence in her decision-making ability; the ambitious employee needs to demonstrate how well he can help implement those decisions.

(B)

In the United States, people call flatterers "brown-nosers." The reference is to following so close behind the Big Man that one's nose is literally up his butt, yet the flatterer cannot be critical of the bad odor. But, despite the popular derision, it is undeniable that brown-nosing is a tried-and-true method of gaining preferential treatment; from the standpoint of the boss, it is merely a demonstration of personal and corporate "loyalty."

### 3. Does a second language have any value in the business field you work in or wish to work in?

(A)

I enjoy studying languages and am pretty fluent in four of them, but I can't imagine how it would help me in my job. I'm a carpenter, and unless my company gets a major foreign contract (which isn't likely), my linguistic skills will remain just a hobby.

(B)

As our nation becomes increasingly *cosmopolitan*, the *acquisition* of a second language will become ever more necessary *across the board*. Jobs in most service sectors, including restaurants, hotels, banks, hospitals, trading companies, schools, and so forth, will be more and more internationalized. As the global economy takes shape, labor skills will become less national, and people will need to spend long periods abroad just to stay employed.

### 4. What specific skill is the most important in your line of work?

(A)

I need to be able to *think on my feet* and quickly communicate my thoughts and decisions to my colleagues. (What do you think my job is?)

(B)

I have to keep large blocks of numbers in my head at all times and keep constant track of how they keep changing. (What is my job?)

### 5. Who is generally better positioned to get promoted, a man or a woman? Defend your answer.

(A)

It is still true that the vast majority of top executive positions in every field are held by men, who have the ones with the training, experience, and demonstrated ability. While women, in theory, have the same *aptitude* and intelligence as men, they are still generally lacking in terms of lifetimes spent on the job.

(B)

You may be surprised to learn that women have a *leg up* on men with *identical* résumés. This is probably due to corporate awareness of the public perception of gender unfairness and an attempt to create a more balanced workforce. In the long run, any qualified person can do the job to the same degree of ability, and gender is irrelevant, but public image definitely has an *impact* on sales.

→**cosmopolitan** : not parochial but sensitive to other nations

→**acquisition** : gaining (sth) →**across the board** : applying to all categories or members

→**think on one's feet** : have good ideas and make decisions quickly in a difficult situation

→**aptitude** : natural ability that makes it easy for one to do (sth) well →**leg up** : advantage

→**identical** : same →**impact** : influence

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

6. Where does a woman have an advantage over a man in terms of employment and promotion?

(A)

Men usually do a poor job selling clothes or other personal products to women, while women often do very well selling these kinds of items to men. (On the other hand, car or *appliance* salesmen probably perform better than saleswomen.)

(B)

I would certainly guess that few male *gynecologists* or *obstetricians* do as well as their female *counterparts*. Most women just do not feel particularly comfortable discussing their *reproductive* problems with men.



-**appliance** : machine, such as a toaster or dishwasher, used to perform a household task

-**gynecology** : study and treatment of medical conditions and illness affecting only women

-**obstetrics** : part of medical science that deals with the birth of children

-**counterpart** : one having the same function    -**reproductive** : relating to the process of having babies

## 7. Which do you think is more important in getting a promotion, seniority or competence?

F : I'm so angry I could scream!

M : Whoa, slow down. Take it easy. What's the matter?

F : I found out today I didn't get that promotion I was expecting.

M : Why not?

F : It went to some one else, just because he's been there longer.

M : Are you sure? I'm not at all suggesting that you are incompetent, but maybe he is a little more competent than you are simply because he has indeed been there longer. As a result, he has a bit more experience and so on. Wouldn't you agree that that's possible?

F : That might be true sometimes. But though he's been there a lot longer than I have, I was as good at the job in six months as he was in three years. I'm sure my aptitude for the work, or maybe just my attitude towards it, is far better than his. In any case, I've *worked my butt off* while he's been *cruising along*. I deserved that promotion much more than he did, and I'm upset about not getting it.

M : Well, if he's such a *goof-up*, this might be the best thing that could have happened to you. If he isn't very well suited for the new job, his bosses will *find* that out pretty quickly. Then they'll need someone to *fill his shoes*, and they'll need that person pretty *badly*. It seems to me you'll be in a better *bargaining position* then than you are now. At the end of the day, you'll be much better off.

F : Yes, I've thought of that. But that doesn't make me any less angry at the moment. I still think I deserve this opportunity more than he does, and I still think it's unfair for my company to pass me over.

M : Yes, but what can you do about it?

F : Well, I can always leave and find another job. Or start my own firm. Either way, that would show them!

M : Yes it would. But I would advise you to go along with their decision this time. Show your loyalty and commitment and keep doing your job to the best of your ability. Don't criticize the new guy yourself; let your bosses realize their mistake on their own. Then, when the next *spot* opens up, let them know that if your ability isn't adequately appreciated you will take it elsewhere.

F : Yes, you're absolutely right. I can certainly see the wisdom in your approach, even though I can't help feel the injustice of the current situation. I'll try your way for a while and see what happens. If I don't get promoted soon, I can still go elsewhere later on. I don't have to quit now, but I can start looking for other options, just in case.

M : Don't be discouraged. I know you'll make it. Timing is everything.

→ **work one's butt off** : work very hard to achieve (sth) → **cruise along** : move leisurely without effort

→ **goof-up** : silly or stupid person → **fill one's shoes** : do the job that (sb) else used to do

→ **badly** : very much → **bargaining position** : positive quality to be emphasized during negotiations

→ **spot** : position

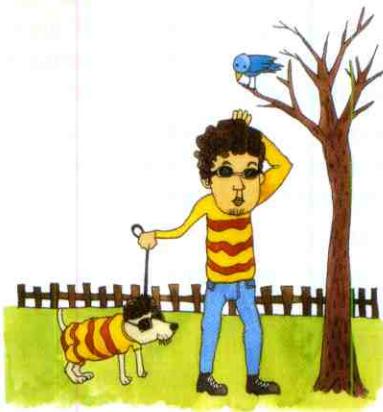
# ISSUE 25

## Pet-people

Did you know that, over time, our pets begin to resemble us? Not just in terms of behavior and attitude, but even in the way they look. If you don't believe me, try this simple experiment. Go someplace where a lot of dogs are allowed to wander around by themselves, like a park. Then try to match the animals with their owners. You'll be surprised at how many you will be able to identify.

**What is your favorite kind of pet? Why?**

- (1) Dogs
- (2) Cats
- (3) Mice
- (4) Reptiles
- (5) Birds
- (6) Other



# Sample Answers

(A) The world *breaks down* into Cat People and Dog People, I guess. I'm a Dog Man. Dogs are always friendly and eager to please; cats are solitary and independent, except for the few times when they want attention. It's easy to train dogs; cats are bright but too *contrary* to get educated easily. In addition, dogs have traditionally filled useful functions in human households, as herders, hunters, protectors, and burglar alarms, while cats are always merely decorative — have you ever heard of a "watch cat"?

(B) Snakes fascinate me, the bigger the better. All of the things that most people think are true about snakes are actually quite false. They are not *slimy* at all; they are very cool and dry. Once they become used to being handled, they are very *docile*. And they are quite easy to take care of; due to their low metabolism, they can go for weeks without eating. And, though they are not as *obvious* as most pets, they truly do show affection to the humans who care for them.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you like pets? Why or why not?
2. Why are more and more people becoming pet owners?
3. How much do pets cost, *in your estimation*? Is that too much?
4. If you were leaving on vacation, what would you do with your pets? Would you leave them at home, take them with you, or do something else with them?
5. Do you think people with pets make good neighbors?
6. Do you think that pets are better off than some people? Explain your opinion.

→**break down** : divide →**contrary** : opposite in nature or character

→**slimy** : covered with a thick wet unpleasant substance

→**docile** : well-behaved, quiet, and easy to control

→**obvious** : easily seen or understood; evident →**in one's estimation** : in one's opinion

# Speak Your Mind

## 1. Do you like pets? Why or why not?

(A)

I don't see what all the *fuss* about pets is about. The way some people *fawn* over stupid animals makes me sick — they treat them with more affection than they do their own children. Perhaps taking in a *stray* dog or cat for companionship is understandable, but anyone who spends a small fortune on a dumb animal could obviously use that money for a far better purpose. I guess pets are God's way of telling any culture that it has just too much money!

(B)

I remember the first cat I got. I was nine, and the cat was a birthday present. We *bonded* immediately. I don't care what their *detractors* say, cats are actually very warm, caring creatures, capable of great love and companionship for their owners. Every day, the cat would lie in my lap while I drew pictures or did my homework. When I rubbed his belly (which was often), he would *purr* and purr in contentment. We spent many years together, in good times and bad, and that cat was always a faithful, devoted friend. Since then I have had many other cats and cannot imagine a happy life without one.

## 2. Why are more and more people becoming pet owners?

(A)

It is all part of Western cultural *imperialism* and status-seeking. Thirty years ago, almost no one had a pet cat or dog, although farmers may have had animals around to hunt mice or help with the chores. But the change in attitude came upon us all at once, and soon every *affluent* young urban family felt the need to *flaunt* its new wealth. All of a sudden, women with small lap dogs on the subway became a common sight, and well-groomed packs of pink-eared poodles began to *roam* freely in every *well-heeled* neighborhood.

(B)

People need dependable companionship, especially in the lonely city. Pets fill this need. Families may break up through divorce or just the process of aging; kids go off to college, get married, and move away from home; old friends are transferred elsewhere or gain new interests and comrades. But one's pet stays close forever.

### 3. How much do pets cost, in your estimation? Is that too much?

(A)

Some of them cost almost a week's pay to buy. And that's just *for starters*. They still need shots and bedding. We have to feed them several times a day and take them to a *veterinarian* when they get sick. And they live better, more comfortable lives than we do. It is we who work on their behalf, not *the other way around*, so I guess they are the masters and we the servants after all.

(B)

One does not have to spend a lot of money to get a nice pet. Usually, a neighbor's pet has just had puppies or kittens that need a good home. The money spent to take care of them is also *negligible*; left-over kitchen scraps will often be sufficient and healthy too. So, for an extremely small investment, we can get a lifetime of love and companionship.

### 4. If you were leaving on vacation, what would you do with your pets? Would you leave them at home, take them with you, or do something else with them?

(A)

When I'm going away, I always take my cat with me. By now, she's a *seasoned* traveler who's very familiar with the *routine*. A little preparation in advance is all that's needed: making sure that the proper vaccinations are *administered* and the correct paperwork filled out; a nice, comfortable pet carrier; and sufficient food and water to get to the destination.

(B)

If I can't find a neighbor or friend who is willing to help out while I'm gone, I just leave my pets at a *kennel*. That way I know they are being properly fed, exercised, and taken care of, and I don't have to worry about them until I get back.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 5. Do you think people with pets make good neighbors?

(A)

I hate it when the neighbor's cat starts *howling* in the middle of the night. The first time, I *panicked* and thought it was an infant in *distress*. But now that I know it's just a frustrated pet looking for a *one-night stand*, I just get irritated because I can't sleep. I wish the neighbor would just put the cat out for the night, so both the animal and I could have a good night *for once*.

(B)

The worst *plague* brought on by pet owners is their carelessness in cleaning up after their *wards*. All the streets in my neighborhood are dotted with little mounds of *excrement*, *Fido's* smelly *calling cards*. They are *unsightly* and hard to keep from stepping on, and they attract flies, which then spread their diseases to my house. Really, it wouldn't take more than a few seconds for the owners to take care of the problem, but they seem to prefer to pretend that there is no problem.

## 6. Do you think that pets are better off than some people? Explain your opinion.

M : Look at that puppy!

F : Oh, how cute! I wish we had one like that.

M : It's a shame how we treat our pets better than we treat other people.

F : How can you say that?

M : Well, it's true, isn't it? Just think about how many people are starving or don't have any place to live. And yet that dog is treated like *royalty*.

F : Yes, you're right. But I still wish we had a dog like that one!

M : OK. we'll get one. But I hope you treat ours better than that one.

F : It looks happy and well-fed to me. You were just complaining about how we treat dogs better than we treat people.

M : But that haircut! The dyed hair and the costume! I don't think any self-respecting dog would want to look like that.

F : But it's so cute!

M : That dog would be much better off living in the natural state instead of looking like a clown.

F : I bet his owners love him very much. That's why they dress him like that. The sweater keeps him warm, and he needs to have his hair *trimmed* from time to time. What's wrong with that?

M : What about the blue tail and the pink ears?

F : Dyeing his hair isn't any different than dyeing mine, to look better. Don't you think I look good with my hair done this way?

M : Ummmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Yeah. Of course I like it.

F : Then it's exactly the same thing, isn't it?

M : OK, you win. But I hope you'll agree that there is still something wrong with a world that spends so much time *pampering* a puppy and can't even bother meeting the minimum needs of its people.



→ **royalty** : kings and queens and their families

→ **trim** : cut (sth) as hair so that it looks neat

→ **pamper** : take care of (sb) too well; coddle

# ISSUE 26

## Are You Willing to Help Others?

According to some recent philosophers, altruism does not exist. They say every action we take is selfishly motivated. If we give something away, it is because we need thanks and recognition in exchange. Or we act in expectation that others in our group will aid us if we are in similar circumstances, so our philanthropy is merely disguised insurance. The real reason for risking our lives to protect our young is our instinctual preservation of our own genes, which is the only kind of physical immortality we have.

### How do you help others?

- (1) Volunteer
- (2) Give money
- (3) Donate blood
- (4) Donate organs
- (5) Give to charity
- (6) Give to beggars
- (7) Organize charity events



→ **altruism** : concern for the welfare, happiness, and well-being of others; selflessness      → **in exchange** : in trade  
→ **philanthropy** : belief that one should help people, esp. by giving money  
→ **disguise** : hide (sth) such as one's feelings or intentions  
→ **immortality** : living forever

# Sample Answers

(A) Ever since high school, I have been an active volunteer no matter where I have lived. The amount of time I have *available* is very *flexible* these days, so sometimes I spend an hour a day and other times Saturday afternoons only. There are always many kinds of services that need to be provided, even if it is only answering a phone or driving someone or handling correspondence. Among the places I've helped are orphanages, suicide *hotlines*, homeless shelters, and food distribution centers. I've always felt that by donating my time I've gained far more than anyone else, including the people who directly get the benefits of the program.

(B) Organ donation is the easiest thing in the world to do, and potentially the most valuable. It only takes a minute to fill out the appropriate card, and you never need to *lift a finger* to help someone for the rest of your life. And then, some day in the hopefully distant future, someone else will be helped by your organs, but not until you don't need them any more. Just think, your thoughtfulness may enable someone else to see or to live a normal or longer life. You probably won't know who that person is, but you can certainly be sure that he or she will be *eternally grateful* to you.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you give money to panhandlers? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever helped the poor or the handicapped?  
If so, when and how? If not, why not?
3. How often do you donate blood?
4. They say everybody is *handicapped* somehow.  
What does that mean? In what way are you handicapped?
5. Why should we help others, especially strangers?  
*What's in it for us?*

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Do you give money to panhandlers? Why or why not?

(A)

I always feel sorry for those poor folks on the subway who are blind or *crippled*. I can't help but imagine what it must be like and wonder how I could support myself if it were me instead of them. I'm always so grateful for my good health that I would feel *unbearably* guilty if I didn't help them out.

(B)

I never give any money. I don't know which ones are *faking*, and don't want to contribute to a society in which people think someone else owes them a living. There are charities and government programs to take care of their *legitimate* needs, so I know they don't require my personal assistance. In fact, I suspect that these beggars all make more money than I do!

## 2. Have you ever helped the poor or the handicapped? If so, when and how? If not, why not?

(A)

There are many ways of helping. In fact, giving money is perhaps the least valuable way. I've found that giving my time every week is not only a way of meeting their real needs, but is also a way of making me realize my effort is actually doing some good. To anyone who wants to make a difference in this world, I *heartily* recommend *volunteering*.

(B)

Once I saw a mother and her two young children on a street corner, sleeping on a cardboard box. I was *overwhelmed* with pity and wanted to take them to my house, where they could get something to eat and a good night's rest. But my wife refused, so I didn't *extend* them the offer. The next day they were gone. I've always wondered what happened to them.

→**crippled** : disabled   →**unbearably** : extremely   →**fake** : pretend (sth))

→**legitimate** : genuine   →**heartily** : in a loud or enthusiastic way

→**volunteer** : work without getting paid   →**overwhelm** : affect (sb's) emotions in a very powerful way

→**extend** : offer (sth) such as a welcome, thanks, or sympathy to (sb)

### 3. How often do you donate blood?

(A)

I used to donate blood five or six times a year. But ever since I heard rumors about blood donors getting AIDS, I stopped. Health officials keep insisting that there is nothing to worry about, but I don't want to *take* any unnecessary *chances*.

(B)

When I was in college I used to sell my blood. I never had much money, and this was one way I could have a little to spend. I guess I *overdid* it then, because now when I give blood the nurse always has a difficult time finding a suitable vein. So far, though, we've always found some way to make the process work, and I'm glad to help unfortunate accident victims.

### 4. They say everybody is handicapped somehow. What does that mean? In what way are you handicapped?

(A)

Nobody is *gifted* in all aspects of life, so we are all handicapped in comparison to someone else. In my case, I'm terribly shy. It's hard for me to talk *to* people I don't know, even when it's *urgent* that I do so. This has *hindered* my progress in school and made it hard for me to make new friends.

