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# Unit One

## Text A

### A Call Too Far

By Lois Maassen

Let me be upfront<sup>1</sup> about the fact that I hate telephones. The phone rings when it wants to and rarely when I want it to. I can't control who's on the other end of the phone; even when I place the call, there is no guarantee who or whether anyone will answer. When I'm talking to someone on the phone, I'm bereft<sup>2</sup> of facial expression, "body language," dozens of cues that will help me best make my case. And the sound of a telephone ringing late at night will boost my blood pressure until I can convince my kids to live at home — and be in by 10:30 — the rest of their lives.

So I could hardly be expected to be happy about the insidious<sup>3</sup> propagation<sup>4</sup> of cell phones. But I'm not the only one who's cranky<sup>5</sup> about cell phones ringing in theaters, restaurants, airports, trains, and shopping malls. You know how little kids think they're hiding from you if they cover their eyes? That's how cell phone users strike me when they put the phone in front of their faces and pretend I can't hear the details of their latest conquest — business, social, or private.

But I'm beyond a casual crankiness about the lack of social skills of the average cell phone users. I think we're so carried away with the ostensible<sup>6</sup> convenience of the communication that we're overlooking the effectiveness we're losing.

I've been a sucker for time management books for years — still hoping to add

<sup>1</sup>**upfront** *adj.*  
坦率的

<sup>2</sup>**bereft** *adj.*  
失去……的

<sup>3</sup>**insidious** *adj.*  
阴险的,暗中为害的

<sup>4</sup>**propagation**  
*n.* 蔓延

<sup>5</sup>**cranky** *adj.*  
对……厌烦的

<sup>6</sup>**ostensible** *adj.*  
表面上的,貌似真实的

<sup>7</sup> **exacerbate**  
v. 使恶化

<sup>8</sup> **obstetrician**  
n. 产科医师

<sup>9</sup> **drop-in visitor**  
不速之客

<sup>10</sup> **Bigshot** n.  
大人物

four hours before 5 p.m. and four hours after. In *The Time Trap*, originally published in 1972 and republished in 1990, Alec Mackenzie lists 20 top time wasters cited by managers around the country. And I see that cell phones are exacerbating<sup>7</sup> four of the five problems office workers have put at the top of the list for decades:

Management by crisis: Number one on Mackenzie's list. What's a cell phone for except to make you aware of the latest crisis? Unless you're a heart surgeon or an obstetrician<sup>8</sup>, do you really want to live crisis to crisis?

Telephone interruptions: One telephone on the desk wasn't enough to keep us from doing our work? Management books recommend reserving an hour or two a day specifically for phone calls — and relying on voice mail or an assistant to cover — or at least delay — the rest. (I've heard of one exception to the rule that phone interruptions are time wasters: a man who fakes receiving a cell phone call in order to escape from deadly dull meetings.)

Attempting too much: Like being in two places at the same time? If you're in my meeting, please be in my meeting. If you really need to deal with something else, go do it — but don't be upset if I make some decisions and move along without you.

Drop-in visitors: What's a phone call if not a drop-in visitor<sup>9</sup>? And now we can't even leave our offices to get away from the phone calls — we have to take the phone with us!

Inability to say no: Remember when status was having a secretary who would answer Mr. Bigshot<sup>10</sup>'s phone and say, "I'm sorry, he can't be disturbed." What's changed about the human race to justify a complete reversal? Does it really make any sense to say "I'm so important, I need to be distracted all the time"?

As a working woman and a parent of three, I'm a big fan of multi-tasking — doing several things at the same time. But I think it's time to admit that we can't really think about one thing and talk about another. I can think about a work problem while I cook. I can think about work while I mow the lawn.

But to say I'm participating in a meeting to solve one problem while talking on the phone about another is dishonest. What I'm doing is ducking out on the person who invited me — whose invitation I accepted, or I wouldn't be there — to talk to someone who just happened to call. It takes time — and attention — to think through an issue, even all by yourself.

We humans seem to repeatedly forget our nature: that time for contemplation and focus is part of what makes us healthy. Sooner or later, we'll catch on that all

this intrusion and interruption is nothing we should live with. So give full attention to the task or person at hand rather than being distracted by future concerns or past pains — just be here now.

