

ХРЕСТОМАТИЯ

АНГЛИЙСКИЙ КАК ВТОРОЙ ИНОСТРАННЫЙ

**Учебно-методические материалы
на английском языке
для студентов ФГБОУ ВПО «НГЛУ», обучающихся
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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Предлагаемые материалы предназначены для аудиторной и самостоятельной работы студентов IV курса факультета романо-германских языков. Они включают тексты по основным темам IV курса: "Профессия учителя", "Проблемы молодежи", "Выбор карьеры", "Проблемы семьи и брака", "Защита окружающей среды", "Здоровый образ жизни".

TEACHER'S PROFESSION

When a Child Turns Violent There Is Too Little Help For School or Pupil

The Guardian, Tuesday 15 April 2014

In schools like ours, serving an area of high deprivation, emotion and anxiety often run high. Parents **at the end of their tether** may bring in children who are traumatised. It's not uncommon to hear a parent tell their children they may call social services and have them put into care because they can't cope any more. For a headteacher, the emotional cost of all this can be high: you are the **repository** of all the tension and pain in the school.

Staff in my school do an amazing job. I must hold them to account for their performance and also help them to develop professionally. But at the same time, they need my support. I have a duty to nurture and encourage them emotionally so that they too can manage the high levels of **neediness** that our children exhibit. We all do it for the children. This is the only way to see the students make good progress.

Sometimes things can boil over. Finding the balance between the needs of the one or the many can be difficult. When a child is **distraught**, or does something extremely dangerous, this tension is at its highest.

One day last month, one of my children violently turned on a member of staff. He was not picked to answer a question in class; for some reason something burst inside him. In a **frenzy**, the year 4 boy kicked and punched his teacher – who was badly shaken.

I have to protect my staff and the other pupils, so I felt it would not be possible for the boy to come back into school. But, as so often, I knew if I permanently excluded him, it would have far-reaching **implications** for him and his family. What if one of the parents had to give up their job? Things like that change lives for ever. Sitting with the child and parents in my office and seeing how distraught they all were was heartbreaking.

My member of staff was also overwhelmed, and I spent time supporting him, and reassuring him he was not to blame and that the attack was more to do with issues the child was dealing with outside school. I was deeply moved by his capacity to forgive this child.

What do we do with the boy? Sadly, in cases like these, there are limited options and the choices are getting more limited all the time. The cost of alternative provision in a pupil **referral** unit is **prohibitive** when the school has to fund the place – assuming that there is a space. There is the possibility of a managed move, where the child is given the opportunity for a fresh start in a

new school. This can be effective, but where the issues in the child run deep, it can just pass the problems on, which is also what permanent exclusion does. There is the possibility of home education, where the parents are able to do this – but that is not often the case, especially in a troubled home.

It's in situations like these that schools desperately need support from other agencies – health and social care, for example. Where mental health services used to be able to offer support relatively quickly, changes in their operating procedures mean that they are no longer able to do so. Nine times out of 10 referrals that we make to Camhs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) are sent back as the parents haven't attended a required parenting course. Although parenting courses can be successful for some families, they are not a replacement for good mental health support.

I can't just wash my hands of this child and dump the problem on someone else. I have managed to find him a temporary alternative provision, giving me time to find a more permanent solution. It is unacceptable for teachers to be the subject of violence in their workplace. They have the right to be safe. But it is also outrageous that there is not enough suitable provision and support for these troubled children in order that they can have a better future.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/series/headteacher-on-a-knife-edge>

be at the end of your tether (*BrE*)

to feel that you cannot deal with a difficult situation any more because you are too tired, worried, etc

You'd better let her know you're safe. She's at the end of her tether.

repository *BrE* / rɪˈpɒzətəri /, noun

a person or book that is full of information

My father is a repository of family history.

needy *BrE* / ˈniːdi /, adj

(of people) not confident, and needing a lot of love and emotional support from other people

She is shy and needy.

distraught *BrE* / dɪˈstrɔːt /, adj

extremely upset and anxious so that you cannot think clearly

She's still too distraught to speak about the tragedy.

The child's distraught parents pleaded for witnesses to contact the police.

frenzy *BrE* / ˈfrenzi /, noun

a state of great activity and strong emotion that is often violent or frightening and not under control

in a frenzy of activity / excitement / violence

The speaker worked the crowd up into a frenzy.

an outbreak of patriotic frenzy

a killing frenzy

referral BrE / rɪ'fɜːrəl /, noun

[uncountable, countable] ~ (to sb/sth)

the act of sending sb who needs professional help to a person or place that can provide it

illnesses requiring referral to hospitals

to make a referral

The report suggests that doctors should reduce their rate of referral (= to specialists).

prohibitive BrE / prə'hɪbətɪv /, adj

(of a price or a cost) so high that it prevents people from buying sth or doing sth

prohibitive costs

a prohibitive tax on imported cars

The price of property in the city is prohibitive.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Secret Teacher: Why I've Given Up My Dream Job In Teaching

'I have nothing but respect for those who don't find teaching a toxic environment.' After just four terms as an NQT, this week's Secret Teacher explains why they've left the profession.

You would think that the PGCE year, complete with 24 weeks of teaching practice, would be a good time to realise that you hate being a teacher. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case for me. By the end of my second newly-qualified teacher (NQT) term, I had gone from being filled with pride at my job title and key stage 3 form to searching for a job – any job – that would get me out of education. After just four terms, I became part of the statistic which sees nearly 50% of all new teachers leave in their first five years.

Like anyone who leaves a position, I have many reasons. But, aside from the odd person I was relieved to see the back of, none of them were specific to the school where I worked. I left because I could no longer cope with the demands and pressures of the teaching sector itself. There were three key factors that contributed to my departure:

Workload.

Some teachers manage to get all of their work done by 5pm and spend every weekend and holiday blissfully divorced from school life. I don't know

how they manage it. I prided myself on working smart – my colleague and I (the only two in the department with responsibilities for more than one subject) worked with each other to prevent duplicating efforts and my assessments were tightly defined to make marking as fast as possible.

But despite this, I rarely had an evening to myself, let alone a holiday without work. I know some people think that teaching is a job that will fill every moment if you allow it to, but I wasn't doing anything more that was necessary to prepare properly and I streamlined things as much as possible. *An unsustainable work-life balance is a normalised and accepted as part of the job, but it shouldn't be.*

Assessment.

This could fill a book, but I'll keep it simple. There is a never-ending cycle of assessment in today's schools that is deeply unhelpful, especially in lower years. I was expected to do an assessment at the end of each half term, which isn't unusual, but what's the point when the progress averages out at less than a sub-level per term? All it creates is a culture where kids (and their parents) focus on the result of a test and teachers focus on how to **jump through hoops**, rather than encouraging a deep engagement with the subject for the sake of its content. We taught our students to pass tests instead of teaching them about the subject and we couldn't break away for fear of looking like the children weren't progressing (they would do, just not in a way that's easily conveyed by a number or a letter).

Politics.

I met a lot of teachers through my family when I was growing up, and I had wanted to be a teacher since I was a child (apart from a brief spell when I was determined to be the Archbishop of Canterbury). Even during my first term I felt a huge amount of pride in what I was doing – thrilled that no two days would ever be the same, assured that I would make a difference.

This was **derailed** quite spectacularly by the realisation that education was dictated by privately-educated politicians who hadn't set foot in a classroom since they were 18. We were told that satisfactory was no longer good enough; that you didn't have to be qualified to be called a teacher; that vocational subjects weren't as worthy as academic ones; that music and religious education were less challenging than history or French. We were told that poor behaviour was the fault of the teacher for not being entertaining enough and that 11 year-olds should have a say in the selection of new staff.

Of course, there are some things I miss. I will always wonder how some of my students (the brightest, the keenest, the most apathetic and those who tried their hardest) will get on. I will always look back fondly on the enthusiasm of my first 6th form class and I will always be proud of my most creative schemes of work. But I can't pretend that they aren't vastly outnumbered by everything

else that teachers contend with. I have nothing but respect for those who don't find it a toxic environment to work in and manage to maintain their enthusiasm – they must be far more **resilient** than me. The problem is that we shouldn't feel like that about a job that is so incredibly important for the future of our society. Most of all I miss the feeling that being a teacher meant something.

<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2014/feb/01/secret-teacher-left-dream-job-teaching>

jump through hoops

to do sth difficult or complicated in order to achieve sth

derail *BrE* / dɪ'reɪl /, verb

(of a train) to leave the track; to make a train do this

The train derailed and plunged into the river.