(B)

I don't think I'm handicapped at all. Other people may disagree, since I can't walk and I rely on a wheelchair. This may be very inconvenient at times, but it doesn't stop me from doing any of the important things in life. I went to college and got a good job, I got married, and I have kids. I have many good, kind friends. So I don't see in what way I am handicapped.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 5. Why should we help others, especially strangers? What's in it for us?

M : I can't understand how any country can support *impoverishing* its most successful citizens in order to support its least successful ones.

F : What are you complaining about *specifically*?

M : Taxes. They're too high. I've spent my entire life preparing for success. I studied hard in school. I worked diligently on my job. Eventually, I saw an opportunity to get ahead, and I took the risk. I didn't have any guarantee that I'd make it, but I took the chance and focused on it *to the exclusion of* everything else.

F : Yes, I know. Very admirable of you.

M : But now that I've made it, I don't see why I have to pay such high taxes to make life easy for the ones who never wanted to follow the rules but now expect a *handout* in reward for their *shiftlessness*. It just doesn't make sense.

F : Well, on a practical level, I guess in a democracy the poor people have more votes than the rich.

M : Then there should be some sort of process. Maybe the law should be changed so that the really poor can't vote; why should anyone who doesn't have any money to be taxed have a right to decide to tax the ones who do?

F : Or maybe each rich person could get extra votes to *counterbalance* the poor?

M : That's a great idea!

→ **impoverish** : make (sth/sb) very poor    → **specifically** : in an exact and detailed way

→ **to the exclusion of** : so as to exclude something    → **handout** : money or goods given to people; charity

→ **shiftless** : lazy and not interested in anything

→ **counterbalance** : have an equal and opposite effect on (sth)

F : But the problem is that, even under the current system that you complain about, the rich still manage to run the economy and the legal system to their own advantage. If they had their way, they wouldn't pay any taxes at all, and they would let the poorer people *foot* the bill all by themselves. Democracies aren't perfect, but at least they're fair.

M : But I still don't see why I should be responsible for paying for other people's bad attitudes.

F : In the first place, it isn't quite that simple, you know? A lot of poverty is due to accidents and bad health. Many hard-working people have lost their jobs because their bosses made bad decisions. It's not just because they're "lazy" that they have difficulty.

M : Then let's fix the system so that only the truly needy benefit. Maybe *impose* time *restrictions* on benefits, or invest in programs that provide job training. I'm not a heartless person, I just want the rules to be fair.

F : Good. I'm glad to hear that. In the second place, even the poor and handicapped have *genuine* value in society. We shouldn't have to make moral values on any individual, but we should expect that everyone has the right to at least a minimum of health care, decent food and housing, and human dignity. We can't have any self-respect if we aren't willing to share our wealth with the truly unfortunate.

M : You know, I'd be willing to keep the tax levels at the same rate *temporarily*, to build an effective system of aid. It would be wonderful to get rid of the real causes of poverty. But, mostly, we just use this public money to remove all *incentives* for people to work their way out of poverty. We think it's enough to give them a fish every day instead of teaching them how to catch fish on their own.



→**foot** : pay for (sth) →**impose** : place (a burden or an obligation) on (sb)

→**restriction** : rule or system that limits or controls what one can do

→**genuine** : real or pure; not false →**temporary** : for a limited period of time

→**incentive** : (sth) that encourages action or effort

# ISSUE 27

## TV Commercials

When we turn on the television, or listen to the radio, we might think we get to enjoy free entertainment. But actually it is not free, not by any means. Advertisers pay vast sums of money to provide us that service, in exchange for an opportunity to make a subtle sales pitch. They know that a certain percentage of people who hear their message will buy their product. The "free" program is actually just packaging; the broadcasters give us twenty minutes of enjoyment in exchange for our giving them ten minutes of attention.

### What do you think about TV commercials?

- (1) Some of them are interesting.
- (2) They are usually informative.
- (3) They make me sick!
- (4) They encourage impulse buying.
- (5) TV commercials need to be more strictly controlled.



→commercial : advertisement on television or radio

→vast : extremely large

→subtle : not obvious

→sales pitch : statements and promises made to persuade (sb) to buy (sth)

→impulse buying : purchasing (sth) without planning or choosing carefully

# Sample Answers

(A) Television programming has become so poor and predictable that many of the commercials are more entertaining than the *sponsored* show. The best ads cost a lot more money to make than the typical TV show, so the photography, scripting, acting, and directorial skill are usually far superior. Many times, a half-hour program will be shot nearly live, with perhaps a few scenes being done in two or three *takes*. But a thirty-second commercial will probably be shot over and over, dozens of times, until it is perfect. It may take days to shoot, rather than just a few hours!

(B) By definition, advertisers are *manipulators* of behavior. Even if the information they convey is *factual* (which is not always the case), it is designed to create an emotional response. We don't usually pay a lot of conscious attention to any commercial, but we do *absorb* its message, especially since we are exposed to it time after time. So, I think governments should take a more active role in regulating the content and delivery style of commercials.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you believe whatever commercials tell you?
2. Do you change the channel whenever a commercial comes on?
3. Did you ever buy something because of a commercial?
4. Who do you think is the most easily *brainwashed* by commercials?
5. What was the most appealing commercial you've seen?
6. Is there any difference between TV commercials and ads in newspapers or magazines? If so, what?
7. Can we make commercials more honest?

→**sponsor** : pay for an event, a television or radio program

→**take** : section of a movie or television program that is recorded without stopping

→**manipulator** : (sb) who influences people in a clever or dishonest way

→**factual** : based on truth      →**absorb** : soak (sth) in

→**brainwash** : persuade (sb) by intense means, such as repeated suggestions, to adopt a belief or behave in a certain way

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 1. Do you believe whatever commercials tell you?

(A)

Of course. I know that it is against the law to *deliberately* make false claims in advertising. No business would be brave or foolish enough to lie on TV, because they all know they'll get caught and have to pay a heavy *fine*. Plus, the bad *publicity* could destroy them in terms of public esteem.

(B)

We have to be very *skeptical* about commercials, even those that *employ* seemingly-accurate statistics. After all, perhaps figures don't lie, but liars certainly do *figure*. We probably don't have to be overly concerned about absolute falsehoods being told, but information that looks to be correct but isn't quite accurate is far more *insidious* in its persuasion.

### 2. Do you change the channel whenever a commercial comes on?

(A)

What good does that do? All the commercials come on at the same time, so it doesn't make any difference.

(B)

I just leave the channel alone but leave the room. I'm glad there are so many commercials; that way I have a lot of opportunities to go to the bathroom or to get something to eat without missing any part of my favorite shows.

→ **deliberately** : with a definite intention; not by chance

→ **fine** : amount of money paid for violating a law

→ **publicity** : widespread mention

→ **skeptical** : having doubts about (sth)

→ **employ** : use (sth) for a particular purpose

→ **figure** : calculate; think manipulatively

→ **insidious** : intended to trap; sneaky

### 3. Did you ever buy something because of a commercial?

(A)

Of course not. A commercial helps keep me informed about the existence of new products, but it's never influenced my decision to buy them. If I need something, I talk to my friends and see what they like.

(B)

We like to think that we are independent-minded and always make our own decisions about what to buy and how much to spend. And certainly, it is never the case that everyone who watches a commercial goes out and buys the advertised product. But sales is directly related to how many people see the commercial. Businesses know that fact and *act upon* its predictability. They would not continue to spend such large amounts on advertising campaigns (and the costly programs they sponsor) if commercials didn't work.

### 4. Who do you think is the most easily brainwashed by commercials?

(A)

Kids are very *impressionable*. They don't yet have much experience in the ways of the world and are usually pretty *gullible*. They are also especially *vulnerable* to *peer pressure*. So they make easy targets for *unscrupulous* advertisers.

(B)

Commercials are like magic tricks. Once you see how they are done, they lose their effect. So, it isn't a question of "who" is the most easily brainwashed — we all are. It's actually a question of whether we take an actively or passively critical approach to them. None of them can trick us into doing anything unless we want them to.

→**act on** : behave in accordance with  
→**gullible** : too ready to believe what other people say, and therefore easy to trick

→**impressionable** : easy to influence

→**vulnerable** : easily affected, as by persuasion or temptation

→**peer pressure** : influence that other people of one's own age or social class have on the way one behaves

→**unscrupulous** : willing to do things that are unfair, dishonest, or illegal

# Speak Your Mind

## 5. What was the most appealing commercial you've seen?

(A)

I never pay any attention to commercials, so I'm not aware of any of them in particular.

(B)

I think the best commercials are the ones that have a very funny, very memorable *catch phrase* in them. Pretty soon, we hear our friends use that phrase in their own conversations, and we all know the reference without even thinking about it.

## 6. Is there any difference between TV commercials and ads in newspapers or magazines? If so, what?

(A)

The *conscious* manipulation is the same. But newspaper ads are cheaper and more *static*. They are easier to examine for factual errors and obvious distortions. But commercials are dynamic. The words and pictures are in constant motion, and we pay more attention to color, sound, and movement than we do to the actual *script*.

(B)

I guess all ads, including billboards and posters, are effective at selling their goods. But I think the print ads are boring and don't understand how they can persuade anyone. But commercials are clever and *compelling* enough that we don't mind watching them again and again.

- catch phrase** : group of words that is easy to remember and is repeated regularly
- conscious** : deliberate; intentional    -**static** : lacking in movement, action, or change
- script** : written words of a play, etc.
- compelling** : very interesting; demanding one's attention

## 7. Can we make commercials more honest?

F : That's disgusting!

M : What?

F : That commercial. The people responsible must think their audience is a *gaggle* of fools.

M : I rather liked it. What's wrong with it?

F : It doesn't really say anything at all. It's just a bunch of extra-good-looking people pretending to have a great time together. The *implication* is that if I buy the product, then I too will be like them.

M : Yes, that's what I thought too. But I enjoy watching several *well-endowed* beauties enjoying themselves. What's wrong with that? It sure *beats* watching a lot of sweaty young men running up and down a field.

F : What's wrong is that the *underlying* message is a lie. It's a beer commercial. Drinking beer leads to serious health problems, not to more fun. It's all a *blatant* lie.

M : What do you expect the advertiser to do, run an ad that says, "Drink my product and you'll get fat and sick"?

F : No, of course not. But there should be some kind of social responsibility for public advertisers. There should be some recognition of the health and safety problems that are *associated with* the consumption of alcohol.



→**gaggle** : group of geese    →**implication** : indirect indication

→**well-endowed** : having a abundance of beautiful physical aspects    →**beat** : do or be better than

→**underlying** : fundamental; basic    →**blatant** : very obvious and noticeable in a bad way

→**associated with** : connected with

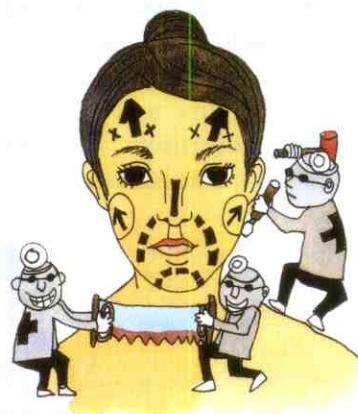
# ISSUE 28

## Cosmetic Surgery

In times past, plastic surgery was used primarily by accident victims and by old people to restore their appearance. But now cosmetic surgery is in vogue, especially among the very young. They save their money to pay for an operation, ask their parents to foot the bill, or take out a bank loan. Adults are usually worried about the possible side effects from the surgery, but the youngsters don't seem to worry about them at all.

Why do you think plastic surgery has become so popular among young people?

- (1) It is like any other fad, driven by peer pressure.
- (2) They want to have a more prestigious job in the future.
- (3) They want to marry a more desirable mate.
- (4) They are looking for self-satisfaction.
- (5) They want social acceptance.
- (6) They think looks matter more than anything else.
- (7) They are insecure and lack confidence.



→cosmetic surgery (plastic surgery) : medical operations that improve one's appearance  
→primarily : mainly      →in vogue : popular or fashionable      →foot the bill : pay for (sth)  
→take out : get (sth) officially      →prestigious : admired and respected by people  
→matter : be of importance

# Sample Answers

(A) As the old saying goes, do not judge a book by its cover. Apparently, people think that they can create an appealing exterior that will somehow hide their true nature. Or, perhaps, they believe that the way they look prevents other people from discovering their real selves, so they want a more appealing *façade*. Either way, psychologists have found that a person's feelings about himself or herself do not change at all after receiving cosmetic surgery, and neither do other people's *perceived* attitudes toward him or her.

(B) If clothes make the man, why stop there? Why not refashion the entire package? If there is no serious health risk involved, what's wrong with looking younger? What's the matter with having a better figure or a more attractive face? *Let's face it*, first impressions really do *count*, and by their very nature they are *superficial*. Most people never get beyond first impressions, so we might as well maximize our initial advantage.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What kind of cosmetic surgery would you want (if any)?  
A facelift? A nose job? A *boob job*? *Liposuction*?
2. Are you worried about the side effects of any surgery?
3. What would you say if your child wanted a facelift?
4. Who in your opinion really needs plastic surgery?
5. Do you think cosmetic surgery makes it easier to get a good job or find a good spouse?
6. Discuss the social background to the *boom* in *aesthetic* surgeries.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers

## 1. What kind of cosmetic surgery would you want (if any)? A facelift? A nose job? A boob job? Liposuction?

(A)

I've tried to lose weight through all kinds of diets and exercise programs. Nothing seems to work for longer than a few weeks. I had given up hope. But now I can have the fat removed, painlessly and safely, in just a few hours. And the procedure does not cost much to obtain. So why shouldn't I have liposuction performed?

(B)

I look at the models and actresses in the movies and magazines and I can't help but admire the way they look. I should be able to look that way, too. I think I'm not bad looking now, but just a little modification here and there and I could be really *gorgeous*. It's no different than a poet revising his work to make it perfect, or a composer *polishing* her symphony.

## 2. Are you worried about the side effects of any surgery?

(A)

What side effects? All the ads insist that the procedures are safe, painless, and easy to perform. They make it obvious that anyone can be transformed from being a plain person to a perfect one immediately.

(B)

Cosmetic surgery is like any other. Someone's body is being cut open; skin or bone or other *body* parts are being removed, carved up, replaced, or *augmented*; the body is being sewn up again. No matter how minor any surgical procedure is, there are problems with *scar* tissue, infection, bruising and *discoloration*, post-surgical pain, and *depression*. These after-effects may be mild or severe, long-lasting or brief, but they always exist, and no one knows in advance how anyone will respond to that particular surgery.

→ **work** : have a particular effect or result → **gorgeous** : very beautiful

→ **polish** : improve (sth), such as a piece of writing, speech etc. by making slight changes

→ **augment** : increase the size, amount, or value of (sth) → **scar** : permanent mark on one's skin from an injury or cut

→ **discolor** : change color badly → **depression** : condition of feeling sad and sorrowful

### 3. What would you say if your child wanted a facelift?

(A)

I'd tell him to wait until he's an adult and can afford to waste his own money. Even then, he should think about it long and hard. We look the way we do because of our parents' genetic *disposition* and because of our own inner selves; *carving up* these factors is like stealing our entire identity.

(B)

I would talk to her for a long time about why she wanted one. If I were convinced that she had *thought* the issue *through* and that her desire was not just a passing *fad*, I don't see why her request should automatically be refused. After all, she knows her own fears and desires better than anyone. Of course, other discussions would follow, about health risks, costs, timing, and so forth, and, clearly, professional people would need to be consulted as well.

### 4. Who in your opinion really needs plastic surgery?

(A)

People who are *disfigured* by illness, disease, or genetics should have an equal opportunity for acceptable looks. And anyone who has been in a car crash or fire certainly needs to have his or her appearance return to normal. Unfortunately, the truly *bizarre*-looking people tend to be *shunned* by society, so they should be able to *redress* that discrimination.

(B)

Anyone who is dissatisfied with the way he looks should be able to improve his appearance. Getting plastic surgery is no different than getting our teeth straightened when we're kids or wearing glasses — or contacts! — to see better.

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

5. Do you think cosmetic surgery makes it easier to get a good job or find a good spouse?

(A)

Many studies show that good-looking people are rewarded in their jobs and lifestyles. But none of them have demonstrated whether the results are due to the way they look or to their inner selves. Perhaps people who have always been admired for their looks are more confident and secure about themselves and more *extroverted* than ordinary people; and so, it is their attitude that is rewarded, not just their appearance. But people who merely change their looks do not change their characters overnight and will continue to have the same lack of confidence and insecurities as before.

(B)

As the world grows more competitive, anything we can do to improve our appeal makes us more *marketable*. We can do this by many means: getting more education or special training, meeting useful people, dressing more appropriately, taking care of our health and appearance, having a good reputation, and so forth. But certainly, *adjusting* the way our body or face appears to others *falls in* the same category of maximizing our success factors.

- **extroverted** : confident and happy in social situations
- **marketable** : of interest to employers or purchasers
- **adjust** : change or adapt
- **fall in** : belong to

## 6. Discuss the social background to the boom in aesthetic surgeries.

F : I think I'm going to get a nose job. What do you think?

M : I think your nose is perfect the way it is. Don't change it!

F : But it's too flat, don't you think?

M : But I like it that way. If you change it, you'll become somebody else entirely, not the "you" that everybody knows and loves.

F : But I don't love me the way I am. I want to try a different look. If I don't like it, I can always get back my old one, right?

M : You make it sound like getting a new *hairdo*.

F : From what I hear, it's almost as easy.

M : Somebody's been *feeding you a line*. We're talking about surgery. That's never "as easy as getting a hairdo," even under the best of circumstances.

F : Well, I don't know. I'm still *tempted*.

M : You're just brainwashed, that's all. The people who control the media insist that there is only one standard of beauty in the world, and if you *deviate* from it then there's something wrong with you.

F : But just look at the women in the fashion magazines and on TV. They're gorgeous. I want to look like them.

M : I don't look much like any of the big movie stars these days, do I?

F : No, not at all!

M : Well, then, it's the same thing, isn't it? Do you dislike me just because I'm not *conventionally* handsome?

F : No. It doesn't matter what you look like (although I think you look just fine). But I like you for who you are, not who you look like.

M : That's my point, exactly.



→**hairdo** : hairstyle, esp. for a woman    →**feed (sb) a line** : give (sb) false or misleading information

→**be tempted** : have an urge or inclination

→**deviate** : move away, as from a norm or purpose; stray

→**conventional** : based on or approved by general usage; customary

# ISSUE 29

## Househusband

I've been a househusband for five years, and I'm not even married. I think it's great! I'm very particular about living in a clean, neat environment, but I'm my own boss and my hours are flexible. The only "bad" thing about being a househusband is the pay. But my "real" job is a free-lance writer, so it's easy for me to do the housework around my other schedule, and I don't have to fight the traffic every day to get to work. Someday I'll probably get married, but I'll retain both my present jobs. My wife can continue with her occupation without having to worry about getting home to clean house, or she can stay at home with me and we can spend even more time together.

### What do you think about househusbands?

- (1) I think it is a stupid idea.
- (2) I think people should be able to live their lives anyway they want.
- (3) I really don't care one way or the other.



→**particular** : attentive to, or concerned with details; meticulous  
→**flexible** : capable of or willing to change; adaptable

# Sample Answers

(A) For a long time, people have *framed* individual rights from a feminist perspective: women who are qualified and interested should have the same right to pursue any career as men have. But the same should be true for males as well. If it *suits* them, why can't they be homemakers? Let their wives work for a living!

(B) It is unnatural for men to do housework for a living. There is nothing wrong with helping out in an emergency or sharing the household chores with a wife who works outside the home, but both of these situations are very different from a man cleaning the house and raising the kids *day-in, day-out*. Househusbands are not real men!

## Speak Your Mind

1. Have you ever talked with your spouse about being a house-husband? Why or why not?
2. If a man's wife had a more *promising* job than he, should he be willing to be a househusband?
3. What do you think is the main factor that determines who stays at home and who *goes off* to work?
4. What would be the merits and the demerits of house husbandry?
5. A lot of social prejudice against househusbands still exists, so they are often reluctant to talk about their lives. Why?

→frame : express (sth) carefully in a particular way

→suit : be convenient or appropriate for (sb)

→day in, day out : everyday for a long time

→promising : likely to be successful or very good      →go off : leave a place

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Have you ever talked with your spouse about being a househusband? Why or why not?

(A)

My husband and I have discussed this many times. I think he should take a year off from his job and take over the housework, while I go out into the working world full time. It would be a kind of experiment in living. We would both become more *sympathetic* to each other's *lot in life*; and, who knows? — maybe we would both find out that we're happier *reversing* the sexual *stereotype* and it would not be temporary after all.

(B)

No, we've never talked about it. We both think the idea is just plain silly. It's too bad that so many women are forced to work outside the home for economic reasons. They would have much happier, more fulfilling lives if they stayed home and took care of the family. But bringing the men home to do the housework would just make the situation worse. Men are men and women are women, and any society that *obliterates* those roles is in very serious trouble.

## 2. If a man's wife had a more promising job than he, should he be willing to be a househusband?

(A)

No man should be expected to stay at home just because his wife has a better job. He should feel proud of his wife's achievements while also taking pride in his own. Since they would be doing well financially, the best solution would be for both of them to continue working and to hire someone to handle the domestic chores.

(B)

Absolutely! Men often talk about how *ennobling* women's work is, and how *debasement* it is for men to have to sell their souls out in the market place. Fine; if that is true, they should be happy to stay at home themselves and enjoy the pleasures of changing diapers, scrubbing the floors and windows, buying the food, cooking the meals, and washing all the clothes and dishes every day. It's only fair, after all.

→ **sympathetic** : favorably understanding toward (sth) → **(sb's) lot in life** : (sb's) general situation; fate

→ **reverse** : change one's views, policies, etc. to the opposite

→ **stereotype** : conventional idea or image of (sb), based on race, gender, religion, profession, etc.

→ **obliterate** : destroy (sth) → **ennoble** : give (sb) elevated qualities → **debase** : reduce the value, quality, or status of (sth)

### 3. What do you think is the main factor that determines who stays at home and who goes off to work?

(A)

It is entirely social. Because of the woman's ability to bear children, traditional societies have focused solely on that aspect of her being. So, females were expected to stay home and take care of family affairs, while the men were out hunting or farming. But social conditions have changed a great deal. In a modern society, families are smaller, most work is mechanized or computerized so physical differences between men and women are minimized, and urban populations are much more anonymous than small villages. So people are free to pretty much do as they like.

(B)

It is not a matter of fairness; it is all biological. Men cannot bear children. No one can argue with that. So it follows that men are not biologically or psychologically suited to do what is usually called "women's work." It is called that for a good reason: females are predisposed to being mothers and homemakers, while men are more inclined to more physical kinds of activities like being soldiers or farmers. Men get very bored and restless if they are confined indoors for long periods; they can't help it, it is the way they are genetically programmed. But women are more patient, and they also express their feelings better, so they make more easily, more caring parents than their husbands.

### 4. What would be the merits and the demerits of house husbandry?

(A)

My husband would go nuts if he had to stay home every day. He has worked hard to get where he is in his profession, and he is proud of his accomplishments. He loves his job, and he loves the perks and income it has provided him. In addition, if he just stayed home and did the housework, his friends would look down on him, and his own self-respect would decline as well. I love him just the way he is!

(B)

The best thing about house husbandry is letting a man do what he enjoys. Not every man is suited to the task; but not every woman is, either. Likewise, not every man (and not every woman) is cut out to be a doctor or a teacher or a welder or a clerk. We should all have the opportunity to do what we like best, whatever occupation that turns out to be.

→ anonymous : nameless or unnamed    → it follows : it must be true    → suited : right for a particular purpose or situation  
→ predisposed : likely to think, feel, or behave in a particular way    → restless : unable to rest, relax, or be still  
→ confined : in a small, cramped space    → go nuts : become crazy    → perk : extra privilege or benefit at work  
→ look down on : regard (sb/sth) as being inferior    → cut out : have the qualities needed for a particular job

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. A lot of social prejudice against househusbands still exists, so they are often reluctant to talk about their lives. Why?

F : And now, I would like to introduce the local head of Househusbands Anonymous. He has asked that his name be *withheld*. Why is that, Sir?

M : Because we househusbands are discriminated against. People seem to think that somehow we are lazy, unambitious, or *effeminate* just because we enjoy taking care of our own homes.

F : Have you noticed any *stigma* of that nature?

M : Constantly. Men who know what I do stop talking about football and politics in my presence. I guess they believe that since I am not "a real man," I must not be interested. But, in fact, I'm just like any other man; the only difference is that I work at home.

F : What do you enjoy about your profession?

M : I get excited about doing the routine little things right every time. It's not easy maintaining a spotless house. It seems like every time I clean something, or do something, it immediately gets dirty again or I have to do it all over. But it's just a matter of keeping constantly *on top of* things. It is a real challenge, let me tell you.

- **withhold** : refuse to give

- **effeminate** : looking, behaving, or speaking like a woman

- **stigma** : sign of shame or disgrace

- **on top of** : in control of

F : What does your wife think about your being a househusband?

M : It took her awhile to adjust to the notion, but now she loves it! She isn't tied down to a task that always bored her in the past. She has the freedom to do whatever she pleases, and when she gets home she knows that she will have a strong, happy man waiting for her. Our relationship is so much better now than it used to be, when I got home tired and unsatisfied every day.

F : Hasn't there been a financial loss since you left your old job?

M : Well, money isn't everything, you know. At first, we had some loss of income, but we were not poor. And we were much happier than when we had money but no job satisfaction. However, now that my wife can concentrate full-time on her job, she has gotten several promotions and our family income is actually higher than it was before.



# ISSUE 30

## Are Relatives Important to You?

Like it or not, we have to deal with the relatives we have, not the relatives we would like to have. Most families have one or more black sheep, whom the rest of the clan would disinherit if they could. It used to be that families were very extensive, with dozens of cousins, aunts, and uncles; a person needed a program just to keep track of them all. Now, as families are becoming considerably smaller, and as divorce and remarriage rates climb, instead of trying to remember who the relatives are, the new difficulty is trying to straighten out how they are related.

### How important are your relatives to you?

- (1) Very important
- (2) Somewhat important
- (3) Not important at all
- (4) Some of them are more important than others.

FAMILY TREE



-black sheep : undesirable member of a family  
-clan : group of families claiming a common ancestor

-disinherit : exclude (an heir) from inheriting

-extensive : very large    -straighten out : deal with a problem or confused situation

# Sample Answers

(A)

Some of my cousins are in the "my best friends" category. We all live near each other and have spent our lives in close contact. Others are *vague*, distant memories; we never see each other on a regular basis and don't keep in touch.

(B)

Just because two people are closely related does not mean they are close. Their personalities may *clash*; they may have quite different interests or opinions on sensitive issues. On the other hand, people usually choose their friends on the basis of compatibility and shared concerns.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Why do you think relatives should (or should not) be important?
2. Who are your most important relatives? Why?
3. Which ones do you meet most frequently? Why?
4. Do you volunteer to help your relatives when they are in financial trouble?
5. When are you bothered by your relatives?
6. Do you have a close relationship with your in-laws? In what ways?
7. What's the difference in your life between friends and relatives?
8. Is blood thicker than water?

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 1. Why do you think relatives should (or should not) be important?

(A)

We have a shared identity and a common *heritage* that must be *preserved*. For that reason, if for no other, we must work together with our relatives. There is a family *obligation* to help one another out of personal difficulties. One person alone would be terribly burdened to assist the one in need, but an entire network of relatives can help out with little difficulty.

(B)

When family members stayed together in the same village over many *generations*, relatives were the most important social contacts one had; without them would have been orphan-like. But the value of distant family relationships has declined with the *advent* of modernity. Except for parents, siblings, and one's own children, few relatives matter very much any more.

### 2. Who are your most important relatives? Why?

(A)

The obvious answer, of course, is my mother and father. Without them, I wouldn't even be here! They spent many years and a lot of money taking care of me and teaching me how to be the person I am, and they *endured* many sacrifices on my behalf.

(B)

My sister is the only relative who *matters* to me. We grew up in a home in which we were abused, neglected, and scorned. But, *through it all*, we always had each other. No one else will understand our particular situation as intimately as we ourselves do.

→ **heritage** : traditional beliefs, values, customs, etc. of a family, country, or society

→ **preserve** : maintain (sth/sb) in safety; protect → **obligation** : moral or legal duty

→ **generation** : all people of about the same age → **advent** : coming or arrival of (sth)

→ **endure** : put up with (sb/sth); tolerate → **matter** : be of importance → **through it all** : despite everything

### 3. Which ones do you meet most frequently? Why?

(A)

Sadly, I seldom see any of my relatives anymore. I'm an only child and my parents already *passed away*. My aunt and my uncle never did pay much attention to me, and most of my cousins have moved away. But I'm still very close to my grandfather. I go to his home every day and help out around the house.

(B)

I have a cousin who was born 24 hours after me, in the same house. We have followed each other closely ever since. We started walking and talking at the same time. We went to school together. We used to have a *crush* on the same boys. It is as though we are each other's shadow, we're so close.

### 4. Do you volunteer to help your relatives when they are in financial trouble?

(A)

I always try to help out to the extent I can. That's what family is for, isn't it? If we can't depend on our relatives, who can we depend on?

(B)

Not usually. Maybe you think I'm being selfish, but I remember when I needed help and none of them came to my assistance. So why should I come to their aid?

### 5. When are you bothered by your relatives?

(A)

I love my relatives, all of them. But sometimes they can be a real *nuisance*. If I want to have some intimate, *private* time with my girlfriend, they can always be *counted on* to see me with her and tell my parents. If I'm getting ready to go out with a buddy, I know that one of my cousins will show up and want to *tag along*. I love my relatives; I just wish sometimes we weren't so close.

(B)

Almost every week has somebody's birthday or anniversary that I have to celebrate. The *get-togethers* are nice, but it's always the same people who attend. We ran out of interesting new things to say to each other years ago.

→ **pass away** : die    → **crush** : strong, often foolish and brief liking for (sb)

→ **nuisance** : (sth) that annoys one or causes problems    → **count on** : expect

→ **tag along** : go somewhere with (sb) else when not wanted

→ **get-together** : small party or gathering

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 6. Do you have a close relationship with your in-laws? In what ways?

(A)

As far as I'm concerned, my in-laws are outlaws. They never seemed very interested in getting to know me better. It's almost as if they *resent* my joining the family, as though I'm not good enough for them.

(B)

I'm extremely lucky, I guess. Even before I got married, my future in-laws have been like my own family. We take vacations together, we *speculate* on stocks and real estate together, we vote the same way, and *root* for the same sports teams. Sometimes I think I get along with my in-laws better than my spouse does.

### 7. What's the difference in your life between friends and relatives?

(A)

I've chosen my friends; my relatives have been *thrust* upon me, whether I like them or not. As far as I'm concerned, we have far too many family reunions.

(B)

Friends may come and go, but our relatives are always with us. They provide most of the continuity we enjoy throughout our varied lives. Even when relatives fight, they still understand one another; but when friends fight they become *mortal enemies*.



→ **resent** : feel or show displeasure or anger at (sth/sb)

→ **speculate** : buy or sell, esp. at the risk of a loss, in the hope of making a large profit

→ **root** : strongly support a team or player    → **thrust** : push forcefully

→ **mortal enemy** : enemy to the death

## 8. Is blood thicker than water?

M : "Blood is thicker than water." What a silly saying. Anybody can see that.

F : It's not supposed to be taken literally. It's a kind of *metaphor*.

M : For what?

F : Well, "blood" is one's relatives. They are more important than anyone else.

M : Oh, so that's what it means! But I still think it's silly.

F : Really? Why?

M : Most times, being related to somebody else is just an artificial category. Most of my relatives barely know who I am, and I don't know them very well either.

F : You must have some relatives you're close too.

M : Well, of course, my parents and my brother. And I'm close to a few of my cousins. But most of them are almost strangers.

F : That's odd. In my case, even though there are a lot of us, we stay in very close contact. I'd be lost without my relatives.

M : Maybe it's because my family has a lot of divorces. Whenever some of us get together we have to first *figure out* who's "yours, mine, or ours."

F : But don't your relatives help you out when you're in a *jam*? I know mine do.

M : Sure they do. I have to admit that. But, you know, they have to do it, just because they're relatives. It's not because they want to. But I can always tell who my real friends are, because they volunteer to help me out even though they aren't *obligated*.

F : I'm glad you have friends you can rely on. But I'm grateful that I'm part of an *involuntary* system, as you call it, because then I never have to worry about whether or not I have any *genuine* friends. I will always have relatives!

→metaphor : way of describing (sth) by comparing it to (sth) else

→figure out : understand; solve →jam : difficult situation

→be obligated : feel that one has to do (sth)

→involuntary : happening or done without being intended →genuine : real

# ISSUE 31

## Who Has the Most Stressful Job?

No one has a harder job than miners. They work long hours deep underground. The work is dirty and dangerous. At any time, the earth may collapse around them. If they are not crushed to death immediately, they will die soon from lack of air. Even if they have enough air, they may starve to death while their rescuers try to find them. But even if they are lucky and never have any accidents, the air they breathe is extremely dirty, so they usually suffer from decades of serious lung disease.

### Who has the most stressful job, in your opinion?

- (1) Taxi/bus/truck driver
- (2) Salesperson
- (3) Police officer
- (4) Doctor or nurse
- (5) Homemaker
- (6) President
- (7) Lawyer
- (8) Professional athlete
- (9) CEO
- (10) The jobless



# Sample Answers

(A) People in sales have *tremendously* stressful jobs because they work on *commission*. In other words, they get a percentage of how much they sell. Part of the stress, then, is due to wage instability. One week they may do very well, and the next they may sell nothing at all. So, it is very hard to plan ahead financially. The other part of the stress is in making the *sales pitch* itself; the customer somehow has to be persuaded not only that he needs the product *in question* but that he needs it right now.

(B) The head of any government has a terribly hard time at his job because he is under constant pressure from every direction. He has to make political, legal, military, economic, diplomatic, and social policies while also managing public relations effectively. It's no wonder that pictures of presidents show them aging rapidly through the course of their administration.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What is the most stressful part of your job?  
How could this stress be *lessened*?
2. Do you think there is any relationship between the degree of stress and the payment for a job?
3. What is the most effective way of *coping with* stress?
4. Some people insist that stress is necessary to be *productive*. Do you agree? Why?
5. What are some *symptoms* of stress?
6. Can anyone enjoy job-related stress? If so, how? If not, why not?

→**tremendous** : very great in size, amount, or intensity

→**commission** : amount of money made every time a product is sold →**sales pitch** : high-pressure sales talk

→**in question** : under consideration →**lessen** : reduce →**cope with** : deal well with

→**productive** : leading to a useful result →**symptom** : sign of disorder or disease

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. What is the most stressful part of your job? How could this stress be lessened?