Are we experiencing what we would choose to? Because we can, in fact, choose. And I choose to leave my cell phone, turned off, in my glove box. And finally, to the guy talking on his cell phone while walking on my heels: “Hang up. Take a rest. Hush up and think for a while. ”



## Exercises

**Directions: Choose the best answer to each of the following questions based on the information given in the text.**

1. The title “A Call Too Far” suggests that the author “I” \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. received a phone made by someone far away
  - B. wanted to call somebody far away
  - C. enjoyed phoning people whenever possible
  - D. personally hated being disturbed by phones in daily life
2. Which is not a reason that “I” hate telephones?
  - A. When the phone rings, “I” don’t know who is making the call.
  - B. “I” cannot control when and where to make a call.
  - C. “I” am not sure whether my call will be answered.
  - D. “I” am unable to see the facial expression and body language of the one “I” am talking with.
3. The author criticizes the cell phones because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. they push people to live crisis to crisis
  - B. they are very much like drop-in visitors
  - C. more often than not cell phone users are unable to say no
  - D. all of the above
4. In “I’ve been a sucker for time management” (line 1, paragraph 4), “sucker” means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a person who is easily tricked or deceived
  - B. a person who is especially fond of (sth.)
  - C. a person who is bad in quality
  - D. a person who pulls in liquid by sucking
5. Which of the following is the theme of this passage?
  - A. We should completely abandon using cell phones.
  - B. We should experience what we would choose to.

- C. We should not sacrifice contemplation and focus for convenience brought about by phones.
- D. When making phone calls we should consider whether it will interrupt or intrude others.

## Text B

### Shakespeare's Sister

By Virginia Woolf

It would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare. Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably — his mother was an heiress<sup>1</sup> — to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin — Ovid, Virgil and Horace — and the elements of grammar and logic. He was, it is well known, a wild boy who poached<sup>2</sup> rabbits, perhaps shot a deer, and had, rather sooner than he should have done, to marry a woman in the neighborhood, who bore him a child rather quicker than was right. That escapade<sup>3</sup> sent him to seek his fortune in London. He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door. Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practicing his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen.

Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog<sup>4</sup> to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers. They would have spoken sharply but kindly, for they were substantial people who knew the conditions of life for a woman and loved their daughter — indeed, more likely than not she was the apple of her father's eye. Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly, but was careful to hide them or set fire to them. Soon, however, before she was out of her teens, she was to be

<sup>1</sup> **heiress** *n.* 女继承人, 继承遗产的女人

<sup>2</sup> **poach** *v.* 偷猎

<sup>3</sup> **escapade** *n.* 越轨行为, 恶作剧

<sup>4</sup> **agog** *adj.* 渴望的

betrothed<sup>5</sup> to the son of a neighboring woolstapler. She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father. Then he ceased to scold her. He begged her instead not to hurt him, not to shame him in this matter of her marriage. He would give her a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, he said; and there were tears in his eyes. How could she disobey him? How could she break his heart?

The force of her own gift alone drove her to it. She made up a small parcel of her belongings, let herself down by a rope one summer's night and took the road to London. She was not seventeen. The birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was. She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother's, for the tune of words. Like him, she had a taste for the theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said. Men laughed in her face. The manager — a fat, loose-lipped man — guffawed<sup>6</sup>. He bellowed<sup>7</sup> something about poodles<sup>8</sup> dancing and women acting — no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted — you can imagine what. She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways. At last — for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows — at last Nick Greene the actor-manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so — who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body? — killed herself one winter's night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle.

That, more or less, is how the story would run, I think, if a woman in Shakespeare's day had had Shakespeare's genius.



## Exercises

### I. Directions: For questions 1—7, decide whether the statement is true (T) or false (F).

1. That Shakespeare had a gifted sister named Judith is a hard fact. ( )
2. Shakespeare had to marry the woman in his neighborhood because she had been pregnant with his child. ( )
3. As suggested in this passage, it was generally accepted that books and papers were not the right things for girls. ( )

<sup>5</sup> **betroth** v.  
订婚

<sup>6</sup> **guffaw** v.  
狂笑

<sup>7</sup> **bellow** v.  
咆哮

<sup>8</sup> **poodle** n.  
髦毛小狗;  
贵宾犬

4. Judith was deprived of opportunities to receive good education because her parents did not love her as much as they loved Shakespeare. ( )
5. Unwilling to break her father's heart, Judith married the son of a neighboring woolstapler. ( )
6. Judith's gift in theatre performance was valued and cherished by Nick Greene the actor-manager. ( )
7. In Shakespeare's time, his sister's dream to become an actress was doomed to be buried in the cruel realities. ( )

