

Exercise 4

Read the following article about living without money, and then complete the notes on the opposite page.

The moneyless man

Mark Boyle, who has written a book called 'The Moneyless Man', woke up one morning in 2008 and made the decision to give up using money for a year. It wasn't a sudden decision, but something he had been considering for a long time.

Seven years previously, Mark had been studying in his final year of a business and economics degree in Ireland. He came across a DVD about Gandhi, who said that if you want something to change, you have to make it happen yourself. Although Mark didn't have any idea what changes he wanted to make back then, he was deeply impressed by Gandhi's idea.

After graduating, Mark spent several years managing organic food companies, but he came to realise that even businesses such as these were not environmentally-friendly enough. Many still used excess plastic packaging, and imported food from overseas, for example. Basically, he realised that as consumers nowadays, we lack awareness of our impact on the environment. We don't have to observe the destruction that is involved in the production of the food and other things that we buy. As a result, we waste too much of everything. He realised that if we grew our own food, we wouldn't throw away so much of it, as some people do today. If we made our own tables and chairs, we wouldn't get rid of them just because we wanted a new style or colour in our living room. If we had to clean our own drinking water, we wouldn't waste it so freely.

Mark decided that as long as money exists, these problems would not go away. So, in 2008, he decided to give up money, initially for one year. First of all, he had to find a place to live in. He located a caravan on the website 'Freecycle', where people give away things they no longer need. And he decided to volunteer three days a week at an organic farm, in return for a place to park his caravan. Having no way of paying for gas or electricity to keep warm, he burned old wood from the farm as fuel.

Food is of course a necessity, but Mark soon found a way to provide himself with what he needed. He grew fruit and vegetables, and gathered more from the countryside. He then realised he could offer to do some work in exchange for other types of food.

Mark discovered that in a moneyless world, everything takes much more time. For example, handwashing clothes is far slower than using a washing machine, and cycling several miles to collect something takes more time and energy than driving or catching the bus or train. However, he discovered that cycling was a cheaper alternative to going to the gym, and much more enjoyable too. Another realisation was that he preferred spending time doing something productive rather than wasting time in front of the television. And finally, he found that by the end of the year, he valued his friendships even more than he had done before. And that was what made his experiment so worthwhile.

You are going to give a talk to your class about Mark Boyle, the moneyless man. Prepare some notes to use as the basis of your talk.

Make short notes under each heading.

Why Mark chose to live without money:

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How Mark avoided using money:

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What Mark learned from living without money:

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[Total: 9]