(A)

I'm a teacher, and the most stressful aspect of my job is dealing with the parents. They always want special favors for their children, and they never respect my professionalism. The stress could be reduced greatly if people would only realize I'm there to help their children get an education, not to cause trouble for them.

(B)

Being an air traffic controller is the most stressful job in the world. We have to make life-and-death decisions all day long, hurriedly, despite the ever-changing traffic patterns. By the end of the day, I'm an emotional wreck. We should get shorter hours and more controllers to help us.

## 2. Do you think there is any relationship between the degree of stress and the payment for a job?

(A)

The higher one goes up the *corporate ladder*, the more responsibility there is and the higher the amount of stress. So, yes, I think there is a close relationship.

(B)

The relationship between pay and stress is *inverse*. The people with the highest salaries do the least work; they "make decisions" and *delegate* all the tasks to their *underlings*. Instead of being under stress, they are the ones who put the stress on the shoulders of others.

## 3. What is the most effective way of coping with stress?

(A)

Nothing *beats* good relaxation. I try to make sure that I have a half hour or so of quiet time in the afternoon, when I just close my eyes and rest. I don't think I ever actually fall asleep, but when my "nap" is *through* I feel refreshed and energized.

→**wreck** : in a disorderly or worn-out state

→**corporate ladder** : hierarchical order of position, title, or rank in a corporation →**inverse** : exactly opposite

→**delegate** : give part of one's work, duties, or responsibilities to (sb) who is more junior

→**underling** : worker who is ranked beneath another; subordinate →**beat** : do better than →**through** : finished

(B)

People need to completely separate home and work. I never take work home with me, never even talk about or think about work-related matters. I enjoy my colleagues, but I don't want to spend my free time with them, because I know our job situation will *end up* being the main topic of conversation. Similarly, I refuse to take my home to the office. Any problems I'm having with my spouse or kids can be dealt with at home; I'm too busy at work to be distracted by them. One stressful situation at a time is enough to deal with.

#### 4. Some people insist that stress is necessary to be productive. Do you agree? Why?

(A)

I used to complain about stress all the time, but I always managed to do my job. I'm sure if I would have relaxed more, I would not have accomplished as much. When I look back at my success, and the challenges I had to overcome, it was all worth it.

(B)

Stress is *counter*-productive. We all work at a different pace, and hurrying to get more done is merely *self-defeating*. We should concentrate on the task at hand and complete it to the best of our ability before moving on to the next one. Then projects would not have to be finished in a *slip-shod* manner or redone, and we would all have fewer health problems as well.

#### 5. What are some symptoms of stress?

(A)

When work really *gets me down*, I get severe headaches and can't concentrate. I don't sleep very well. And, unfortunately, I also find myself drinking more. At times like this, I know I should just take some time off, but usually the stress *manifests* itself in the middle of a project, not when it is nearly complete, so I can't quit. I just have to *grit my teeth* and keep working until I'm done.

(B)

The worst thing about stress is that it *erodes* one's joy of life. I'm normally a pretty *outgoing* sort of person who finds a lot of things to laugh about. A smile is part of my usual *attire*. But when the *going* gets tough, I know that only the tough get going, so I have to *abandon* my carefree attitude and get serious about my job. I'm afraid the Stressed-Out Me is not a very pleasant fellow for my family and colleagues to be with, but at least he's only temporary. Eventually, Mr. Nice Guy comes back.

# Speak Your Mind Helpers

## 6. Can anyone enjoy job-related stress? If so, how? If not, why not?

F : I sure admire your boss. He always seems to accomplish his goals.

M : Well, he's hard to work for sometimes. But I agree that he gets a lot done.

F : He must be under a lot of stress these days, considering the *adverse* business conditions he has to *confront*.

M : Yes, but I think he *thrives* on it. The more stressful the situation, the harder he *bears down*. It's the rest of us who feel the stress more — from him!

F : Maybe if everything worked fine all the time, he wouldn't get anything done.

M : Maybe so, but that situation will never exist. He'll always find some new challenge to *inflict* on us. And on himself too, of course. That's just the way he is. He's *driven*. He can't relax or *let up* for a moment.

F : Don't you wish you were like that?

M : No, not at all. Money and position are nice, of course, but they aren't the most important things in life. I would never want to get to the point where I was dying and all I had to look back on in life was my *bank balance*. I'd rather live my life to the fullest.

F : I guess that explains why he's the boss and you aren't.

M : I guess so. But the stress is *taking its toll* on him as well.

F : What do you mean?

- **adverse** : unfavorable; negative; unpleasant      → **confront** : directly deal with
- **strive** : use much effort or energy to do (sth)      → **bear down** : work hard and relentlessly
- **inflict** : cause (sth) unpleasant; impose      → **driven** : as though forced (by sth)
- **let up** : lessen pace, force, or intensity      → **bank balance** : amount of money in a bank account
- **take its toll** : harm or damage (sb/sth), esp. in a gradual way

M : He looks tired all the time. His eyes are red, and he has dark circles under them. There's a constant worried look on his face. And I've never seen him so *irritable*.

F : That doesn't sound good.

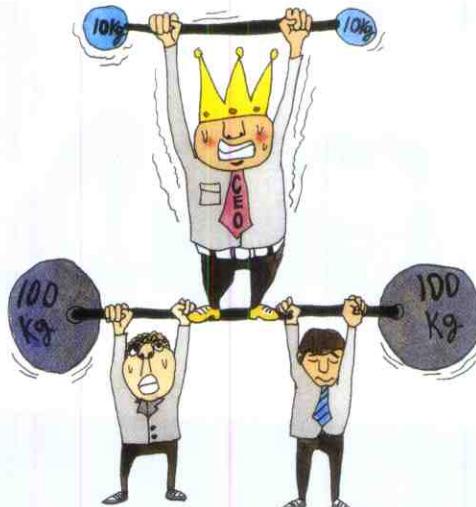
M : No. I'm worried about his health. He's always had problems with his ulcers, but now he's smoking and drinking more than he used to. I'm afraid he's going to have a heart attack if he keeps this up.

F : His home life must be suffering as well.

M : Probably so. I know he's always had trouble spending any time with his family. I hear that his wife is seeking a divorce. And he's never been close to his kids.

F : Hmmmm. Maybe you're right, after all. *Putting it all in perspective*, maybe he's concentrated on the wrong things in life.

M : I think so. At least when I *knock off* for the day, my time is my own to enjoy as I *see fit*. He never has any time of his own.



-*irritable* : easily annoyed or angered

-*put (sth) in perspective* : regard (sth) in terms of relative importance

-*knock off* : stop working

-*see fit* : desire

# ISSUE 32

## Women are Becoming More Powerful

Women have become the locomotives of our society. They are emerging as the leaders in all walks of life and are the boss in many families. For instance, according to a recent survey, women have the decisive vote in buying the family car. Do you agree with the results of the survey, based on your own family situation?

In what matters do women have the primary decision-making power?

- (1) Children's education
- (2) Buying a car
- (3) Eating out
- (4) Planning a vacation
- (5) Where to live
- (6) Visiting in-laws



→ **locomotive** : powerful force that makes other things happen or succeed

→ **emerge** : appear or come out from somewhere

→ **walks of life** : positions in society, esp. the types of job

# Sample Answers

- (A) If it were up to me, I would visit my in-laws as infrequently as possible. This is not because I think they are bad people, but they live far away. However, my wife insists that we visit once a month. To be fair, she also makes it a point that we visit my parents every month also. But that only leaves me two weekends a month to do what I want to do.
- (B) My husband still makes all the important family decisions. But he closely *consults* me. If I don't agree with his judgment, he will usually change his mind.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Who is the *breadwinner* in your family? Who manages the *finances* in your family? Are these the same person?
2. Can the husband in your family invite his friends to your house without the wife's prior permission?
3. Can the husband come home whenever he wants, no matter how late, whether the wife likes it or not?
4. Who has the stronger voice in deciding to buy things such as a car or furniture? The man or the woman of the house?
5. How have women gained a *dominant* role throughout our society as well as in the family?

→ **consult** : discuss (sth) with (sb) in order to make a decision together

→ **breadwinner** : member of a family who earns the money to support the others

→ **finances** : money that a person, company, organization etc. has available

→ **dominant** : ruling or controlling

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Who is the breadwinner in your family? Who manages the finances in your family? Are these the same person?

(A)

I always *turn over* my pay to my wife so I don't have to take the time out of my own busy schedule to take care of the daily spending necessities. As a result, we always have fresh food on the table, and I have the comfort of knowing that the *basics* are well taken care of.

(B)

My husband and I both work. We jointly plan our household finances, and we each contribute to the family's *budget*. But we always make sure that we have money left over that is not mutually *accountable*. It's very nice to know that I can take a trip or buy a painting or give to a charity on my own, without worrying whether my husband will approve. This way I'm working for myself, not just my family.

## 2. Can the husband in your family invite his friends to your house without the wife's prior permission?

(A)

I have no *objection* to my husband's friends visiting our house; they are always welcome. But I do object to being surprised by their arrival. I'd like to know ahead of time so I can be prepared to welcome them with the full *hospitality* my home can offer.

(B)

I've noticed that my wife's friends are free to drop by whenever *they* like, without any sort of *prior* warning or invitation. All *they* do is sit around and gossip, while our normal family routine is interrupted. But if I ever bring my pals home with me, they're treated as though they are nuisances. And then, after they leave, I know that my wife will have plenty to say about not being given any advance notice. Reminding her about her friends' visits never seems to have any effect on the tone of the conversation.

→**turn over** : give (sth) to (sb) →**basics** : simple necessary things

→**budget** : amount of money a person or organization has to spend on (sth)

→**accountable** : responsible for the effects of one's actions →**objection** : feeling of disapproval or disagreement

→**hospitality** : friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers

→**prior** : coming before in time, order, or importance

### 3. Can the husband come home whenever he wants, no matter how late, whether the wife likes it or not?

(A)

I can come home any time I want to, even if I've had much too much to drink, as long as I'm prepared to sleep on the couch or in the car. But at least I have a hot breakfast waiting for me the next morning.

(B)

I realize that sometimes my husband can't control how early he comes home. Entertaining customers is an important part of his business. But he calls me to keep me informed about his estimated arrival time. At least then I don't have to worry about something having happened to him, like an accident. And I know that he always tries to be back at a reasonable hour, so we can spend some time together and still get enough sleep to stay healthy.

### 4. Who has the stronger voice in deciding to buy things such as a car or furniture? The man or the woman of the house?

(A)

In our house we have a simple rule: if it is strictly for the house, my wife makes all the decisions. If it is something entirely for business, I decide. But we have to reach an agreement on everything else. Sometimes my opinion *prevails* and sometimes it's my wife's *call*.

(B)

My husband thinks he makes all the decisions, so he is very happy about the way we dress and the way our house looks. Once in awhile, on unimportant matters, I let him do whatever he wants. I know the value of *stroking* his male ego, but I also know that he doesn't have very good taste or even sometimes very much sense about these matters.

→ **prevail** : be the strongest influence in a situation

→ **call** : decision

→ **stroke** : promote feelings of self-approval, as by flattery

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

### 5. How have women gained a dominant role throughout our society as well as in the family?

M : Did you read the paper? It looks like another country is going to have a woman president soon.

F : What? That's not news! There've been lots of female presidents and prime ministers. Most of them have been better than the men who usually *run* their countries.

M : Are you claiming that women are superior to men?

F : Well, aren't they? Do you deny the point I'm making? How would you *account for* it then?

M : Not all the women in those positions did a particularly good job, though I'll *concede* that most of them were excellent. But it's not a matter of gender.

F : What is it, then?

M : Well, some people are negatively *prejudged*. Maybe it's sex or race or family background. But no one expects them to get ahead. Most occupations, especially in government and politics, kept women out for a long time. So some very talented person, who happens to be a woman, climbs to the top of her profession and does an exceptional job because she had to work even harder than her male rivals to get to that position. If she had been a man and had accomplished the same things, no one would mention his gender; but a woman, or anyone else who does not *fit* the stereotype, would be especially noticed *on that account* alone. But as more women succeed, gender will become less *remarkable*.

→**run** : conduct, manage, or perform (sth)

→**account for** : explain or give the reason for (sth)

→**concede** : admit (sth) as true or real, esp. unwillingly or hesitantly

→**prejudge** : make a judgment about (sb/sth) before everything is known about it

→**fit** : belong to a particular group or set of ideas →**on that account** : for that reason

→**remarkable** : unusual or surprising

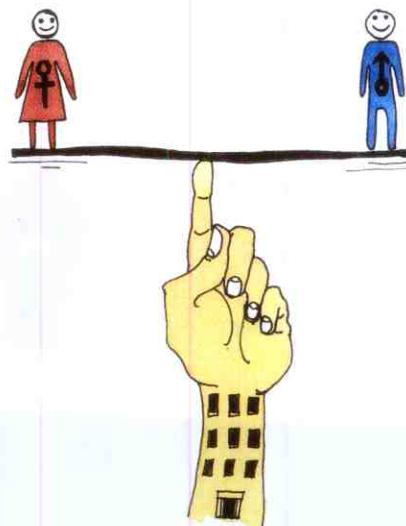
F : You think you have a smart answer for everything, don't you? Why don't you just admit it: Women are smarter than men. That's why you *kept us down* for millennia, because you knew you couldn't compete with us in a fair contest. So you made sure we would stay uneducated and stuck at home raising the kids.

M : Most men are much bigger and stronger than most women, and of course men can't have babies. So it's true that men did most of the hard work outside the home, and women took care of the family. Now, most jobs don't need physical strength to perform, and families are a lot smaller. So men opened many opportunities to women. But neither men nor women are smarter than the other just because of their gender.

F : Men did no such thing! Men did everything they could to keep their women down. It was the women who forced men to hire and promote them. Some men were smart enough to realize that the job would get done better if women did it, that's all.

M : Somehow I get the feeling that I'm the one who is being told that merely because of my sexual identity I'm automatically being placed in an inferior role. It was wrong for men to do that to women, and I think it's wrong for women to do that to men as well.

F : Get used to it. It's *pay back time!*



→ **keep (sb) down** : stop (sb) from achieving one's potential  
→ **payback time** : time to punish (sb) who has harmed one in the past

# ISSUE 33

## Teens Who Smoke and Drink

The one thing teenagers do not want to be is "teens." It is too much like being "tweens" — between infancy and maturity. They know they are no longer children, so they have to take responsibility for their actions, but they want to be treated as adults who are fully free to make choices on their own. But instead they are caught in the middle. So they often try to pretend to be adults by adopting the only adult vices they can easily get away with, like smoking and drinking.

### Why do teens smoke and drink, despite the known bad effects?

- (1) They think it will make them look sophisticated.
- (2) They cave in to peer pressure.
- (3) They start out being merely curious, but then the practice becomes habitual.
- (4) They think they can stop anytime they want.
- (5) They are merely copying adults' bad habits.
- (6) They don't think about getting old or sick, or about the potentially tragic consequences of their actions.



-adopt : accept and use (sth)    vice : bad habit

-get away with : manage to do (sth) bad without being punished or criticized for it

-sophisticated : having worldly knowledge and confidence    -cave in : suddenly stop opposing (sth)

-start out : begin as one thing but develop into (sth) else    -potential : possible    -consequence : result

# Sample Answers

(A) It would be wrong to blame the media for kids smoking and drinking — young people did those things long before modern communications were invented. Nonetheless, the mass marketers know the effects of image-making and are well aware that there are few things regarded as more “cool” than the young *rebel defying* the false values of an older, powerful, yet *corrupt* generation. The easiest way to *portray* that image is by showing a good-looking, charismatic actor or actress smoking or drinking or taking drugs or engaged in illicit sexual activity.

(B) Teenagers are the hope and future of the world. They are still full of energy and idealism; anything is possible. The old ways of doing things don’t work, so they are *defiantly* ready to try different approaches. Their view of the world is not shaped by any long history they have lived through, so they are still open to new possibilities. But, although they may be the future, they are not yet the present. So their restlessness is often *diverted* into unhealthy habits as they experiment with activities their parents do not approve of.

## Speak Your Mind

1. What do you think of teenagers who smoke and drink?
2. Do you think teenagers are genuinely aware of the dangers of smoking and drinking?
3. Do you think parents have a right to *forbid* their teenage children to smoke and drink?
4. If your teenage child refused to stop smoking or drinking, what would you do about it?
5. Are there any effective ways to avoid acting under peer pressure?
6. What should government do to keep young people from *liquor* and tobacco?
7. Are adults mainly responsible for teenagers smoking and drinking? If so, how?
8. Are the media responsible for teenagers smoking and drinking?

→**rebel** : (sb) who opposes authority or opposes accepted ways of doing things  
→**defy** : oppose or resist (sb/sth) openly    →**corrupt** : immoral; dishonest  
→**portray** : show or describe (sb/sth) in a particular way    →**defiant** : boldly resisting  
→**divert** : cause (sb/sth) to change course or turn from one direction to another  
→**forbid** : order (sb) not to do (sth)    →**liquor** : alcoholic beverage

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. What do you think of teenagers who smoke and drink?

(A) Teenagers are like anyone else. Smoking and drinking may be bad habits, but that does not mean smokers and drinkers are necessarily bad people. Kids who *indulge* in their behaviors do so for the same reasons anyone else does, as a way to adjust to their social roles or to find some excitement in life. I agree they should be discouraged from doing so — but, then, so should every adult as well.