~ **sth** (*figurative*) *This latest incident could derail the peace process.*

resili ent *BrE* / rɪ'zɪliənt /, adj

1 able to feel better quickly after sth unpleasant such as shock, injury, etc

He'll get over it—young people are amazingly resilient.

These plants are very resilient to rough handling.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Teacher's Profession (Discussion)

– Our topic today is education, or, to be more specific, the teacher's profession. It is common knowledge that the teacher's profession comprises many aspects of other professions and involves quite a lot of indispensable personal characteristics. Carolyn, I hope you don't mind being the first to speak. You have the reputation of being your pupils' best friend. How do you gain their affection? What personal qualities make a good teacher?

– I don't think it right to start with self praise. I am not at all sure that I have all the makings of a teacher. I'll just tell you, why I have chosen this profession. I love children and I love French.

– But of course you do have the makings of a teacher, hasn't she, Dr. Jones?

– I'd say as much. Now, Carolyn, excuse my taking you to pieces, but I can't help it. You're intelligent and have a sense of humour. You're firm but tolerant and patient. You're responsive and easy to deal with, but somehow, you

always get your way. You're creative and enthusiastic. You're always punctual. And, last but not least, you speak French like a Frenchwoman.

– (Carolyn) I can hardly believe that one person can possess so many virtues!

– (Class) But that's true! You really do! ...

– If one hasn't these qualities, the primary task is to mould them in oneself. Our profession involves constant self-education and self-sculpture. You're a probationer, Jane, aren't you? What problems have you been confronted with during your first days at school?

– They are misbehaviour and breaches of discipline, asserting my authority as a teacher, finding a way with children, adjusting to my colleagues, making contact with parents, et cetera. In fact, the problems are so numerous that they look insurmountable.

– Which do you think is the most difficult?

– For me, it is maintaining discipline. It is very hard to be firm and exacting without losing touch with children and alienating them. On the other hand, trying to be popular, showing response and understanding I've failed to assert my authority, I've lost control and they seem to have got out of hand.

– They say the best way to assert one's authority is by taking up a firm attitude from the very beginning. The teacher-pupil relationship is a tightrope to be walked. Being too lenient and permissive causes familiarity and familiarity breeds contempt. I'll start by making them know who is boss and by setting my class in order.

– (Class) Don't speak too soon! It's easier said than done! We'll live and see!

– It is a good idea but it is no easy matter to find a way with children. It is not every beginner that copes with the task from the start. More often than not it takes lot of experience and patience.

– But still, what do I, do first thing when I start? What is meant by taking up a firm attitude? Is it punishment? What kind of penalties can be used at school?

– (Class) Notifying the pupil's parents! Sending the wrongdoer away from the lesson! Reporting to the Headmaster! Bringing the offender before the form meeting! Detaining them after class! Sentencing them to some work!

– Well, all these penalties may be effective in some cases. But in most cases they don't work. Neither does telling-off, shouting, threatening or scaring. I must warn you against overestimating the educational value of punishment.

– It all looks rather hopeless. There seems to be no sure way of asserting one's authority.

– I'm afraid you're right. There is no universal recipe. It is individual. It involves such qualities as a feeling for atmosphere, resourcefulness, quick wit, a sense of humour and what not.

– Society sets a lot of demands on the teacher and education at large. The main responsibility of the teacher is cultivation of human virtues such as honesty and loyalty, compassion and sympathy, inquisitiveness, creativity, love of work. It is my firm belief that the spiritual moulding of a personality comes first!

– This list of qualities may be continued and it largely depends on the country. Americans would surely place special emphasis on moulding the sense of the country's cultural values, such as self-reliance, individual freedom and individual achievement.

– I've been waiting for an opening to say that all this talk about the teacher's personality and the pupils' spiritual development seems to leave no room for teaching! In my opinion it is teaching that should be the teacher's main concern!

– By the way, I have some interesting comparative research data on personal qualities vs teaching skills as evaluated by teachers and children. You'd be surprised at the results!

– I'm sure we'd all appreciate your information but I'm afraid it'll have to be next time. Do share it with us at our next meeting. Thank you all for coming and participation!

Staff Relationships

Wherever the probationer starts he is likely to live and work with much older colleagues. Staff relationships are not only tremendously important in their own right, as a source of happiness and help, but they are also important in that they indirectly influence staff-pupil relationships. Acceptance into a school is rather like acceptance into a new family. The relationship to older members of the staff may have a certain mother-in-law quality. There are family customs to be learnt and however warm the welcome, a grain of jealousy between the newcomer and the established family group has to be dealt with. There is also unacknowledged fear among the young of seeing themselves as they will be thirty years on. No one likes to grow old.

For these and other reasons older persons of the staff are often a great threat to probationers and cause a good deal of unhappiness. It is the profound distrust and cynicism towards their new ideas which many students find so disturbing.

Probationers themselves are, in turn, often unaware of the threat their youth and new ideas can be to older members of the staff. Their own inner feelings of uncertainty prevent them from appreciating that they can be seen as a threat to any one else. And, yet, of course, they are; new methods may serve to remind senior staff how long ago their training was and how their teaching skills are being brought into question. The youth of the probationer attracts the

children towards him. Hence the defensive reaction of the older members of staff can be all too easily one of cynicism and withdrawal.

Cynicism is not a prerogative of older teachers. It can be found among the young: "Don't swamp yourself with work - play it cool". The young may be condescending towards the old. Probationers often express disappointment with the level of staff-room conversation, and yet at the same time do little to make it sparkle.

One situation with which the probationer has to come to terms is the discovery that he and many of his colleagues with whom he has to be in very close contact, think on very different lines. In a college or university, it is possible to be less aware of the differences between people. A large choice of friends is available and, as university life proceeds, friends come nearer together in common attitudes and interests. After the completion of the course, this enclosing world of group ideas and feelings disintegrates as members take up different jobs. It takes time for the isolated individual to adjust to the loss of this support of understood and accepted opinion. It is a shock for a former student who is permissive in outlook and who has, without thinking, mostly been friendly with like-minded individuals, to find that his colleagues are "solidly authoritarian in sentiment." He may be appalled to find there are people who "actually believe in flogging and fagging and that these people are one's colleagues."

It is immature not to be prepared for differences of opinion and attitudes of this kind. This difference between the old and the young is endemic in our society; in schools it is brought sharply into focus for the probationers by the confines of the staff room, and the sudden change from the predominantly young group to one approaching middle age.

Here is some advice given by probationers to students.

"Be very polite to senior staff (speak when you are spoken to, not otherwise!)."

"Treat your senior colleagues with diffidence at first."

"Say little about the ideas and education which you learnt in training and listen to what the older staff say. Gradually introduce your new ideas."

"Take no notice of staff who crab everything one tries!"

"Develop a thick skin to old-fashioned criticism."

"Take an active part in staff discussion!"

"Don't be afraid of older members of staff."

"Don't be upset by the ignorance and boorishness of the older inhabitants."

The Changing Teacher-Children-Parents Relation

Jun Kanno. Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

I often feel that teachers are less appreciated by children these days. Lately, we even hear more of teachers being criticized, denied, and pressurized

by parents and children, leading to mutual distrust. Being in charge of cases such as classroom dysfunction, violence towards teachers, and problems with parents over education in educational counseling, I strongly sense the changes taking place in the relationship between teacher and pupil, and school and parents. And this change is towards a heartless relationship. This did not just start recently, but began to build up gradually with the economical and social changes taking place in Japan after the war, especially after the high economic growth. Today, children have several “my teacher” in the same period of time. In addition to their homeroom teacher, they also have their prep school teacher, afterschool lesson teachers, sports coach, etc. So, in their very long school life, including graduate school, how many “my teachers” will a student have? We also cannot blame parents for being friendlier with the prep school teacher of their children than their school teachers.

Teachers have lost their position as “someone different”. In the past, teachers were the people of culture or intellectuals in the community, and to the children, they were someone, neither a parent nor neighbor, who provided “different” knowledge and values. However, this “different” aspect has started to thin in modern times, and teachers today have become a common presence. The Japanese saying in respect to teachers “take three steps back to avoid stepping your teacher’s shadow” has become obsolete, and is something that is incomprehensible to the children of today.

What Children Hope for in Teachers.