**II. Directions: For questions 8—10, complete the statement with the information given in the text.**

8. What drove Judith to London was her \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Both Shakespeare and Judith had a taste for \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Judith's father promised a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, if she would agree to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Text C**

## Ten Steps to a Successful Good-bye

By Pat Stevens

**A)**

The first impression you make on a new job is important, but so is your last one. In a volatile<sup>1</sup> workplace, your resume is likely to become dotted with career changes and new skills. Being flexible and adjusting emotionally as you leave one job and prepare for another are essential career-survival skills.

**B)**

How you leave says a lot about you, whatever the circumstances. The process of leaving isn't about packing a box and moving to a new place. It's about cementing<sup>2</sup> relationships and establishing a network that will ensure you a place in the business world. It's also about realizing that the desk next to you at a future employer may be occupied by your former boss.

**C)**

To stay emotionally grounded while saying good-bye and beginning your

<sup>1</sup>**volatile** *adj.*  
易变的, 不稳定的

<sup>2</sup>**cement** *v.*  
巩固

transition, apply the following 10 strategies:

**D)**

1. Express your appreciation and stay connected.

**E)**

Take time to reminisce<sup>3</sup> with colleagues about projects you've worked on, special times you shared and joint accomplishments. Consider sending short thank-you notes after you leave that mention their contributions to your success. Make sure co-workers have your address and phone numbers and remember to stay in touch with them.

**F)**

Regardless of the circumstances involving a job change, it's important to "maintain dignity" and avoid embarrassing<sup>4</sup> yourself by burning bridges with co-workers and managers. Their ties to you are important links to your future.

**G)**

2. Let go.

**H)**

Letting go of security, embracing a new opportunity and exploring the unknown take courage. Focus on what is instead of what was. Since the primary safety net during periods of change is self-confidence, employees are reminded in transition that they'll fit in and find a new identity.

**I)**

During change, your ability to tolerate ambiguity<sup>5</sup> and uncertainty will stand as a critical skill. Learn to loosen up and be willing to wing it.

**J)**

3. Leave your office in top shape.

**K)**

Be meticulous<sup>6</sup> about how you leave your office. Only take files that belong to you and make sure your desk, computer, records, and files are neat, organized and complete. Provide employees with updates and leave your notes on on-going projects.

**L)**

4. Create a morale-building file.

**M)**

Keep a file of positive work evaluations, thank-you notes and other documents that will supply you with enthusiasm, courage and hope in the

<sup>3</sup> **reminisce**  
v. 追忆

<sup>4</sup> **embarrass**  
v. 使……尴尬

<sup>5</sup> **ambiguity**  
n. 含糊

<sup>6</sup> **meticulous**  
adj. 谨慎的

<sup>7</sup>**backfire** *v.*  
适得其反

<sup>8</sup>**introspective**  
*adj.* 反省的,  
内省的

<sup>9</sup>**botanical** *adj.*  
植物学的

<sup>10</sup>**reclusive** *adj.*  
隐遁的

upcoming weeks. Realize you've made a difference in others' lives and will do so again.

**N)**

5. Don't be critical.

**O)**

Avoid criticizing your company, co-workers and managers or participating in negative conversations about these subjects. You may feel bitter and demoralized, but letting others know your feelings will backfire<sup>7</sup>.

**P)**

Remember and discuss the positive events you experienced, even if there were only a few of them. Those left behind can feel disoriented or unsettled. Being a peacemaker will help you be remembered positively.

**Q)**

6. Prepare, reflect and move on.

**R)**

Recognize that every work experience has value, and view your job as a bridge to the next one. Be introspective<sup>8</sup>, realistic and excited. Dream about what might be. Remember "There's always a place for talented people."

**S)**

7. Take time to play.

**T)**

Schedule an enjoyable event before beginning the next phase of your life. It can be something simple like visiting a botanical<sup>9</sup> garden with your family, having friends over for a barbecue or pursuing an activity you never had time for. Consider taking a vacation if time allows. Even long leisurely weekends can provide opportunities to laugh, become energized and relaxed.

