1 Wake up your senses!

READING

1 Complete the text with these words.

cosy dismiss dull overwhelming pigeonhole pretty reluctant willing worthwhile

Small change, big difference

Is life feeling [1] ..... and boring right now? Are you [2] ..... to get out and try something new? Then change. But this doesn't mean taking on huge challenges that become [3] ..... . The key to shaking up your routine is to start small. Look for ways of changing the stuff you do every day: take a different route to school or college, download a song by a band you've never heard before, talk to a student you don't normally mix with. These things might sound [4] ..... basic but don't [5] .....them. For one thing, they help to make day-to-day life a bit more fun. And they really can be [6] ..... because they make you start to think differently. It's easy to [7] ..... yourself with fixed roles and routines. Making a change every day helps you escape in a risk-free way. And if you're [8] ..... to step out of your [9] ..... routine in small ways, you're much more likely to take on bigger challenges.

2 Read the article on the right quickly. Choose the quotation (1–3) that best fits the main message of the text.

1 Whoever said money can't buy happiness simply didn't know where to shop
2 Have stories to tell, not stuff to show
3 Good advice comes from bad experiences

3 Read the article again. Choose which sentence (A–G) best fits each gap (1–6). You do not need one of the sentences.

A A description of a difficult situation can over time turn into a funny story that becomes part of the speaker's identity.
B While the happiness we get from objects fades over time, experiences define who you are.
C Firstly, the memory of an experience stays with us for a long time, much longer than the excitement you get from buying an object.
D So don't give up buying objects completely but invest in some great experiences, too.
E There's nothing wrong with objects: some are necessary, others are beautiful.
F He has been studying the link between money and happiness for over twenty years.
G They seem to regret missing an experience more than losing out on an object.

Extend

4 Complete the questions with the correct prepositions. Check your answers in the article.

1 What three objects are most important ..... you?
2 Have you ever been left ..... feelings of disappointment after buying something? What?
3 How many people are you connected ..... on social media?
4 What's happened this week to make you feel positive ..... life?

5 Complete the comments (1–6) with the correct form of these pairs of words.

regret / miss last / keep possession / stuff

Objects OR experiences?

Sarah Add message | Report

I guess objects. I often ask 'Why do I have all these [1] .....?' But then I'm not very good at getting rid of all my old [2] .....!

Hayley Add message | Report

Both. The only thing I [3] ..... is not getting tickets to see my team but I really [4] ..... seeing it live.

Liz Add message | Report

I think both. Experiences give you memories that [5] ....., but [6] ..... objects also brings back happy times.

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The search for *happiness*: to have or to do?

Imagine you could have either the object of your dreams or the experience of your dreams. Which would make you happier for longer? Most people would choose the object. It's logical. You can keep the object for years but the experience may be over in days, hours or even minutes. Well, according to recent research, if you want to be happier for longer, choose the experience.

Thomas Gilovich is Professor of Psychology at Cornell University in the United States. [1] ..... . His research suggests that people who spend money on experiences are generally happier than those who buy physical objects. So why are experiences more important to our wellbeing than possessions?

[2] ..... . Although the majority of people think it's better to spend money on something physical, Professor Gilovich has found that the opposite is true. People tend to believe an experience will come and go. They feel they will be left with very little when compared to owning an item.

But in reality we remember experiences long afterwards, while we soon get used to our possessions or even bored with them.

The research also looked at other differences, including how people felt before a purchase or experience. Professor Gilovich says that people look forward to enjoying an experience more than owning an object. So before getting a new smartphone, for example, it's exciting to think about owning the object itself. But more pleasure comes from thinking about what you can do with the object and how you can share experiences with others. Another area of the research was how people felt after choosing not to do or buy something. [3] ..... . So you may feel worse about not going to see a band with friends than not buying a new pairs of jeans.

Perhaps one of the most important results from the research was the effect on identity. [4] ..... . Professor Gilovich believes that who we are isn't a direct result of the things that we own. He says that our experiences are a bigger part of ourselves and that even though can really like your material things, they are separate from who you are. In other words, they aren't a part of your identity. He adds however, that we are connected to our experiences.

If experiences make a person, they also make a community. They are very often shared with family and friends, face-to-face and on social media. Even if they last only a very short time, they become part of the stories that we tell each other. They can be remembered across different communities and generations. Even if an experience has made someone unhappy, describing what happened can make that person feel more positive about things. [5] ..... .

So we connect more with other people when sharing experiences than when comparing objects. The next time you're bombarded by adverts on TV, online and on the streets, maybe take a moment to decide how you want to spend your money. [6] ..... . But you won't enjoy them forever. And your friends probably want to hear more about where you went in your new trainers than about the trainers themselves. ■



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