However I pause to think that despite the various social changes and the changes in the relationship between schools, teachers, children, and parents, the children that I meet in counseling sessions have surprisingly innocent feelings towards their teachers; they want to be loved and cherished by their teachers, praised, accepted, and so on. Listening to university students, the teachers they liked, teachers who influenced their career path, unforgettable teachers, still live on in them. The teacher figures that they talk about, at the least, are not much different from mine when I was a child. These are teachers who love children, passionate about education, devote enormous energy to education, are warm people, and introduce new worlds to children. On the other hand, there are also not few teachers who lose their confidence in their work, are uncertain about themselves, or become psychologically unwell. Everytime I meet such teachers in counseling sessions, I hope for teachers to see the innocent wishes of children towards teachers that lie deep inside their outward behavior, because the origin of education remains more or less the same through time.

YOUTH PROBLEMS

Privacy Can Be a Burden – Sharing More Online Might Help

Many of our private concerns are matters of public import – a shared empathy could help us all better deal with our troubles.

theguardian.com, Tuesday 1 April 2014 14.05 BST

I've been having some personal problems. A vindictive stalker has made me second-guess my every word and action; stress and misunderstanding have occasionally strained my relationship with my partner. Coping with these concerns, on top of the daily strains of being a sex worker in this economy, I have found **that my kettle occasionally boils over** and I feel the need **to blow off steam, to vent**.

Sadly, the era of venting may have passed me by. At university my crowd was a close-knit collection of misfits; none of us was very stable and our drug and experimental sex habits didn't help. We endlessly dissected our frustrations and passions. Today, I have many wonderful, supportive friends, but we rarely confide in each other. Perhaps we acknowledge that everyone has issues and we shouldn't burden anyone with our own.

On social media my friends' posts tend towards the minor but humorous gripe. One might complain of stress or sleeplessness, but **straightforward mentions of serious troubles are rare**. Maybe we avoid posting them because we are afraid of seeming weak, of being attacked, or of causing harm to ourselves and to others through our honesty. Instead we post vague updates, indirectly encouraging support from trusted friends.

This tendency to hide our distress affords us many social benefits. Conceivably, it forms part of the national bedrock of civility that welcomed and delighted me as a new immigrant. It's also important to remember that our love of privacy has fuelled our righteous outrage at state surveillance of our calls and emails. However, we pay heavy costs for our social privacy. We risk soldiering on as our relationships disintegrate, as we search for work, or as we struggle to make ends meet.

I have a young friend who will show up bright and cheerful for a social engagement trying to hide the fact she is weak with hunger. To directly offer her my support would embarrass her; she **was raised to find it shameful to ask for help**. Empathy alone couldn't overcome her embarrassment. What finally got through was an understanding that the recession, not personal failure, was the principal cause of her joblessness.

So many of our private concerns are actually matters of public import. My young friend's hunger and my travails in business can both be **blamed on our age of heartless austerity**. So can the anguish of a disabled person forced to choose between inappropriate work assignments and destitution. So too can the terror of a transgendered person forced to live closeted in order to compete at work or to avoid violence and rejection. Our struggles seem shameful only when contemplated in isolation; learning that we live in a brutal, exploitative system we put them in context and find, happily, that we are not alone.

There are glimmers of a different approach. A few weeks ago, I noticed on Facebook that my friend, an inspiring woman who lives with bipolar disorder, had broadened her daily selection of uplifting memes to include sombre, arresting descriptions of the pain and loneliness felt by a person suffering a depressive episode. I asked her what had moved her to open up in this way. She explained that her posts had encouraged her friends to open up about their own struggles; in posting about the darkness of depression she could acknowledge and support those still submerged in its depths. In his magnificent *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau famously said: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." To lift ourselves out of desperation may take generations; until then, let's voice our despairs and find ourselves, and each other, through the common themes of our laments.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/01/privacy-sharing-online-social-media>

stalker *BrE* /ˈstɔːkə(r)/, noun

1 a person who follows and watches another person over a long period of time in a way that is annoying or frightening

2 a person who follows an animal quietly and slowly, especially in order to kill or capture it

surveillance *BrE* /sɜːˈveɪləns/, noun

[uncountable]

the act of carefully watching a person suspected of a crime or a place where a crime may be committed

observation

*The police are keeping the suspects **under** constant **surveillance**.*

surveillance cameras/equipment

bipolar disorder

[**uncountable**, **countable**]

(also **manic-depression** [**uncountable**])

(*psychology*)

a mental illness causing sb to change suddenly from being extremely depressed to being extremely happy

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Spain On Drugs – Francisco Babín: “Using Drugs In Spain Is Not a Crime, and We’re Proud of It!”

06/11 15:35 CET

Spain's drug czar says the country's youth have an “abusive consumption” problem with alcohol. Francisco Babín, the Government Delegate for Drug Policy, also attacked the proliferation of “cannabis consumers clubs” in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

But, in his interview with euronews, he added **government drugs policy** was having a positive effect and said **Spain** was leading the fight against trafficking.

Rafael Cereceda, Euronews:

Drug consumption seems to be decreasing in recent years. How satisfied are you with that?

Francisco Babín, Government Delegate for Drug policy:

Nobody with a level of responsibility in a sensitive field like the drug consumption can be fully satisfied. We have some cause to greet this, but many reasons to worry. Our main concerns are the increase in “abusive alcohol consumption” or the use of narcotics (legal) that have overrun the use of cannabis and the trivialisation that some sections of society are making of the drugs use, which has no scientific base.

Euronews:

Why has there been a decrease in overall drugs consumption (legal narcotics and alcohol aside)?

Francisco Babín:

It is a trend that has been observed for a while. For example, in the cocaine use the “inflection point” was detected in 2007.

We think that government policies had a positive effect. It would be absurd to say that prevention policies are the only reason for this reduction but they played a role. We also think, but we can't prove it, that for the consumption not linked to dependency, the “recreational” consumption, has decreased due to the economic crisis, so that people that have the choice, have the chance to be able to decide to, stop consuming.

Also Spain is leading the fight against drug trafficking. I think there are many factors, and many that we can't control, I'm sure of that.

Euronews:

And what are the policies and investments that have worked?

Francisco Babín:

Just by example, because there have been many actions taken by many different people: in 2006, as the cocaine consumption had doubled or even tripled since 1996, it was decided to do an extra financing effort in prevention and treatment policies specifically for cocaine consumption, and right after the consumption trends started to decrease.

Euronews:

Have you noticed more demand for drug-quitting treatment after these policies were implemented?

Francisco Babín:

No, actually it's the opposite, and this proves that consumption is decreasing because over the years we have seen that the delay between the consumption time and the moment when people ask to be treated is quite long, so it's logic that a decrease of drugs consumption goes together with a decrease in demands for treatment. The number of people asking for treatment is quite stable, but the profiles change. For example now we are seeing an important increase in cases of teenagers with problems linked to cannabis consumption. I think it's important to highlight, against the message that some are trying to spread, saying that cannabis consumption has no effect on health.

Euronews:

And which kind of problems do these teenagers have?

Francisco Babín:

Despite their youth they have an important problem related to "abusive consumption" and dependence, and they have performance problems either at school or at work. I think it's very important to highlight that 90% of requests for treatment related to cannabis come from under-age people. This should make people think.

Euronews:

And why do you think that cocaine has spread that much in Spain? Is it the fiesta culture? Or is it the close contact with Latin America?

Francisco Babín:

Well, there's a paradigmatic situation: almost 50% of the cocaine seized in the EU are seized by the Spanish police.

Euronews:

And that's for geographical reasons?

Francisco Babín:

No doubt. We are the western border of the continent and the closest country to the areas where the drugs are produced. That's also changing, thanks to the police action, but there is no doubt Spain is an important crossroads and many of the attempts to bring cocaine into Europe come through our country, and of course an important part of that traffic stays in our territory. So, there are many factors for cocaine consumption but availability is an important one.

Euronews:

Cannabis social clubs – why are there so many in Catalonia and only a few in Madrid?

Francisco Babín:

I don't know if I have an answer for that (laughter). Probably there are groups with more interest in establishing these businesses in Catalonia or the Basque Country, while in other regions they adopt other business models.

But I want to make very clear, and I would be happy if you highlight this in your report, is the image of these “cannabis clubs” abroad is completely distorted, and this image is guided by those interested in promoting these kind of clubs.

It's absolutely false that these clubs are allowed to do any transaction with cannabis. This is a crime and when we have proof of drug trafficking, the prosecutor acts.

These clubs shelter behind freedom of speech, saying they want to promote a debate on consumption and that's not forbidden, but this doesn't allow them to produce or distribute cannabis in any case.

Euronews:

But they argue it's private consumption which is allowed by Spanish law.