**U)**

8. Recognize the value of friends.

**V)**

Don't neglect friends and networking opportunities. This change may make you feel reclusive<sup>10</sup> and want to retreat into a corner. But contact with and reassurance from others may be what you need most. You may be surprised to discover that many others have been through similar experiences. Successful people often have experienced worse or more unsettling events than a job loss. Identify supportive people and maintain contact with them. Also keep up a

routine that balances church, family and social obligations even if you don't feel like it.

**W)**

9. Analyze your financial status.

**X)**

Review your finances and take steps to become more secure in a time of transition. Determine how leaving a job and taking a new one will affect your retirement plans. Double-check your health, disability and life insurance plans to ensure your family will be covered during the transition. If not, review your COBRA<sup>11</sup> rights and other options so that unexpected medical bills won't disrupt your financial security.

**Y)**

10. Be open to new possibilities.

**Z)**

Change always comes bearing gifts. It's up to you to find them. Your job change can be an opportunity in disguise. Don't be so reluctant to embrace changes that you can't see new opportunities that become available. Starting over is part of career advancement in today's turbulent<sup>12</sup> workplace. Successfully ending the final chapter of one job will give you a good start in the first chapter of a new one.



## Exercises

**Directions:** For statements 1—8, each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter. Answer the questions by marking the corresponding letter at the end of each statement.

1. Make sure that your family will be financially secure during your transition from an old job to a new one. ( )
2. Both the first and the last impression you make on your jobs are important. ( )
3. To become energized and relaxed before you begin a new job, schedule an

<sup>11</sup> **COBRA**, 全名为 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act。这是美国的一项公民福利法案,该法案允许个人在因失去工作或家庭状况改变时,继续参加前雇主提供的集体保险计划,时间最长可达18个月。

<sup>12</sup> **turbulent** *adj.* 动荡的

enjoyable event. ( )

4. If you are too reluctant to embrace changes, you will neglect new opportunities available. ( )

5. Job change may make you feel reclusive and want to retreat into a corner. ( )

6. Fitting in the new job and finding a new identity in it will help you build your self-confidence. ( )

7. Keeping in touch with your co-workers and managers will benefit your future. ( )

8. After taking a new job, you should focus on the present instead of dwelling on the past. ( )



# Unit Two

## Text A

### Should You Spy on Your Teen?

By Ross Werland

Ruth Ann and Robert Lipic knew their children could make mistakes that could last a lifetime — maybe even shorten a lifetime.

As former chairwoman of the Illinois chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Ruth Ann is well aware of the dangerous combination of teens, alcohol and cars. All three boys are now in their 20s, and “we’re proud of them,” she says.

The Lipics are not alone. In recent years many parents have thought they had to engage in action of espionage<sup>1</sup> to keep tabs on their kids. The reason for parental anxiety is clear. A 1999 report by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan showed that about 62 percent of high school seniors reported having gotten drunk. The report also indicated that about 42 percent had used drugs in the last year. Another survey shows that roughly 50 percent of high school girls and boys have engaged in sexual intercourse.

What isn’t as clear is the propriety of parents’ spying on their children. Is it right to read children’s diaries, search their rooms, tail them to hangouts? Conscientious<sup>2</sup> parents can be found on both sides of the issue.

One camp believe that protection of a teen outweighs the right to privacy. Yvonne Webster, a mother of four boys aged 11 to 24, worried when she heard

<sup>1</sup>**espionage** *n.*  
侦察；间谍活动

<sup>2</sup>**conscientious**  
*adj.* 认真负责的

rumors that gangs were infiltrating the local high school. “I got very nervous,” she said. Fearing her two older sons were not telling her all she needed to know, she talked with their friends to find out what was going on at the school. “They were getting into shouting matches with students,” she said of her sons. “But that was it.”

She also searched the boy’s rooms and went through their pockets, but she never found any evidence of a problem.

To her, spying was justified, though she has not seen a need to do it with her younger sons. “Kids are precious, and we all need to be respectful of them,” Webster said. “But when they enter high school and we see the problems they could be influenced by, we have to find ways to protect them. If spying is the route we have to take, I would do it.”

