Luisa begins our dialogue by saying to Max: "Are you still here?" This is one of those questions you ask when you surprised about something obviously Luisa can see that Max still wherever they are. She says: "I thought you **got off** at 3:00." To get off of work means to finish your work schedule to be able to leave the place where you work. If someone says: "What time do you get off?" they mean what time do you get off of work when you stopped working what time do you stop working.

Max says: "I **picked up** a second shift." A shift s-h-i-f-t refers to a period of time when people work. Usually this term is used for jobs when people work at that particular location more than 8 hours or that there are people working at the location for more than 8 hours. It might be for example a place where there is someone working 24 hours a day. Well one person is not going to work 24 hours straight so they break up the day into shifts. So if you work the day shift you're working probably from 8 in the morning to around 4 or 5 in the afternoon. If you're working the night shift you would be working perhaps from 4 or 5 in the afternoon to midnight. If you're working what we call the grave yard shift you're working probably from 11 o'clock at night or midnight to 7 or 8 in the morning. Those are shifts and divisions of the workday in the place that usually is open for more than 8 hours. Max says he picked up a second shift. To pick up here means to get to obtain. He was working one shift and now he's picked up a second shift which means of course he's working more than 8 hours a day. Why has Max done this well? He says: "I **could use** the money." When someone says: "I could use the money" he means that he would be able to benefit from getting more money he has some need of extra money.

Luisa says: "But I thought you had another **part-time** job in the evenings." A part-time job is a job usually that is less than 40 hours per week. In United States 40 hours per week is considered full-time. If it's less than 40 hours we might call it part time. Luisa thought that Max said another part-time job.

Max says: "I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been cutting back my hours." When we talk about someone cutting back on something we mean that he is using less of it or he is reducing the number of something. The two-word phrasal verb cut back then means to reduce the number of something. In this case we're talking about the restaurant where Max works cutting back his hours. His hours refers to the number of hours that he can work. Max says he's trying "to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can."

Luisa then asks: "And don’t you work at the **amusement park** on the weekend?" An amusement a-m-u-s-e-m-e-n-t park is a large park usually that has lots of what we would call lights in the places where people especially children can play games and get into these machines that go really fast for example Disneyland is an example of an amusement park here in Southern California. Luisa asks if Max is still working at an amusement park on the weekends. He says: "I do half the year (meaning I do work there part of the year), but it’s winter and the park only keeps a **skeleton crew** on during these months." Max is saying that the amusement park where he normally works in the summertime only has a skeleton crew during the wintertime. The phrase skeleton s-k-e-l-e-t-o-n crew c-r-e-w refers to a very small number of workers the minimum number of workers you can have at a place. If a business doesn't have very many customers it might have very few employees and we might call that a skeleton crew. If during busy times the company has more employees. This is the case with the amusement park it has a skeleton crew. A crew just refers to a group of people. The word skeleton is normally used to describe the bones of your body or the bones of an animal. Max says: "In the meantime (meaning during the winter season), I’m working for a **temp agency**, which gives me **short-term** assignments." A temp t-e-m-p agency is a company that finds people temporary jobs. The word temp is short for temporary meaning short term not permanent not for a long time. There are of course many company that find workers find people to work for companies that just need worker for a short period of time. Max says the temp agency gives him short-term assignments. Short-term refers to a short amount of time perhaps a week perhaps even a day. I used to work for temp agency when I was in college. I would call up every morning and see if they have any work for me and they would send me to jobs that would last maybe one day, maybe two or three days sometimes as long as a month. Temp agencies are very popular now especially when the economy is not doing so well companies don't want to hire employees full-time.

Luisa says: "I don’t know how you **juggle** all these jobs." The verb to juggle j-u-g-g-l-e usually refers throwing objects up in the air and keeping them up in the air. We refer to someone who does this as a juggler but here the verb means to handle many different things at the same time to be able to do many different things at the same time.

Max says: "I have no choice (I have no other option). I have **to piece together** an income if I want to pay rent." To piece p-i-e-c-e together something means to put together to assemble. An income i-n-c-o-m-e refers to the money you get for working. Max is saying that he has to work a little bit at this job in a little bit at that job in order to make enough money to pay for his rent.

Luisa says: "Have you ever thought about going back to school **to qualify for** other work, something **full-time**?" To qualify q-u-a-l-i-f-y for something means to have the skills and/or education in order to be able to do something. So for example if you want to be a doctor you have to study for many year in order to qualify for that kind of job at least I hope you study many years if you're a doctor if not please don't be my doctor. Luisa is asking if Max has thought about going back to school to qualify for some kind of jobs that would be full-time that would be 40 hours a week.

Max says: "Sure, all the time." meaning I have thought of it a lot. He says: "I’d like a better job, one with **benefits** and a reliable **salary**." Benefits b-e-n-e-f-i-t-s refers to things such as health insurance and vacation time and sick pay money you get when you can't work because you're sick. These are common benefits that you get when you have a full-time job. Salary s-a-l-a-r-y refers to money that you get to work at a certain place usually by the month or by the years. We talk about a salary we're talking about money you get regardless of how many hours you work. There're two kinds of ways of getting paid. One is by the hour when you get paid a certain amount of money for every hour you work. Another way of getting paid is by salary. When you're getting paid on a salary we would say you are getting a certain amount of money and are expected to do your job even if it takes more than the normal 40 hours a week.

Luisa says: "What’s stopping you?" what's preventing you from going back to school?

Max says: "I have to pay for something called food." Max is making a joke he is saying that he can't afford to go back to school he doesn't have enough money to go back to school because in addition to paying his rent he also has to eat and to eat he has to buy food. He finishes by saying: "I haven’t met my **fairy godmother** yet!" A fairy f-a-i-r-y godmother g-o-d-m-o-t-h-e-r is a character from children's stories stories that we tell children usually involving a woman who has some sort of magical powers. The fairy godmother is a common character in certain fairy tales that are told to children. They are made up stories about magical events. Here Max is using the expression to mean that he hasn't found someone who's just going to give him money to pay for his expenses and to go to school.

Now let's listen to the dialogue this time at a normal speed.