

Speak 1 Your Mind



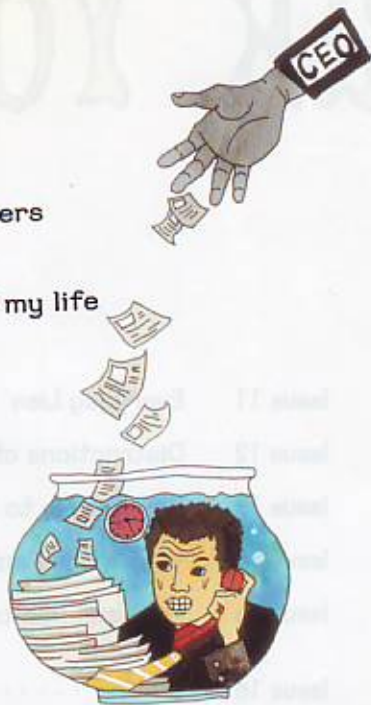
ISSUE 1

Are You Busy?

Most people today claim to be extremely busy. But I wonder if they are really any busier than people who lived at other times. Maybe most people generally regard themselves as being busy even if they are not. No one wants to admit to idleness or laziness, not even to himself. It may also be that people are aware that there are so many possibilities of things to do that they feel compelled to do them all.

What keeps you busy?

- (1) My job
- (2) Family concerns
- (3) Cultivating relationships with others
- (4) My kids
- (5) Efforts to improve the quality of my life
- (6) I just pretend to be busy.



→ **claim** : say that (sth) is true, even though there is no definite proof

→ **regard** : think of (sth) or (sb) in a particular way

→ **compel** : force (sb) to do (sth)

→ **cultivate** : develop a friendship or relationship with (sb)

Sample Answers

(A) On weekends, there always seems to be some sort of family *obligation* I have to attend. Someone is always having a birthday or anniversary or graduation or a wedding or other kind of family reunion. If nothing is scheduled and I think I will have some free time, it always seems like a family *emergency* occurs, so I never have time for myself.

(B) Children are not only expensive but time-consuming as well! Every day I have to make sure they are doing their homework. They participate in sports and other activities that I have to attend, too. But even without these obvious instances, they always need my personal love and attention *on display*. It *wears me out*!

Speak Your Mind

1. Who is the busiest in your family?
2. Do you have enough time to do what you want? Why or why not?
3. How do you spend your free time?
4. If your boss asked you to work *overtime*, would you agree?
5. Do you usually come home late or early? Why?
6. Who do you think are busier, kids or adults?
7. Which do you think is more important, making money or spending time with your family or friends?
8. What is a *typical* example of how you waste time?
9. Who do you think are busier these days, men or women?

→ **obligation** : moral or legal duty to do (sth)

→ **emergency** : unexpected situation that must be dealt with immediately

→ **on display** : presented in a visible, prominent manner

→ **overtime** : extra hours that (sb) works beyond the minimum requirement

→ **typical** : having the usual features or qualities of a particular classification

→ **occur** : happen

→ **wear (sb) out** : make (sb) feel extremely tired

9. Who do you think are busier these days, men or women?

M : As always, men are busier than women are.

F : What! How can you say that?

M : Maybe, at one time, "A woman's work is never done" was true. But these days, a woman can do all of her housework in a few hours and have lots of leisure time to shop and meet her friends before her husband and children get home. I wish I had life that easy!

F : You aren't a woman, and it's obvious you don't know what you are talking about.

M : Obviously I'm not female. But that doesn't mean that I'm ignorant.

F : The modern woman has to get up early in the morning, *fix* breakfast for her family, get her children ready for school, get herself dressed, go to work, spend a hard day on the job, come home, help kids with homework, do the housework, prepare supper, do the dishes, put the kids to bed, finish any work that she has taken home with her from the office, deal with her husband's needs, and then finally go to sleep. And then, early the next day, she starts the *routine* all over again.

M : Nevertheless, I spend far more time at work than my wife does. Even after hours, I have to meet with clients to *further* the company's interests.

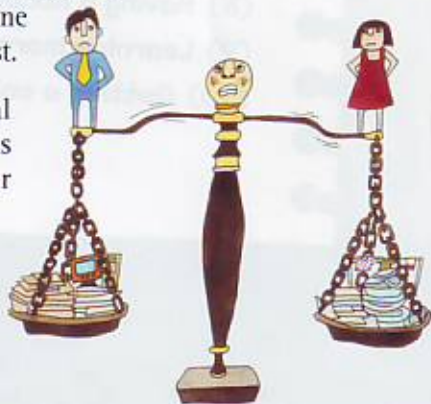
F : You mean you go to fancy restaurants and expensive bars instead of going home and helping your wife.

M : It may seem like fun to an outsider, but it is actually very stressful. I really just want to be at home.

F : Once a man's done with work, he's done! But a woman has to maintain two jobs, one at home and one outside the house. No wonder she gets old so fast.

M : Oh, come on! Women *outlive* men by several years. I'm convinced that the hard work shortens men's lives, and the women get to save their energy and live longer.

F : No. But maybe women are so busy they aren't able to drink or smoke or overeat the way men do — it's those activities which *kill them off*, not the work!



ISSUE 2

Are You Happy?

What makes you happy? More fundamentally, what does “happiness” mean? The way we answer these questions is very important if we want to achieve a happy life. We should know what makes us feel satisfied and sad. That way we could pursue some situations and evade others. Everyone is different in terms of what he desires and what he despises. For example, most people seem to want more money, thinking it will make them happier, but some believe that material desire is endless and thus causes eternal trouble.

What makes you happy?

- (1) Being healthy and physically attractive
- (2) Having money
- (3) Preserving my integrity
- (4) Doing my job well
- (5) Having friends
- (6) Being in love
- (7) Accomplishing my goals
- (8) Having a hobby
- (9) Learning more
- (10) Getting a college diploma



Sample Answers

(A) I would say that being in love is the happiest feeling in my life, except that every time I've been in love I've felt *miserable*. You want the other person to love you *in return*, so you are *hyper*-sensitive about whether that is true or not. If you are not with your loved one all the time, you feel lonely and anxious. Emotionally, it's like being *on a roller coaster* at the amusement park, but the ride never ends.

(B) If I had my diploma I could do anything in life I wanted. It would be easier to find a better job and make more money. I could attend concerts and sporting events and take wonderful vacations. I could drive a nice car and live in a big house. And I'd be able to be friends with rich, attractive, successful people. But, unfortunately, studying doesn't make me happy at all!

Speak Your Mind

1. How do you usually respond if your friend asks if you are happy?
2. Are you satisfied with your current life? Why or why not?
3. What is your *secret* for a happy life? Is it *applicable* to other people?
4. Does money make people happy? Or does the love of money destroy their happiness?
5. How do your friends make you happy? When do they disappoint you?
6. Do you think knowledge makes people happy or unhappy?
7. We *overlook* a lot of trivial and routine things that actually make us happy. Name some "unimportant" things that are *vital* to your happiness.
8. A certain man is handsome, intelligent, and rich, and everybody knows and respects him. He has a beautiful wife and terrific children. The whole family enjoys a high social *status*. Do you think he is always happy? Why or why not?
9. We must learn how to be happy and then *work at* it. What have you learned about happiness? How do you practice happiness?

9. We must learn how to be happy and then work at it. What have you learned about happiness? How do you practice happiness?

F : I feel wonderful today!

M : I thought you felt wonderful every day. Is today special?

F : Well, of course, every day is wonderful, and I do feel terrific all the time. But, yes, today is a very special day indeed!

M : Why? It's just like any other Wednesday.

F : No, it's not. It is a Wednesday beyond compare!

M : Why? How?

F : Today is the Wednesday that will notify me that I just won the lottery. I know I won! I can *feel it in my bones*!

M : Are you sure you won? Have you checked the newspaper?

F : Not yet. I'm delaying as long as I can, because I love the happy sense of *anticipation*. When the *suspense* has *built up* to the point where I can't take it any more, then I'll check out the winning numbers.

M : And then what?

F : And then I'll find out that I actually won, and my excitement will know no *bounds*!

M : Gosh, I sure hope you win. You're so high that a fall in your spirits if you lose could be *downright* painful.

F : Don't worry. I'm so high because I know I'll win. It's just impossible for me to lose!



ISSUE 3

When You Have a Cold

Colds are not fatal, but they assure maximum discomfort to their sufferers. A person with a cold not only coughs and sneezes regularly but also has a runny nose, a fever, a headache, a sore throat, and congested nasal passages all at the same time. It is hard to concentrate or stay awake, yet it is also difficult to fall asleep. Even though it only lasts a day or two in its severe stage, the time of suffering seems endless. An odd but important fact is that, even though the cold is the most common illness known to man, repeatedly affecting nearly everyone, there is no known cure. Antibiotics don't work well because every cold virus is unique.

Do you rush to see the doctor whenever you get a cold?

- (1) Yes. That's what doctors are for — making us feel better when we're sick — isn't it?
- (2) I just take some aspirin and try to go about my normal routine.
- (3) I relax and stay at home, knowing I'll recover soon.