She has plenty of company. The owner of The Spy Shop Inc. , on Chicago’s Near North Side estimates that 20 percent of his business in video-monitoring equipment is for families, including parents spying on their latchkey children<sup>3</sup>. Home drug-testing is another market that’s growing steadily. Bill Minot, marketing director for drug-test manufacturer Psychemedics Corp, said his company began offering the kit<sup>4</sup>s for home use several years ago at the behest of parents. The kits require a snippet<sup>5</sup> of hair to be sent to the company for analysis; results are available in about a week.

But espionage can be dangerous to parent-child relationship, cautions Fran Stott, dean of academic programs at a graduate school in child development. “Spying is adversarial<sup>6</sup>,” she explained, and might undermine<sup>7</sup> any foundation of mutual trust a parent needs to build with a teenager.

“As parents, we are very anxious not to let children make mistakes, and our anxiety only causes more problems than it solves,” Stott said. “That is not to say there aren’t times when teenagers show signs we need to take very seriously—evidence of drug use, an eating disorder or a drinking problem. It is our job as parents to sort it out. I personally would try to do it in a more straight-forward way.”

Severe distress<sup>8</sup> will manifest itself in ways that don’t require spying, she said, such as drastic changes in moods and grades or associations with new friends. Loving but firm confrontation is a better approach than spying, said Stott. And if parents see evidence of severe trouble, she added, “seeking professional

<sup>3</sup> latchkey children

挂钥匙儿童，指因为父母出去工作，所以放学后独自在家、无人照看的孩子。

<sup>4</sup> kit n. 成套设备

<sup>5</sup> snippet n. 小段

<sup>6</sup> adversarial adj. 敌对性的

<sup>7</sup> undermine v. 从根基处破坏

<sup>8</sup> distress n. 危难，不幸

help. Your goal is not to vent your own anger; your goal is to help your children.”

Teens tend to agree with Stott. “There are things teenagers need to experience on their own,” said Brittany Cable, 17. “It helps you mature faster.” She added of her parents, “If they need to find something out, they should just ask me and I’ll let them know.”

Even Minot suggests avoiding the espionage approach when using the home drug tests. “We recommend that you talk with your child and show him the collection device so it becomes a deterrent,” he said. “Get one and leave it on the shelf.”

Barara Cavanagh, whose seven children range from 5 to 24, agrees that many kids do not talk openly, but she is uncomfortable with the idea of spying. Instead, her approach is to limit the opportunities for wrong-doing.

A child’s safety should outweigh any qualms<sup>9</sup> about espionage, according to social worker Dave Clinton, who works at an alternative school for disturbed children. But this applies only if parents have legitimate reasons to be concerned.

“You wonder what is in that dresser, in that diary,” Clinton said. “It is not a good idea to invade that space. That’s off limits unless there is some clear provocation<sup>10</sup>. ”

As the Lipics see it, children aren’t born deserving trust; they earn it. They spied on their sons “so they could develop some credibility<sup>11</sup> with us,” Robert Lipic explains. “Then we felt very comfortable.” Once the boys proved worthy of trust, they received it.

But many of those sensitive to the subject of family espionage, even those who resorted to<sup>12</sup> spying, urged this bottom-line caution: be careful, these are your children.



## Exercises

**Directions: Choose the best answer to each of the following questions based on the information given in the text.**

1. Many parents think that they have to spy their teens because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. reports indicate that a rather high percentage of high school students have engaged in improper deeds
  - B. it is dangerous when teens are combined with alcohol and cars

<sup>9</sup>**qualm** *n.*  
不安, 疑惧

<sup>10</sup>**provocation**  
*n.* 挑衅, 刺激

<sup>11</sup>**credibility**  
*n.* 可信性

<sup>12</sup>**resort to** 诉诸于, 动用

- C. teenagers are prone to make mistakes that may last a lifetime  
D. All of the above
2. Which of the following statements is NOT true?
- A. Parents who spy on their children are generally more conscientious than those who don't.  
B. The parents who are in favor of espionage value the safety of children over their privacy.  
C. Spying on teens has become popular because in many parents' eyes it is the route they have to take.  
D. Spying can do harm to mutual trust between parents and children.
3. The sentence "She has plenty of company" (line 1, paragraph 8) means that \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. she runs many businesses  
B. she owns a lot of companies  
C. she is not the only one who thinks that spying on teens is necessary  
D. her company enjoys a big market
4. All of the following people are against family espionage except \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. Even Minot  
B. Yvonne Webster  
C. Fran Stott  
D. Barara Cavanagh
5. Concerning the issue of home drug tests, Even Minot's idea is that \_\_\_\_\_.  
A. no family needs drug-testing devices  
B. parents should use the espionage approach only when necessary  
C. drug-testing devices on the shelf may prevent children from drug taking  
D. it is preferable to talk with your child instead of purchasing drug-testing devices