(B) Kids who try to act like adults by adopting bad adult behaviors are just fooling themselves. These actions do not make them "more adult," it just makes them seem even more childish. They should *act their age* and enjoy their youth while they still have it; they will have plenty of time later on, when they would like to be kids again but can't.

## 2. Do you think teenagers are genuinely aware of the dangers of smoking and drinking?

(A) Almost everyone knows about the health risks involved. But they only "know" this intellectually, not in a way that affects them personally. By the time the bad physical effects begin to be obvious, most people are already well into middle age and heavily *addicted*.

(B) Most smokers and drinkers, no matter how young they are, will readily admit that they are engaging in unhealthy behavior. The problem is that people apply their statistical knowledge to other people, not to themselves. Unfortunately, we don't really learn much from the mistakes of others; usually, we learn only from our own, after much of the preventable damage has been done.

## 3. Do you think parents have a right to forbid their teenage children to smoke and drink?

(A) If parents don't have a right to control their children's actions, who does? Even if we give that authority to others, such as the government or schools, the restrictions will not mean much unless backed by parental enforcement.

→ **indulge** : allow oneself some special pleasure; have or do what one wants

→ **act one's age** : behave in a way that is appropriate

→ **addicted** : unable to quit an undesirable behavior

(B) Teenagers are not really "children." They are just not legally adults. But their moral and individual sense is fully mature. By the time anyone is a teenager, he no longer needs someone twice his age to tell him what to do; and any parental attempt to try to restrict a teen's activities is largely *doomed to failure*.

#### 4. If your teenage child refused to stop smoking or drinking, what would you do about it?

(A) Parents still control *the purse strings*, don't they? So all they need to do is make sure their children don't have money to spend on cigarettes or alcohol, and the problem is solved. For a while, the kids might be able to depend on their own friends buying these products for them, but sooner or later the other kids will get tired of *subsidizing* their buddies' habit.

(B) The wise parent tries to avoid the micromanagement of his teenage child's behavior. Such attempts are both *futile* and *resented*. The parent should try to put himself in his child's position and realize how ineffective the attempts were to control his own life when he was that age. Instead, he should talk honestly to his son or daughter and say why he thinks the behavior is bad for the child. Teenagers may be naturally rebellious against adults in general and their parents specifically, but they can't help loving and respecting them at the same time. Usually, they just need to be treated as responsible human beings and will eventually behave that way if given the chance.

#### 5. Are there any effective ways to avoid acting under peer pressure?

(A) All people want to feel like they are an important *ingredient* in their social salad, but teenagers are generally the most dependent on others' approval. Adults usually have the ability to choose their own fellows on the basis of shared attitudes and activities, but kids have fewer options. They are basically stuck with their neighbors, relatives, and classmates. And they are usually *insecure* in their own self-identity. So it is extremely difficult for them to behave in an independent, anti-social manner.

(B) A person needs two things to resist peer pressure: 1) an understanding of his own moral code of behavior and 2) the courage and confidence to stick to that code. Some people develop these two characteristics at a very early age and others never do.

→ **doomed to failure** : sure to fail

→ **the purse strings** : money → **subsidize** : pay part of the cost of (sth)

→ **futile** : useless; hopeless → **resent** : feel angry or upset

→ **ingredient** : element in a mixture → **insecure** : doubtful; lacking self-confidence

# Speak Your Mind Helpers

## 6. What should government do to keep young people from liquor and tobacco?

- (A) Laws should be made and enforced that will make it hard for young people to obtain those products. Selling them in unsupervised *vending machines* should be strictly prohibited. Salesclerks and bartenders who sell these items to minors, and any adults who buy them on their behalf, should be severely punished when caught. In addition, a lot more money should be spent on educating people about the health risks involved.
- (B) No matter how well-intentioned (and strict) a government is, it cannot fully control the minds and actions of young people. They will always find a way to do what *they* wish, no matter how severe the potential punishment. So, young people need to be persuaded that it is not in their own interest to engage in unhealthy activity.

## 7. Are adults mainly responsible for teenagers smoking and drinking? If so, how?

- (A) It's funny. Teenagers are not only in rebellion against adult authority but they are also *keen* to *emulate* adult behavior. Because role models of all sorts (celebrities, athletes, respected relatives, teachers, religious leaders, etc.) routinely engage in bad behavior, they send out dual messages: 1) that the behavior itself is OK and 2) that they are *hypocrites* to *denounce* it. Until the responsible adult community is ready to behave uniformly like responsible adults, it should not expect its offspring to do any differently.
- (B) Teenagers can't *shirk* responsibility for their own actions. They are not *gullible* little kids any more, easily manipulated and powerless to act on their own. They are not *naive* about the health risks involved. They deliberately and consciously choose to smoke and drink and could just as easily choose not to.

→**vending machine** : machine that provides items (cigarettes, candy, drinks etc.) in exchange for money  
→**keen** : very interested in (sth) or very eager to do it →**emulate** : copy  
→**hypocrite** : (sb) who pretends to believe (sth) or behave contrary to actual beliefs or actions  
→**denounce** : condemn (sb/sth) openly →**shirk** : avoid or neglect (a task or duty)  
→**gullible** : easily deceived or tricked →**naive** : simple like a child; inexperienced

## 8. Are the media responsible for teenagers smoking and drinking?

M : Did you see that?

F : See what?

M : That commercial!

F : Mmmmm. I guess I wasn't really paying close attention. Why? What happened?

M : This is what's wrong with our kids' generation.

F : I don't understand. Can you explain to me what you mean, please?

M : Absolutely. Just look at any of these tobacco and alcohol ads. These uniformly *feature* good-looking young people having a great time smoking and drinking, perhaps while *ostensibly* engaged in some other activity such as dancing or playing sports or just driving around in a fancy car.

F : Yes, that's right. So?

M : Well, kids see these ads and think, "I want to be like that. I want to have a good time. I want to be accepted by attractive, beautiful people. So I will act the same way."

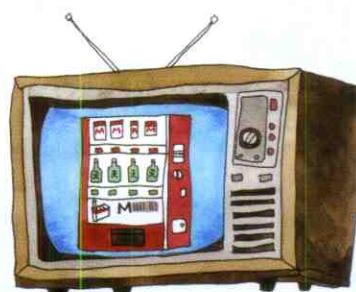
F : Maybe they think so at some level, but it's not really that conscious on their part.

M : Yes! That's exactly the problem. If they were acting fully consciously, we'd be able to talk some sense into them. But instead they're like robots, programmed by Big Business to spend their money on dangerous, addictive products.

F : I think that's true, but I also think you're *exaggerating*. The media may be guilty of encouraging teens to drink and smoke, but they can't be held responsible for the basic desires people have.

M : Why not? If a married woman is "naturally" inclined to be sexually attracted to men, a man can still be punished for leading her into *adultery*.

F : Teens have always wanted to be regarded as older than they are, because they think adults have all the freedom and fun. However, by the time they have kids of their own, they want to be thought of as younger than their actual age, because they think kids have all the freedom and fun. The advertisers are happy to try to *exploit* both attitudes. That's why you dye your hair black and worry about your weight.



→**feature** : show    →**ostensibly** : pretending to do (sth) for one reason, but actually having another purpose

→**exaggerate** : make (sth) seem better, larger, worse etc. than it really is

→**adultery** : sex between a married person and (sb) other than his or her lawful spouse

→**exploit** : use (sth) to the greatest possible advantage

# ISSUE 34

## Poverty

Despite a global rise in prosperity in the late 19th century, many people still live in poverty. Some nations seem characterized by a general lack of opportunity, resources, and food, while even in rich, industrialized countries many residents find it difficult to maintain a decent standard of living. Sometimes the underlying problem is one of distribution; other times, it is a drought or famine. The political order in some cases is committed to providing basic needs to its entire population and in others to promoting some groups or interests at the expense of others. But, in general, the old observation that the rich get richer seems to be especially true these days.

What causes poverty to persist even though society continues to advance materially?

- (1) Individual irresponsibility
- (2) Social structure
- (3) Lack of education
- (4) Economic fluctuation
- (5) Inadequate resources
- (6) Corrupt government



→ **prosperity** : having a lot of money

→ **underlying** : basic; fundamental

→ **distribution** : how (sth) is shared

→ **drought** : long period of little or no rainfall

→ **famine** : serious, widespread shortage of food

→ **at the expense of (sb)** : causing pain or financial loss to (sb)

→ **observation** : comment or remark

→ **persist** : continue; last

→ **fluctuation** : frequent changes in the amount, value, or level of (sth)

# Sample Answers

(A) No matter what a society may be willing to do to help its disadvantaged, unfortunately there are always going to be some people who unfairly take advantage of the system. There are going to be some completely healthy people who are too lazy to work or learn a skill. We can't just let them starve, but it still seems immoral to reward their *shiftlessness* when so many worthy poor need help.

(B) Education is expensive — but not as expensive as ignorance. Nearly everyone can improve his or her economic position by learning a profitable skill or being retrained in new skills. But the positive effects tend to be evident later rather than immediately, and people who have no money are often focused almost *exclusively* on the present. After all, if someone is worried about the next meal, he is not usually able to *think ahead* to how much better things may be a year from now.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you think the number of poor people is going up or down? Why?
2. What makes someone rich or poor?
3. The poor are often said to be lazy. Is this a true observation or just a prejudice?
4. The rich are often said to be selfish. Is this true or a generalization?
5. Poverty, like wealth, is often said to be inherited. Can you explain what that means?
6. What are some of the potential social problems when poverty *skyrockets*?
7. Is society responsible for the poor?

→ **shiftless** : lazy and not interested in anything

→ **exclusive** : complete

→ **think ahead** : contemplate the future

→ **skyrocket** : rise rapidly or suddenly

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Do you think the number of poor people is going up or down? Why?

(A)

As someone once said, "God must surely love the poor because He made so many of them." And the number keeps rising. It is *heartbreaking* to see the mass poverty that *characterizes* large areas of the globe; but even in a modern, prosperous city, one only needs to travel a few minutes to find equally tragic scenes of human misery.

(B)

The media like to focus on the most visually dramatic scenes, but by so doing they often *misrepresent* reality. In fact, the great mass of *humanity* is much better off than ever before. While there are still areas that *stubbornly* resist noticeable improvement, in general, people everywhere are living longer, healthier lives than at any time in history.

## 2. What makes someone rich or poor?

(A)

When I was growing up, my family never had any money, but all of our neighbors were in the same position, so we never thought we were poor. We were quite rich, in fact, in everything except money. The whole family had to work, but we never went hungry; we didn't have any fancy new clothes, but we were never naked. In many ways, though now I am much better off financially, I miss those days and believe that they were the best time of my life.

(B)

There may be *absolute* measurements of poverty — having a minimum number of calories consumed each day, for instance — but most of our notions about poverty are *comparative*. If I drive around in a ten-year-old car, get new clothes once or twice a year, and have ready *access* to a phone, TV, and a computer, I might think I am poor because my neighbors own two or three new cars, constantly wear the latest fashions and jewelry, and live in a large house that is fully equipped with all the modern *gadgets*. But, all over the world, my own humble life style would be the envy of millions of people without work, without any material possessions at all, and without hope. It is all relative, really.

- **heartbreaking** : making one feel very sad or upset      → **characterize** : be a typical quality or feature of (sb/sth)
- **misrepresent** : give a false account or description      → **humanity** : all people
- **stubborn** : very difficult to change      → **absolute** : true or right in all situations
- **comparative** : relative      → **access** : capability to enter, reach, or use      → **gadget** : small mechanical device

### 3. The poor are often said to be lazy. Is this a true observation or just a prejudice?

(A)

Of course they're lazy! I don't believe it is possible that anyone with any *gumption* at all, who is willing to accept any honest job offered, is forced to remain in poverty. What many of these people want is a *hand-out*, not a helping hand.

(B)

I know many poor people who have the worst jobs imaginable — dirty, dangerous, difficult, *depressing* — and *barely* make a decent living. They work long, hard hours and have neither the time nor the *inclination* to spend their money on foolish things. And yet you claim you would rather starve than work for such a low wage or have such a *degrading* occupation. Which one of you is the lazy one?

### 4. The rich are often said to be selfish. Is this true or a generalization?

(A)

I have never met any really wealthy people who weren't extraordinarily cheap. They can afford anything they want, but purposely *get by* on as little as possible. Instead of spending their money, they invest it all, so they never have any *cash*. When they die, their heirs will be very wealthy and will perhaps live happier lives by spending the money on *pleasurable* things.

(B)

"All" rich people are not alike. Many are indeed selfish, just as many poor people are. But others are extraordinarily generous and have the *means* to put their generosity to work for the *betterment* of others. They *fund* charities, museums, hospitals, schools, and social services of all sorts.

- **gumption** : boldness, courage, or spirit      → **hand-out** : money or goods given to needy people
- **depressing** : making one feel very sad      → **barely** : by very little; hardly
- **inclination** : natural tendency to act in a certain way      → **degrading** : causing one to lose one's self-respect
- **get by** : survive or manage to live or continue      → **pleasurable** : agreeable; pleasant
- **means** : amount of money, property, income, etc.      → **betterment** : improvement      → **fund** : provide money for (sth)

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

5. Poverty, like wealth, is often said to be inherited. Can you explain what that means?

(A)

Poverty is as much a matter of attitude as it is an actual lack of money. People who are poor are poorly educated, lack medical care, and depend on other people for their *sustenance*. Their children then, growing up in that environment of *dependency*, become exactly like them. It is very hard to break out of the cycle of poverty without some sense of possibility of doing so.

(B)

We all start out in life with our own advantages and disadvantages. To some extent we inherit our parents' intelligence, status, possessions, and attitudes, but we use them or abuse them on our own. In the end what matters is how we apply the resources available to us, not how we acquire those resources.

6. What are some of the potential social problems when poverty skyrockets?

(A)

Hungry, oppressed people are driven by circumstance to seek to destroy the system that *exploits* them. They may be willing to endure their poverty if they are convinced that no one is unfairly living well, at their expense, but once they become convinced that the rich and powerful are *profiting* from their *despair*, the situation is *ripe* for revolution.

(B)

No matter how rich I may be as an individual, I am diminished by the *filth*, ignorance, and disease of others. If I have a *disposable income* that is capable of making myself overweight, how can I in good conscience allow a child to starve? For many, the answer is that they grow *callous* to their consciences. The *degradation* that we ignore becomes ours as we lose our connection to the rest of humanity.

→**sustenance** : means of supporting oneself →**dependency** : situation in which one needs (sb/sth) else to survive

→**exploit** : make use of (sb/sth) selfishly or unethically →**profit** : gain an advantage; benefit

→**despair** : complete lack of hope →**ripe** : fully prepared; ready →**filth** : extremely dirty substance

→**disposable income** : amount of money one has after necessary bills are paid →**callous** : unkind and not caring that other people are suffering →**degradation** : situation or condition that makes (sb) feel ashamed and angry

## 7. Is society responsible for the poor?

F : We must do something to *eliminate* poverty.

M : It's not our problem.

F : Of course it's our problem! How can you *sit back* and let babies starve?

M : There are too many starving babies for me to feed, and new ones are being born all the time. I work hard to make sure that my own babies are not starving, and I don't have any resources left to feed the millions who are. If their parents worked as hard taking care of their children as I do mine, they wouldn't have to worry about their babies starving; the problem would take care of itself.

F : That's just blaming the victim instead of working to solve the problem.

M : Don't you have any problems at home that need to be fixed? Why don't you spend your energy taking care of your own problems and stop worrying about the problems of others? If everyone would do that, there would be fewer problems.

F : I'm fully capable of taking care of my own problems, thank you. But I also feel that we have an obligation to help those who, through no fault of their own, can't properly take care of theirs.

M : And what do you propose to do about it?

F : A modest tax on everyone — the price of a DVD every week, let's say — would provide an enormous fund. We could use that money to buy food, build houses, establish schools and hospitals. We could end or greatly reduce poverty in just a generation.

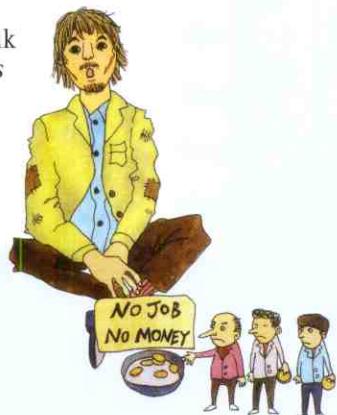
M : As long as I can remember, people have told me that. In my lifetime, billions of dollars have been spent and thousands of organizations have been created to fight poverty. But it seems to me that the basic situation hasn't changed a bit. To me, that just shows that all of that money has been wasted.

F : No. In addition to poverty relief, the money has *spurred* employment.

M : Thousands of people have gained jobs as a result of these programs, that's true, but none of these jobs went to the poor people themselves, only to the ones raising the money and distributing it. Hardly a *dent* has been made in employing poor people and ending poverty. I don't know, maybe these people enjoy poverty, or at least they enjoy it more than actually doing something about it.

F : They need help to do something about it. I heard you talk about people *lifting themselves up by their own bootstraps* — you just try that sometime and you'll find yourself *flat on the ground*. It's impossible. We all need someone else to lift us up.

M : I don't think it is my responsibility to solve all the world's problems. But if you can show me even one program that actually works as advertised, instead of merely *funneling* funds into the pockets of the rich, I'll gladly think about changing my opinion. Until then, leave me alone, I have my own issues to deal with.