Sample Answers

(A) I always tell myself when I get a cold to just stay at home, drink plenty of liquids, and get lots of sleep until I feel better. But somehow, instead, I try to ignore the cold as much as I can. I take medicine and go to work, but I feel terrible all day, I don't get much accomplished, and I probably just *infect* other people. Maybe next time I'll take my own advice!

(B) Patients want their physician to *relieve* their various medical problems. And the doctors want to be helpful, not only because of their professional obligation but also because they know the patient will find a new doctor if they don't help. But this mutual attitude has led to some very severe problems, related especially to the overuse of antibiotics. So viruses are *adapting* themselves to the most widely used drugs and making them ineffective. So I never go to the doctor for some minor *ailment* like a cold. I want those vaccines to be useful when I really need them!

Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you feel tired? What do you do at those times?
2. How often do you catch a cold? How do you find relief from it?
3. Do you sometimes have a stomach ache? How do you *cope with* it?
4. Do you ever *suffer from* a headache? Do you take aspirin or deal with it some other way?
5. Do you regularly take vitamins?
6. Have you ever suffered from *insomnia*? What did you do?
7. Are you afraid of the *side effects* of any medicine?

7. Are you afraid of the side effects of any medicine?

F : Do you ever worry about the side effects of any medicines you're taking?

M : Why, no. I just follow the instructions carefully. Why do you ask? Is my skin turning green or something?

F : No, but I'm afraid mine might. I hardly ever take medicine, not even aspirin, but my doctor just prescribed a whole *slew* of them for my back pain, and I'm worried about how they might affect me.

M : Well, prescribing medicines is not an exact science. Sometimes the drugs will affect one person differently than another. People have different *tolerances*, and some people are allergic to certain medicines. So if you have any *adverse* effects, it might be a good idea to *discontinue* their use and see your doctor again right away.

F : Yes, that's what the doctor told me. How likely is it that I'll have problems?

M : *The odds are in your favor*. Medicines are pretty *exhaustively* tested before they're allowed on the market, and very few people have any trouble as long as they follow the directions carefully. But there's always that odd exception, so watch yourself. Be careful.

F : This is the reason why I usually avoid medicines: I'm afraid of the after-effects.

M : Being a little cautious is good for everyone, but I wouldn't worry so much. The doctors usually don't offer prescriptions to medicines they're not familiar with.

F : But I hear horror stories about people who follow directions carefully and still have something terrible happen. They get a heart attack or go blind or something like that! I'm very concerned.

M : Usually the side effects are minor but unpleasant. People get *blurred* vision or stomach *cramps* or something like that. But they're just having a bad case of anxiety attack.

F : Really? What do you think I should do?

M : Why don't you see a doctor? He can probably prescribe something else that will calm your *nerves*.

ISSUE 4

What Are You Worried About?

Everybody is always worried about something. Many times, their worries are counterproductive. When someone feels unwell, going to a doctor is a good, proactive step that may lead to a solution of the problem. But it does not help anyone to worry about a medical condition instead of seeing the doctor or, after seeing the doctor, to worry about the results of the medical tests. The results may be bad, but worrying about them won't change them. Instead of worrying, people should spend their time and energy seeking solutions to their problems — writing a will, or planning a budget, or making vacation reservations, or outlining a business proposal.

What is your biggest source of worry?

- (1) My job
- (2) My finances
- (3) My health
- (4) My kids
- (5) My friends
- (6) My sweetheart
- (7) My other relatives
- (8) My neighbors



→ **counterproductive** : having a result that is the opposite of the one intended

→ **proactive** : taking action and making changes before problems happen

→ **outline** : describe (sth) in a general way, giving the main points but not the details

Sample Answers

(A) My parents always warned me that someday I'd have kids of my own and hoped that my kids would not be as great a cause of concern to me as I had been to my parents. Well, I guess it's pay-back time! Hardly a day goes by that I don't have some reason to be worried about them: their safety, their grades, their friends, their habits, their future. I've learned what my parents meant, *the hard way*.

(B) I hate my boss and worry about what he's going to do next to make my life miserable. He enjoys *humiliating* me in front of my co-workers and never praises me for a job well done. I'm afraid he's looking for some excuse to *fire* me. Then, instead of worrying about my boss, I'd have to worry about finding another job to take care of my family.

Speak Your Mind

1. What are the common worries ordinary people have?
2. What is their most serious worry?
3. As soon as one problem is solved, another seems to *pop up* immediately. Why?
4. With whom do you usually talk about personal matters?
5. What particular worries do the following people have?
 - (a) parents
 - (b) kids
 - (c) the rich
 - (d) the poor
 - (e) the famous
6. Is there any difference between how men and women worry?

→ **the hard way** : through learning from the unpleasant consequences of mistakes

→ **humiliate** : make (sb) feel ashamed and upset, esp. by making that person seem stupid or weak

→ **fire** : discharge (sb) from a job

→ **pop up** : appear suddenly

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

6. Is there any difference between how men and women worry?

F : Aren't you worried about your son in the military?

M : Of course I am! Don't you think I should be?

F : Of course you should be. But you never talk about it. So I assumed that you weren't bothered at all.

M : Talking about it won't make it any better. It's a situation that won't just go away immediately. But meanwhile I'm worried about him every single day.

F : If it were my son, I'd be talking about the problem every day to everybody. That wouldn't solve the problem or relieve my worries, but it would make dealing with the situation easier.

M : I don't know if it is somehow biological or merely social, but that is certainly one difference in the way men and women typically behave. A man *internalizes* his worries and keeps them to himself, while a woman more freely *communicates* her emotions. I wonder why that is.

F : Yes, I've often thought about that. Maybe it's *evolutionary*.

M : In what way?

F : For centuries and centuries, most women stayed behind in the camp or village with other women, and they would talk to each other to help pass the time while they cooked, made clothing, watched the kids, or *tilled* the fields.

M : OK. Go on.

→ **internalize** : make (sth) personal

→ **communicate** : express thoughts, feelings, or information to (sb) else

→ **evolutionary** : connected with a gradual process of change and development

→ **till** : prepare land for crops to be planted

F : The men, on the other hand, would be away from home and spending much of their time alone, engaged in activities that required a lot of silence, like tracking down animals for food or protecting the camp against enemies. And they needed to appear brave and strong in order to gain the respect of their *comrades*, so it was easier to pretend that they weren't afraid or worried at all by keeping their mouths shut.

M : So you're saying over time, these two modes — being talkative and being silent — became *ingrained* in the two *psyches*?

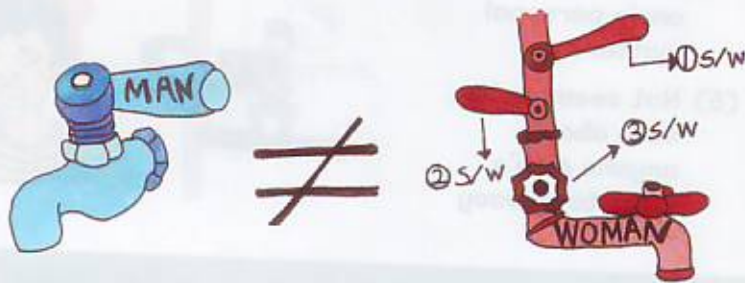
F : Sure. It makes sense to me.

M : So you think men and women are fundamentally different.

F : I think there are many differences. They are not exactly the same, biologically or psychologically. But that doesn't mean that one is better than the other. Men and women are equally capable of doing any job, but they may still do them differently.

M : Hmmm. I'll have to think about your *remarks* for a while.

F : Fine. But after *mulling it over*, don't forget to talk to me about it. We're not robots, you know; we can consciously *alter* our behaviors, despite *millennia* of programming.



ISSUE 5

Cell Phone Taboos

The growth of cell phone use has led to an erosion of etiquette. Maybe I am sitting somewhere thinking or reading a book; maybe I am watching a good movie. Suddenly, someone's phone rings. Or, without my hearing it ring, I hear somebody talking loudly to someone else. It is a very strange feeling, like listening to a deranged person talking to himself. It also makes me extremely uncomfortable to be forced to overhear the intimate details of some stranger's personal business. In any case, my former mood of enjoyment and contentment has disappeared, replaced by feelings of unease and irritation.

What is the most impolite aspect of cell phone misuse in public places?

- (1) Not putting it on vibrate mode or turning it off entirely
- (2) Speaking loudly
- (3) Talking for a long time
- (4) Not being inhibited about discussing one's personal matters
- (5) Not seeming to care about anyone else's right to privacy



Sample Answers

(A) The cell phone is a wonderful invention. It lets people in an emergency situation get help easily and immediately. If we are delayed, it lets us notify others of the problem so they will not be concerned about us. We don't have to worry about missing an important message while we are away from home. But, it certainly is *abused*! I can't stand listening to somebody *yakking* endlessly about nothing.

(B) I can understand that someone has received a phone call and is responding to it. But I hate it when that person is *oblivious* to others around him and talks as loudly as he can.

Speak Your Mind

1. Is there any difference in cell phone usage between young people and old ones?
2. What is the proper etiquette in using a cell phone in public?
3. Can you think of going a day without a cell phone?
4. The age of children having their own cell phones is constantly going down. Why?
5. What do you think about buying a cell phone for your own young kids?
6. What age do you think is appropriate for a person to have a cell phone of his own?
7. What are the bad side effects of camera phones?
8. How has the *advent* of the cell phone changed people's lives?

