**Audio Track 3-1-10/Audio Track 3-1-11/Audio Track 3-1-12**

Going solo is the way to go!

How do you usually travel? Do you go with a close friend or a group of friends? Do you join a tour group? Do you travel with your family?

Have you ever imagined “going solo”? In the mid 1990s, it was estimated that 9 million Americans were planning a summer vacation alone. Since then, the number of solo travelers has increased. You may think that traveling alone would be scary or boring. Well, according to people who do it, that’s not exactly true. Solo travelers often have positive experiences: they make new friends, get to know themselves better, and can make their own schedule.

There are many different things you can do on a vacation alone. Some solo travelers use the time to learn or practice a sport such as golf, mountain climbing, or scuba diving. Others go and stay on a ranch and learn how to ride a horse. You can pretend to be a cowboy or a cowgirl for a day!

You may not believe this, but some travelers like to study on their vacation. They even go to “vacation college” at a university or join a research team as a volunteer worker. It’s hard but satisfying work. You can “play scientist” for a week or two while you help someone with their project.

For solo travelers of different ages and genders, there are many travel options. There are tours for women only and for people over the age of 60. And, of course, there are trips for singles who are looking for romance. One company offers trips that focus on fine dining — there is time for sightseeing during the day and for sharing a delicious meal with new friends at night.

The next time you take a trip somewhere, why don’t you consider going solo?

Bon voyage!

**Audio Track 3-2-8/Audio Track 3-2-9**

Take back your street!

Two neighbors meet on a city sidewalk. They talk about planting more flowers along their street, or asking the city council to add bike lanes to a busy road. In small but important ways, these people are changing the face of their cities.

All around the world, people are speaking up and working hard to make their cities safer and more pleasant for pedestrians. Cities have painted crosswalks on their streets, made streets narrower, put in traffic lights and speed bumps, and made plans to help more kids walk or bike to school. Many people have learned from a man from Brisbane, Australia, named David Engwicht. His book Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns has a simple message. He says that in the past, streets belonged to everybody. Kids played there, and neighbors stopped there to talk.

But now, streets are just for cars and trucks. People stay inside to get away from the noise and dangerous traffic, and we lose contact with our neighbors. Engwicht says that we should use streets for more than just transportation. People need to take back their streets.

Engwicht travels around the world, helping people think differently about pedestrians, streets, and neighborhoods. Besides his books and articles, he gives many speeches. He has worked in neighborhoods from Honolulu to Scotland.

While Engwicht was writing his book, he learned about how neighbors in the city Delft, in the Netherlands, stopped dangerous traffic on their street. They put old couches, tables, and planters in the streets. Cars could still pass, but they had to drive slowly. When the police arrived, they saw the value of these illegal actions to make the streets safer. Soon city officials started planning ways to make cars slow down, and “calm” the traffic.

Engwicht says we should think about streets as our “outdoor living room.” Calming the traffic is just the beginning. In the future, streets will be safe places for children again, and our neighbors will become our friends.

**Audio Track 3-2-10**

Creating spaces

Jin Hee Park is a student at Stanford University in California. She studies hard. “Of course, I came here for the academics,” she says. “But it doesn’t hurt that the campus is so beautiful. I walk around sometimes just to relax.” Alejandro Vega, a banker in New York City, jogs almost every evening after work in Central Park. “I never get bored. The park is so big. I can always find a different path with a new view.”

Niagara Falls was on Ross Howard’s list of places to visit in upstate New York. “The footpaths allow you to get a wonderful view. You can even feel the spray from the falls on your face.”

What do these three places — Stanford University, Central Park, and Niagara Falls State Park — all have in common? They were all landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted (1822–1903) has been called the “father of landscape architecture.”

In the 1800s, more and more people were moving to the cities. Some community leaders became worried about the quality of life. They began a beautification campaign. In 1857, a design contest was held for a new park in New York City. Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, won the contest. Central Park was the finished product — the first landscaped public park in the United States. Today, no trip to New York is complete without a visit to this beautiful park.

Later in his life, Olmsted designed landscapes for college campuses, including Stanford University. In the late 1860s, he joined the “Free Niagara” movement. Members of the movement wanted to preserve the beauty of Niagara Falls. Despite opposition and pressures from businesses to industrialize the area, Olmsted and others resisted. Olmsted designed footpaths to give visitors better views of the falls. In all his work, Olmsted preferred to preserve the natural beauty of an area.

Today, there are pressures again to develop Niagara. On Goat Island, an island in Niagara Falls State Park, there are now souvenir shops. There may be signs that say “No Littering,” but there is still a lot of trash on the island. Most of the animals have disappeared. What would Frederick Law Olmsted say to all this?