## Text B

### Why Do It Yourself?

By *Martin Carvey*

The reasons why people engage in DIY have always been numerous and complex. For some, DIY has provided a rare opportunity for creativity and self-expression. For others it has been an unwelcome necessity, driven purely by economic considerations. Then there has been

a group which feels that a building can never be a home unless it has been altered and modified to reflect a change of occupancy. A final group has traditionally taken the line that if you want a job done well, you must do it yourself.

The same four species of DIYers exist today, although these various motives may now overlap very substantially. The perfectionist in search of the good job done well is often also driven by a desire for creativity. There are also two new categories of motive — the pursuit of DIY as a leisure activity and DIY as a form of occupational therapy<sup>1</sup>. These, again, overlap with other reasons.

### **DIY as necessity**

There is a significant number of young homemakers for whom there is no option but DIY. Their new home, whether bought on a mortgage<sup>2</sup> which consumes a major slice of their income, or rented at similarly challenging rates, will often require refurbishment<sup>3</sup> and even structural repair.

Some of these people are reluctant first-time DIYers. They would much prefer to hire professionals, but can't afford to do so. The majority, however, welcome the opportunity that need has forced upon them to get involved for the first time in the real business of creating a home — with all of its unfamiliar physical labour and the learning from scratch of new techniques. In time, many will migrate<sup>4</sup> to one of the other categories of DIYer, continuing to exercise their new found talents and enthusiasm when no longer forced by financial constraints to do so.

### **DIY as territorial marking**

Even those who have bought a brand new “starter home”, the type which increasingly proliferates<sup>5</sup> around the edges of our towns and cities, will feel compelled to add personal touches of a less dramatic kind to disguise its otherwise bland and expressionless nature. Putting a “personal stamp on the place” was one of the most frequently reported motives for DIY.

### **DIY as self-expression**

Many young people today are frustrated artists — their latent<sup>6</sup> creative talents just waiting for the chance to reveal themselves. There are also those seeking opportunities for a sense of achievement and personal fulfillment. DIY provided just such opportunities for the overwhelming majority of young people. They spoke at length of their sense of pride after completing their very first DIY task, and about how this experience gave them the drive to tackle more ambitious projects.

<sup>1</sup> **therapy** *n.*  
治疗, 疗法

<sup>2</sup> **mortgage** *n.*  
抵押贷款

<sup>3</sup> **refurbishment**  
*n.* 整修, 翻新

<sup>4</sup> **migrate** *v.*  
迁移

<sup>5</sup> **proliferate**  
*v.* 增生, 增殖

<sup>6</sup> **latent** *adj.*  
潜在的

This sense of creative achievement comes both from the choices made by the first-time DIYer — the selection of colors, textures and components to apply to the “canvas” of the home — and from the application of specific skills and techniques. The manufacturers of DIY materials clearly understand this and now provide a wide range of “arty” products to fuel creative urges. At the same time, they make the materials themselves much easier to use — the DIY equivalent of painting by numbers. Special paint effects, which once required the specialist knowledge and training of the true professional, can now be achieved straight out of the can with a simple brush.

### DIY as perfection-seeking

A large proportion of first-time DIYers distrust builders and decorators. They feel that most are “cowboys” and that even the more reputable ones are very unlikely to have the same loving attention to detail and care as the DIYer. Within this group there were those who were content for builders to perform basic or structural work, and to undertake tasks such as plastering (抹水泥) which are beyond the competence of most DIYers, particularly the younger novices. The finishing work, however, was something these people kept for themselves — the final “perfecting” of what otherwise would be just a mediocre result.

This drive for perfection was also evident among the “strippers” in this group. The idea of putting wallpaper over existing paper, or even paint on the top of preceding coats, was anathema. Everything needed to be taken back to the bare plaster or the naked wood before any new decoration could be applied. Some informants recognized that this search for perfection could sometimes go too far: “It’s an obsession for me really. I’m never happy with anything.”