8. How has the advent of the cell phone changed people's lives?

F : I just read an old science fiction story about a society in which all its members were in constant contact with one another. The process was not described, but it sure reminded me a lot of our own world and our reliance on cell phones.

M : How old is that story?

F : I don't know exactly, but maybe fifty or sixty years.

M : That's pretty amazing! We weren't even born then!

F : But there were some pretty *disturbing* aspects that I can't stop thinking about.

M : Such as?

F : Well, first there was absolutely no privacy. Everybody was talking or being talked to all the time. No one could do anything without the rest of the world knowing all about it. And if there was some sort of technological problem, or if someone was being punished by being denied *access*, the sense of isolation would drive him insane.

M : That could be a serious problem. Sometimes we need to be alone, just to think about our situation and what to do about it.

F : I know. But it was worse than that. The government always knew where the people were and what they were doing. As a result, they lived in an extremely *oppressive police state*.

M : Yes, I think it would be easy to plant a tracking device in a cell phone. That's a very *scary* thought!

F : And, as part of the process, the government was *perpetually* sending out its own *propaganda* through the phones. No one ever had any way to avoid it. So it was easy to *brainwash* and control the *population*.

M : Yikes! Maybe I should start thinking about leaving my phone at home from now on.



ISSUE 6

How Often Do You Exercise?

Too many people today don't move often enough. They stay stuck in a chair in the office at work. They use the elevator or escalator instead of taking the stairs, and they drive short, walkable distances. When they get home, they watch TV or play video games or read a newspaper. But their bodies do not move around. They get larger (not taller!) and their health deteriorates as they sit out their lives. That's why they really should make time to work out.

How often do you exercise?

- (1) Never
- (2) Rarely
- (3) Once a week
- (4) 2-3 times a week
- (5) Almost every day
- (6) Daily
- (7) Whenever I get the chance



Sample Answers

(A) I never go to the gym, but I get plenty of exercise. I walk to and from my job, since it is only a few blocks from my home. At work, there is a certain amount of lifting and carrying I have to do most days, and I watch what I eat. So I see no reason to exercise *artificially*.

(B) If I don't *work up a good sweat* at least once a day, I feel tired and *lethargic* all day. In addition to maintaining my weight and muscle tone, working out also clears my mind and increases my energy. So I am hardly ever sick, tired, or depressed. The hour or so I spend in the gym every day probably adds years to my life!

Speak Your Mind

1. What is the most popular exercise people engage in? Why?
2. Golf is relatively expensive, but the sport is *booming*. Can you explain why?
3. Do you know of any exercise that is easy and inexpensive, and that people will stay with for a long time?
4. What is the best exercise for young people?
5. What is the best exercise for the elderly?
6. What do you do for exercise?
7. People usually start exercising with a *firm determination* to continue, but many fail to persist. Do you know why?

→ **artificially**: not naturally

→ **work up a good sweat**: do hard physical exercise

→ **lethargic**: lacking energy, not wanting to do anything

→ **boom**: grow or develop rapidly; thrive

→ **firm**: definite and not likely to change

→ **determination**: act of making a decision

7. People usually start exercising with a firm determination to continue, but many fail to persist. Do you know why?

M : Let's go to the gym.

F : Oh, you go! I'm tired.

M : Tired? From doing what?

F : Mainly, I'm just tired of the same routine. We go to the gym every week, and it's getting boring. It's the same old schedule every time.

M : Oh, you're just disappointed that you aren't making progress any more.

F : That's part of it, I guess. At first, I could see results. My waistline went down, I lost a lot of weight, and my scores improved. But I think I've reached the limit of my ability.

M : If you stop, you'll just get fat again! You should exercise to maintain the gains you made, even if you don't continue to make more.

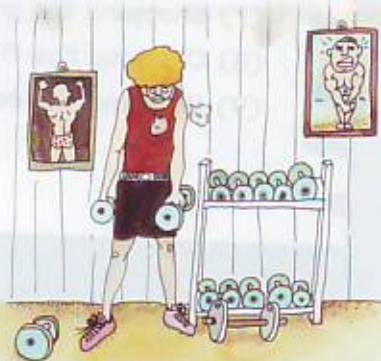
F : I've thought of that, but maybe if I just watch my diet that won't happen. If it does, I can always start exercising again later. But right now, I'm just not *up for* it. The thought just *bores me to tears*.

M : Won't you miss the new friends you've met?

F : Not really. We don't have anything in common except sweat, and I have lots of other friends I can get together with to do things I enjoy more.

M : OK, I'll go by myself, then. Don't say you weren't invited!

F : I won't! Have fun. But make sure you shower well before you come home, so you don't *stink up* the place *up*!



ISSUE 7

Household Chores

It's amazing how much work has to be done every day just to maintain a place to live in. The dishes have to be washed, dried, and put away. Clothes not only need to be washed, dried, and put away, but ironed as well! The floors need to be swept, the furniture dusted. There's garbage that has to be taken out. Toilets and bathroom tiles need to be cleaned. And, then, we need to shop for groceries and make sure all the bills are paid. Periodically, we need to replace the wallpaper or repaint the rooms. Sometimes, we have to repair the furnace or the air conditioner or some appliance. The work never ends!

What chore do you hate the most?

- (1) Doing the dishes
- (2) Cooking
- (3) Washing clothes
- (4) Ironing
- (5) Taking out the garbage
- (6) Cleaning the bathroom
- (7) Shopping for groceries
- (8) Cleaning the floor
- (9) Washing the car



Sample Answers

(A) I hate doing the dishes the most. It always needs to be done at the worst possible time, right after I have eaten a nice, filling meal, when all I really want to do is relax and let some of the food digest in peace. But, no! Instead of watching TV or reading a magazine for a half hour, I have to collect all the dishes, *utensils*, pots, and pans, take them to the sink, turn on the hot water, and *scrub*, scrub, scrub until they are all clean. By then, the television and magazine have lost their appeal, and it's time to start getting the kids ready for bed.

(B) There's no chore like cleaning the floor. It is, quite *literally*, *back-breaking* labor to crawl around on my hands and knees with a rag and scrub the floor down to a bright *polish*. The worst thing is, it seems like as soon as I finish, it needs to be done all over again! I hate it!

Speak Your Mind

1. Who does the cooking in your family?
2. Who does the grocery shopping at your home?
3. Who does the dishes in your house?
4. What chores do the kids in your family help with?
5. What is the chore that men hate to do the most? Why, do you think?
6. What is the chore women hate the most? Why?
7. Women are said to be more *adept* at doing household chores. Do you agree? Why or why not?

7. Women are said to be more adept at doing household chores. Do you agree? Why or why not?

F : There might have been a time when women had nothing else to do except take care of the home. It *made* a certain amount of *sense* that if the husband was away from home earning money for the family, then the wife should make sure everything at home was taken care of.

M : Do I sense that you don't think that is the case any more?

F : It might be, for some families. If the wife does not have a job, then she should be expected to work at home. That seems *fair*.

M : But?

F : But, that isn't the case for most families anymore. A lot of women work outside the home, and many have full-time jobs. They put in just as much time at work as their husbands do, but still they are expected to take care of the house too. Most husbands don't help at all, or they only help a *tiny* bit.

M : Well, why don't women *go on strike*, then? "Don't iron while the strike is hot!" Eventually, men will be forced to help out, since they want to live in a clean house and wear nice clothes, too.

F : I don't know about most men, but I don't think my husband cares much one way or another if the house is *messy*. He just seems *oblivious* to the whole situation. Eventually, I just can't *take* it anymore and clean up the mess by myself.

M : Do you suppose it's genetic?

F : What? Do I think there's a house-cleaning gene that women have and men don't? Of course not! Men are just lazy *slobs*, that's all!

M : I take exception to that! I don't think I'm lazy at all, and I'm certainly not a slob. I always take great care to look good and to live in a neat, clean environment.

F : Then what's the difference between you and the rest of the Male Race?

M : I guess it was the way I was raised. I was always expected to help with the household chores, so when I got married I was used to it. Sure, when I get home I'm tired and want to relax, but I know my wife feels the same way. So I always try to do about half the housework, and we take turns doing the things we both hate.



→ **make sense** : be practical and sensible

→ **tiny** : extremely small

→ **oblivious** : unaware of what is happening

→ **slob** : dirty, lazy, or messy person

→ **fair** : without favoritism; just

→ **go on strike** : refuse to work

→ **take** : accept or endure

→ **messy** : disorderly

ISSUE 8

Do You Get Along Well with Your Parents?

Our first major choice in life is who our parents are. This determines the fundamental aspects of our very identity: our name, our status, our genes. These factors will influence us until we die, so the relationships we maintain with our closest relations is important.

How well do you get along with your parents?

- (1) Very well
- (2) So-so
- (3) Indifferently
- (4) Not so well



Sample Answers

(A) My parents and I have gone in different directions since I was about ten. No matter how much we love each other or how hard we try to live together peacefully, we have fundamentally different ideas about how I should live my life. I hope someday they accept me for who I am instead of trying to make me into who they think I should be. (Or, to be fair, maybe someday I will recognize their wisdom in trying to change my attitudes and lifestyle.) But I doubt it.

