

READING

I turned my life around!

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_1033R

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can recall the key facts from a text about people who have turned their lives around.
- I can talk about struggles in life and how to overcome them.



Warm-up

1. **Write** 3 ideas of your own.
2. **Compare** your list with a partner.

**What are some
typical struggles
we face in life?**

Hint:

**What about at home?
Or at school? Or at work?**



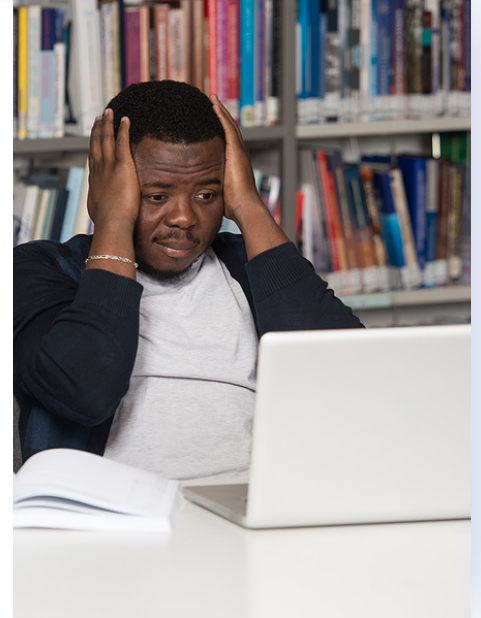


Tim's story

Read the story. **Answer** the questions below.

I had really high expectations of myself when I was younger and everyone around me seemed to expect great things from me too. I always found schoolwork easy and I thought it would be the same at university.

However, as soon as I started my course, I **struggled** to keep up with everyone else. Worse still, **it dawned on me** that Economics was the wrong course for me - I didn't want to work in the corporate world at all.



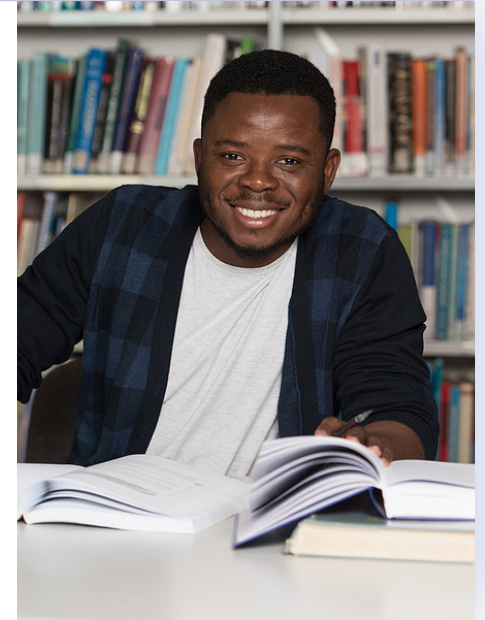
1. Did Tim expect to do well at university or not? Explain your answer.
2. Summarise Tim's experience at university in your own words.



Tim's story

Read the rest of the story. **Answer** the questions below.

I stuck at it for a year but when I went back home for the summer, I broke down and confessed to my parents how miserable I was. I thought I'd let them down but they were amazing. I applied for a course transfer to Psychology and I knew I'd found a subject I was **enthusiastic** about. It was hard work but I loved it. My friends said the **transformation** in me was incredible - I'd gone from a miserable, lost boy to a young man with a purpose. I now work as a child psychologist and I couldn't be happier.



3. What did the author decide to do?
4. How did the decision change him?





Vocabulary check

Give a synonym for the words in **bold**.

- 1 But, from the moment I started my course, I **struggled** to keep up with everyone else.
- 2 Worse still, **it dawned on me** that Economics was the wrong course for me.
- 3 I knew I had found a subject I was **enthusiastic** about. It was hard work but I loved it. My friends said the **transformation** in me was incredible.





Discuss

How do you think Tim was feeling before speaking to his parents?



How do you think he felt afterwards?



How about you?

**Is it ever a good idea
to stick at something
you don't enjoy?**

**Have you ever had a similar
experience to Tim?**





Samantha's story

Read the next story. **Answer** the questions below.

I was a naughty kid growing up. I hated school and left when I was 16 with **no clue about** what I wanted to do with my life.

After school, I **took** a series of **wrong turns** and made friends with people who were a bit lost and spent too much time partying. I lost my only job at a local supermarket because I kept showing up late to work. My life was spiralling out of control!



1. Was Samantha a good or a bad student at school?
2. What happened once Samantha finished her education?



Samantha's story

Read the final part of the story. **Answer** the questions below.

So, my grandma sat me down and told me that she hoped I would be able to turn my life around and finally be happy. That stuck with me and made me **determined** to do something with my life.

I signed up for a plumbing course at my local college and started counselling sessions. It took a lot of **self-improvement** work and **accepting** I might always have trouble focussing, but thankfully everything turned out well in the end!