The problem perfectionists face is that progress can be very slow. One young female partner of such a perfectionist said: “My boyfriend spent so long decorating the bedroom that I had to hire in someone to do the living room.” The living-room was finished first. When perfectionists are obliged, by nagging<sup>7</sup> or circumstance, to speed things up, other problems can result: “The only time I rushed a job was when we had friends coming for the weekend. I was so unhappy with it that I painted it again after they had gone.”

### DIY as leisure activity

For a significant minority of first-timers, DIY is seen as a novel and entertaining pastime. It is not really work, but something akin to entertainment, shared by both partners and even the children in the case of young families.

<sup>7</sup>nagging *n.*  
(对某人)不断的挑剔或批评

The idea that DIYing is akin to a trip to the lions of Longleat may seem strange. But for these informants home-making was sufficiently different from, and infinitely preferable to, the dull routines of weekday work to constitute a weekend break. The results of such activity were rewarding, but probably less so than engaging in the activity itself.

### DIY as therapy

“It’s therapeutic, isn’t it? I’m always in my own little world when I’m doing DIY — it’s great.” So said a young man of 27 in our sample. “For me it’s occupational therapy”, said another informant. For them and others it was their way of getting rid of stress after a long day at work — a way of switching off and using the repetitive nature of many DIY tasks as a way of relaxing. Others hinted at a similar process, where DIY was almost an end in itself, rather than just a means to achieving a better home. In this sense they were similar to those who saw DIY as a form of leisure, but it was the psychological effects which were emphasized by 18% of our sample.

While people in this group might sound like sad anoraks, lacking the basic social skills to get a life outside of the home, they were quite the opposite. DIY provided a transitional stage between work and play — something which allowed them to unwind and rid themselves of tensions, becoming more sociable in the process.



## Exercises

### I . Directions: For questions 1—7, decide whether the statement is true (T) or false (F).

1. For those young homemakers, buying a new home on mortgage is as challenging as renting one. ( )
2. Those reluctant first-time DIYers prefer to hire professionals to do the homemaking if they could afford to do so. ( )
3. For those who do DIY as self-expression, adding personal touches can make their homes less bland and more expressive. ( )
4. Special paint effects cannot be achieved by a DIYer for they require the specialist knowledge and training of the true professional. ( )
5. A large part of first-time DIYers distrust professionals because they think that builders and decorators are not careful and responsible enough. ( )
6. Compared with the basic tasks such as plastering, the final “perfecting” task is more demanding and is beyond the competence of most DIYers. ( )
7. For the individuals who see DIY as an entertaining pastime, engaging in the DIYing

activity is more rewarding than its results. ( )

**II. Directions: For questions 8—10, complete the statement with the information given in the text.**

8. The two new species of motive are the pursuit of DIY as \_\_\_\_\_ and DIY as \_\_\_\_\_.
9. A significant number of young homemakers are forced by \_\_\_\_\_ to get involved in the business of creating a home.
10. DIYing can make some people more sociable as it provides a transitional stage between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Text C**

## Slow Is Beautiful

By Jay Walljasper

**A)**

The alarm rings and you hop out of bed. Another day is off and running. A quick shower. Wake the kids and rush them through breakfast so they won't miss the bus. Down a cup of coffee. Shovel a bowl of cornflakes. Hurry out to the car, not forgetting a swift kiss on your partner's cheek. Hightail it to the freeway, making a mental note to grab some takeout Thai on the way home. Weave back and forth looking for the fastest lane while the radio deejay barks out the minutes. Reaching work, you sprint into the building and leap up the stairs three at a time, arriving at your desk with seconds to spare. You take a couple of deep breaths, then remember that the project you didn't finish last night must be faxed to New York by 10:00. Meanwhile, you've got five voice-mail messages and seven more on e-mail, two of them marked urgent. More and more it feels like our lives have turned into a grueling<sup>1</sup> race toward a finish line we never reach. No matter how fast we go, no matter how many comforts we forgo<sup>2</sup> in order to quicken our pace, there never seems to be enough time.