(B) Ever since I left home and moved to a different city, my parents and I have gradually *drifted apart*. We see each other on major holidays and talk to each other on the phone from time to time, but we just are not as close as we used to be. I miss the good old days, when they were a constant source of *inspiration* and advice.

Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you visit your parents?
2. How much money do you give your parents (if any)? How much do they give you?
3. Do you always vacation with your parents?
4. What do you do for a special day such as a parent's birthday or wedding anniversary?
5. Do you think your parents are proud of you? Why or why not?
6. What is the most important lesson you learned from your parents?
7. Do you expect an *inheritance* from your parents? Why or why not?
8. Will you financially support your parents when they retire or become unable to pay for themselves?
9. Would you move aged or ill parents into your home? What about sending them to a *nursing home*?
10. Do your parents have strong opinions about how you should live your own life?

→ **drift apart** : gradually lose interest in or affection for each other

→ **inspiration** : feeling of encouragement or uplift

→ **inheritance** : property or money received upon (sb's) death

→ **nursing home** : institution where old people live when they are too old or sick to care for themselves without help

10. Do your parents have strong opinions about how you should live your own life?

M : I'm an adult, aren't I?

F : Well, you look like one anyway. Sometimes I'm not so sure that you act like one. Why do you ask?

M : My parents still treat me like a child. They don't think I can make any decisions on my own.

F : It's what parents do. No matter how old or successful you become, to them you'll always be their little boy.

M : But I'm not a little boy! They did a good job raising me to be a *self-reliant, capable* human being, but they never recognize how well they did. They still want to control my life.

F : I think you should consider yourself very fortunate. Once I left home, my parents left me entirely on my own. Now even when I try to get their advice, they tell me to solve my own problems.

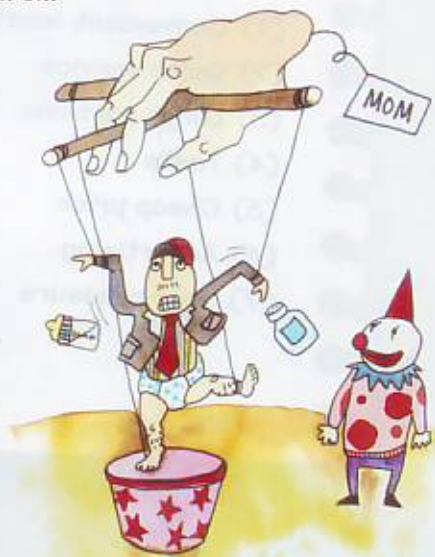
M : Well, I think you do a pretty good job of taking care of yourself.

F : I think so too, but it's not like I have any choice. I have to rely on my own *initiative*, since I don't have anyone else to *lean on*.

M : It's odd, isn't it? We're both basically well-adjusted, self-motivated people, with loving parents. But I wish mine would leave me alone more often, and you want yours to be more involved in your decision-making.

F : I guess there's another possibility, as well. Maybe in both of our cases, our parents *intervene* to the same degree, but we both overreact. You *resent* any interference at all, and I never feel I get enough involvement.

M : Hmmmm. Maybe you have a point. I don't think that's true, but it's something to think about.



→ **self-reliant** : able to decide what to do by oneself, without depending on the help or advice of other people

→ **capable** : skillful; effective

→ **initiative** : ability to make decisions and take action without waiting for (sb) to tell one

what to do → **lean on** : depend on

→ **intervene** : become involved in a situation in order to try to stop or change it

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

ISSUE 9

Fast Food

The fast-food chains are gobbling up the restaurant segment of the economy. When they first began to appear a generation or so ago, they offered cheap, healthy products to people in a hurry. Consumers said they ate there because they "couldn't fix that food at home for such a low price." Well, that was then; now, most fast-food outlets feature expensive, unhealthy items. So, the "food" part of the description is in some doubt; and as waiting times grow, even the "fast" part seems to be inaccurate as well. Nevertheless, the major fast-food companies continue to proliferate and their profits just keep on growing.

Why do you think people buy fast food, even though they know it is not good for their health?

- (1) Convenient location
- (2) Quick service
- (3) Large portions
- (4) Taste
- (5) Cheap price
- (6) Advertising
- (7) Peer pressure



Sample Answers

(A) At work, I only have a short time to eat and run personal errands, so I don't have the time to go to a nice, relaxing restaurant for a good meal. I save that luxury for the weekends. My office is in an area where there are dozens of small fast-food restaurants, so I have a wide choice of menus and I can finish my meal quickly.

(B) People eat in the popular fast-food places for the same reason that they listen to popular music and wear popular fashions: because it is "popular" to do so. The giant *corporations* understand very well the value of advertizing and image-creation. Most people actually prefer high-quality food that is individually prepared, served to them by a friendly waiter or waitress, and consumed in a comfortable, relaxing environment; but they still spend most of their eat-out *budget* at the assembly-line food outlets.

Speak Your Mind

1. What is your favorite fast food?
2. How often do you eat at a fast-food restaurant?
3. Are there any problems associated with fast food?
4. Why do many people, especially kids, seem to be addicted to fast food?
5. What should the fast-food producers do to help consumers?
6. Do you think parents are at fault for their children's bad eating habits, or are the kids themselves most responsible?

6. Do you think parents are at fault for their children's bad eating habits, or are the kids themselves most responsible?

F : I don't know what to do about my son.

M : Why? What's the matter?

F : No matter what I *fix* at home for him to eat, he hardly touches it. When he does eat, he's *listless*. It's like he has no appetite for good food.

M : Oh, he's probably just *infatuated* with somebody. Nobody who's "in love" feels like eating, you know.

F : No, I don't think so. Mainly, he only wants to eat fast food. He *loads up* on it before he gets home, and then of course he isn't hungry any more.

M : That should be an easy problem to fix. Just don't give him any money.

F : That wouldn't help. He would just borrow some cash from his friends, and I'd end up having to give him money to pay them back. And I don't want him to be a beggar; he needs to *stand on his own*.

M : But he's making terrible food choices. How did he get such bad habits?

F : It's probably my fault. When I used to take him out shopping, we'd stop at some fast-food place for lunch. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but now I'm sorry.

M : Don't be too hard on yourself. Everybody buys fast food now and then. Sometimes there just isn't any convenient *alternative*.

F : But it isn't good for him to make it his main source of meals. He needs to have a more balanced diet with fewer empty calories and less fat.

M : Have you talked to him about it?

F : Many times. But he doesn't even seem to think there's a problem. He says all his friends eat out, and he just wants to be with them.

M : Well, I guess ultimately he has to make his own choices in life. He's not your prisoner.

F : No, he isn't. But I can't help worrying about him.

ISSUE 10

What's On Your Mind Now?

People seem to think about money more often than any other thing. Or they are obsessed with their looks. Maybe it's their love life that is uppermost in their thoughts. Frivolous things such as gossip, football standings, movies, music, games, and celebrities preoccupy a lot of folks. I suppose some ambitious people are focused on achieving success. And maybe a few concentrate on leading upright, moral lives, but these definitely seem to be in the minority these days.

What's on your mind?

- (1) Money
- (2) Appearance
- (3) Health
- (4) Improving relationships
- (5) Getting a promotion
- (6) Getting a new job
- (7) The in-laws
- (8) The future
- (9) Skill acquisition



Sample Answers

(A) What's wrong with being worried about how I look? It's a *known fact* that the so-called beautiful people get the best jobs, make the most money, find the best mates, and are the most popular, no matter how well they do in school. So any time I put into improving my appearance is just a good investment in life. If others think I'm *vain*, that's their problem; they're probably just jealous anyway.

(B) I don't think I have just one thing on my mind at all. Like other people, I go from subject to subject throughout the day. At work, I concentrate on my job. When I'm with my friends, we are concerned with our mutual interests. When I'm by my myself, *my thoughts wander* over many fields: sometimes I worry about mistakes I made, sometimes I think about what I need to do to get ahead, sometimes I'm not much interested in anything at all. We don't really have any control over the contents of our thoughts; our brains just randomly surf across whatever *stimuli* they happen to encounter.

Speak Your Mind

1. What is the most *urgent* thing for you to do now?
2. What should you accomplish this year?
3. What is your 10-year plan?
4. What is the ideal retirement situation?
5. What would your next job be if you had a choice?
6. What are your most pleasant memories?
7. What are your worst memories?
8. Do your relatives give you headaches or happiness?

→ **known fact** : proven point

→ **vain** : overly proud of one's own looks or abilities

→ **one's thoughts wander** : (sb) stops paying attention to (sth) and thinks about (sth) else

→ **stimulus** : (sth) that causes a reaction

→ **urgent** : needing immediate action or attention

8. Do your relatives give you headaches or happiness?

M : I feel very lucky to have the in-laws I do. Sometimes I think they care more about me than my real parents do.

F : You are lucky indeed. I don't think my in-laws have ever forgiven me for marrying into their family. I don't think they believe anyone is good enough for their son, and I'm the unfortunate evidence of that belief.

M : Maybe you're over-reacting. Have you tried to get close to them? They can't be expected to do all the work, can they?

F : I've tried many times, but *to no effect*. Whenever I think we've achieved some sort of *breakthrough* in our relationship, they make sure that I am quickly *disabused* of that notion. If I didn't love my husband I'd get a divorce just to get rid of his parents.

