

Major
New Edition

Reading & Topic-Discussion Textbook
for Intermediate and Advanced Students

EXPRESS YOURSELF 1

25 Contemporary Issues with **25** Topical Dialogues

399 Topical Questions
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Issue 01

Life Styles

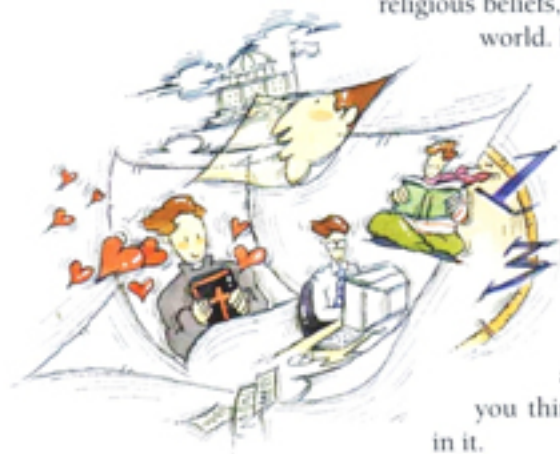


People have different attitudes toward living. Some seek self-oriented happiness, without any consideration for others. To them, "happiness" means wielding⁺ political or economic power over others. But most of these people turn out to be disappointed in their pursuit of happiness: since man's desire is endless, nothing can fully satisfy their needs.

Other people believe that the first step to attaining happiness is to restrict personal desire. Priests, monks, and nuns are the most common representatives⁺ of this group. By refraining from worldly passion, they think they are happy because they live their lives in accordance with⁺ religious commands. But, can anyone without personal autonomy⁺ be genuinely happy?

A third group consists of very ordinary people. They have no great wealth or political authority. While they may have religious beliefs, they do not turn their back on⁺ the world. But they treasure their families, they value the little things of everyday life. They are happy if they have three meals a day, a car, a home, a vacation, enough money to educate their children....

Which group of people is the happiest? Who knows?⁺ If you think you are happy, then you are. Happiness is the result of how you think about the world and your place in it.



- wield : exercise (influence) effectively
- representatives : typical examples of something
- in accordance with : in conformity with
- autonomy : self-government; independence
- turn one's back on : abandon, ignore, or reject
- Who knows? : It is not possible to know at the moment.

Comprehension



1. According to the essay, how many groups of life styles are there?
2. What does the expression "to turn one's back on the world" mean?
3. What is the definition of happiness?

Express Yourself



1. What types of social activities do you engage in?
2. What would you think about becoming a priest, monk, or nun?
3. What religion do you have?
4. How do you spend your free time? Do you prefer spending it alone or with friends?
5. Do you think the quality of your life is improving or getting worse?
6. What musical instruments can you play?
7. Do you enjoy singing?
8. Have you ever done any volunteer work?
9. Are you usually on time for appointments?
10. How do you relieve* your stress?
11. Are you forgetful?* If so, how do you cope with* it?
12. Do you think you are happy? Why or why not?

*relieve : lessen or reduce (pain or anxiety, for example); ease

*forgetful : often forgetting things

*cope with : deal well with (sb) or (sth)

Opinion Samples



1. The quality of my life is worsening. I agree that material wealth grows as the economy expands. But I don't think money is everything in terms of a quality life. What are the really decisive factors? I think quality depends upon environmental concern, stress, crime rates, education, etc. Economic wealth comes after these. We all know our environment is becoming dirtier and crimes are on the rise. Everybody suffers from stress, caused by a variety of sources, which shortens the life expectancy⁺ of our generation. Even material comfort might be a source of stress. The quality of life can't be measured by material wealth.

2. Traditional sex roles used to be clear-cut⁺ in our society. Men did not try to understand women's work, and vice versa.⁺ For example, men did not pitch in⁺ to help with domestic chores, and women were not allowed to interfere in male jobs. This division was probably an obstacle to mutual understanding. But now society is changing rapidly. Many women are making money outside the home, while more men seem ready to help with cooking, cleaning the house, washing the dishes, taking care of the children, and so forth. This not only helps men and women understand each other better, but also helps ease the problems between spouses.

- life expectancy : the length of time that a person or animal is expected to live

- clear-cut : not vague or confused; obvious

- vice versa : the same but in the opposite order

- pitch in : join forces with others; help or cooperate

Useful Expressions



These expressions are related to the topics discussed in this chapter. It will be good speaking practice to let students explain what these sentences mean in their own English.

- 1.** The world is full of people making a good living but poor lives.

→ _____

- 2.** Death is not a period, but a comma, in the story of life.

→ _____

- 3.** Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.

→ _____

- 4.** It has been said that life is a game—but how can we play it if we don't know where the goalposts are?

→ _____

- 5.** Some people treat life like a slot machine—putting in as little as possible while hoping for the jackpot.*

→ _____

- 6.** A long life is a gift of God; a full and fruitful life is your own doing.