**Audio Track 3-3-7/ Audio Track 3-3-8（考过）**

Celebrating life changes

In Mexico and some other Latin American countries, girls mark their fifteenth birthday with a celebration called the Quinceanera. In the morning, the birthday girl goes to church with her family and her best friends. She wears a beautiful (and sometimes very expensive!) dress. Later in the day, there is a huge party, with a big cake that matches the girl’s dress, and a night filled with music and dancing.

When older people in the United States retire, their friends and coworkers often give them a retirement party to celebrate this life change. On their last day of work, there is a big dinner, with entertainment afterward. People make speeches and tell jokes about the retiree. Guests like to give presents, such as an album of photos of the retiree’s coworkers, or a homemade video of the retiree’s friends.

Becoming an adult is a very important life change, and Japan has a special holiday to celebrate this. The second Sunday in January is Coming-of-Age Day. On that day, everyone who had their twentieth birthday in the last year goes to their town’s City Hall for a special ceremony. Everyone dresses up, and many women wear beautiful kimonos. The mayor makes a speech and gives presents to all the new adults.

Some kids are afraid to start school, but six-year-olds in Germany can’t wait. For them, Schulanfang is a big holiday. To celebrate a child’s first day of school, parents or friends give the child a Zuckertuete, a big colorful cardboard cone filled with candy and little presents. People take pictures of the kids holding their Zuckertuete, and there is a school party later for the parents, with cake and coffee.

**Audio Track 3-3-9（考过）**

Coping with life’s stressors

Let’s face it: Life is stressful. Stressful events in our lives are called “stressors.” Some of them are minor, such as uncomfortable air conditioning or a loudly ringing telephone. Others are more serious, such as the death of a spouse. That event tops the list as life’s most stressful event.

You might be surprised to learn about the top 20 life stressors. Getting a divorce, for example, is number 2 on the list. And not all stressors are unhappy events. Pregnancy is a happy time for most families. It may also cause stress. Pregnancy is right below retirement on the list of life’s major stressors. We can’t avoid stress, but we can do something about it. Listen to three people talking about their responses to stress in their lives.

Tina Vega, 16

Last year was horrible! My family moved to another town. I had to change schools and say good-bye to all my friends. It was really tough. I felt so lonely in my new school. But then one day I decided to enjoy my life: I smiled at everyone and I joined the soccer club at school. Now I have new friends. I like my new school.

Frederick Cho, 42

Life is unpredictable. Three weeks ago I lost my job. I was upset for the first week. I couldn’t do anything. Now I’m looking for a new job. It’s not good to sit around the house. I exercise every day and I’m healthier than I’ve been in years.

Hazel Greene, 80

My husband and I got married in 1950. He died five years ago. For the first two years I was depressed. I missed him so much because we did everything together. But now I’m feeling better. I think it’s important to stay active and positive. I read a lot and do volunteer work.

**Audio Track 3-4-10/ Audio Track 3-4-11（不会考）**

Get in the habit!

We all know that good habits bring good health, but we don’t realize how much difference they can make. In the 1970s, scientists at the university of California-Los Angeles interviewed 7,000 people about their health habits. Then they followed these people to see how long they lived. The scientists discovered that seven habits were closely linked with a longer life.

These habits are:

1. eating breakfast every day

2. avoiding snacks between meals

3. keeping an ideal weight — not too heavy or too thin

4. exercising regularly

5. sleeping seven to eight hours per night — not more or less

6. not smoking

7. drinking two or fewer alcoholic drinks per day

The researchers found that these habits had a powerful effect on health. People in this study who had three or fewer of these habits lived another 21.6 years. People who had six or seven could expect to live another 33 years! People aged 55 to 64 with all seven good habits were as healthy as younger people aged 25 to 34 who practiced only one or two of the habits.

But how do you change your habits? A slow approach is the best way. Make one small change every week. And be patient. It takes about 21 days to form a new habit.

**Audio Track 3-4-12/ Audio Track 3-4-13（考过）**

Surprising syndromes of modern life

Margaret’s friend is taking a new job in a faraway city. She wants to hold a farewell dinner party at her home. But she can’t. Margaret suffers from CHAOS (Can’t Have Anyone Over Syndrome). Her apartment is messy and she’s embarrassed by it. “I’ve never been a tidy person,” she says. “My best friend gave me some good advice. He told me to get a maid.”

Today it’s so easy to get information … and lots of it. We receive telephone calls all day long. People expect a quick response to their faxes, text messages, and e-mail messages. For some people, it’s too much. They have information fatigue syndrome. There is so much information, they become paralyzed and can’t think clearly. “I can’t sleep at night because I worry,” says Bahman, a college senior. “It’s terrible.”Hurry sickness is a straightforward name for another syndrome of modern life. “I’m always rushing. I get headaches a lot. Taking aspirin seems to help,” says Mari, a mother of two and a part-time company employee. Do you engage in “deskfast” (eating breakfast at your desk at work) more than once a week? Then you, too, may suffer from hurry sickness!