M : Wow, that sounds pretty bad. My in-laws and I had to make a rough adjustment in the very beginning, but we all learned to make the necessary *compromises*, and then everything worked out fine. I don't know what I'd do without them. If I ever have any problem, they are always there to help me out. I think that my wife and I may have actually *split up* without their support.

F : It's very strange. We can't choose who our parents are, and sometimes people get very bad ones. But usually we can depend on our parents to love us and help us, no matter what. Then, when we grow up, we actually get to choose someone to share our lives with; but we also inherit their parents as well. I'm glad that this has worked out for you, but I don't think that most people get along very well with their in-laws.

M : Maybe not. I guess that it's because of some sort of rivalry in their affections. Your in-laws must love their son very much and can't *tolerate* the notion that he has to share his love between themselves and you.

F : But they should realize that their interference in our lives makes him unhappy too. It isn't just me who is hurt by their actions. If they truly loved him, as you say, they should want him to be happy, not miserable.

M : Yes, you're right, of course. I suppose there is nothing you can do about it, though. But I hope you can remember how bad you feel now, when your own children get married. Then maybe their spouses can say how lucky they are to have such a wonderful mother-in-law!

ISSUE 11

Everyday Lies

People lie every day! A man tells his wife that her new dress is lovely even though it looks terrible on her; she tells him that he is still as handsome as when they first met. People routinely inform a dying man that he looks well to keep his spirits up. Doctors sometimes withhold the worst news from their patients, and politicians and soldiers deliberately spread untruthful information to protect national security. In addition, of course, many folks lie to protect themselves or to avoid embarrassing situations. Lying is a natural, and sometimes necessary part of human life.

Discuss the following sentences: say whether or not they are lies and if they serve a good purpose.

- (1) There is a God.
- (2) Heaven and hell both exist.
- (3) I will love you forever.
- (4) Sorry, I'm too busy now.
- (5) Money can buy everything.
- (6) It's not my fault.
- (7) If you study hard, you will succeed.
- (8) I didn't know.
- (9) The traffic was heavy.
- (10) Politicians work for the good of their nations and their people.



Sample Answers

(A) To tell people that they will surely succeed if only they study hard is a lie but a necessary lie. The real truth is that there are no guarantees of success or failure. Some *dedicated*, intelligent people will *inexplicably* fail despite their ability and hard work, just as good fortune may shine on a handful of lazy, stupid folks who are lucky enough to win a lottery. However, studying hard is usually a *prerequisite* for success, and most people who do not study hard won't go very far in life. But to tell them that would *do them a disservice*; they need to believe that success will automatically come to them if they are diligent, or they may decide to take a chance on pure luck.

(B) The only people who believe that money can do everything either have no money or too much money. The poor use their lack of money to excuse their inability to do things, while the rich have an *inflated* idea of their own worth and *potential*. Everybody else realizes that money is very useful but has limited utility; the real value lies in courage, ability, *perseverance*, intelligence, *sociability*, and many other personal characteristics. So telling people that "money can do everything" harmfully *distorts* the truth.

Speak Your Mind

1. Talk about the lies that people tell most often.
2. What would be a common lie told by:
 - (a) an ordinary worker?
 - (b) the boss?
 - (c) parents?
 - (d) kids?
 - (e) the jobless?
 - (f) husbands to wives?
 - (g) wives to husbands?
 - (h) teachers to their students?
 - (i) a drunk driver stopped by a cop?
 - (j) a person who is late for an appointment?
 - (k) someone who didn't call his friend right back?
 - (l) people who get drunk often?
 - (m) anyone who can't quit smoking?
 - (n) a man or woman who fails to lose weight?
 - (o) people who just got fired?
 - (p) a man who is having an *affair*?
 - (q) a woman who is *unfaithful* to her husband?
3. Do you think white lies are necessary? Why? What would happen if people stopped telling them?

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

3. Do you think white lies are necessary? Why? What would happen if people stopped telling them?

M: How do I look?

F: You look wonderful, just like always.

M: Did I spend too much on my new suit?

F: No, it looks great on you. When you go to that meeting, I know you'll *wow* them with your *proposals*.

M: Afterwards, why don't we go somewhere to celebrate?

F: Great! I'll wear my new dress. And that new diamond necklace I just got.

M: That sounds wonderful! I'm glad I have your support. Sometimes I'm not so sure of myself, and it's great to know that you are behind me *boosting* me all the time.

F: Nonsense. You're always basically on the right track, but you just need a little *nudge* from time to time to keep you *pointed* in the right direction. That's all.

M: Are you sure?

F: Of course I'm sure!

M: Well, then, maybe now is a good time to test the theory. I won't be coming home tonight.

F: Why not? Another late meeting?

M: No, there's no late meeting. There are never any late meetings.

F: What are you saying?

M : It's difficult, but I want to be completely honest. I'm seeing another woman.

F : What!?

M : That's right. One who never has to lie to me. She doesn't just tell me what I want to hear all the time. She loves me for who I am, not for who she wants me to be.

F : You fool! If I weren't *stroking your ego* every step of the way, you wouldn't be where you are today. You'd just be another *washed-up*, middle-aged man. Everything you have, you owe to me!

M : Is that right? You mean everything I owe is because of everything you have. I've worked hard for years just so you can spend all of my money on yourself. Your new dresses and diamonds, indeed!

F : You wouldn't have any money if I didn't guide you all the time. So, leave me, see if I care. Go to your "other woman." See what happens then, when you're *left to your own devices*. But, after you fail, don't come begging me for help. It's over!

M : You, too. When you don't have any of my money to spend any more, don't come back to me for more. I'm tired of supporting you.

F : And I'm equally tired of all the psychological support I've given you!



→ **stroke one's ego** : flatter; motivate to become more confident

→ **washed-up** : no longer successful

→ **leave (sb) to one's own devices** : leave (sb) alone and without help

ISSUE 12

Distractions at the Wheel

Maybe there was a time, long ago, when driving was a carefree activity. There was no traffic except a few horses and cattle-drawn wagons. The car was so slow that people had plenty of time to get out of the way as you approached. There were no roads, so you could drive wherever you wanted, and there were no traffic rules. The biggest worries were if the automobile would start and where to find gasoline. But times have changed.

These days, there are millions of fast, heavy vehicles on the roads. Not all drivers are particularly careful, and many drive too fast and do not pay much attention to their common sense, let alone the laws. So a really good driver in today's world must not only pay attention to his own business, but he has to also keep track of the goings-on of everybody else on the road as well.

What is the most common distraction for drivers?

- (1) Not keeping their eyes on the road (Looking at something else)
- (2) Fiddling with radio, TV, CD, or video controls
- (3) Talking to passengers
- (4) Using cell phones
- (5) Drinking or eating something
- (6) Not paying attention
- (7) Being too tired
- (8) Getting lost
- (9) Being confused by the road signs
- (10) Becoming angry or impatient in traffic jams



Sample Answers

(A) The most dangerous device for the modern driver is the cell phone. To use it, one must take one's hands off the wheel, one's eyes off the road, and one's mind off the task of driving. It is no wonder that many countries have *banned* the use of cell phones by drivers.

(B) Driving in *metropolitan* traffic is a full-time job. It requires complete concentration and a clear mind. A driver must be able to react instantly to avoid an accident or to deal with some unexpected road condition. Even excellent drivers are *handicapped* behind the wheel if they are tired or preoccupied with other matters. To drive well, people absolutely must be *alert*; *by definition*, tired people are not attentive enough and not quick enough to deal with the ever-changing situation on high-speed highways.

Speak Your Mind

1. Are you confident of your driving skills?
2. Who do you think are the best drivers, men or women?
3. Do you obey all the traffic rules?
4. Have you ever *dozed* at the wheel?
5. Did you ever drive drunk?
6. Do you always *buckle up*? What do you think about the legal requirement to use seat belts?
7. Have you ever been involved in a traffic accident? Tell what happened.
8. Would you ride in a car with a friend who has been drinking?
9. Are you ever willing to lend your car to a friend or coworker?
10. What is the traffic rule people break most often?

10. What is the traffic rule people break most often?

F : Don't drive so fast!

M : I'm not going any faster than anyone else. I'm only keeping up with the flow of traffic.

F : But you're still over the speed limit. Slow down.

M : If I'm too slow I run the risk of being *rear-ended* by a fast car behind me. It's better to go the same speed as everyone else.

F : I'm not in any hurry to get where we're going. There's no *degree of being late* that can compare to being dead! I'd rather be alive and a little late than never to get there at all.

M : Don't worry. Everything is fine. The weather is good, the car is operating perfectly, and I'm in complete control of the situation.

F : If you're not going to slow down, let me out. I refuse to ride with an *outlaw*.

M : An outlaw?

F : Yes, absolutely. you know what the speed limit is and you refuse to *abide by* it. That is deliberately breaking the law! Let me out, you criminal!

M : OK, OK, you win. I'll slow down. Now, are you satisfied?

F : Just keep at the speed limit or below and I'll be happy.

M : At least I don't race the other cars. I don't feel like my *manhood* is threatened just because someone passes me.

F : No, I didn't say you were a terrible driver. But sometimes you're too fast. I don't want to get a ticket and I don't want to take risks.

M : OK, I promise to try to do better. But I think you worry too much.



