1 BAT READING

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Many of us dream of winning the lottery. We imagine that if we could buy an expensive house, a yacht, designer clothes and all the latest gadgets, we would surely be happier. However, there have been many surveys into the nature of happiness, and one key conclusion seems to be that spending money on life experiences, instead of material items, makes humans happier. Most of us will not win the lottery, but we can still ask ourselves how manyexperiences we should try to fit in, and just when we should try toachieve these.

Psychologists sometimes classify people according to which period of their lives they focus on. People who live 'in the moment' focus on the present time and on finding fun and excitement in their lives through newor enjoyable experiences. This type of people is described by psychologists as having a 'hedonistic time **perspective**'. This contrasts with people who focus on the past, and those who spend their lives planning for, or worrying about, the future. Hedonistic types seem to be extremely happy. But why is that the case, and should we all try to do it?

On the whole, psychological studies have shown that people who live in the moment feel positive emotions more frequently than those who focus on the past. These emotions, such as joy, love, amusement and compassion, have important physical benefits too. The more you experience a range of positive emotions, the more of a chemical called serotonin you havein your brain cells. Serotonin helps regulate sleep, and assists memory and learning. Serotonin levels can also be boosted by doing aerobic exercise and getting exposure to sunlight – the sort of things you are likely to experience if you take up a new sport or outdoor activity.

Because they often enjoy new experiences, people who try to live in the moment are often better at dealing with changes and new challenges. This is usually a result of not having a fixed way of doing things, and therefore being more flexible when circumstances do not go as planned. Another big benefit is that in choosing to take on new experiences, people will often be more sociable. Having fun with friends and meeting new people are likely to lead to the serotonin-producing positive emotions mentioned above, and recent tests have shown that extroverts (people who are more outgoing) tend to be happier than more introverted people.

There are, however, disadvantages to living in the moment, focusing on pleasure and filling your life with new experiences. It seems that people with a hedonistic time perspective may be very good at planning activities to fill their time, but they are not so organized when it comes to saving money. Financial security is also one of the biggest contributors to overall happiness. Therefore, while focusing on enjoying the present is useful, it needs to be balanced with planning how much you spend, so that you are not left with little to live on in thefuture.

Perhaps the best solution would be to combine a present- and future-focused attitude. This would enable you to think carefully about all the things you want to achieve, and then save money to realize these goals. Increasingly, people are writing'bucket lists' of experiences that they want to have in their lifetime, and then making these happen with careful planning. This way people can compromise by planning adventure and excitement, while working towards raising the funds to cover the costs. And in the event that your dreams do not actually come true, research has shown that just thinking about the things you want to do will make you feel better!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the text and choose the correct answers.

1 Many surveys into happiness have found that …
A any kind of spending makes you happier.
B spending money on doing things makes you happier.
C spending money on material goods makes youhappier.
D winning the lottery makes you happier.

2 People who have a hedonistic time perspective …
A focus on fun things they did in the past.
B spend time worrying about the future.
C aren't usually very happy.
D focus on having fun in the present moment

3 People who live in the moment …
A feel positive emotions more often than some otherpeople.
B are far healthier than everybody else.
C find it easier to fall in love than other people.
D are less emotional than other people.

4 High levels of serotonin …
A make you sleep better and remember more.
B can only be achieved by taking regular exercise.
C will encourage you to take up a new sport.
D can be damaged by prolonged exposure to sunlight.

5 It's easier to cope with new challenges if you …
A focus on solutions you've tried in the past.
B always tackle everything in the same way
C have a flexible attitude to problem-solving.
D have made your plans well in advance.

6 According to the article, being more sociable …
A is not connected to taking on new experiences.
B is only beneficial to extroverts.
C is likely to make you feel good
D will make extroverts more outgoing

7 One of the largest contributors to happiness is …
A being able to save money.
B being well organized.
C spending very little money.
D having enough money to feel secure.

8 People who write 'bucket lists' of experiences they dream of …
A often end up without enough money to live on.
B need to save money carefully in order to realizethem.
C don't usually manage to make their dreams come true
D make themselves miserable by dreaming of thing they can't have.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Activities. The following must be handwritten.

1. **Describe what a hedonistic is. Do you feel identified with this definition? Give an argument or an example. Use a maximum of 50 words.**
2. **What three things do you have in your bucket list? List them.**
3. **Write about an experience that you have had which you feel changed your life for the better. Use a maximum of 50 words.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS