

SM1 – U10 – L4 – LISTENING [A= male interviewer; B = Sue Franklin]

A: When you stop to think about it, people do a lot of strange stuff. We actually pay money for the thrill of watching scary movies. We enjoy going to amusement parks to ride roller coasters and other crazy rides for the thrill of going at high speeds and getting turned upside down. And the list of wacky extreme sports, where the adventurous face their [redacted]—bungee jumping, skydiving, extreme skiing—seems to get longer every year. And then of course, there are those of us—the faint of heart—who wouldn't dare do any of these things. Well, Sue Franklin is an expert on this topic, and she's here to tell us about two personality types—the person who loves [redacted] and can't get enough of them—known as the “big T” personality— and the person who [redacted] thrills and prefers to avoid them—the “small t” personality. Welcome, Sue Franklin.

B: Thank you.

A: You call this the type-T analysis. What is that, and what does it tell us about human nature?

B: Well, it's based on the work of psychologist Frank Farley, and it's a way of studying a person's risk-taking behavior. It indicates how comfortable a person is with taking [redacted]—living on the edge. What Farley calls a big T personality is a person who likes [redacted]. A big T likes thrills, whereas a small t does not. In fact, it's more like a continuum—from risk-taking to risk-[redacted]. Most of us are willing to take some risks from time to time—but we may still tend to avoid risk in general. So generally speaking, if you like to take risks, do new things, then you're a big T. If you prefer certainty and routine, then you're a small t.

A: What's the [redacted] for seeking thrills?

B: Much of it is for the adrenaline rush that comes with going right up to the edge. Actually, big Ts may physically need a higher level of stimulation than other people do—and they need to take risks in order to get that stimulation.

A: So do big T types have an important role to play socially?

B: Absolutely. Farley believes that human progress depends on big T-type behavior. These are people who are not afraid of [redacted] or pushing the limits.

A: Is there another side to big T behavior?

B: Definitely. There are both positive and negative sides. There's the healthy, constructive risk-taking that you see in most [redacted] fields—like science, for example. But there's a negative side as well—crime, drinking and driving . . . crazy risk-taking in general. As a matter of fact, big Ts have twice as many highway accidents as small ts because they take more chances and put themselves in danger more often.

A: I love riding on roller coasters at the amusement park. Does that make me a big T?

B: Not necessarily. One of the great things about roller [redacted] is that they allow people who are afraid of taking risks to feel like they're really taking a big risk by riding one—because they're so scary. But everyone also knows that roller coasters are pretty safe. But if you told me you'd never ride on them, I'd tell you you were a small t for sure. The big T personality is the one standing up in the front [redacted]