ISSUE 13

Do You Like to Eat Out?

A few businesses seem to be recession-proof. It really doesn't matter whether times are good or bad, people will still eat out, they'll still drink alcohol, and they'll still gamble. They gamble to get rich, and if the economy is bad they'll be even more desperate to have lots of money. When times are good, people drink to celebrate; and when times are bad, they drink to forget. But they go to restaurants because it is a pleasant experience. It's easy to vary the diet: one day I can eat Greek food, and the next, Italian. Or even if I eat hamburgers every day, those at one fast-food chain are different than the ones at another. Eating in company with other people is always an enjoyable experience, especially if you know you don't have to wash the dishes afterwards.

Why do you eat out?

- (1) For a change
- (2) I hate to cook and do the dishes.
- (3) It's not fun eating at home alone.
- (4) For more delicious food
- (5) The family likes to go out together once in a while.
- (6) To celebrate special days



Sample Answers

(A) When I got married, my wife and I made it a point to eat out once a week. We didn't have to go to an expensive restaurant — that was for special occasions — but we avoided the fast-food places. We'd go someplace quiet and get a table alone, and later with the kids. And we'd relax and talk about *pointless* things, just to enjoy being together. But then our schedules changed, and it became harder to eat out every week, and we lost a lot of the *intimacy* we once had. Eventually we *broke up*. I don't think we got a divorce because we didn't eat out very much any more, but I think if we had continued to do so we would have had a better chance of staying together.

(B) I'm sorry to say it, but my wife is a terrible cook. She can't even boil water successfully. So if we didn't regularly go out to eat, the whole family would either starve to death or die of food poisoning.

Speak Your Mind

1. How often do you eat out?
2. Where do you usually go when you dine out?
3. Who decides what to eat?
4. Does the expense matter when you go to a restaurant? Why or why not?
5. Do you always eat out on a special day? Why or why not?
6. Explain why the number of people who eat out is on the rise.

6. Explain why the number of people who eat out is on the rise.

F : My, this place is crowded!

M : Yes. I can remember when we'd come here and be almost alone.

F : I wonder what's happened.

M : *Commerce is picking up*, I guess, so a lot of businesses are probably taking *prospective* clients out more often. The food here is always good, so they come here.

F : That's probably true. And I suppose that, as more and more women work, they don't have the time to cook at home, so they go out to eat.

M : Right. And also, I suspect that a lot of modern women never learned how to cook properly, so they are forced to eat out.

F : Unfortunately, I think you're right.

M : Yes, and so some of them, the ones who couldn't cook, saw their marriages break up. And so there are a lot more single people these days, and most of them don't want to go to the trouble of fixing their own meals by themselves. It's just a lot more convenient for them to eat out.

F : What about us? Why do we eat out?

M : So we can share a nice experience together and keep our romance alive.

F : I was hoping you'd say that!

M : I suspected it was a test. I'm glad I passed.

F : So, let's eat!



ISSUE 14

Who Is the Real You?

When we look in the mirror each morning, we like to squint a bit to soften the image a bit. But to know and understand oneself is the first step to a successful life. Everybody has his or her strong and weak points, and we might as well admit it. Then we can concentrate on improving on our weaknesses and emphasizing our strengths. Otherwise, we will go through life wondering why we aren't accomplishing more.

Describe yourself by choosing one from each of the following pairs.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| (1) Friendly | Reticent |
| (2) Self-reliant | Dependent |
| (3) Impulsive | Calculating |
| (4) Optimistic | Pessimistic |
| (5) Conservative | Liberal |
| (6) Outgoing | Shy |
| (7) Adventurous | Staid |
| (8) Humorous | Humorless |
| (9) Leader | Follower |
| (10) Spendthrift | Tightwad |
| (11) Forgiving | Vengeful |
| (12) Social | Reclusive |
| (13) Idealistic | Realistic |
| (14) Modest | Boastful |
| (15) Law-abiding | Anarchic |



Sample Answers

(A)

This is hard! Sometimes neither choice is quite right. For instance, with my close friends I'm very outgoing and friendly, but I'm usually a bit shy and reticent among strangers. Which is the real me?

(B)

I'm definitely the Leader type. I guess that *fits* my other choices such as Self-Reliant, Realistic, and Social. But I wonder, am I really Boastful? I know I'm not *false*ly Modest very often, but I would prefer to describe myself as Honest rather than Boastful. But this list sure does give me a lot to think about in my *self-evaluation*.

Speak Your Mind

1. Who do you think knows you the best? Why?
2. What makes you the proudest of yourself?
3. What makes you the most disappointed with yourself?
4. List three things you should change to improve yourself.
5. A sense of humor is often considered important for *fostering* better relationships with others. Why?

→ **fit** : be appropriate or right for (sth)

→ **false**ly : not really

→ **self-evaluation** (**self-assessment**) : analysis of oneself or one's actions and attitudes

→ **foster** : help (sth) to grow or develop

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. A sense of humor is often considered important for fostering better relationships with others. Why?

M : Do you think I'm humorless?

F : Sometimes, maybe, but usually you see the funny side of things. I don't think you take life or yourself too seriously, but you aren't irresponsible either.

M : I'm glad to hear you say that. Lately, people seem to think that I'm too *tense*. I guess maybe I'm working too hard.

F : We all need to relax sometimes. But maybe even more important: we need to be able to get others to relax with us. If being with us makes everyone else feel nervous, no one will want to be in our presence, and we'll never have close friends.

M : That's true. But if someone's always a clown and is constantly the life of the party, lots of people may want to be with that person, but they won't take him very seriously. He'll be more like a pet poodle than anything else.

F : It's not just acting silly and telling jokes well that *matters*. Having a good sense of humor means being able to accept *setbacks* as part of life and not *getting down* about the bad things. A smile is always a better solution than suicide.

M : But sometimes we need to do the hard work to succeed, even if it is not all fun and games. A pleasant *mediocrity* is still just a mediocrity. I don't see how anyone can be *content* with laughing at his or her own failures — it's not funny!

F : But people who can't laugh at their own *absurdities* can never overcome them. We all need to realize how imperfect we are and then do the best we can. If we fail sometimes, people won't think worse of us for it, and when we succeed they won't *resent* us. In either case, we'll be much happier about it.

M : You seem to have thought this through pretty thoroughly.

F : Well, I guess it's because I've fallen down enough times to realize that it hurts too much if I can't laugh about it at the time.



ISSUE 15

Personal Habits

Isn't it funny how one person's foibles attract us to that person, while those same habits make other people obnoxious to us? Take my boyfriend, for instance. I usually can't stand it when people talk too much, but I love the fact that he can spend hours on end keeping me entertained with his wonderful, funny stories.

What is your sweetheart's worst habit or characteristic?

- (1) Being a workaholic
- (2) Smoking and/or drinking
- (3) Messy or unsanitary
- (4) Being a spendthrift
- (5) Having a useless or dangerous hobby
- (6) Driving too fast and/or carelessly
- (7) No sense of humor
- (8) Habitually late
- (9) Not exercising
- (10) Eats too much junk food
- (11) Being a tightwad
- (12) Snoring
- (13) Being a bookworm
- (14) Selfish, self-centered
- (15) Hot-tempered
- (16) Other (explain)



Sample Answers

(A) Because I love my husband, I don't want him to get hurt. But he drives much too fast, and I'm afraid it's just a matter of time before he causes a serious accident. Nothing I say seems to make any difference, and I refuse to ride with him or to let our children travel with him in our car. I only pray that he doesn't hurt himself or any one else too badly when the crash comes, and that maybe then he will finally learn his lesson.

(B) My girl friend just doesn't understand me. All she really cares about is herself; everything else is second. Don't get me wrong: I love her, and she has many wonderful qualities. She's honest, intelligent, and fun to be with. But I wish she could be a little less *demanding* and a little more sensitive about my moods and desires.

Speak Your Mind

1. Would you want a sweetheart who is cheap? Why or why not?
2. Would you want your sweetheart to be a workaholic? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever tried to persuade your sweetheart to get rid of his or her bad habits? Did you succeed?
4. What are the most common bad habits men have?
5. What are the most common bad habits women have?
6. What are the most common bad habits old people have?
7. What are your sweetheart's best character traits?
8. Talk about your own good and bad habits.
9. Why is it important to have good habits? How can we acquire them?
10. Many people *look forward to* the new year as a new start on getting rid of old habits. Have you ever made New Year's *resolutions*? What were they? What happened?

→ **demanding** : requiring much time, effort, or attention

→ **look forward to** : feel happy and excited about (sth) that is going to happen

→ **resolution** : decision to do (sth)

10. Many people look forward to the new year as a new start on getting rid of old habits. Have you ever made New Year's resolutions? What were they? What happened?

F : What are your New Year's resolutions this year?

M : If I tell you, they won't come true.

F : Don't be silly! If you tell me, maybe I can help you achieve them.

M : Well, OK. I want to lose some weight. Can you help me with that?

F : Sure! Just start coming to my house to eat. I'm a terrible cook, so you won't have much *appetite*.

M : I also want to improve my vocabulary, but I don't read very much. What can I do?

F : I suggest that you listen to me more. I love to talk and I know lots of words!