→ _____

- 7.** After all, life is really simple; we ourselves create the circumstances that complicate it.

→ _____

- 8.** The tragedy of life is what dies inside a man while he lives.

→ _____

- 9.** People who are afraid of death are usually afraid of life.

→ _____

- 10.** We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

→ _____

*jackpot : an outstanding reward or success

Issue 02

Traffic & Transportation



In modern societies, cars have become indispensable for most people. They are needed for commuting to work, for shopping, and for leisure purposes. However, this widespread use also poses many traffic-related problems. For example, since the roads are congested⁺ most of the day, the meaning of "rush hour"⁺ is fast disappearing. A lot of drivers complain that the police are more interested in "collecting money" from law-breaking commuters⁺ than in facilitating the traffic flow. In addition, as more and more "demand pressure" is put on gasoline supplies, and as more taxes are added by the government to regulate usage, prices are rising dramatically.

Worldwide, the automobile is probably the number-one contributor to air pollution, and policies designed to protect the environment are expensive. So far, mass transportation systems such as subways and buses—and electric or other alternatives⁺ to internal combustion

engines⁺—have proved inadequate for solving the needs of conveniently moving large numbers of people from place to place.



- **congested** : too full or crowded because of too many people or vehicles

- **rush hour** : a period of heavy traffic

- **commuter** : a person who travels regularly between a home in one community and work or school in another

- **alternatives** : choices, more possibilities from which to choose

- **internal combustion engines** : engines which produce energy by burning fuel within themselves

Comprehension



1. What does "rush hour" mean and why is the expression becoming meaningless?
2. Explain "demand pressure."
3. Why haven't the problems associated⁺ with automobile usage been corrected?

Express Yourself



1. If you were late for an appointment, would you violate the traffic rules?
2. What traffic rules do you often break?
3. If you were stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation, what would you do?
4. Have you ever tried to bribe⁺ a police officer?
5. How do you feel when you get a ticket?
6. If you knew you were only going to be someplace for 10 minutes, would you pay for half an hour of parking or just park illegally?
7. When do you take the subway?
8. When do you take a taxi?
9. When do you take a bus?

⁺ associated : connected

⁺ bribe : pay money to (sb) in exchange for a favor, especially by doing something dishonest

Opinion Samples



1. Yesterday I got my first traffic ticket.⁴ I was so angry that I drove away recklessly.⁴ Even though I knew this was dangerous behavior, I couldn't help myself. But after nearly causing an accident, I stopped my car, drank a coffee, and relaxed for a few minutes. I realized that my bad driving was the reason I had received the ticket in the first place, and this helped calm me down. Then I was able to drive the way I know I should.

2. When I go downtown I never drive. For one thing, it is very dangerous. The roads are crowded with cars all the time, and an accident or some road construction can cause me to be delayed an hour or more. So driving never guarantees on-time arrival for appointments. And gas and parking are both expensive. On the other hand, the subway is safe, cheap, and timely.

⁴traffic ticket : a notice given to a driver for a traffic violation

⁴reckless : lacking care or caution; careless

Useful Expressions



1. Fewer accidents are caused by traffic jams^{*} than by pickled[†] drivers.

→ _____

2. Traffic tickets are like wives. No one complains about them until he gets one of his own.

→ _____

3. The way traffic is today, it's easier to star[‡] on Broadway than it is to cross it.

→ _____

4. Fast transportation has made us all neighbors—but, unfortunately, not brothers.

→ _____

5. People seem to have thought up every solution to the traffic problem except staying at home.

→ _____

6. Doctors tell us that people are living too fast. Traffic statistics show they are dying the same way.

→ _____

7. A traffic light is a device for trapping you in the middle of the intersection.

→ _____

-traffic jam : a long line of vehicles on a road that cannot move, or that can only move very slowly

-pickled : intoxicated; drunk

-star : play the leading role in a theatrical or film production

Issue 03

Meals



Eating is supposed to be one of the most pleasant things in life. Sometimes we are not sure if we eat to live or live to eat. However, these days, many people are being deprived of regular meals. Some folks claim they are too busy to take the time, or they skip¹ a meal because they are dieting. The meal that is most often missed is breakfast, so the eater or fixer² can stay in bed longer, even though health experts usually insist this is the most important meal of all. In some cases, this phenomenon is because wives are working outside the home, in others because husbands do not insist on breakfast. More convenient Western ideas about breakfast are becoming popular: eggs, toast, cereal, coffee.

Later in the day, lunches are also becoming more problematic, especially for salaried workers. The variety and quality of food seem to be declining, even as the restaurants themselves become more crowded and expensive.

After work, it is usually an informal requirement to join co-workers in a meal and drinks, so a family meal at home is out of the question³ for a lot of male workers.



- deprive (sb) of (sth) : take something from someone, especially something they need or want
- skip : not do something that you usually do or that you should do
- fix : make (sth) ready; prepare
- out of the question : not possible