**B)**

It wasn't supposed to turn out this way. As a kid in the 1960s, I remember hearing that one of the biggest challenges of the future would be what to do with all our time. Amazing inventions were going to free up great stretches of our days

<sup>1</sup> **grueling** *adj.*  
激烈的

<sup>2</sup> **forgo** *v.* 放弃

for what really matters: friends, family, fun. But just the opposite has happened. We've witnessed a proliferation<sup>3</sup> of dazzling time-saving innovations — jet travel, personal computers, cell phones, microwaves, drive-through restaurants, home shopping networks, the World Wide Web — and yet the pace of life has been cranked to a level that would have been unimaginable three decades ago.

C)

Curiously, there has been scant public discussion about this dramatic speed-up of society. People may complain about how busy they are and how overloaded modern life has become, but speed is still viewed as generally positive — something that will help us all enrich our lives. Journalists, business leaders, politicians, and professors feed our imaginations with visions of the new world of instantaneous communications and high-speed travel. Even many activists who are skeptical of the wonders of modern progress, the folks who patiently remind us that small is beautiful and less is more, look on speed as an undeniable asset in achieving a better society.

D)

Revv<sup>4</sup>ing up the speed, in fact, is often heralded as the answer to problems caused by our overly busy lives. Swamped<sup>5</sup> by the accelerating pace of work? Get a computer that's faster. Feel like your life is spinning out of control? Increase your efficiency by learning to read and write faster. No time to enjoy life? Purchase any number of products advertised on television that promise to help you make meals faster, exercise faster and finish all your time-consuming errands<sup>6</sup> faster.

E)

Experiences like this are making me question the wisdom of speeding. A full-throttle<sup>7</sup> life seems to yield little satisfaction other than the sensation of speed itself. I've begun voicing these doubts to friends and have discovered that many of them share my disease. But it's a tricky topic to bring up in public. Speaking out against speed can get you labelled as a hopelessly wrongheaded romantic who refuses to face the facts of modern life. Yet it's clear that more and more Americans desperately want to slow down. Schor, author of the 1991 bestseller *The Overworked American*, says her research shows that "millions of Americans are beginning to live a different kind of life, where they are trading money for time. I believe that this is one of the most important trends going on in America."

<sup>3</sup>**proliferation**  
*n.* 扩散, 增生

<sup>4</sup>**rev** *v.*  
使加速

<sup>5</sup>**swamp** *v.*  
使陷入困难

<sup>6</sup>**errand** *n.*  
差事, 差使

<sup>7</sup>**full-throttle**  
*adj.* 全速的

## F)

People want to slow down because they feel that their lives are spinning out of control, which is ironic because speed has always been promoted as way to help us achieve mastery over the world. “The major cause in the speed-up of life is not technology, but economics”, says Schor. “The nature of work has changed now that bosses are demanding longer hours of work.” After a long workweek, the rest of our life becomes a rat race, during which we have little choice but to hurry from activity to activity, with one eye always on the clock.

## G)

Yet there is a small but growing chorus of social critics, Schor among them, who dare to say that faster is not always better and that we must pay attention to the psychological, environmental, and political consequences of our constantly accelerating world. Environmental activist Jeremy Rifkin was one of the first to raise questions about the desirability of speed in his 1987 book, *Time Wars*. “We have become more organized but less spontaneous, less joyful. We are better prepared to act on the future but less able to enjoy the present and reflect on the past.”

## H)

“As the tempo<sup>8</sup> of modern life has continued to accelerate<sup>9</sup>, we have come to feel increasingly out of touch with the biological rhythms of the planet, unable to experience a close connection with the natural environment. The human time world is no longer joined to the incoming and outgoing tides, the rising and setting sun, and the changing seasons. Instead, humanity has created an artificial time environment punctuated<sup>10</sup> by mechanical contrivances<sup>11</sup> and electronic impulses.”

## I)

Rifkin closed his book with an eloquent call for a new social movement to improve the quality of life and defend the environment, a movement of people from all walks of life gathering under the “Slow Is Beautiful” banner. Perhaps appropriately, progress is forging such a movement that has moved forward very slowly in the decades since *Time Wars* was published, while the pace of modern life has revved up considerably thanks to breakthroughs in technology and new economic demands imposed by the globalizing economy.

<sup>8</sup> **tempo** *n.*  
速度, 进度

<sup>9</sup> **accelerate**  
*v.* 加速

<sup>10</sup> **punctuate**  
*v.* 加强, 不时打断

<sup>11</sup> **contrivance**  
*n.* 发明