Francisco Babín:

It is so fallacious as an argument. Tell me, from your own perspective and with common sense, if you can consider as ‘private’, consumption by 3,000 people associated to the same organisation. It's a clear semantic deformation. The private use, which is protected by our legislation, and the “shared drug use” which is also allowed, is perfectly detailed in case law. And it allows:

1. Consumption by drug-addicts, not anyone just for fun.
2. In a fully private space, with no possibility of public access
3. When all the participants are identified as drug addicts
4. Quantities that you can consume in that session (you can't have a stockpile)
5. And whenever it's an occasional consumption with no publicity.

What we cannot consent is that these clubs play with the legislation in that manner. What they do is a drug trafficking crime and it's prosecuted when we have the proof to act.

Euronews:

But doesn't the decentralisation of the Spanish administration play a role in the differences between regions?

Francisco Babín:

No, I don't think so.

Euronews:

But we have spoken with some of these cannabis associations and they say that decentralisation has an influence and that authorities are more restrictive in Madrid than in Catalonia for example.

Francisco Babín:

That's another fake argument. It's a lie. The law is the same in the whole country. They are free to register a new association, create a website, make advertising but it doesn't allow them to sell the marijuana plant in any form.

Euronews:

And they never say they intend to share cannabis in their bylaws?

Francisco Babín:

They have very good legal advice not to. These groups generate huge amounts of money. There are many faceless people interested in promoting the cannabis market and make money with that, and they have very good legal advisors.

Once these associations start, if we get enough proof of misconduct, we can prosecute them. But they are not allowed to produce, or deal cannabis.

I had to explain this everywhere, in Uruguay, in Mexico, in Peru. Because always, wherever we go, they have been there before. I wonder what are the funding sources of a club, that in theory has 50 members, but whose directors have travelled around the world defending that this is a wonderful model to deal with cannabis consumption in Spain.

There's a contradiction between what they say and what they do. And we are not going to change legislation to be tolerant with this behaviour.

Euronews:

The Spanish drug policy is considered quite soft, and in fact it allows these kind of situations. Do you think the law should be changed?

Francisco Babín:

In Spain consuming drugs is not a crime and we are proud of that, so I make clear that we don't have the intention to change that.

We suffered with the HIV epidemic, the heroin epidemic and this led, more than 20 years ago, to a period of deep reflection: we had to differentiate between the person that has a problem with drugs, that is a sick person, that has to be protected from the trafficking, and profit-making with these substances.

So we thought that we couldn't punish the sick person because that would make him stay away from the system and his reintegration into society, so that cannot be punished.

The consumption in public is a breach, punished, because it has an "incitation effect."

But drug trafficking is very severely punished.

The distinction between private consumption, public consumption and trafficking, is essential in our legislation.

Euronews:

Which are the priorities for the government?

Francisco Babín:

I can give you four:

- Abusive alcohol consumption of under-age people. We are developing a new law against this.
- Guarantee quality attention to people with drugs problems.
- Implementing a quick alert system for new substances, which is a problem throughout Europe.
- Making clear that our cannabis policy won't change!

<http://www.euronews.com/2013/11/06/francisco-babin-using-drugs-in-spain-is-not-a-crime-and-we-re-proud-of-it/>

The Highs and Lows Of New Drugs

*The European Commission has announced proposals for new regulations to tackle the controversial issue of so-called legal **highs**, psychoactive substances that imitate the effects of **illicit** drugs and which are not subject to state controls. Last year in Europe 73 new drugs were identified, up from 49 in 2011. Some countries have brought in wide-ranging bans, others are more relaxed. Right On visited Latvia, where authorities have already banned some of these substances, but where it's still possible to buy legal highs in more than 100 **outlets**. The police carry out regular controls, but are powerless to do anything about drugs that are not on the government's list of banned substances. Reporter Seamus Kearney discussed the issues with some of the key players in the capital Riga.*

The Doctor

Dr. Astrida Stirna, Addiction medicine specialist, Latvian Ministry of Health

“There are similar problems in Latvia as there are in the rest of the Europe, where the use of narcotic substances is increasing, especially in terms of legal narcotic substances. They are legal, but at the same time everything is being done in order to change the laws and make these substances illegal as well.

“For an example, I can mention the herbal mixtures that youngsters call spice, which is very popular among our youth under the age of 27. Between 2009 and 2013 we have seen a big rise in the number of patients. For instance, there have been 86 people brought in for medical tests. And every month, every

week, actually every day, such youngsters are brought in. They have used these new substances and they have found themselves in such an uncontrollable state that very often they are brought in by ambulance or by the police.

“If we compare how these youngsters behave, then we can see that the effect of these synthetic narcotic substances is faster, and it causes a lot of fast psychotic changes and addiction. For example, if we compare the natural cannabinoids and the synthetic cannabinoids that are being added to these herbal mixtures, then we can see that the result is 100 or even more times effective!

“Therefore youngsters who smoke these herbal mixtures are getting into an uncontrollable state after smoking at home or on the street. Then, in this psychotropic state, they are brought to us where it is hard for us to identify what exactly they have used. This is because there are new substances added all the time and we cannot identify them all. There are new biochip analysers installed in Latvia, and with their help we can determine the new narcotic substances and give fast help to these youngsters that **have got high**.

“Latvia has changed the narcotics list that is based on a so-called generic system where, based on the formulas of the narcotic substances, all their derivatives are banned as well. Therefore there is a wide range of illegal substances. At the moment there are some new substances appearing that are outside this banned substance list, therefore we have submitted **amendments** to this law that will allow a temporary ban of up to one year for unknown substances that are not included in the banned narcotic substance list. In this case, we could hold and examine these substances and ban them from distribution.

“I believe that we have a chance to contain the distribution of these substances, which is quite wide, because these substances are distributed as air fresheners, incense and bath salt, for various purposes, in order to hide the real use. Very often the distributors of these substances say that they do not carry any responsibility for the consequences after use, that people under 18 are not recommended to use them and so on. They pretend to distribute them for different purposes, even if they know that they will be smoked or **inhaled** anyway.

“Of course, we will not be able to cover everything at once, even if the amendments in the laws will be happening all the time in future. It does not mean that we will be able to identify these substances so easily, as every new substance that appears in Latvia needs to be chemically proven. It is being done by the police and our labs and our equipment is constantly improving. We will not be able to solve it all at once, but we are trying to do that.”

[http://www.euronews.com/2013/09/02/
the-highs-and-lows-of-new-drugs](http://www.euronews.com/2013/09/02/the-highs-and-lows-of-new-drugs)
European Affairs right on

high BrE / haɪ /

FROM DRUGS

4 (*informal*) the feeling of extreme pleasure and excitement that sb gets after taking some types of drugs

The high lasted all night.

FROM SUCCESS/ENJOYMENT

5 (*informal*) the feeling of extreme pleasure and excitement that sb gets from doing sth enjoyable or being successful at sth

*He was **on a real high** after winning the competition.*

*the **highs and lows** of her acting career*

illicit BrE /ɪˈlɪsɪt/ adj

1 not allowed by the law

illegal

illicit drugs

pose verb BrE /pəʊz/

1 [**transitive**] ~ **sth** to create a threat, problem, etc. that has to be dealt with

*to **pose a threat/challenge/danger/risk***

cannabis BrE /ˈkænəbɪs/

a drug made from the dried leaves and flowers or resin of the hemp plant, which is smoked or eaten and which gives the user a feeling of being relaxed. Use of the drug is illegal in many countries.

amendment BrE /əˈmendmənt/

1 [**countable, uncountable**] a small change or improvement that is made to a law or a document; the process of changing a law or a document

*to **introduce/propose/table an amendment** (= to suggest it)*

inhale BrE /ɪnˈheɪl/, verb

[**intransitive, transitive**] (*rather formal*)

to take air, smoke, gas, etc. into your lungs as you breathe

breathe in

*She closed her eyes and **inhaled** deeply.*

*He **inhaled** deeply on another cigarette.*

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

My Housemate Was a Student Drug Dealer

Drug dealers aren't always violent criminals: many students turn to dealing drugs in desperation, says a student blogger.

theguardian.com, Friday 21 March 2014 09.52 GMT

I awoke to the sound of my front door **splintering** from its **hinges**. The entire house shook and boots thundered up the stairs. The dreamy bubble of student life burst and the harsh realities of the real world came flooding in.

"Police! Everyone stay where you are!" Dark figures burst in, and fear raced through my body as the officers began to **dismantle** my room.

