**Trinh Quang Thanh – Working Part-Time Jobs**

Luisa begins our dialogue by saying to Max “Are you still here”, it’s one of those questions you ask when you’re surprise about something obviously Luisa can see that Max still whatever they are. She says “I thought you got off at 3 o’clock”. To get off of work means to finish your work schedule, to be able to leave the place where you work and sometimes say “what time do you get off” they mean “what time do you get off of work when you stop 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 job when people work that particular location more than 8 hours or that they are working at that location for more than 8 hours. That might be, for example, a place where there are someone working 24 hours a day. Well, one person is not going to work 24 hours straight so they break up the day in two shifts. So if you work a day shift, you are working probably from 8 in the morning turn around 4-5 in the afternoon, if you work in the night shift, you’re working perhaps from 4-5 in the afternoon to midnight. If you’re working what we call the graveyard shift, you’re working probably from 11 o’clock at night or midnight to 7-8 in the morning. Those are shifts then division of the work day in the place that usually 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 picks up a second shift which means of course he’s working more than 8 hours a day. Why has Max done it, well, he says “I could use the money”. When someone says “I could use the money”, he means that he will be able to benefit from getting more money, he has some need of extra money. Luisa says “But I thought you have 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 State, 40 hours per week is consisted of full time, if it is less than 40 hours, we might call it par time. Luisa thought that Max had 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 hour refers to the number of hour that he can work. Max says he is trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can. Luisa then asks “And don’t you work at 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 could call rides on them, place is where people especially children can play games and get into the machine that go really fast, for example, Disney Land, it’s an example of amusement park in California. Luisa asks Max is still working at the amusement park on the weekend, he says “I do half a year” meaning I do work there part of the year “but it’s winter and the park only keeps a skeleton crew on doing this month”. Max is saying that the amusement park where he normally works in the summer time only has the skeleton crew doing the winter time. 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 worker you can have at that place. If the business doesn’t have many customers that might have very few employees and we might call that a skeleton crew if during busy time, the company has more employees. This is the case what the amusement park gets has a skeleton crew. The word crew just refers to a group of people, the word skeleton is normally used to describe the bone of your body or the bone of the animal. Max says “In the meantime” meaning during this 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 job, the word temp is short for temporary means short term, not permanent not for a long time. There are of course many companies that find worker, find people to work for companies that just need workers for 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 or 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 works for me and they will send me to job that would last may be one day, may be 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 to throwing objects up in the air and keeping them up in the air. We refer to someone who does this essay – 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 income if I want to pay rent”. To piece p-i-e-c-e together means to put together, to assemble and 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 and 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 education in order to be able to do something. So, for example, if want to be a doctor, you have to study for many years in order to qualify for that kind of job. At least, I hope you study many years if you are a doctor, if not please don’t be my doctor. Luisa is asking Max how about going back to school to qualify for some kinds of job 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 reliable salary”. Benefit b-e-n-e-f-i-t-s refers to thing 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 the certain place usually by the month or by the year when we talk about salary, we’re talking about money you get regardless of how many hours you work. That’s two kinds of way of getting paid, one is by the hour when you get paid of certain amount money for every hour you work, another way of getting paid is by salary when you’re getting paid on the salary we would say you are getting a certain amount of money and I expected to do your job even if you take 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 here, he says that he can’t afford to go back to school, he doesn’t have enough money to back to school because the addition to pay 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 the character from children story, story that we tell children usually involve in a woman who has some sort of magical powers, the fairy godmother is common character in certain fairy tales that are told to children, these are made of stories about magical adventure. Here Max is using the expression to mean that he hasn’t found someone that is going to give him money, to pay for his expenses and to go to school.