M : Last year I tried to quit smoking, but it didn't *work out*. I did fine for about a week, but then I *started up again*. What could you have done to help me then?

F : Usually people smoke in certain situations, for example when they are in a bar drinking with their friends. So you should have avoided those circumstances and done something else, such as going to a restaurant or a movie with me.

M : What about you? Did you make any resolutions?

F : I swore I would do my best to get you to spend more time with me so we could get closer.

M : Really? I think it's working.



ISSUE 16

Dieting

These days, most people associate the word "dieting" with losing weight. But the word actually has many shades of meaning. Some dieters want actually to gain weight, not lose it. Others need to adjust their food intake due to health reasons that have nothing directly to do with weight; they may be allergic to some foods or be deficient in some minerals or vitamins. So, diabetics will avoid some kinds of food, while cancer victims will gorge themselves on others. In addition, some diets are prescribed by religious or social rules. And, of course, the most general definition of a diet is "that which is customarily eaten."

Why do many diets fail?

- (1) Ordinary people don't know enough about nutrition.
- (2) Most people lack will power.
- (3) People look for shortcuts (such as starving themselves or following a fad diet) rather than make the necessary lifestyle changes.
- (4) People are dependent on commercial diet medications.



Sample Answers

(A)

There is only one thing people need to know to lose weight: they have to burn more calories every day than they *store*. Usually, this means getting more exercise and eating less. But no matter how one accomplishes it, it is entirely a mathematical process.

(B)

Most *fad* diets *work*, for a while, often with very dramatic results over a short period of time. But most followers soon *revert* to their old habits, and their weight goes back to the old levels. Even in the case of sensible diets, the pattern is usually good progress at first, but then the curve begins to flatten as the body adjusts to the new foods it is consuming. In fact, even extreme solutions such as *liposuction* often fail, because people do not change their lifestyles sufficiently.

Speak Your Mind

1. Are you worried about your weight? Why or why not?
2. Is it easy for you to stay *fit*? Why or why not?
3. Do you know any good way to lose weight?
4. Ordinary people, especially men, gain weight after getting married. Do you have any ideas why?
5. Talk about problems caused by being overweight.
6. Do you know that many people still suffer from being abnormally underweight? What is a good way to gain weight?
7. Who do you think is more self-conscious about their weight, males or females? Why?

7. Who do you think is more self-conscious about their weight, males or females? Why?

F : You men are lucky!

M : Why do you think so?

F : The ads, the movies, TV, videos — all the media focus on beautiful women being as skinny as poles! Men are allowed to be their natural selves who don't have to starve themselves or wear tight clothes that hide their weight.

M : Well, I agree that men are lucky if they have a beautiful wife. But women who look that way are lucky, too. They are healthy and popular, and they probably have a rich husband as a result. Men aren't so lucky, because they can't get by on their looks alone.

F : You're *disgraceful*! These are exactly the chauvinistic attitudes I was complaining about. I thought that you at least would be more sensitive to the *plight* of women.

M : Whoa, *slow down*. I'm not trying to insult anyone, I'm just describing the world as I see it. Two hundred years ago, women were expected to have large, round bodies, because their motherhood roles were emphasized. Skinny women were undesirable then. But now the focus has *shifted*. Motherhood is less important now, so the main purpose of a woman is to look good so as to add *status* to her husband's social role.

F : What! You're even worse than I thought! How can any sane person believe such *drivel*? Women and men are exactly the same and should have exactly the same rights and privileges.

M : Some rich women have boy-toys of their own, don't they? Isn't that the same thing?

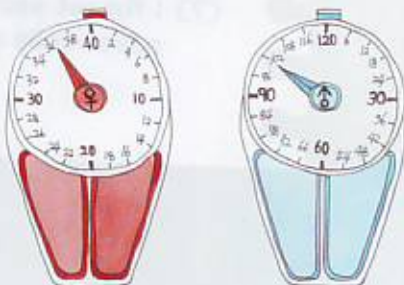
F : Of course it is. How much respect do the *boy-toys* get from other men? Or even from the women who "own" them? Not much! It should be the same with women — if their only goal in life is to be a trophy for some man, there's something wrong with them.

M : Okay, okay, I'm sorry I got you so upset. I'm just joking. I don't really believe any of this nonsense; I just wanted to see your reaction. So, why don't we get something to eat and *make up*? *My treat*!

F : No, I'm sorry. I can't join you for lunch today.
Can I *take a rain check*?

M : Why not?

F : I'm watching my weight. There's a big new position being created in my office, and I've got to *look the part* if I'm going to get it.



ISSUE 17

What Did You Forget?

Some people naturally have poor memories, but almost everybody becomes more forgetful as he gets older. People may try to slow this phenomenon by doing mental exercises such as reading and writing, but the process nevertheless continues. Some folks lose their ability to recall names, others can't remember where they parked their car. In extreme cases, they no longer recognize friends or loved ones.

What do you forget most often?

- (1) I forget where I parked.
- (2) I'm not sure if I locked the door when I left.
- (3) I need a shopping list to remember what I need to buy.
- (4) I forget appointments.
- (5) I forget special days like birthdays and anniversaries.
- (6) Sometimes I lock the car with the keys inside.
- (7) I forget secret numbers and passwords all the time.



Sample Answers

(A) When I got old, I sometimes forgot to zip my pants back up after I urinated. But now that I'm older, I forget to unzip before I urinate. Do you think I have a memory problem?

(B) Yesterday was a horribly *hectic* day for me. I had an important appointment that I almost forgot about. Fortunately, at the last minute, the person I was supposed to meet called to confirm it, so I left my office in plenty of time to get there. Unfortunately, I was confused about the meeting place and went to the wrong location. After waiting a long time for the man to show up, I was ready to leave in disgust and anger, but he called me again and then I realized I was in the wrong place. Very *graciously*, he forgave me for my mistake, and I rushed off to the correct spot. I thought I knew a *shortcut*, but I was wrong and it took quite a bit longer to get there. Fortunately, he was still waiting for me when I arrived. Unfortunately, I forgot what we were supposed to talk about at the meeting, so we had a friendly but rather *bewildering* chat and then went our separate ways. It was not until I got back to the office and looked in the folder I had left on my desk that I finally remembered the purpose. I immediately called him to set up another meeting, but it was too late, he had already made arrangements with some other firm. So my company lost an important contract. When it's time for my next promotion, I hope my boss will be able to forget about this incident.

Speak Your Mind

1. What kinds of things are you most likely to forget about?
2. What have you done to improve your memory? Was it successful? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever forgotten anything that seriously mattered?
4. Does your sweetheart always remember your birthday or anniversary?
5. What is the best way to make someone remember special days?

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. What is the best way to make someone remember special days?

M : Why do you have that string wrapped around your finger? Is this some new kind of *fashion statement*?

F : It helps me remember things. I'll constantly be seeing it there, and so I'll be forced to remind myself to remember something important.

M : Really? Does it work?

F : It does now, but it took me awhile to learn how to associate the fact that I needed to remember something with the actual item I wanted to remember. But once you *figure out* that trick, it works every time.

M : Very interesting. But what do you mean, "trick"?

F : Developing a good memory is really just playing games with your mind. All of the information is there, but sometimes you just have to be creative in the *retrieval* process. It's easier to do if you make it fun.

M : Can you give me an example?

F : OK. This is a green string on my finger, right? I associate green with a park, so this reminds me that I have to get a gift for my neighbor, Mr. Park, to celebrate his daughter's wedding.

M : Oh, I see. But don't you need lots of colors of string? And how do you keep them all straight in your mind?

F : This isn't about long term memory at all, it's just a hint to remind me. I could just as easily have associated this string with my boss, Ms. Green, or I could have worn a blue string to remind me how *blue* my neighbor was when he found out that he was about to lose his daughter.

M : It sounds easy enough. But I really have a terrible memory. I'm sure that I'd forget to tie the string to my finger in the first palace, so I wouldn't have any clue that I was supposed to remember something.

F : You just need to get into the habit of doing something (it doesn't have to be a string around the finger) to *jog your memory*. Once you make a *concerted* effort, it's all pretty easy, actually.



ISSUE 18

Do You Want to Be a Millionaire?

Why would anyone want to be a millionaire? I want to be a billionaire! Having a million dollars is relatively common these days. There are well over a million millionaires just in the United States alone. To be really rich, one needs at least a cool billion. That seems like a lot of money, I know; and some people would say that no one needs that much, that this kind of wealth just perpetuates poverty in general. But from my perspective, poor people will always be poor no matter how much money I have, so I might as well make as much as I can and let them worry about themselves.

What is your own approach to getting rich?

- (1) Continue to save up
- (2) Start my own business
- (3) Inherit a fortune
- (4) Win a lottery
- (5) Marry a rich person
- (6) Get a good education that will lead to a good job



Sample Answers

(A) I want to *run* my own business. I'm sure that I could do very well developing software solutions for the general public. I already know a lot about the subject, and the *start-up* costs are pretty low. And I think that earning money through one's own talent and hard work provides much more satisfaction in life than just having someone else give you a salary or having a rich parent or spouse.