We were all aware of what had been going on under our roof, but the gravity of the situation only occurred to me as I sat handcuffed in my bed. It was then that I realised what was happening and what the consequences would be for my housemate.

Everyone knows students take drugs; it's **enshrined** in popular culture and celebrated in films. What many don't consider is that they might sell them too.

But the fact that some students are drug dealers should come as no surprise. Students often face financial hardship, and selling drugs is a **lucrative** option. There is a ready market, too – many students are keen to avoid meeting potentially dangerous strangers to buy drugs, preferring instead to visit a local student dealer whom their mates have recommended.

University is a time when people experiment with things – they have more sex, flirt with radical ideologies, go out more, and yes, take more drugs.

I can't say if it is morally or socially desirable, but it's a lived reality. Drug culture has gone **mainstream** among students, and with the law as it is, it looks like the market will only keep growing, particularly in universities.

The UK now has one of the most expensive higher education systems in the developed world. Job prospects for many are **dismal** and record numbers of young people face the depressing prospect of returning to live with mum and dad when they complete their degree.

To lessen the burden of loans and overdrafts, or simply to survive, many students are prepared to take the risk and sell drugs. Examples of students being pushed to extreme and deprived means are plenty. Recently it was revealed by a study published in the British Journal of Sociology of Education that nearly a third of women working in strip clubs are students, often from middle-class families.

Although a similar study hasn't yet been done about student drug dealers, in just my university alone I know of three people who are **on bail** for selling drugs.

I've been shocked by the levels of binge drinking and reckless drug consumption I've witnessed at university. Only evidence-based laws, decriminalisation, regulation and proper education can **curb** the intoxicant

epidemic that the UK has slid into. Drug education tries to teach us to fear drugs, not how to live with them.

What we see in pop culture and the media about drugs contradicts what we're told in school. The hypocrisy is stark; Barack Obama has admitted to taking cocaine and Jay-z, the self-styled role model of urban cool, has spoken openly about his past life as a drug dealer. We need education that teaches adolescents to deal with these realities, to understand drugs, to control consumption and to identify problem users.

But users are not the only victims of the drug industry. The law comes down with draconian force on those who sell drugs. My housemate isn't a bad person, she was just desperate. Her parents had moved abroad, she was **crippled** by debt and knew she had little chance of finding a graduate job next year, let alone a roof over her head. Now she's looking at five years in jail and a criminal record for life.

Selling drugs is fast becoming a cottage industry for many students and it's a reflection of what's happening across society. Where there is rising inequality and economic desperation, more and more reasonable people are entering this lucrative industry.

Drug dealers are no longer just violent criminals on the fringes of society, they are the sons and daughters of solicitors and dentists. It's time the state started to look after a section of society it has criminalised and marginalised.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2014/mar/21/student-drug-dealers-on-the-rise>

splinter *verb* BrE / 'splIntə(r) /

[**intransitive**, **transitive**] (of wood, glass, stone, etc.) to break, or to make sth break, into small, thin sharp pieces

shatter

The mirror cracked but did not splinter.

The vase splintered into a thousand pieces.

hinge *noun* BrE / hIndʒ /

a piece of metal, plastic, etc. on which a door, lid or gate moves freely as it opens or closes

The door had been pulled off its hinges.

dismantle BrE / dIs'mæntl /, *verb*

1 ~ sth to take apart a machine or structure so that it is in separate pieces

I had to dismantle the engine in order to repair it.

The steel mill was dismantled piece by piece.

enshrine BrE / ɪnˈʃraɪn /, verb

[usually passive] ~ sth (in sth) (formal)

to make a law, right, etc. respected or official, especially by stating it in an important written document

These rights are enshrined in the country's constitution.

lucrative BrE / ˈluːkrətɪv /

producing a large amount of money; making a large profit

a lucrative business/contract/market

Had the plan worked it would have proved highly lucrative.

mainstream noun, adjective BrE / ˈmeɪnstriːm /

the mainstream [singular]

the ideas and opinions that are thought to be normal because they are shared by most people; the people whose ideas and opinions are most accepted

His radical views place him outside the mainstream of American politics.

He was never part of the literary mainstream as a writer.

mainstream adjective [usually before noun]

mainstream education

dismal BrE / ˈdɪzməl /, adj

causing or showing sadness

gloomy, miserable

dismal conditions/surroundings/weather

Christmas will be dismal without the children.

bail noun BrE / beɪl /

1 [uncountable] money that sb agrees to pay if a person accused of a crime does not appear at their trial. When bail has been arranged, the accused person is allowed to go free until the trial

*She was released **on £2 000 bail**.*

*He committed another offence while he was out **on bail** (= after bail had been agreed)*

curb verb, noun BrE / kɜːb /

~ sth

to control or limit sth, especially sth bad

check

He needs to learn to curb his temper.

A range of policies have been introduced aimed at curbing inflation.

cripple *verb, noun BrE* / 'krɪpl /

2 [usually passive] ~ sb/sth to seriously damage or harm sb / sth

The pilot tried to land his crippled plane.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

EU Annual Drugs Report Reveals Growing Use Of Synthetic Substances

The EU is reporting a fall in the use of traditional drugs in some member countries, but growing concern over increasing use of 'legal highs'.

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction's (EMCDDA) annual trends and developments study released in Portugal on Tuesday shows that **cannabis**, cocaine and heroin are less popular. However, the UK has the highest number of cocaine users and people in heroin substitution treatment.

The report cites more than 280 psychoactive synthetic substances, with more than 70 new ones coming onto the market in the last twelve months. These synthetic drugs are mainly manufactured in Chinese or Indian laboratories, sold over the internet and sent to Europe through the post without any controls. The substances are often marketed and sold as 'legal highs', 'plant food' or 'research chemicals'. These are now the largest group of drugs being monitored.

Experts say they have discovered two new substances that have been linked to over 40 deaths in Europe. "In big cities, the choice of new synthetic drugs on offer to consumers is now much more important, mainly for **stimulants**. Their use is problematic. They are being abused, they are unhealthy, and have bad consequences for societies and families in the way we normally think of heroin," said analyst Laurent Laniel. They can now be found in almost every European country, according to the report compiled by the EMCDDA and the EU's law enforcement agency, Europol.

Euronews correspondent in Lisbon Tiago Marques said: "Drug trafficking and consumption trends can be assessed in different contexts but there's always the question of public health. The experts are unanimous: in terms of economics, one of the main risks to prevention and treatment policies is cuts in health spending and spending on social integration policies in Europe."

<http://www.euronews.com/2013/05/28/eu-annual-drugs-report-reveals-growing-use-of-synthetic-substances>

high *BrE* / haɪ /

FROM DRUGS

4 (informal) the feeling of extreme pleasure and excitement that sb gets after taking some types of drugs

The high lasted all night.

cannabis *BrE* /'kænəbɪs /

a drug made from the dried leaves and flowers or resin of the hemp plant, which is smoked or eaten and which gives the user a feeling of being relaxed. Use of the drug is illegal in many countries.

cocaine *BrE* / kəʊ'keɪn /

a powerful drug that some people take illegally for pleasure and can become addicted to. Doctors sometimes use it as an anaesthetic.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th edition

stimulant *BrE* / 'stɪmjələnt /

(*formal*)

a drug or substance that makes you feel more awake and gives you more energy

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Thousands Gather For AIDS Conference

24/07/12 15:36 CET

Guy Jenkins-Bass, 31, has been managing his HIV condition for 13 years and feels that today he's a healthy man.

He explains how he developed the condition: "I was raped at 18 by someone I was dating at the time, and they were positive, and that was my first sexual experience and my first encounter."

This combination of early and then long-term care is in part fuelling excitement within the AIDS community that a turning point has been reached regarding the disease.

The focus is now on trying to get people treated straight away.

Guy is also grateful for the care he's received: "I immediately went to find care in North Carolina, at the time at Duke University, but I don't think I've ever been without it. It's been an ongoing situation, I'm a strong advocate for it."

The International AIDS Conference is running this week in Washington DC, with more than 21,000 delegates gathered to discuss infection rates, research and treatment.

Pioneering Iranian doctors Arash and Kamiar Alaei were honoured for their work in the field. Sharon Stone was on hand to hand over the tribute: "This makes Kamiar and Arash Alaei deserving recipients of the first Elizabeth Taylor human rights award."

They developed harm reduction programmes including needle exchanges and condom distribution at clinics but fell foul of Iranian authorities and were jailed for some three years.