→ **eliminate** : get rid of; remove    → **sit back** : stop making an effort

→ **spur** : encourage (sb) to do (sth)    → **dent** : noticeable effect

→ **lift (pull) oneself up by one's bootstraps** : become richer or more successful through one's own hard work

→ **flat on the ground** : lying flat    → **funnel** : supply money or goods

# ISSUE 35

## Internet

Just a few years back, who would have thought that almost anyone, for almost no money, could instantaneously communicate with anyone else on the planet, retrieve information from any library, publish a book, obtain music or movies, play interactive games, buy anything, get a degree, or find a date, just by using one simple device? And now that that is the reality, who can imagine living in a world without the internet?

### What do you mostly use the internet for?

- (1) Games
- (2) Email
- (3) Net surfing
- (4) Finding particular information
- (5) Chatting
- (6) Club activities
- (7) Shopping
- (8) Dating



→instantaneously : immediately

→retrieve : obtain

→(net) surfing : looking at various sites one after another (on the internet)

# Sample Answers

- (A) I don't know about you, but every day I have a couple of hundred emails to go through. The vast majority of them turn out to be *spam*, but I still have to open each message to find out what its contents are before I can *delete* it. *Aside from* taking up much of my precious time every day, it is also causing my eyes to go bad.
- (B) I can't get enough of online gaming. The activity has not *only* made me many friends around the world, but it has also improved my *reflexes*, coordination, and reasoning ability. So I don't think it is a waste of time at all — it is good training for life.

## Speak Your Mind

1. How many hours a day do you use the internet?
2. Who is the most vulnerable to internet addiction?
3. Can you imagine your life without the internet?
4. Discuss the main characteristics of the following media: television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, DVDs, the internet.
5. Which medium is the most trustworthy? Why?
6. Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. How many hours a day do you use the internet?

(A) It's hard to estimate actually. I constantly check my email, probably five or six times a day. Sometimes my box is empty and sometimes I have a lot of messages to respond to. Usually when I get home from work I play a game. So I guess that, on average, I probably spend four or five hours a day, maybe less. (Wow! Four or five hours! That sure does seem like a lot, doesn't it? Maybe I don't need to check my email so often!)

(B) I never use the internet and I never have. Many of my friends have suggested that I try it, but I don't like to play electronic games. I don't want to shop online — I want to be able to see, smell, and feel whatever I'm buying. I hardly ever use a phone, so I can't see myself messaging anyone very often. I guess I'm just old-fashioned, but I'm afraid the whole world is becoming more *isolated* and less personal.

## 2. Who is the most vulnerable to internet addiction?

(A) There is no such thing as internet addiction. It is just a *myth* invented by worried parents who think their kids are not studying hard enough or getting enough exercise. The internet doesn't have any harmful substances, so using it is no more addictive than talking, typing, or reading. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to a game I'm playing. I play it every day at this time and I don't want to be *disturbed*.

(B) Addiction does not have to be physical; it can be psychological as well. People can become addicted to gambling or shopping, for instance. Studies have shown that adolescent and young-adult males are the ones most likely to become addicted to the internet, especially in terms of playing violent action games. The colors and sounds, and their sense of competition and accomplishment, are all key components of this addiction. However, slightly older women are also vulnerable; for them, the *habituation factors* are the need for close human interaction and to feel loved, so chatting and date-lines are the most appealing aspects of the internet to them. But anyone who feels a need to spend more than an hour a day on the internet may be addicted.

→ **isolated** : feeling alone

→ **myth** : false belief

→ **disturbed** : interrupted or bothered

→ **habituation factors** : addiction factors

### 3. Can you imagine your life without the internet?

(A) I do not believe that there ever was a time when the internet was not available. Stories *to that effect* are just grandmothers' tales used to teach some sort of moral lesson.

(B) I am a heavy internet user, but when I go on vacation in another country it's easy to *get by* without it. For one thing, finding a cyber café is not always convenient, and even if one is available the connections are often poor. The *hassles* are generally not worth the effort, so I just go on about my life and enjoy myself. Being off-line is not the end of the world after all.

### 4. Discuss the main characteristics of the following media: television, newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, DVDs, the internet.

(A) It's too easy to ignore the TV or radio, they're such a normal, passive part of our everyday lives. Usually, they are turned on whether anybody is watching or listening to them at all. And we constantly get up and go to another room or get something to eat or drink, even if we are watching television. However, for *breaking news* there is no *substitute*.

(B) For thoughtful, in-depth analysis of something, nothing can beat a newspaper, magazine, or book. I can easily carry it with me, read it at my own convenience, and take my time *comprehending* it. I can usually find the same information on the net, of course, but doing a lot of reading on a computer is both uncomfortable and physically harmful.

### 5. Which medium is the most trustworthy? Why?

(A) No medium is better than its source: *garbage in, garbage out*. But the respectable print media are still the most *reliable*, I think. News professionals are trained to be objective and accurate, and what they write has a *permanence* that adds to its trustworthiness: tomorrow it will still be the same as it is today.

(B) What we need is a variety of perspectives rather than the narrow views of one (or a small group of) commentators, so we can apply our own judgment and common sense based on our own experience to a *multiplicity* of facts and possibilities. So I think bloggers and their interactive audiences are superior to the corporate news *put out* by publishers and broadcasters, who have their own particular interests to promote.

→**to that effect** : with that meaning    →**get by** : succeed in managing; survive    →**hassle** : trouble or bother

→**breaking news** : news story that is happening at the moment    →**substitute** : replacement

→**comprehend** : understand    →**garbage in, garbage out** : incorrect or poor quality input will always produce faulty output

→**reliable** : dependable    →**permanence** : state of happening or existing for a long time

→**multiplicity** : great variety    →**put out** : produced

## Speak Your Mind Helpers!

### 6. Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

F : Do you think the internet will replace other media in the near future?

M : What an odd question! Why do you ask?

F : Because it is part of a discussion topic in my English conversation book.

M : Oh. That explains a lot. I was wondering why you have been talking to me about all these strange topics.

F : Not as strange as some of your answers!

M : OK, you win. But do you sincerely want to know what I think?

F : Of course. What about the internet?

M : The medium is still in its early *phase*. We haven't yet even begun to *exhaust* all its possible uses.

F : But will it replace the other media?

M : No, probably not. The tendency is for the old ones to continue to exist but to find more specialized usage.

F : What do you mean by that?

→ **phase** : distinct stage of development

→ **exhaust** : use (sth) completely

**M** : Well, people still read. In fact, more books are published every year than at any time in history. So radio and the movies did not replace newspapers and magazines. Movie producers and radio station owners were *deathly* afraid of the competition from television; this was especially the case since radio and TV programming were *virtually* the same format. But both of the older media *adapted* and are doing very well in their particular *niches*. Even when VCRs and then DVDs came along, instead of killing the motion picture business they helped promote the cinema-going experience.

**F** : That was a very thoughtful answer. Thank you.

**M** : You're welcome.

**F** : Whether you are right or wrong, there's one thing I'm very sure of, however.

**M** : What's that?

**F** : That no medium, whether print or electronic, will ever replace the emotional pleasure of dealing directly, face-to-face, with another person. Especially with one as thoughtful and *articulate* as yourself.

**M** : You're very kind. I don't know what to say.

**F** : Well, let me put this book away and then let's go someplace and just talk.

**M** : *Sounds like a winner!*



→**deathly** : extremely; completely    →**virtually** : almost

→**adapt** : become adjusted to new conditions

→**niche** : particular place or position    →**articulate** : capable of speaking clearly and effectively

→**sounds like a winner** : seems like a good idea

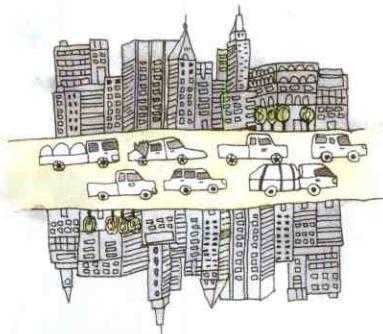
# ISSUE 36

## The Quality of Our Lives

For many people in many parts of the world, life has seemingly never been better. They live longer, healthier lives in considerable comfort, with air conditioning, effective heating and sewage, easy transportation and communication services, and a plethora of labor-saving devices. However, this level of ease and luxury has by-passed many areas except for the privileged few, and even in the affluent sectors people seem to realize that a price has been paid for this comfort. The automobiles destroy our air, overcrowding deprives people of the space they need to breathe and think, and materialism undermines morality. One must wonder whether there is some kind of happy medium at which progress can be balanced with the past.

### What most degrades our quality of life?

- (1) Pollution
- (2) Poverty
- (3) Materialism
- (4) Modern technology
- (5) Health problems
- (6) Dysfunctional family
- (7) Declining morality
- (8) Apathy
- (9) Lack of common sense
- (10) Crime
- (11) Other \_\_\_\_\_



# Sample Answers

(A) If our families still worked, many of other problems would be more manageable. Not long ago, people got married for life, had many children, and lived close together across many generations. There was always someone close, both geographically and psychologically, whenever a problem needed to be dealt with. But today, *divorce* rates climb, families become bitterly divided, and parents and siblings live far from each other. No wonder there is so much confusion and uncertainty in our lives.

(B) I asked someone once what the difference was between ignorance and apathy. He responded, "I don't know and I don't care." He probably didn't realize it, but he was right *on both counts*. And that is the deepest cause of our social *discontent*. Most things are pretty easy nowadays. We can travel around the world, use our computers to find any information we seek, and make a lot of money without even leaving home. This has made us lazy, so that nothing is worth struggling to obtain or to know. We are used to getting *superficial* answers and have no desire to do better.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you think technology has upgraded or degraded our quality of life?
2. Why are people becoming more selfish and *indifferent* toward each other?
3. How does money play a role in our life quality? Is life better when one has more money or less?
4. Some people stay married and others get divorced quickly and perhaps repeatedly. Is there any difference between them?
5. Do you think the future guarantees us a better life? Why or why not? What will *determine* our life quality in the future?

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Do you think technology has upgraded or degraded our quality of life?

(A)

People seem to have a romantic *nostalgia* for the "good old days" when life was simpler and people were more *virtuous*. When *life expectancy* was 40 years of age. When even a simple medical problem was *fatal*. When few opportunities were available and hope was a rare commodity. The next time someone complains to you about the air pollution caused by cars, ask him what kind of pollution horse- or ox-drawn carts made.

(B)

If you live in a city, have you even seen the stars? In most *urban* areas, the nightly *haze* permanently *obscures* the sky. Do you know who your neighbors are? Apartment *dwellers* are *notoriously* unconnected with the lives of the people who live right next to them, even though they live closer together than people from *adjoining* farms (who usually know each other on a first-name basis as well as being familiar with their spouse, children, and habits). How much time do you spend at home with your family? Most of us leave early in the morning, and at different times from each other, spend all day at work or school, entertain ourselves with our colleagues, and then go home to a house full of strangers, just before going to bed. So, in light of my answer to the question, I say yes, definitely, technology has degraded my life.

## 2. Why are people becoming more selfish and indifferent toward each other?

(A)

We are all under a lot of pressure to compete and succeed. The "labor-saving" devices that have been imposed upon us mean that we can spend more *time* at work and less time relaxing with others. We are becoming more *self-absorbed* in our careers and less involved in the lives of other people.

(B)

Because there are more lives around us, each one is worth less. When our circle of acquaintances was smaller, every one was a precious commodity to be *nurtured* and sustained. But now we can afford to be *picky*; if one relationship does not develop or last, there seems like an infinite number of other possibilities waiting.

- **nostalgia** : desire for the past      - **virtuous** : behaving in a way that is morally good and right
- **life expectancy** : length of time (sb) is likely to live      - **fatal** : causing death      - **haze** : fine dust or smoke
- **obscure** : block (sth) from view      - **dweller** : (sb) who lives in a particular type of place
- **notorious** : famous for (sth) bad      - **adjoining** : next to      - **self-absorbed** : preoccupied with one's own situation
- **nurture** : feed and protect      - **picky** : choosy; fussy

### 3. How does money play a role in our life quality? Is life better when one has more money or less?

(A)

A wise person should be able to *capitalize* on his wealth, no matter how little or great that is. There is no need to be in debt or do without anything that is vital to us such as good health or medical care, love and friendship, and comfortable living. But most of us are not wise. We spend our *surplus* on foolish, *transitory* things that we have no permanent need for, and waste precious moments trying to recover what we have lost. Modern life has become a never-ending cycle of *desperation*.

(B)

A truly wise person needs nothing in excess. We all need to eat a balanced diet in sufficient quantities to sustain our health; we need water and air; we need space and freedom of movement; and we need to maintain ourselves within a fairly wide temperature range. Besides these minimal physical needs, all else is foolish *vanity*. We should use our excess time and energy to develop our human relationships, not to *bloat* ourselves with empty possessions.

### 4. Some people stay married and others get divorced quickly and perhaps repeatedly. Is there any difference between them?

(A)

People who stay happily married for a long time are willing to be patient as they either grow toward one another or learn to live with each other's *peculiarities*. The ones who can't do that want a perfect, lasting relationship immediately without putting in sufficient care or work to achieve it.

(B)

It is easy to criticize those who do not stay married. But in fact, they are like anyone else. Most long marriages are as unhappy as the ones that break up, but the couples involved in them usually lack the resources, imagination, or courage to seek something better.

- **capitalize on** : get as much advantage out of a situation as possible
- **surplus** : amount that is more than what is needed      → **transitory** : lasting only for a short time
- **desperation** : worry and anger that (sb) feels due to not knowing how to deal with a bad situation
- **vanity** : (sth) worthless, trivial, or pointless      → **bloat** : cause to swell up or inflate
- **peculiarity** : (sth) odd or strange in a person's behavior

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

### 5. Do you think the future guarantees us a better life? Why or why not? What will determine our life quality in the future?

M : Every day I get up thinking that today life is going to get a little better.

F : And when you go to bed, how do you feel then?

M : Some days, of course, are filled with bad news. And some days don't seem any different than the one before. But that doesn't discourage me. I wake up the next morning with the same feeling of optimism. And, indeed, although tomorrow may not be better than today, I'm sure that things will be a lot better in a thousand tomorrows. That's only about three years.

F : It's all a matter of chance and luck. We all have good times and bad times, but they are not evenly distributed throughout our lives. Many of my friends never seem to get a break and are *plagued* by bad luck day after day, while others just *sail through* life with no major worries.

M : It is not a matter of intelligence or character, that's true.

F : Absolutely not!

M : But it is entirely a matter of attitude. I am convinced we make our own *fortune*, whether good or bad.

F : *Explain yourself.*

→ **plague** : cause misery or trouble

→ **sail through (sth)** : do (sth) or deal with (sth) very easily

→ **fortune** : course of one's future; fate

→ **explain yourself** : say clearly what you mean

**M** : A pessimist will never be content with his *lot*, no matter how well he does. But an optimist will maximize the benefits of every situation. When we are optimistic of success, we work harder because we expect more, and over time this becomes a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.

**F** : But maybe, since the pessimist expects bad things to happen, he *works harder at preventive maintenance*. So, over time, fewer negative events occur and he has fewer failures as a result.

**M** : Exactly! So life gets better for them both, optimist and pessimist alike.

**F** : Yes, but my real point is that it does not matter whether one is optimistic or pessimistic; good things and bad things happen to us all, *at the most unexpected times*. No one is guaranteed a better tomorrow, but if he is lucky he will have one. If he is unlucky, *tomorrow will cause the collapse of all he has*.



→ **lot** : general situation in life

→ **self-fulfilling** : achieving fulfillment as a result of having been expected or foretold

→ **prophecy** : statement that (sth) will happen in the future

→ **work at** : try hard to develop or improve (sth) → **collapse** : sudden complete failure; breakdown

# ISSUE 37

## Shopping on the Web

The internet has changed our lives in countless ways. We can keep in touch with friends and acquaintances around the world, virtually instantaneously. We can gain access to any library or public data base, find a job, or look for a date. But it has also opened up the world of on-line buying. No matter what sort of item we are seeking, we can look for it in the comfort of our own home, compare prices globally, and buy it with our credit cards with very little bother. Of course, one of the downsides to this is that we may be cheated or, even worse, the information we provide could be used to perpetrate identity theft. Another negative quality is the increased isolation it may bring: instead of leaving our homes and mixing with others in the marketplace, we may decide to avoid human contact altogether.

### Why do you shop on the web?

- (1) It is easy and convenient.
- (2) It is cheaper.
- (3) It saves time.
- (4) Returning unsatisfactory items is easy.
- (5) Quality is guaranteed.
- (6) I don't like crowds.
- (7) Purchasing options are seemingly infinite.
- (8) I rarely buy anything on-line.



-countless : too many to be counted      -virtually : almost completely

-access : entry      -downside : disadvantage or negative aspect of (sth)

-perpetrate : do (sth) that is harmful, illegal, or dishonest

-infinite : having no limits; endless

# Sample Answers

(A) I don't like shopping by internet. I prefer to do all my buying in person, so I can feel, smell, and see the product directly. If it is an item of clothing, I want to be able to *try it on* before I get it. And, besides, shopping is one of my major social occasions — why would I want to *pass it up*?

(B) We have to be very careful about buying something *sight unseen*. The quality may not be as good as we were led to believe, and it may be a real *hassle* to return an item by mail. But, otherwise, I very much enjoy the experience of buying on-line, mainly because I can do it anytime I want to. I don't have to worry if the store is open or not, I don't have to find a place to park, and there isn't any sales clerk pressuring me to purchase something. I love it!

## Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you shop on-line? What kinds of goods do you most often purchase?
2. In your opinion, what's the difference between shopping on- and off-line? Which do you prefer?
3. What do you worry about most in terms of on-line shopping?
4. Did you ever return anything you had purchased on-line? If so, why? Was it easy to do?
5. Shopping centers are still very popular even though on-line shopping is usually cheaper and more convenient. Why do you think this is so?

→**try on** : put on a piece of clothing in order to see how it looks and whether it fits

→**pass up** : not take advantage of an opportunity

→**sight unseen** : without previous examination

→**hassle** : trouble or bother; nuisance

# Speak Your Mind

## Helpers!

1. How often do you shop on-line? What kinds of goods do you most often purchase?

(A)

I do almost all my shopping on-line, except for food. Mostly, I get CDs and jewelry. If I need something "right now," I buy it in person, but if it's something that can wait till later to get, I much prefer doing it in the privacy of my own room.

(B)

I shop for *dates*, books, music, and clothing — just about everything, in fact. Last year I bought a car on-line, and right now I'm in the process of looking for a new apartment. I get something on-line nearly every day.

2. In your opinion, what's the difference between shopping on- and off-line? Which do you prefer?

(A)

I'm old-fashioned, I guess, but I enjoy the process of buying in person. No matter what it is, I like to get to know a product before I *put down* my *hard-earned* money for it. If I shopped on-line, I know I would miss the *haggling* and the shared experience of going to a store and mixing with the crowd. As far as I'm concerned, the more shoppers there are, the better! It's a very *vibrant* experience, to be part of a crowd of like-minded individuals instead of just a *lone* individual acting *anonymously*.

(B)

I enjoy going on a shopping *spree* with my friends, and I also enjoy buying items locally, where the shop clerks know me and are friendly toward *me*. But I also like to buy on-line because of the selection and lack of *hassle*. I'm glad that both options are readily available.

### 3. What do you worry about most in terms of on-line shopping?

(A)

My biggest worry is the loss of my identity or the destruction of my good credit. I hear tales all the time of people being victimized because of their on-line purchases. I don't know personally anyone who this has happened to, so I wonder if these are mainly *urban legends*, but, still, these stories are enough to *give one pause* about the consequences of using the computer to buy things.

(B)

I've had very positive experiences shopping on-line. Once in a while, some item has not arrived or I've been disappointed in its quality, but I've never had any problems *straightening the matter out*. Nevertheless, I hesitate to make any expensive purchase on-line, out of fear of being *ripped off* by some *unscrupulous* seller and not having any *recourse* if that were to happen.

### 4. Did you ever return anything you had purchased on-line? If so, why? Was it easy to do?

(A)

I return things all the time, and I've never had any problem. I just make sure that I buy from a reputable retailer and not from a private individual, because major stores already have a consumer-friendly returns policy. Even the postage is covered by them!

(B)

Once I got a sweater that was the wrong color, the wrong size, and the wrong price. I contacted the seller right away, but we never did work out a satisfactory method of exchange. Eventually, I gave it away as a gift, but the experience soured me on ever buying anything else on-line forever.

- **urban legend (urban myth)** : imaginary story about modern life that many people believe really happened
- **give (sb) pause** : make (sb) think carefully about (sth)      → **straighten out** : deal with a problem or a confused situation
- **rip off** : cheat (sb), esp. by charging too much for (sth)
- **unscrupulous** : willing to do things that are unfair, dishonest, or illegal      → **recourse** : way to receive aid or protection
- **sour (sb)** : make (sb) unpleasant

# Speak Your Mind

5. Shopping centers are still very popular even though on-line shopping is usually cheaper and more convenient. Why do you think this is so?

F : Let's go shopping!

M : Why? What do we need?

F : Maybe we don't need anything, or maybe we'll find something that we just can't do without.

M : If we need something, we can just order it on-line.

F : You *miss the point*. Going out is a kind of adventure! Shopping is just an excuse to get out of the house and be with people. We can *make a day of it*, grab something to eat, get some fresh air.....

M : But I have a lot of work to do, and I'm tired. I go out every day to work. I really want to enjoy my time off relaxing at home.

F : Don't be so lazy! Let's go out and enjoy life. The department store down the street is having a big sale, and I'm sure we'll find some good deals. And besides, we'll probably *run into* some friends we haven't seen in a long time.

M : When we go shopping together, you never pay much attention to me. You just want someone to carry all your packages!

F : Oh, if you really think so, I'm sorry. I guess I just *get carried away* by all the excitement. I promise that won't happen today. Let's go.

→**miss the point** : fail to understand

→**make a day of it** : spend the whole day doing (sth) enjoyable

→**run into** : meet or find (sb) by chance

→**get carried away** : become so excited that one loses control of one's feelings or behavior

**M** : I would love to spend more time with you, but I hate going shopping. If we use the internet to get what you need today, then we'll have lots of extra time to see a movie or do something else together tonight.

**F** : *Catching* a movie sounds good. How about going to a fancy restaurant, too?

**M** : Why don't we download something good to watch and order out? That way we can spend our time together more intimately.

**F** : *Intimacy* is good. But you just don't understand! I feel *cooped up*. I want to get out! All you want to do is stay in this boring house.



- **catch** : see, watch, or listen to (sth)
- **intimacy** : close personal relationship
- **coop up** : confine (sb/sth); shut in

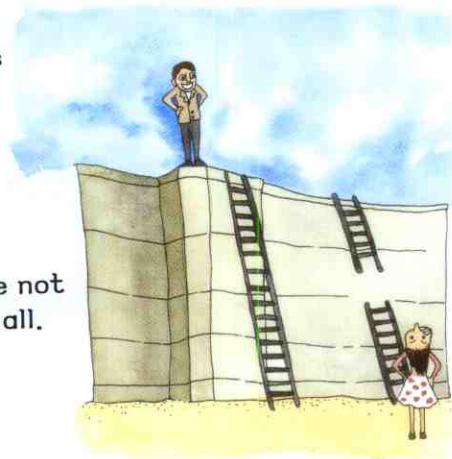
# ISSUE 38

## Socially Discriminated Against

Career women, with advanced degrees, are boasting high incomes and professional positions. The existence of female professors, doctors, and lawyers is routine nowadays, and even woman CEOs are not considered unusual any more. Even so, feminists claim there are many social inequalities, while some men complain about modern women's aggressiveness. But it seems clear that "the good old days" of clearly defined, traditional women's roles will not be back any time soon.

Do you think women still face routine discrimination?  
In what areas do you think they are the most discriminated against? Give examples.

- (1) While being raised
- (2) Educational opportunities
- (3) In the job market
- (4) In marriage
- (5) In courtship
- (6) In status
- (7) Women in our society are not discriminated against at all.



→ **discriminate** : treat (sb) unfairly because of their religion, race, or other personal features  
→ **courtship** : period of romantic relationship before getting married

# Sample Answers

(A) Why doesn't anyone ever talk about the ways men are discriminated against? Because the government and business are *keenly* aware of public opinion and seek to avoid *controversy*, they often hire and promote second-rate women instead of first-rate men. I don't want to be misunderstood: I have nothing against rewarding anyone for genuine merit, man or woman; but gender should never be part of the evaluation.

(B) I'm always amazed at how polite and well-raised our young girls are — and how wild their male siblings are in comparison. It seems very unfair to me that young ladies should be *repressed* in such an extreme degree, while boys are given *carte blanche* to do whatever they feel like. Unfortunately, these same patterns persist into adulthood as well. No wonder women have such *latent* hostility.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you think women are discriminated against in our society? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. What do people need to do to get equal rights?
3. Is it possible for the law to treat men and women the same? Why might this be more difficult than it seems at first?
4. Talk about the kinds of discrimination the poor face.
5. Talk about the kinds of discrimination the old must endure.
6. Talk about the kinds of discrimination against the handicapped.
7. Some men complain about *reverse* discrimination. What are they talking about?

→ **keenly** : very strongly

→ **controversy** : disagreement, esp. about a public policy or a moral issue that a lot of people have strong feelings about

→ **repress** : put (sb/sth) down; quell → **carte blanche** : freedom to choice

→ **latent** : present but not evident or active; hidden → **reverse** : opposite

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. Do you think women are discriminated against in our society? If so, how? If not, why not?

(A)

A generation ago, women had *justifiable* complaints. It was an *uphill* struggle for them to get a good, high-paying job and to get promoted into a better one. Many fields of employment were closed to them altogether. In their marital relations, they had fewer rights. The list goes on and on.... But that was then, this is now. Times have changed. There may still be *vestiges* of gender discrimination in our society, but they are disappearing fast.

(B)

I would say that the so-called "change" in gender relations is superficial at best. Firms and offices may have hired a few *token* female executives with genuine responsibility, but most of the women who work under them still have *menial* jobs. Females are still expected to be bread-makers rather than bread-earners, and are treated *accordingly*. Male-dominated society still has a long way to go before anything like true equality is achieved.

## 2. What do people need to do to get equal rights?

(A)

First, they need to realize how unequal the existing system actually is. Then they need to devote themselves to effective change. In their personal lives, they need the wisdom to be aware how their actions affect others; in their public lives, they need the courage to push hard for effective reform. Women have begun to take these actions in many societies, while other disadvantaged groups have not even taken the first step yet.

(B)

"Equality" itself is a very flexible goal. Do we want economic equality? Then, people are rewarded for their laziness and inability at the same rate as people with talent and energy. Perhaps we mean "equal opportunity," so external factors such as gender, age, geography, religion, nationality, or race are irrelevant to success. But does that mean that the truly incompetent are to be denied the basic necessities of life, since they are not skilled enough to "deserve" them?

→**justifiable** : right or reasonable      →**uphill** : difficult

→**vestige** : small part of (sth) that still remains when most of it no longer exists

→**token** : symbolic      →**menial** : low or unimportant

→**accordingly** : in a manner that fits

### 3. Is it possible for the law to treat men and women the same? Why might this be more difficult than it seems at first?

(A)

Although we like to believe that the law is designed to achieve justice, this notion is not always true. Many times laws are passed to protect or promote selfish interests. Even in the best circumstances, laws are likely to be *vague* and perhaps unenforceable. Finally, when we are considering new legislation, how do we all agree on what is both fair and *doable*? After all, if we were all perfect we would not need any laws!

(B)

A fundamental problem is that men and women are truly not the same. There are many physical, biological, genetic, and psychological differences. On the basis of how incredibly unlike men and women are, despite their superficial similarity, it is hard to *conceive* how they can both be treated "equally," especially since sometimes the *imposition* of equal standards would in fact be *grossly* unfair. Just two examples: if all women were given the same muscular tests as men, few women could hope to pass; if breast-feeding were to be a job requirement, men would be excluded.

### 4. Talk about the kinds of discrimination the poor face.

(A)

The poor lack a good education, so it is very difficult for them to get jobs good enough to *lift* them out of poverty. And, of course, their children inherit the same disability, and the cycle of poverty is never broken.

(B)

Due to the high cost of health care, and miserable living conditions, poor people tend to be a lot sicker than more *affluent* people. As a result, they miss more days of work and perform less effectively on the job, which tends to *perpetuate* their financial disadvantage.

- **vague** : not clear    → **doable** : feasible    → **conceive** : imagine or think of (sth); consider
- **imposition** : introduction of (sth) such as a new law or system
- **grossly** : very or extremely    → **lift** : improve the situation that (sb/sth) is in
- **affluent** : rich enough to buy things for pleasure    → **perpetuate** : cause (sth) to continue indefinitely

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 5. Talk about the kinds of discrimination the old must endure.

(A)

I don't understand the implication. It's my impression that old people are highly *revered* in our society. How could they be discriminated against? They get discounted travel and shopping privileges, on the subway young people like me give them our seats, and they never have to pay when they are in a group at a restaurant! If this is being "discriminated against," how do I *sign up*?

(B)

One does not have to be particularly old for the discrimination to begin. Even people in their early middle age find it hard to find a new job or life insurance. If they are single, it is almost impossible to find romance. This discrimination is particularly difficult for them to deal with if they have always been part of a privileged group in the past; but, it can only get worse as they continue to age. It's sad, really, considering the years of experience and *expertise* they have acquired.

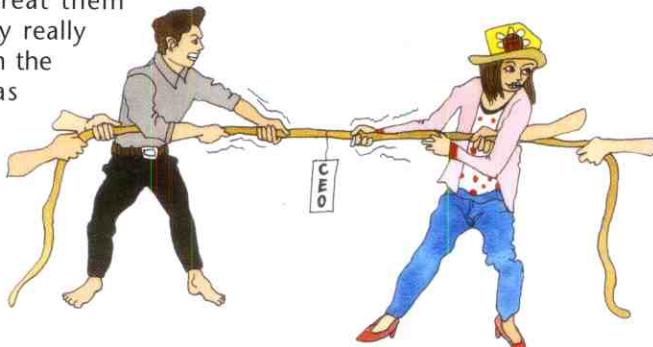
## 6. Talk about the kinds of discrimination against the handicapped.

(A)

People who walk, see, hear, and think normally have no idea how hard daily life can be for someone who is impaired in any of these *faculties*. If you doubt this, try to go upstairs in a wheelchair or cross the street safely with your eyes closed. Society not only discriminates against them but is also dangerous to them.

(B)

From the point of view of the handicapped, perhaps even worse than the actual job opportunities lost or the limited access to public facilities is the social *stigma*. Too many people avoid contact with them, as though their disability were *contagious*, or *go out of their way to treat them differently*, when all they really want is to be accepted on the same human basis as everyone else.



→ **revere** : respect and admire (sth/sth) very much      → **sign up** : join

→ **expertise** : special skill or knowledge      → **faculty** : natural physical or mental ability

→ **stigma** : sign of shame or disgrace      → **contagious** : capable of being spread

→ **go out of one's way to do (sth)** : make an extra effort to do (sth)

## 7. Some men complain about reverse discrimination. What are they talking about?

- F : Have you noticed any discrimination against men? Or, more to the point, have you yourself experienced any?
- M : No, I've never really paid attention. I thought that women were the ones who complain about being discriminated against.
- F : They do. And I think they have a perfect right to do so; they've been treated as second-class human beings for a long time.
- M : Always first-class in my book. I enjoy female company a lot more than *hanging out* with the boys.
- F : I hope that is not just some sort of *chauvinist* remark.
- M : Of course not! But what does this have to do with discrimination against men?
- F : I just started thinking about this a few days ago, and then I started to do some *digging*. According to the files in my office, almost every new *vacancy* and nearly all promotions in my company have gone to women. This seems pretty conclusive evidence that men are being discriminated against, doesn't it?
- M : I don't know. It depends. Are these women qualified to hold the positions they do?
- F : Yes, I think so. But men with the same qualifications have been *turned away*. It doesn't make sense.
- M : Maybe the company has a long history of favoring only men and is just trying to *make amends*.
- F : That's the classic "*affirmative action*" argument. There may be some element of justice to it, but it still doesn't make it right to the person being treated badly.
- M : I agree. But who ever said the world is a fair place? There's always a lot of *arbitrariness* in every situation.
- F : You're *mighty blasé* about this, I must say. I thought you'd be the first to cry out against unfairness in the workplace!
- M : I could never be the first, as long as you are around. You always lead the fight, even when I think you're wrong.
- F : So you think I'm wrong, do you?
- M : I don't know what to think. You may be perfectly correct for all I know. But I doubt that your case is very strong. The sample probably isn't large enough to be statistically *relevant*. If you are talking about, say, 20 cases in which women have been preferred over men, what if men got the jobs or promotions in the next 20 cases? Someone would probably suspect discrimination against women, but a longer view would reveal it to be a case of strictly equal opportunity.
- F : I don't think gender should be the reason for any job action. It doesn't matter whether the victims are male or female.
- M : I agree completely. I'm just not sure under the present circumstances if this qualifies as actual discrimination.

→ **hang out** : spend free time → **chauvinist** : showing excessive or prejudiced attitude

→ **dig** : try to find out information → **vacancy** : unoccupied position → **turn away** : refuse to let (sb) come into a place

→ **make amends** : try to rectify previous wrongs → **affirmative action** : policy to increase opportunities for women and minorities, esp. in employment and education → **arbitrary** : decided without any reason → **mighty** : extremely

→ **blasé** : not worried; indifferent → **relevant** : closely connected or appropriate to the matter at hand

# ISSUE 39

## People are Getting Sick

The last 200 years have seen a tremendous leap in our ability to treat illnesses of many kinds. We have developed all sorts of vaccinations, antibiotics, vitamins, and treatments. We have created techniques for examining bones, tissues, and even genes to look for defects and patterns. Hundreds of separate diseases have been identified and specific treatments devised to cure them. But people still get sick. It seems that the more we know about the cause, the care, and the prevention of disease, the more sick people become.

### What health problem worries you the most?

- (1) Fatigue
- (2) Weight
- (3) Stress
- (4) Smoking and/or drinking
- (5) Lack of exercise
- (6) Poor diet
- (7) Blood pressure
- (8) Family history
- (9) Other \_\_\_\_\_



→ **tremendous** : very large in amount, extent, or degree → **leap** : big jump

→ **vaccinate** : give an injection to protect against a disease

→ **antibiotic** : drug that cures illness and infections caused by bacteria

→ **devise** : plan or invent a way of doing (sth) → **fatigue** : feeling of being extremely tired, either physically or mentally

# Sample Answers

(A) Not long ago I could put in a long day's work and still feel like going out dancing afterwards. But now, even though I do my job more efficiently, so I don't have to work as hard as I used to, all I want to do is go home and go to bed. I'm **tired** and **lackadaisical** all the time. I've tried taking vitamins and minerals, but nothing seems **to work**. What's wrong with me these days?