We’ve all complained about having too much work to do. Well, how about not having enough work? Underload syndrome is caused by having little or nothing to do at the office. You have to pretend that you’re working. Steven works as a project manager. “I can finish my work in about four hours, but I’m afraid to say anything about it. I don’t want to be assigned too much work!” In severe cases, people with this syndrome can get very bored and even become depressed.

Chances are you’ve experienced phone neck before. Another name for it would be “pain in the neck,” because that’s what people with this condition experience. Holding the phone between your neck and your ear for a long time causes phone neck. A good long massage is the suggested treatment for this syndrome.

**Audio Track 4-4-7/Audio Track 4-4-8（考过）**

You’ve never met Melissa Hayes, and you don’t know her name, but you know her voice. Melissa records information messages for the telephone company. When you hear “The number you called has been changed …” — that’s Melissa!

“Yes, it’s true,” she says. “I’m the voice talent for National Telephone.” At least 50,000 people hear her voice every day. “I try to sound warm and friendly, even when I’m saying, I’m sorry, that number is incorrect. Please try again.”

Melissa works only three days a week, but she has to practice a lot. “My voice has to sound the same at the end of eight hours.” She’s very careful about her voice. “I don’t go outside in cold weather, and I have to drink lots of hot water with honey. I can’t go to horror movies because I always scream, and I might hurt my voice!”

How did she get her job? “A friend told me about it. I listened to all the telephone company messages on my phone, and then I recorded a cassette of those messages. After I sent it to the company, I called them every day for a month!”

She’s done this work for three years now, and she loves it. “It’s fun! And I’m helping people by using my voice.” Plus, people are always surprised when they hear about Melissa’s job. They say, “You’re a real person? I thought it was a computer!”

**Audio Track 4-5-2/Audio Track 4-5-3（重点）**

He may have been your typical teenager in most ways. But he was different in one particular way: he started his own magazine. At the age of 15 he managed the magazine called Student. It was written for and about young people in school. He was very busy, but it was a satisfying job.

His next business venture was completely different. He and some friends started a mail order record company. It was also the same year, 1970, when his music discount store was opened in England. It made a lot of money.

In the early 1990s, he sold his successful music business and used the money for another business idea: an airline company. And so, Virgin Airways Ltd. was born. To compete with other airlines, his company offered good prices to customers. Today Virgin is known for its excellent service.

Richard Branson now runs the Virgin Group, Ltd. He employs 50,000 people and in many different fields, such as book publishing, financial services, modeling, and even bridal services! Not bad for a teenager from the UK who dreamed of editing his own magazine!

**Audio Track 4-5-6/Audio Track 4-5-7（小）**

Microsoft Corporation

Microsoft Corporation is a multinational computer technology corporation that develops, manufactures, licenses, and supports a wide range of software products for computing devices. Headquartered in Redmond, Washington, USA, its best selling flagship products are the Microsoft Windows operating system and the Microsoft Office suite. Microsoft ships products to Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

Microsoft was founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen on April 4, 1975. In the mid-1980s, it rose to dominate the home computer operating system market with MS-DOS. Since 1985, Microsoft has released an upgrading line of Windows operating systems featuring a friendly user interface. The latest one, Windows 7, was released in October 2009 and has sold 600 million copies to date. A more powerful one, Windows 8, is to be released in late 2012. It is reported that this product can deliver a fast and fluid experience, along with a new user interface that responds equally well to touch as it does to keyboard and mouse.

As one commentator notes, Microsoft’s original mission was “a computer on every desk and in every home, running Microsoft software,” and now it is a goal near fulfillment. Microsoft also makes profits in other markets such as computer hardware products and home entertainment products.

**Audio Track 4-5-8/Audio Track 4-5-9（考过）**

A different kind of holiday: Shop less, live more!

Advertising is everywhere. It’s on race cars and subway trains, on T-shirts and billboards. Every day, you see hundreds of ads, and each advertiser wants you to buy their product. But do we really need all these products? A group in Canada says “No.” In 1991, they started an event called Buy Nothing Day, to protest against consumerism and waste. Every year, on the last Friday in November, no one should spend any money for 24 hours. The event has spread to over 15 countries around the world, including Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

In the United States, Buy Nothing Day takes place on the Friday after the Thanksgiving holiday. This is usually the busiest day of the year in department stores and shopping malls. Traditionally, it’s the first day of the Christmas shopping season, when Americans buy gifts for family and close friends.

However, this “season” has grown longer every year. Now some stores put up their Christmas window displays in the middle of October, and Americans are pressured to buy gifts for every one of their relatives, for all of their coworkers, and for everyone they do business with. Many people feel that they are forgetting the real significance of the holidays, because companies just want them to spend more money.