As he received the award, Dr Arash Alaei said: “As physicians, we are very pleased to see that today people from different backgrounds and social roles are involved in the field of HIV/AIDS and consider it a critical issue of our time that requires global cooperation. As a result, I do not believe that this award morally belongs to the Alaei brothers, rather I think this is an award to all who are working in this way.”

“Turning the Tide Together” is the theme of the conference, and AIDS expert Dr Anthony Fauci is cautiously optimistic that an AIDS-free generation is becoming a real possibility.

Dr Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said: “What is very, very clear now, what has happened over the past couple of years since the last international meeting is that we’re seeing that the combinations of treatments and prevention, if you do almost a common sense projection together with modelling – which has its own failings at times because you make assumptions in models – you can actually start realistically looking towards what Secretary Clinton said is the possibility, without any prediction when, of an AIDS-free generation. In other words, ending the AIDS pandemic as we know it.”

Despite improvements, new infections rose by 22% in Eastern Europe and Central Asia since 2005. In the US, heterosexual black women and gay and bisexual men account for most new cases, which arise mainly from poor, urban areas.

Dr Anthony Fauci explained the need to reach this demographic: “That’s the group that we have failed to seek out aggressively enough to test voluntarily, to convince them to get tested, to link them to care because they’re already, not all, but predominantly in a situation where they don’t have the access to the kind of care that they would need.”

The US recently approved Truvada – a drug that lowers the risk of a healthy person contracting HIV sexually from a partner.

But this week, medical journal The Lancet published a study on drug-resistant HIV in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Globally, 34 million people are infected with AIDS.

<http://www.euronews.com/2012/07/24/thousands-gather-for-aids-conference/>

Youth Problems (Panel Talk)

– Today our panel looks at such burning problems as drug and alcohol addiction, AIDS and others. Let me introduce to you Mr. Smirnov, a

psychologist, Mrs. Newton, a physician, Mrs. Blake, a psychiatrist and Miss Krasina, a teacher. You are welcome with your questions.

– Do you really consider these problems so vital? It seems to me that the ecological threat, ozone depletion and greenhouse effect are much more important. It beats me why we talk so much about drug-users and alcoholics. Just let them drink themselves to death - they deserve no better. It's their own business, after all!

– No doubt it is. But do remember that an addict sinks rapidly into degradation and is inevitably lost to society. His family suffers. It's a tragedy. The more so if the addict is a teenager.

– Can't agree more. Drug and alcohol abuse is tragically destructive. They ruin youngsters' health, produce insensibility, apathy, frustration and goodness knows what else! All human values lose their significance. It may lead to crime and suicide.

– Yes, that's right. There has been a frightening increase in the number of suicidal teens in recent decades. Obviously, the pressures facing teenagers are too much for many of them to bear. Broken families, the availability of drugs and alcohol, and the pressures to grow up too fast are creating circumstances so difficult to face that young people instead choose to end their lives. The situation will only grow worse if there are no substantial changes made in our society.

– It tends to be more of a social vice than a purely medical or individual problem.

– I fully share my colleague's opinion. It breaks my heart to see normal young people turn into desperate good-for-nothing creatures. They are often doomed to die from an overdose or be killed in drug wars.

– I wonder where they get the money to buy the stuff.

– That's quite to the point! They may steal or rob - which is also a social crime. They often indulge in various other intoxicants: pain killers, other chemicals. All these abominable mixtures are chewed, inhaled or smoked to produce a state of euphoria. It is nothing but hair-raising lunacy.

– Why is the rate of drug addiction increasing?

– The causes are many and various. First come the distortion of the eternal conceptions of right and wrong, low cultural standards, social injustice. The influence of such an environment is anything but beneficial.

– Do you mean to say that the future has nothing good in store for us? It turns out we have to face rather a gloomy prospect: a world of barbarians and morons if things progress (or people regress) this way.

– I'm sorry, I didn't really intend my words to sound so pessimistic. It was rather a warning or a call to be cautious. It is your duty, prevent these ghastly things from spreading, to enlighten your pupils and their parents.

– That brings me to what I was going to say. Parents fail in their duty - that's where the shoe pinches. It is their overindulgence and severity, strict supervision and total negligence that throw the young in the abyss. Many

teenagers develop various complexes, have psychiatric problems and take to drugs or alcohol.

- I might as well add one more side to the problem. Drug-users belong to the so-called high risk-group for catching AIDS. They help spread AIDS through dirty syringes.

- May I ask you a question? What does the abbreviation mean?

- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is caused by a virus that weakens people so much that they become sick. The name of the virus is HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

- And why is AIDS called the plague of the twentieth century?

- You see, it is a global epidemic. It spreads disastrously. No cure has been found as yet. Moreover, some people have developed the so-called AIDS-phobia.

- How do people contract AIDS?

- According to scientific data it spreads through sexual contact, using dirty needles to take drugs, receiving blood from a person who has HIV, from an infected mother to her child through the exchange of body fluids. In a few situations, healthcare workers, such as doctors and nurses, have got the virus from the blood of patients with HIV.

- And what about casual contacts? Are they dangerous?

- No, they are not. AIDS is not believed to spread through touch ways: handshakes, mosquitoes, cats, sweat or saliva.

- What should be and is being done to prevent the infection from spreading?

- An association for combating AIDS has been founded in this country. Its main goals are: to organize education, prophylactics, prevention and treatment; to provide disposable equipment; to test people for AIDS.

- But in any case each person should be cautious. It's necessary to avoid casual love-affairs. Hygiene and marital fidelity may save one from getting infected. Quite simply, defence against AIDS depends on all of us taking responsibility for our actions.

- Exactly so. Responsibility comes first. Parents, teachers, young people themselves should cultivate a sense of responsibility for their actions, their health, their life. For the most part your health is up to you.

- Sorry, will you specify yourself?

- Well, cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, fat, inactivity - each of these subjects represents a form of suicide. You can live longer and feel better by employing certain restraints in your life style. Moderation and ultimately elimination is the crucial concept here. Reasonable diets, activity, pleasurable exercises, outings, sports can help you cope with the problems and have more energy for your work, family and friends.

- Thank you for your participation in our talk. Our next meeting will be devoted to a healthy way of life.

Teenage Years – Do They Bring Luck?

John McCarthy, 17.

Teenagers today have a lot more to worry about than their parents ever did. The world is becoming a very scary place. Violence, teen pregnancy, and AIDS cases are increasing. More and more teens are turning to drugs and alcohol. I'm sure that almost every teenager will at one time or another have an experience with drugs, alcohol or sex. These things combined with personal problems and mates' influence make being a teenager very difficult. I don't have a single friend who has never had a drink of alcohol. Some of them don't drink at all now, but some do. It seems to me that adults are generally quite indifferent to what their children do. Once you reach the age of sixteen or seventeen, your parents think you are old enough to decide for yourself and let you do what you want.

Estelle Hammersley, 16.

It's true that there are so many problems facing teens today I go to an all-girls private school which makes my school life easier I focus more attention on doing my work than on impressing a cute guy But when I go out on weekends there is a lot of pressure to drink and smoke There are no teen clubs close to where I live so weekend activities are limited My friends and I don't do anything exciting, but we usually have fun just being around each other We usually talk about humorous things On the other hand, we also talk about serious things like abortion, sex, and politics.

My friends and I try to help each other if we can, because a lot of the time, being a teenager isn't fun. It's a chore (duty). You have to go to school and your parents want you to get good grades, which is hard enough in itself, and you have to deal with your own problems too.

Bart Naik, 16.

Where I live teenagers have few dangers, but even in my town kids can get alcohol easily. I personally do not drink alcohol. I don't think drinking is exciting. But I know some guys who do. My view is that if they want to, then they can – it's their life, they are free to decide and nobody can forbid them to do what they want.

The people I hang about (слоняться) with don't really put any pressure (оказывать давление) on me or anyone else. Dating is not a big deal (not so important).

We usually go out with a bunch (group) of friends, both girls and boys.

Social events such as discos and parties are a very popular conversation topic among teenagers. At school, politics are discussed quite a lot but along with this there are conversations about boyfriends, girlfriends, and plans for the weekend ahead. I feel also that the majority of boys are football-mad and the girls are very conscious of (crazy about) their appearance and clothes Being a teenager is great fun. Take it easy.

The Ten Skills Students Really Need When They Graduate

theguardian.com, Tuesday 4 February 2014 10.03 GMT

The number of jobs available for graduates is predicted to rise by 10.2%, according to a survey by the Association of Graduate Recruiters. Good news for students – but when you come to apply for your first job after university, are you sure you'll have the relevant skills for the post?