(B) Saving money is simply a matter of habit, just like spending it. Years ago, I decided to set aside five per cent of my salary every time, no matter how little that was. I would spend the rest of it, wisely or foolishly, as I *saw fit*, but that five per cent would always be my payment to myself, to *squirrel away* for future use. In a short while, I never even thought about the five per cent, and I never missed it; to all practical purposes, from week to week it just never existed: if I didn't have it, I certainly couldn't spend it. But now this small figure has grown into quite a fortune, and I know that I never have to worry about my *finances* again, even if I lose my job.

Speak Your Mind

1. Is it important for you to get rich? Why or why not?
2. Are you saving money in the bank? Why or why not?
3. Do you buy lottery tickets regularly? Why or why not?
4. How much money is enough?
5. What do you think about the rich?
6. What do you think about the poor?
7. What's the difference between the rich and the poor?
8. Do you think the rich have a responsibility to help the poor? Why or why not?
9. Is society responsible for taking care of the poor?
10. What is your idea on how to narrow the gap between wealth and poverty?
11. Which do you think is more difficult, making money or spending it? Why?

→ **run** : control and organize (sth) such as a business, organization, or event

→ **start-up** : relating to beginning and developing a new business

→ **see fit** : determine; decide

→ **squirrel away** : keep (sth) in a safe place for later use

→ **finances** : monetary resources

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

11. Which do you think is more difficult, making money or spending it? Why?

M : Bills, bills, bills! Why don't people send me checks in the mail instead of bills?

F : You *exaggerate*. Your salary is far more than these bills. But in return, we live in this nice home, our kids go to good schools, and we can take pride in our appearance and status. A small *price* for these advantages!

M : But don't you realize how huge our debt is? If something happened at work, or if I had a medical emergency, we'd quickly lose everything we've worked so hard for. We really need to start saving *substantial* amounts in order to *put aside for a rainy day*. I'm not going to work forever, you know!

F : But it's just *temporary*. Aren't you expecting a promotion soon? I think we should just maintain our current level of *expenditure* for the time being and save the *surplus* from your next raise. That way we don't have to give up anything, and we'll still be able to put something ahead for later.

M : We've had this discussion before. Every time I get a raise, we say that we'll continue our old level of spending and save the rest, but it never works out that way, does it? Within a few months, we're spending more than we ever did and falling even further into debt.

F : But it's not as though we're spendthrifts! We don't waste money on things we don't need. If we can't have nice things, why *bother* to have money at all?

M : Look, I don't want to live like a monk, either. But I do think we could be a little more careful. Do we really need to entertain guests so often? Can't we stay home for once instead of taking an expensive vacation? Do you really need another pair of shoes right now? Can't I get by with the car we have, or do I have to get a new one right away?

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

→ **price** : cost of getting (sth) → **substantial** : large in amount or degree

→ **put (sth) aside for a rainy day** : save (sth), esp. money, for a time when it will be needed → **temporary** : not permanent

→ **expenditure** : amount of money spent → **surplus** : amount that remains → **bother** : make the effort to do (sth)

F : Oh, we're fine. But, if we cut back too much, our friends will think something is wrong. They'll be worried that things are not going well at your company. They won't want to burden us financially, so they will see us socially less often. This could affect our kids' status at school, and our daughter would no longer be considered such a desirable *catch*. Is that what you want?

M : Well, when you put it that way, I guess we'll just have to keep things the way they are, won't we?



ISSUE 19

Do You Like Your Job?

A few people enjoy their jobs and, in addition, are well paid. They ought to be very happy about that. Most people, however, who are well paid do not enjoy their work; and many who find joy in their occupation are paid very little. Which do you think is more important — job satisfaction or salary?

What is the most important aspect about your job?

- (1) Salary
- (2) Job satisfaction
- (3) Job security
- (4) Fringe benefits
- (5) Working hours
- (6) Promotions
- (7) Location
- (8) Travel
- (9) My boss
- (10) My colleagues



Sample Answers

(A) Work is just that, no matter what it *entails*: performing some repetitive task in order to make money. But the one *variable* that makes or breaks any job is the people one works with. If an *esprit de corps* develops among the employees, even a boring or *arduous* task seems almost like fun. But without that spirit, simple or interesting occupations alike become tiresome.

(B) One of the best jobs I ever had (at least at the time) was also my worst-paying one. I was a lifeguard. I was nineteen and lived at home, so I didn't have any real expenses. I worked long hours most days, from mid-morning until dark, and had some unpleasant job duties to perform to keep the pool clean. And I admit that I didn't much like giving swimming lessons to little kids every morning. But the rest of the day I got paid for sitting around in the sun, *flirting* with pretty girls in *skimpy* bathing suits, and occasionally blowing my whistle. What a life!

Speak Your Mind

1. Do you enjoy your job? Why or why not?
2. Do you take pride in your work?
3. Are you satisfied with your salary?
4. What is the ideal occupation? If you don't have it, why not?
5. Are you happy with your *supervisor* and colleagues at work?
6. Is anything wrong with a wife making more money than her husband?
7. Do you believe some jobs are more *prestigious* than others? Why or why not?
8. What determines occupational prestige?

8. What determines occupational prestige?

M: What are you reading?

F: A movie magazine. I'm just checking up on how my favorite stars are doing.

M: You mean what movies they are making, so you know what to look forward to?

F: Well, I guess I'm more interested in how much they make and how they live and who they're making love to.

M: Why is any of that important?

F: It's just something to fantasize about, since I know I'll never lead that kind of life.

M: The *celebrities* in that magazine are nothing special. They just get a lot of attention, but they don't do much that's important. They don't build anything. They don't discover or invent anything. They aren't working on the problems of world hunger, peace, or justice. All they do in life is look pretty.

F: But they have a lot more prestige and money than any scientist or politician. Or, for that matter, religious leader or poet. Certainly a lot more money and prestige than a teacher or nurse. So, what's so important about being useful? Obviously, being a star is more important than anything else.

M: That's what's wrong with our world. We don't reward the ones who do the most for us. Our fantasies are preferable to our real lives. If this continues, life will *degenerate* instead of progress, because the people who can make a positive difference won't have any incentive to continue. And then our fantasy lives will become even more important as an escape from *the dreary drudgery* we find ourselves trapped in.

F: See, that's why these celebrity lifestyles attract our attention. We want better things, but we can't have them. But we can dream about them, and sometimes, if we work hard, we can make these dreams come true. But if we don't have any idea of what the "good life" is, how could we ever aspire to it?



→ **celebrity** : famous person, esp. in entertainment or sports

→ **degenerate** : become worse

→ **dreary** : boring; dull

→ **drudgery** : boring and unpleasant work you have to do

ISSUE 20

How Would You Respond?

Every problem can be solved, or at least alleviated, by thinking it through and then applying an appropriate remedy. Of course, we also need to realize what result we hope to accomplish, or we will solve one problem only to have to deal with another instead.

How would you respond if your child had no interest in studying?

- (1) Have a private tutor.
- (2) Force him or her to study more.
- (3) Support his or her other interests.
- (4) Let the child establish his or her own priorities in life.
- (5) Offer financial incentives for improved performance.



Sample Answers

(A) First, we would need to know what the *underlying* factors are. Is the schoolwork too easy, so the child is bored, or too hard, so the child needs more help? Is the lack of interest due to *peer pressure*, or is it because the child does not like the teacher or the subject matter? Perhaps some other interest, such as athletics or art or music, is taking too much time, or maybe the child is "in love." It is even possible that a difficulty at home is the *root cause* of the poor performance at school. But before we can do anything we need to know what we are dealing with.

(B) Try the old "*carrot-and stick*" approach. This *refers to* the method of urging forward a mule-drawn wagon. Hang a carrot a few inches in front of the hungry mule's nose so he will keep walking toward it. Meanwhile, hit him with a big stick when he slows down or stops. In other words, promise rewards for good behavior and punishment for bad; this works most of the time.

Speak Your Mind

How would you respond if:

1. your salary was cut?
2. your young child *went through* your wallet?
3. your son or daughter got caught *shoplifting*?
4. your parents demanded a large allowance every month for pocket money?
5. your wife wanted to *divvy up* the chores 50:50?
6. your boss insisted on unpaid overtime three times a week?
7. your sweetheart suddenly broke off your relationship?
8. your friend asked to borrow some money?
9. your grown child announced the intention to stay single forever?
10. the government decided to raise cigarette and liquor taxes *drastically*?

10. the government decided to raise cigarette and liquor taxes drastically?

M : Let's go out.

F : Great! Where to? What's the special occasion?

M : We need to go to a nightclub or a bar every night this week, if we can. And next week too!

F : Why? What are we celebrating?

M : We aren't celebrating anything. Just the opposite, actually.

F : I don't understand. What's going on here?

M : The taxes on alcohol and tobacco are going up 20% next month, so we need to take advantage of the lower prices while we can.

F : Don't be silly. You'll *go broke* partying every night just to save a little money later.

M : But there won't be any later. I can't afford to go out once the new prices *take effect*. So I need to use all my going-out now, while I can.

F : Why don't you just *stock up* on extra cigarettes and *booze* now? And then you'll have an adequate supply when the price hike goes into effect.

M : But eventually I'll *run out*, and I still won't be able to go out. So, just *indulge* me. Let's have a good time while we still can!

F : OK, I'm *game*. But if you *come to your senses*, let me know. I won't be disappointed when we stop.

M : Don't worry. We'll have to stop soon enough. Let's go!