Of course, Buy Nothing Day supporters don’t want to change just one day. They want the change to continue all year. But if we take a break from shopping on one day, we can start thinking about what we really need in life. Michael Smith, British organizer of Buy Nothing Day, says: “Our message is clear: Shop less, live more!”

**Audio Track 4-5-10/Audio Track 4-5-11（考过）**

Ad or no ad?

Is advertising really necessary? Billions of dollars are spent on it every year, so it must be important. After all, it’s a busy world. You have to advertise, sell products, and make money!

Not every company thinks that way. The NO-AD company (“no-ad” stands for “not advertised”) avoids big advertising campaigns. The company was started in 1960 and is successful today. Their products are still affordable because the company saves money on advertising. They also use their savings to support a drug and alcohol awareness program to educate high school students.

NO-AD sells by word of mouth. “Word-of-mouth advertising” happens when a person tells another person about a good experience with a product or service. That second person then tells another friend, family member, or colleague. And so a chain of information is created.

Typically, advertisers talk about how good their product is. Although they say things like, “Studies show that our product is the best,” or “Everyone loves this product,” it can sound insincere or unconvincing. It’s much more believable to hear about a product from someone who did not make it. Our friends’ opinions are very important to us, so we often listen to their advice about a product.

Word-of-mouth advertising has other advantages, too. It’s cost-effective (after all, it’s free) and a company doesn’t have to create a complex business plan to do it. Here is some advice for small business about word-of-mouth advertising:

• Be prepared to talk about your company at any time. You never know who you will meet. Always carry business cards.

• Only say positive things about your company. Don’t say negative things about your company.

• Help other companies by referring people to them. The more you help others, the more good fortune will come back to you.

**Audio Track 4-6-7/Audio Track 4-6-8（考过）**

Vacation every day: The peaceful life Mary Larson has wished for

Mary Larsen was 43 when she got divorced. It was a new life for her, and she started considering what was really important in her life. She was working 60 hours a week as a banker to pay for a big house, expensive furniture, a new car, and all the other “important” things in life. But she had no time for what she really enjoyed: going out on her old houseboat.

One day, she realized she could live on the boat, and forget about the mortgage payments. She sold her house and all her furniture. For the last six years, she and her dog Buddy have lived on the boat, which is only a fraction of the size of her old house. Her “home” is a marina on the river, and the rent costs only $200 a month, including water and electricity.

Inside the boat is one room, about 5 meters by 4 meters. It’s divided in two parts by a curtain. One part is Mary’s bedroom, the other is the living room and kitchen.

There’s also a small bathroom with a shower. “I used to spend every weekend cleaning and maintaining my house. Now, it takes me two or three hours a month,” Mary says.

“My friends think I’m crazy,” she says. “But I wake up in the morning and hear ducks and birds. I can go fishing from my living room.” Now, she works only part time. She uses all the extra hours for writing stories, bicycling, volunteering, and visiting friends. On weekends, she goes along the river on her boat, exploring new places. “Would I go back to my old life? Never,” she says. “It’s so peaceful here. It’s like being on vacation every day.”

**Audio Track 4-6-9/Audio Track 4-6-10（重点）**

Money from unexpected sources

The San people live in southern Africa. Scientists say that they may have been living there for as long as 40,000 years, hunting animals and gathering plants. Until recently, the once mighty San were broke and unemployed.

They had lost their land and were no longer engaged in traditional activities, such as hunting. The few young San people with jobs were working as farm laborers. They were not learning about their ancient culture and language. That may all change. The San have struck it rich. They recently signed an agreement with a large drug company.

The San have traditional knowledge about plants. The drug company is especially interested in a particular cactus and how the San use it.

The San used to go on hunting trips. While away from home, they chewed on the cactus to suppress their appetite — they no longer felt hungry afterwards. Using the San’s knowledge, the drug company plans to make a new drug from this plant. For people around the world who eat too much and have weight problems, this new drug could really help them by suppressing their appetites.

The San have a positive plan for this new wealth. Their first step will be to get jobs for their people. Their next priority will be education. Through education, they hope to save their culture and language for future generations. When you think of a monk, you might think of a quiet man living in an isolated place. The “free monks” of Greece do live in a monastery, but they are anything but quiet. In fact, they sing. They have been recording their songs and selling many records in Greece.

Young music listeners love to listen to the “free monks.” Their songs are recorded in different styles (digital keyboard and rock, for example), and the themes are not only religious. The brothers also sing about problems like drugs and globalization.

The monks haven’t made a fortune from their record sales, but they have made a profit. They use the money to pay for summer camps for teenagers. At the camps, the teens can play soccer and go horseback riding. The monks also donate money to other social programs that help people.