Leaving it until you're sitting in front of a blank computer screen trying to write your CV for a graduate job may well be too late to assess the qualities you've got to offer.

"**From day one** students should see the start of university as the start of their working life," says Dan Hawes, co-founder of the Graduate Recruitment Bureau. "Think of the skills you need to have when you finish university in three or four years time and then work backwards, so you're **hoarding** skills each year."

Gemma Pirnie, founder of Your New Crew, says: "When I left university I was completely unprepared for what the grad market would throw at me. I thought having a 2:1 from a good university and having a bit of (irrelevant) work experience would see me land a job no problem – not the case."

Obviously the skills you need will depend on the job you apply for, but there are some things that graduate recruiters are looking for that you can start thinking about now.

Business sense.

"Candidates who start their own societies, organise their university ball or start their own T-shirt-making business while at uni tend to have a good grasp of how a business makes money," says Cary Curtis, managing director of Give-a-grad-a-go.

An understanding of business is one of the main skills that students underestimate, according to a 2013 Guardian survey. Less than 10% of students thought it was a vital skill, compared to nearly 50% of employers.

"You don't need to be the next Mark Zuckerberg," says Curtis, "but having a good idea of how a business runs and the challenges involved are really useful skills to take into a company."

Get global.

"More and more employers are wanting graduates to have a 'global **mindset**', which means understanding different cultures and how industries

work across borders," says Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Isherwood recommends that students make the most of time at uni to meet people from around the world, consider study abroad schemes like Erasmus, and says that speaking another language shows that a grad has a "better cultural understanding".

A language.

"If you speak another language then make sure it's clearly displayed on your CV," says Curtis. "We really like bilingual candidates as they usually interview really well. But quite often their CV doesn't do them justice. 'Business fluent French' looks much better than just 'French A-level at grade A' as it offers a company more."

A clean digital footprint.

"Start building a digital footprint of relevance to what you want to do," says Smith. "Employers, just like everyone else, will look on the internet as a first port of call."

That might mean setting up a LinkedIn profile, starting your own blog or website, joining Twitter, and generally making sure you're careful about what goes online connected to you.

Chris Smith, chief executive of Opinio Group recruiters, says: "If the only thing employers can find is you with traffic **cones** on your head on Facebook then you're in trouble."

Office etiquette.

Knowing how to fit into an office will come in handy for many graduate jobs, so it's a good idea to look for opportunities to spend time in one while you're still a student.

Hawes says: "What some graduates might not have is the office know-how, maybe they've never worked in an office before so everything's new, whether it's answering the phone or the way you dress or address people, the things like that – office etiquette."

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/04/skills-graduates-need-students-employability>

How to make a good cuppa.

It might sound like a cliché, but being able to make a good cup of tea can go a long way.

Sam Espensen, managing director of Conversation Creation, says: "One of the skills that has **stood me in great stead** is making great tea and coffee. I once had a grad refuse to make my team drinks because it 'suggested he was below the rest of us' – needless to say he didn't last long."

"We all make tea in my team and the person who brings me a cup of tea **unprompted** is likely to be my hero for the day."

Sussing out the culture of a workplace (whether they all make tea for each other, for example) is really important when you come to look for work.

Good with computers.

"Hard skills in programming and software development for us are really valuable," says Hawes. Curtis adds that being highly numerate and having good analytical skills is increasingly important.

But even if you're not applying for a job in a tech company, being digitally **savvy** is still really important.

"All employers expect graduates to be computer literate," says Isherwood. "Generally just being aware of the digital age is important. That doesn't mean having programming skills, but understanding that instant messaging and conference calls are common in the business world and having basic IT skills like working with **spreadsheets** and documents."

Teamwork.

If you've been thinking of joining a uni sports team but haven't quite found the motivation, here's another reason to join: it could help you get a job. Smith says: "What shows better that someone can be part of a team than the fact they've spent the past two years playing for a team."

Being able to work with other people is a key skill employers are looking for and you'll need to prove it's something you have had experience of beyond your course.

"When talking about teamwork don't use university examples," says Isherwood. "At uni the teams are chosen for you, so it's much more impressive to speak about sport or involvement with a society."

Talking to people.

Getting confident talking to people is useful for building up your contacts. Pirnie says: "Attend industry meet ups. This will help you both with **articulating** your interests and with interview techniques as you'll quickly become comfortable talking to new people."

Smith recommends going to exhibitions and **conventions** in your chosen field. He says: "There are small business conventions going on all over the country. Go to them, meet people, ask some questions. And if you're not sure yet quite what you want to do, all the more reason to get out there and investigate."

Positive attitude.

If you're still at uni, it's worth thinking about how you can build up all these skills. But if you're in your final year and haven't ticked them all, don't worry. "Employers often say that they *hire for attitude and train for skill*," says

Hawes. So whatever experience you've got to your name, a positive attitude is still the most important thing you can bring to your first job.

All in all, things you get involved with at university and in your own time might not seem directly linked to what you want to do in the future, but you never know when those skills might come in handy.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/04/skills-graduates-need-students-employability>

from day one (*informal*) from the beginning

It's never worked from day one.

This game makes reading and spelling fun from day one.

hoard *BrE* / hɔ:d /, verb

to collect and keep large amounts of food, money, etc, especially secretly

mindset *BrE* / 'maɪndset /, noun

a set of attitudes or fixed ideas that sb has and that are often difficult to change

mentality

a conservative mindset

the mindset of the computer generation

cone *BrE* / kəʊn /, noun

(also **traffic cone**) a plastic object shaped like a cone and often red and white, or yellow, in colour, used on roads to show where vehicles are not allowed to go, for example while repairs are being done.

etiquette *BrE* / 'etɪket /

the formal rules of correct or polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession

advice on etiquette

medical/legal/professional etiquette

stand sb in good stead

to be useful or helpful to sb when needed

Your languages will stand you in good stead when it comes to finding a job.

unprompted *BrE* / ʌn'prɒmptɪd /, adj

said or done without sb asking you to say or do it

Quite unprompted, Sam started telling us exactly what had happened that night.

savvy BrE / 'sævi /, adj

(*informal* , especially NAmE)

having practical knowledge and understanding of sth; having common sense

savvy shoppers

More people are cholesterol savvy today than five years ago.

spreadsheet BrE / 'spredʃi:t /

a computer program that is used, for example, when doing financial or project planning. You enter data in rows and columns and the program calculates costs, etc. from it.

articulate BrE /ɑ:'tɪkjuleɪt/, verb

~ **sth (to sb)** (*formal*) to express or explain your thoughts or feelings clearly in words

She struggled to articulate her thoughts.

It is the school's duty to articulate its practices to parents.

convention BrE / kən'venʃn /, noun

2 [countable] a large meeting of the members of a profession, a political party, etc.

conference

to hold a convention

the Democratic Party Convention (= to elect a candidate for president)

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Your Job Prospects Aren't Hopeless If You Didn't Go to a Top Uni

If you build employable skills through networking and extra-curricular activities, you can rise to the top.

"I have applied to Warwick University as it has moved from fourth to third in the league table for my accountancy course", said a college student when I was working as a student ambassador. But should ranking really be the only factor considered when choosing a university? And can you get a great job even if you didn't go to a top university?

It's easy to see why students place so much emphasis on rankings. With stretched recruitment budgets and such a competitive graduate job market top recruiters primarily target these universities.

The **Highflyers** Report 2013 shows that students from the top ten universities have the highest earning potential and are the most likely to gain a graduate position in a top company.

But that doesn't mean that your employment prospects are completely hopeless if you don't happen to go to a top university. I attend the University of Worcester, which is currently ranked 107th. When I started university I knew that I would have to compete with students from top universities, so I made sure I built up other skills.

Regardless of what university you're at, getting a job is about being able to demonstrate that you have the relevant skills that match the company's needs.

It's important to get to know the company you're applying to and to understand the skills they value. The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service (AGCAS) shows the top five skills all employers are looking for are: *commercial awareness, teamwork, communication skills, flexibility and integrity.*

Pushing yourself towards situations and experiences that will develop these skills is important. University is not just about studying; extra-curricular activities are necessary to demonstrate relevant skills.

While at university I have got involved with as many projects as I can in order to make myself **employable**.

I have learnt that although top grades are important, your first job will probably come from networking. I would advise other students, whether you're at a low ranking university or not, to work hard on making networks.