(B) I'm very worried about my family's medical history. Almost none of the men on my father's side has lived beyond the age of 47. I'm not sure what their causes of death have been, but I know it's a very **alarming** statistic to have to deal with. Even though I feel fine and, in fact, have never had a sick day in my life, I'm always aware that I seem to be a walking time bomb ticking, ticking, ticking. When I hit 47, will I **go off**, too?

## Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you feel tired?
2. What diseases are you most afraid of?
3. Do you think stress influences your health?
4. What health problems are caused by poor diet?
5. Did you ever go to an emergency room? If so, when and why?
6. Do you regularly get a medical checkup? Why or why not?
7. A lot of people (especially among the middle-aged) are afraid of getting checkups. Why do you think this is so?

→ **lackadaisical** : doing (sth) in a lazy way or careless way that shows a lack of interest in it

→ **alarming** : frightening or worrying

→ **go off** : explode

# Speak Your Mind Helpers!

## 1. How often do you feel tired?

(A)

After lunch I get *drowsy* almost every day. But I take a *power nap* for about fifteen minutes and I don't have any problem the rest of the day.

(B)

It seems like I'm always tired. It doesn't matter whether I go to bed early or late or when I get up, I never have enough strength to get me through the day. I have trouble paying attention, I can hardly read or write, and I don't feel like moving around. Some people tell me that I'm suffering from a form of *depression* and that this condition is controllable. I hope so. As soon as I get the energy to do so, I'm going to see my doctor.

## 2. What diseases are you most afraid of?

(A)

All my adult life I've worried about cancer. A lot of my aunts and uncles have suffered from cancer, and about half of them have died from it. So I'm afraid of a family *disposition* towards getting it.

(B)

It seems to me that Alzheimer's is the worst possible illness. Sufferers may be otherwise extremely healthy and live long lives, but their minds and personalities steadily *deteriorate*. Their families no longer recognize them as being the same people they used to be, and they can no longer remember any of the happy times they've had or any of their friends or accomplishments. Even being dead would be better than living in such a condition.

## 3. Do you think stress influences your health?

(A)

Doctors used to link ulcers to stress, but it turns out they were completely wrong. Ulcers are really caused by a bacterium. So the relationship between stress and bad health doesn't seem to *hold water*.

→**drowsy** : feeling the need to sleep →**power nap** : concentrated period of absolute sleep

→**depression** : medical condition in which a person is too unhappy to live a normal life

→**disposition** : tendency →**deteriorate** : become worse

→**hold water** : be true

(B)

I don't care what the experts say; I know that when I'm under a lot of stress my health suffers, and then when the stress *eases up* I feel better. It seems to me that a lot more research on the connection needs to be done.

#### 4. What health problems are caused by poor diet?

(A)

A lot of diseases like scurvy and beriberi are directly caused by a dietary *deficiency*. And *malnutrition* is a problem throughout the Third World. But we don't give enough thought to the problems of *obesity*, especially in rich countries. There the problem is not insufficient but over-sufficient diet. Either extreme — not enough healthy food or too much of it — causes severe problems.

(B)

Even non-dietary diseases can be *aggravated* by poor eating habits. A sick person needs to eat sufficient quantities of food to keep his strength up, but if he eats too much he may gain excess weight and put more strain on his heart. Foods also affect the circulation, the storage of energy, and the digestion, all of which play a large role in maintaining health.

#### 5. Did you ever go to an emergency room? If so, when and why?

(A)

The last time I went to an emergency room, none of the doctors or nurses seemed to think there were any emergencies there. Patients were sitting or lying around, many of them suffering from severe wounds or *traumas*, with no one available to take care of them. I sat there for over two hours before any doctor examined me, and then it took another two hours to get treated. I feel that I could have stayed home and let nature *heal* me, and I wouldn't have been any worse off. But then I would have *missed out* on that *inflated* bill the hospital sent me!

(B)

Last spring my appendix burst. I was immediately taken to the emergency room of the nearest hospital and given first-class treatment. In less than an hour all the paperwork was completed, I was prepared for surgery, an anaesthetic was administered, and I was operated on. When I woke up I was in a regular *ward* in the hospital, but the emergency-room doctors came by every day to check up on my progress. I owe my life to their quick and professional treatment.

→ **ease up** : become weaker    → **deficiency** : lack or shortage

→ **malnutrition** : condition in which the body does not have the necessary food

→ **obesity** : condition of being too fat in a way that is dangerous to one's health

→ **aggravate** : make (sth) worse    → **trauma** : serious injury    → **heal** : become healthy and sound

→ **miss out** : lose a chance for (sth)    → **inflated** : too high or exaggerated    → **ward** : room in a hospital

# Speak Your Mind

## Speak Your Mind Helpers

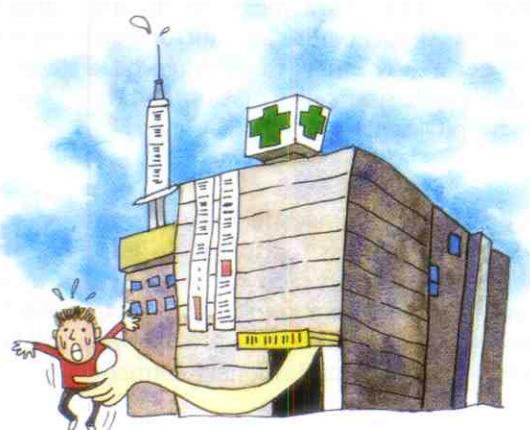
### 6. Do you regularly get a medical checkup? Why or why not?

(A)

I used to get a checkup every year, but I stopped. The doctor never found anything wrong with me, so he would tell me things I already knew (like "Maybe you should lose some weight" or "It would be a good idea if you stopped smoking"). Eventually this just seemed like a waste of time and money, so I quit going. And I've never felt better!

(B)

The older I get, the more careful I am about my health. I always get a complete *physical* every year on my birthday, and sometimes I go in every few months for some specific tests. It's not that I feel bad; mostly, I feel pretty good. But I know that many diseases may be *at work* in my body a long time before I start feeling any effects, and that early *detection* may mean the difference between life and death. I haven't tried death yet, so maybe I'm prejudiced, but I know at the moment I prefer life.



- **physical** : medical examination
- **at work** : in action; operating
- **detection** : discovery

## 7. A lot of people (especially among the middle-aged) are afraid of getting checkups. Why do you think this is so?

F : I missed you yesterday. Where were you?

M : I had to go to the hospital for a checkup.

F : Why? Do you feel sick?

M : No, not at all. But I just don't want to take any chances, so I get a checkup every year.

F : Do you have your results yet?

M : No, the doctor said they'd be ready next week. But I'm not worried about them. I'm sure there aren't any problems. What about you? When did you have your last physical?

F : I don't know. It's been so long I forgot.

M : That's not very smart. You're not getting any younger, you know. You need to take care of yourself.

F : I do take care of myself. I'm careful about the foods I eat, and I work out in the gym almost every day.

M : But that's not enough. You need to have some tests done, too. There might be something wrong with you that you wouldn't know about until it's too late.

F : Well, I know, but I'm just too busy to get it done. I keep *procrastinating*, and the next thing I know, another year has passed. But I'm not too worried; everything seems fine.

M : Nonsense! No matter how busy you are, you know you can take a day off to see a doctor. I think you should make an appointment right now, before you forget again.

F : No, I can't do it now. I have a big contract I'm working on and I can't afford any *distractions*. Maybe next month. Remind me then.

M : What are you afraid of?

F : Nothing. I just don't have time right now. But I'll do it. I promise.

M : I think you're worried that the doctors really will find something wrong with you. You'd rather be foolishly optimistic about your health than get bad news. But ignoring the problem and pretending it doesn't exist can be fatal, while finding out and then doing something about it could save your life. The best thing that could happen would be that the doctor can't find anything wrong with you — and then you wouldn't have to worry.

F : But the worst thing would be to find out I had an *untreatable ailment*.

M : No. The worst thing would be not finding out you had one that was treatable!

→ **procrastinate** : put off doing (sth), esp. out of habit

→ **distraction** : (sth) that gets one's attention and prevents one from concentrating on (sth) else

→ **untreatable** : (of a patient, a disease or other condition) for whom or which no medical cure is available or possible

→ **ailment** : illness, usually not a serious one

# ISSUE 40

## Are They True?

Sometimes we take things for granted even though the opposite is true. Two common examples of this counter-intuitive phenomenon: (1) The idea of sailing west to get to the East. This was Christopher Columbus' insight in 1492; however, instead of finding a short cut to Asia, he "discovered" a new continent. (2) On an icy road, turning in the direction of the skid. Strangely enough, trying to correct the skid by turning in the opposite direction, in an effort to straighten the car, actually makes the situation worse.

Discuss if you think these statements are true or false.

- (1) The rich are happier than the poor.
- (2) Childless couples are lonely.
- (3) Men smoke and drink more than women.
- (4) Well-educated people are happier than those with less schooling.
- (5) People think their own love affairs are real, while those of others are just examples of lust.
- (6) Many people still marry for money.
- (7) Men are smarter than women.



# Sample Answers

(A) It may be true that an average man drinks more than an average woman, but this is mainly due to the average difference in size. Most men outweigh most women by a considerable amount, so they are able to consume larger quantities of liquid. However, *along the same lines*, one should realize that if a woman consumes one bottle of beer, it represents a larger percentage of her body weight than if a man consumes one. So, if the woman drinks as much as the man does, she actually drinks more than he does in relative terms.

(B) We like to think that marrying for money is a *quaint* habit that does not exist in a modern society. Wrong! Marriage increases the combined earning capacity of both partners while cutting in half their major expenses such as rent or a *mortgage*. So single people are at a serious financial disadvantage.

## Speak Your Mind

1. Do you think money can do everything?
2. Do children make us laugh or increase our worry?
3. Do you believe it when someone says he or she is just a "*social drinker*"?
4. What do you think about people who want to marry for money instead of love?
5. Do you think love affairs should be criticized?

-**considerable** : a lot of; much   -**along the same lines** : in the same way

-**quaint** : attractively unusual or old-fashioned

-**mortgage** : loan from a bank in order to buy real estate

-**social drinker** : person who drinks alcohol in moderation, chiefly when socializing

# Speak Your Mind

## 1. Do you think money can do everything?

(A)

It's quite simple, really: the more resources we *command*, the more control we have over any situation. *Mind you*, money is only one of many kinds of resources. Others include knowledge, expertise, useful contacts, health, and personal qualities such as courage and perseverance. But the nice thing about money is that its use is flexible: if we are unhealthy, we can use it to buy good medical care; if we lack the necessary technical knowledge ourselves, we can hire experts to use their skills on our behalf.

(B)

People who have a lot of money *fool* themselves into thinking it can do anything. But it cannot buy genuine love, friendship, loyalty, or respect. And it cannot *substitute* for good health. Many rich people are alone and in poor physical condition, and their bank accounts are of little comfort to them.

## 2. Do children make us laugh or increase our worry?

(A)

Having children changes our lives forever. We will never again be able to satisfy our own *whims* and desires as easily as before. Instead, we have to *moderate* our own selfishness in the realization that we have a serious responsibility to take care of our kids. The worries just keep multiplying, along with their accompanying health concerns and financial needs. And they continue long after the kids "grow up" and are "able to take care of themselves". In fact, they never end.

(B)

I can't deny it: There have been the occasional cuts and *scrapes*, the broken bones and broken hearts, the sleepless nights and painful days that all parents experience on behalf of their kids. But, over all, I can't complain. Raising my two daughters has been the most meaningful and most enjoyable part of my entire life. The laughter far outweighs the tears.

→ **command** : control (sth) → **mind you** : definitely

→ **fool** : trick (sb) by making them believe (sth) that is not true

→ **substitute** : take the place of another → **whim** : sudden idea, thought, or wish to do (sth) for no good reason

→ **moderate** : make (sth) less extreme → **scrape** : short fight or argument

### 3. Do you believe it when someone says he or she is just a "social drinker"?

(A)

I guess a social drinker is someone who drinks at parties and with other friends, rather than drinking alone. If so, almost everyone who drinks alcohol is a social drinker. This is what people do on weekends and late at night. But it does not mean that he or she is a socially responsible drinker. My guess is that group drinking is even worse for one's health than drinking alone, because the quantities are likely to be greater.

(B)

I never believe anything a drinker tells me. People drink to escape reality rather than face it. Perhaps they suffer great heartache or loneliness, or maybe they are *introverted* and boring. They want to forget about some problem or pretend to be someone else. So drinking lowers their *inhibitions* and gives them an excuse for bad behavior. Why should I believe what they tell me?

### 4. What do you think about people who want to marry for money instead of love?

(A)

Who knows why we love someone? If I married a man who was rich, handsome, successful, and famous, could anyone know that the reason I married him was because I loved him? Could his obvious *assets* be the only reasons I married him or not? What I'm *fairly* sure is that we hope to find a lifelong companion and weigh a number of factors before making a final decision. These factors include physical and social compatibility as well as a determination of how well that person can meet our physical, psychological, and economic needs. We may not choose wisely or fully understand the criteria, but we make the best choice we can.

(B)

No one should marry for love alone. The unfortunate thing about love is that it usually has a short *shelf life*, but marriage is a long-term association. People can fall out of love as easily as they fall in, but it is much harder to get unmarried than it is to *tie the knot* in the first place.

→**introverted** : a little shy and tending to concentrate on one's thoughts and feelings

→**inhibition** : holding back (an action, impulse, etc.) →**assets** : all the property

→**fairly** : relatively →**shelf life** : length of time for which an item remains usable, fit for consumption, or saleable

→**tie the knot** : get married

# Speak Your Mind

## Helpers

### 5. Do you think love affairs should be criticized?

F : Does your friend's wife know about his affairs?

M : I guess she must know; they're pretty obvious. But that doesn't mean you should feel an *obligation* to tell her.

F : I wasn't planning to say anything. But don't you think someone should tell her?

M : If she does know, she's obviously *come to grips* with the situation and has decided not to end her marriage. If she doesn't know, what's wrong with her being happy?

F : It's just not right for her to continue in *blissful ignorance* of the true state of affairs. I know I'd want to be told if it was my husband who was *fooling around*!

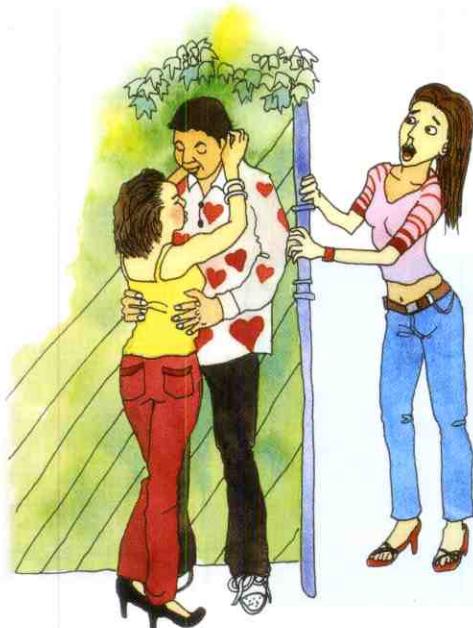
M : Are you sure? Like they say, "What you don't know can't hurt you." If you were happily married to someone, how would you be better off if you found out that your husband wasn't faithful?

F : The truth is always better than a lie. If I knew about my husband's *infidelity*, I could take corrective action. If he was ready to *break off* all his extramarital activity and devote his emotional commitment to me alone, I think we could save our marriage. But if he didn't love me, we would *break up* sooner or later anyway.

- **obligation** : duty      - **come to grips with (sth)** : deal with a problem or situation
- **blissful ignorance** : fortunate unawareness of (sth) unpleasant      - **fool around** : engage casually in sexual activity
- **infidelity** : unfaithfulness to one's husband or wife, esp. by having sexual relations with another person
- **break off** : end a relationship      - **break up** : end a marriage or romantic relationship

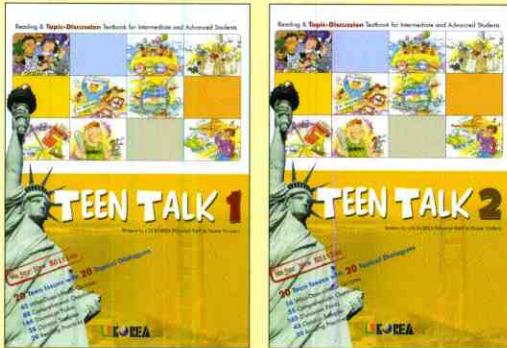
**M :** Don't you think it is possible for a man, or a woman for that matter, to love his or her spouse, deeply and sincerely, and do everything in his or her power to take care of that person and make her or him happy, and yet also to feel a need for other kinds of emotional relationships too? Isn't it possible to love more than one person at a time?

**F :** Not as far as I'm concerned!



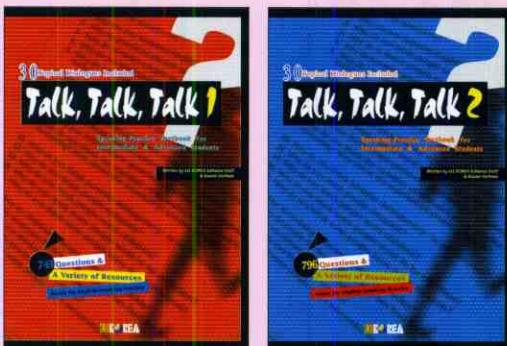
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