3. Who helped inspire the author to change?
4. What did the author do to improve her life?

Match with the definition

1 I had **no clue** about what I wanted to do with my life.

2 I took a series of **wrong turns**.

3 It made me **determined** to do something with my life.

4 It took a lot of **self-improvement** work.

5 I **accepted** I might always have trouble focussing.

a poor decisions, often linked to behaving badly.

b wanting to do something very much and not letting anything stop you.

c to be unable to guess, understand or deal with something.

d to believe that something is true

e learning new things on your own that make you a more skilled or able person



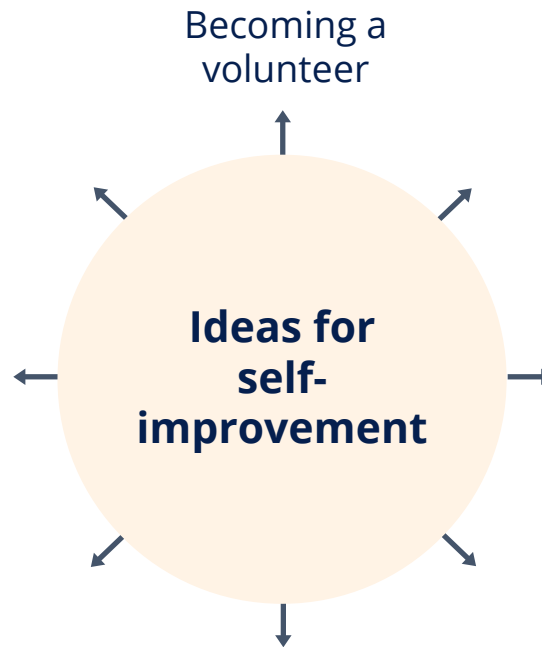
**My life was spiralling
out of control!**

Did Samantha feel able to control what
was going on in her life or not?



Brainstorm

How can we become better people? **Think of** 8 different ways to work on self-improvement.





What do you value most in a person?

1. **Write** a list of **three qualities** you value most in a person.
2. **Compare** your list with a partner in **breakout rooms**.
3. **Find** one similarity and **tell** your classmates about it afterwards.



honesty

kindness

courage

determination



Roy's story

Read the final story. **Answer** the questions below.

When I turned 45, I quit a job I had hated for 10 years and decided to run for my local council. I had no idea where to start, so I **turned to** my wife for support. She was brilliant!

She has lots of experience in PR and marketing, so was a big practical help. There were lots of **obstacles** along the way, but we found ways to **overcome** them.



1. What did Roy decide on his 45th birthday?
2. Who offered him support with this decision?
3. Why was this person the right person to help him?



Roy's story

Read the end of the story. **Answer** the questions below.

One *big* obstacle was how shy I was! I didn't feel **comfortable** walking up to people and talking to them.

I knew I'd struggle with the elections if I didn't **work on** my confidence, so I had some sessions with a life coach. It was a bit ridiculous at first, but I **emerged** a much stronger, more assertive person.

Oh, and I ended up winning the elections, too!



4. What weakness did the author have?
5. How did he overcome it?



Discuss

1



I finally quit a job I had hated for 10 years and decided to run for my local council.

2

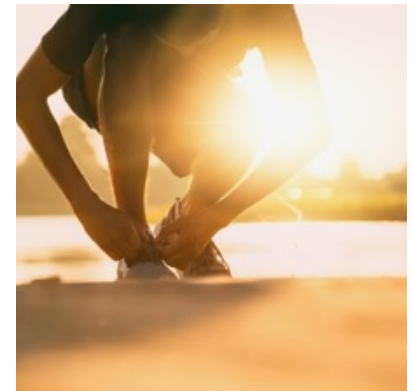


There were lots of obstacles along the way, but I found ways to overcome them.

What's a job you've always wanted to do but never done?

What's stopping you from doing it?

How would you overcome those obstacles?





End of the lesson

Idiom

fight tooth and nail

Meaning: to fight in a very determined way for what you want.

Example: Tina **fought tooth and nail** to provide for her family.



Additional practice



Fill in the gaps

Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

- 1 When I finished university, I had no _____ what to do with my degree!
- 2 I learned to _____ that mistakes are a part of life. Nobody's perfect!
- 3 I made a few wrong _____ in my 30s and made some pretty terrible decisions.
- 4 I was so _____ to be successful in my career that I forgot about my family and how important it is!
- 5 I'd never heard of _____-improvement until I read a book on the importance of living life by your own rules. It changed me!

clue
turns
determined
self
accept





Discuss



**A problem shared
is a problem halved.**

Do you agree with
the statement above
or not?

How easy is it for
you to ask for help if
you need it?

Who is someone
you can always turn
to for help?





Write a short paragraph

1. **Look** back at the qualities you mentioned on slide 14.
2. **Think** of a person you know who **best** represents them.
3. **Write** a short paragraph (50-80 words) about the person.

- Who is the person?
- What qualities do they have?
- How do they show those qualities?





Answer key

- P. 4:** 1. Yes, as he was a good student at school.
- P. 5:** 3. He decided to change courses and study Psychology instead of Economic.
4. He transformed from a miserable boy into a man with purpose.
- P. 9:** 1. She was a bad student.
2. She took a series of wrong turns, met the wrong people and lost her job.
- P. 10:** 3. Her grandma helped her.
4. She signed up for a plumbing course and started counselling.
- P. 11:** 1. c, 2. a, 3. b, 4. e, 5. d
- P. 15:** 1. He decided to quit his job (of 10 years) and work for his local council.
2. His wife offered him support.
3. His wife had lots of experience in PR and marketing.
4. He describes himself as a shy person.
5. He had sessions with a life coach to work on his confidence.



Answer key

- P. 21:**
1. clue
 2. accept
 3. turns
 4. determined
 5. self



Summary

Describing difficulties

- *to struggle to do something; to dawn on someone (that); to have no clue;*
- *to take a wrong turn; obstacle; to not feel comfortable doing something*
- *It **dawned on me** that Economics was the wrong course for me!*

Overcoming difficulties

- *enthusiastic; transformation; to be determined to do something; self-improvement;*
- *to accept something; to turn to someone; to overcome; to work on something; to emerge.*
- *I **turned to** my wife for support. She was brilliant!*



Vocabulary

to struggle to do something

to dawn on someone (that)

to have no clue

to take a wrong turn

obstacle

to not feel comfortable doing something

enthusiastic

transformation

to be determined to do something

self-improvement

to accept something

to turn to someone

to overcome

to work on something

to emerge