Another way to develop skills is through charity work. I work with a charity called Mentor Link and have helped students improve their behaviour through arts and crafts. Volunteering is a good way to demonstrate that you are a "well-rounded individual". It's an excellent way to gain insight into a chosen career as well as developing skills.

If you get involved with extracurricular activities, you might also be **eligible** for employability awards that can show a company your dedication. At my university I attained the Worcester Award for my extracurricular work.

Your university might have a similar employability award, and it's a way to highlight your strengths. Other students have used the award as a talking point at interviews and have **attained** jobs with companies such as Microsoft and Blackberry.

Once you have built up your experiences, be it through networking, volunteering or other extracurricular activities, you need to make sure you put all of this across in your job application.

A good way to do this is by using the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Describe the situation, talk about the task, say what you did and then what effect that had. Recruiters have limited time and do not want to read pages of **waffle**. STAR is a way to effectively and concisely put forward the

skills gained from an experience. This method could be used in your CV but also when answering competency-based interview questions.

If you are determined, and work on building employable skills, then you should be just as employable as a student from a higher ranking university.

My advice would be to attend a university that you want to attend and not to be restricted and worried about league tables. I have had a great time at university, and have built up employable skills through my extracurricular work. Attending an 107th ranked university has not stopped me.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2013/nov/29/students-employability-league-tables>

high-flyer

a person who has the desire and the ability to be very successful in their job or their studies

academic high-flyers

employable BrE / ɪmˈplɔɪəbl /, adj

having the skills and qualifications that will make sb want to employ you

training schemes that aim to make young people more employable

eligible BrE / ˈelɪdʒəbl /, adj

1 a person who is **eligible** for sth or to do sth, is able to have or do it because they have the right qualifications, are the right age, etc

~ **(for sth)** *Only those over 70 are eligible for the special payment.*

~ **(to do sth)** *When are you eligible to vote in your country?*

attain BrE / əˈteɪn /, verb

(*formal*)

1 ~ **sth** to succeed in getting sth, usually after a lot of effort

Most of our students attained five 'A' grades in their exams.

waffle BrE / ˈwɒfl /, noun

2 [**uncountable**] (*BrE, informal*) language that uses a lot of words but does not say anything important or interesting

The report is just full of waffle.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Will Doing a Master's Get You a Better Job? Well, Maybe...

Statistics suggest that people with a master's are more likely to find work, but such figures should be treated with caution

theguardian.com, Monday 14 April 2014 10.09 BST

It was a love of comedy that encouraged Alex Blower to study a postgraduate degree in drama. After taking a year out to work as activities vice president at his student union, he decided that a master's qualification would allow him to specialise in his area of interest.

He says: "I wasn't sure at the time whether I wanted to go into higher education teaching or not, but I knew that I'd need a master's to do so, and that it would give me more of an idea of what academia was like."

After graduating in the summer, he's now working in the widening participation department at Birmingham City University, helping to raise **aspirations** among young people who are considering university. Having a master's degree helped him secure the post, he says.

"It meant that I knew what it's like to study at postgraduate and undergraduate level, which is really useful when talking to students. The experience of studying part-time while working also proved that I was able to stay organised and manage my time."

An interest in a particular subject area is one of the most commonly cited reason students pursue master's courses, according to Charlie Ball, deputy director of research at the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (Hecu), a research charity specialising in graduate employment. But as funding cuts mean students are increasingly **footing the bill** for postgrad study, whether or not such qualifications will boost their salary is a timely question to ask, he adds.

Overall, statistics suggest that people with master's qualifications are more likely to find work than those with undergraduate degrees – and they're likely to earn a slightly higher wage.

Of those graduating in 2011-12, data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (Hesa) shows 86.6% of postgraduates were working in professional positions six months after graduating, compared with 64% of first degree graduates.

Speaking more broadly, however, there isn't currently a general labour market for master's qualifications, says Ball: "There might be one emerging, but it's not there yet, which is why not many jobs are advertised as requiring a master's degree."

This means that many master's graduates – especially those with generalist rather than vocational qualifications – will be competing against first degree graduates for jobs, agrees Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

"If you're studying a technical master's – for example in a pharmaceutical or medical subject area – which has a technical application in the field you're going into, then it's likely that the employer will look upon it favourably," says Isherwood.

"But if you're doing a master's of a more generic nature that's not essential to the advertised job, employers will probably view you in the same way as other graduates. It's unlikely that they'd pay you more."

"You need to have a clear goal and an idea of what you want to get out of it. If you want to get into industry, then think strategically – make sure that you're getting work experience or going on placements and that this links in with your studies.

"It's very important for people not to embark on a postgraduate course and think that it will make them more employable by some unknown means," adds Ball. "They will still have to explain to employers what benefits their qualification will bring and be realistic about the kind of jobs they're likely to go for."

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/apr/14/will-doing-masters-get-you-better-job>

aspiration *BrE* / 'æspə'reɪʃn /, noun

[**countable** , **usually plural** , **uncountable**] a strong desire to have or do sth
I didn't realize you had political aspirations.

~ **to do sth** *He has never had any aspiration to earn a lot of money.*

~ **for sth** *What changes are needed to meet women's aspirations for employment?*

foot the bill

(*informal*) to be responsible for paying the cost of sth

Once again it will be the taxpayer who has to foot the bill.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Do Students Need to Be More Assertive?

theguardian.com, Tuesday 19 November 2013 09.54 GMT

"Current students are wise," says Mark Fudge, head of counselling and student wellbeing at Keele University. "They don't want to leave university with just a degree. They want to make the most of the experience, and develop skills that make them attractive to employers."

One thing that could hold them back, though, is a lack of **assertiveness** with tutors and peers. "A lot of 18-23 year-olds struggle to stand up for

themselves, because it's something you learn to do as you interact with the world," says Fudge.

And being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. "True assertiveness is about being able to communicate," says Fudge. "It's about having respect for yourself and for other people."

Why learn the skill while at university? Well, say the experts, you could end up with a better degree, a more enjoyable university experience, and a feeling of readiness for the workplace.

With confidence in yourself, you can perform better in academic work. "You can engage with your subject and be more creative," says Annette Honeywell, who runs assertiveness classes at Oxford Brookes University. "When it comes to your dissertation, you can be more **bold**."

Students invest a lot of time and money in a degree and that should give them a good level of control in academic relationships. "There is a hierarchy at university between you and your tutor. If you are assertive, you can engage in a healthier way," says Honeywell.

"You can say, 'I don't understand this, can you explain it better so that I know what's expected of me'. Students should feel confident to acknowledge what they don't know, and to ask for more help." It's not about being rude, but about standing up for yourself and asking for what you need. "It's about being able to say, 'I need this information to be able to do what you've asked of me'," says Honeywell. "Or, 'I need more support or clarification from you'."

It's also good to be able to stand up for yourself when working with friends and peers. "Working together as a group can cause conflict," says Honeywell. "It can be difficult to speak to someone who is not **pulling their weight** and you don't want to be a doormat or a bully."

Many students want to make the most of as many opportunities as possible while at university. But to do that effectively you must be able to say no when you need to.

Learning to stand up for yourself can also mean that you perform better in interviews, as well as at work. "The workplace is like the playground," says personal career manager Corinne Mills. "It's a rough and **tumble** environment and you need to stick up for yourself."

So how can you become more assertive?

- Listen to yourself.

Think about what you want. "Students should listen to their inner voice," says Honeywell. "It's not about being selfish, but about having self-esteem and self-approval. Find a way to convey what you want clearly."

- Relearn bad habits.

People can be socialised into being unassertive, so you may need to relearn past lessons. "Think about what you've learned and what was expected of you," says Honeywell. "For example, if you're the eldest in a family, you might

have had to look after younger siblings and put yourself last. Behaviour that you learned as a child can be unlearned."

- Think about body language.

Use body language to communicate and assert yourself. "Look at body language and the words you use and the way you approach people," says Honeywell. "You don't have to be the most confident person but you do need to give the impression of being confident," says Mills. "And you can do that by thinking about your body language."

- Not everyone is confident, even if they appear to be.

If you are trying to assert yourself with someone who appears to be blessed with **unwavering** confidence, whether that be a tutor, a classmate or an interviewer, remember that not everyone is as naturally confident as they may appear. "Sometimes people who aren't confident have a misconception that everyone around them is," says Mills. "That's not true – your manager, tutor or peers might not be, so don't be **intimidated**."

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/nov/19/students-assertive-enough>

assertive *BrE* / ə'sɜ:tɪv /, adj

expressing opinions or desires strongly and with confidence, so that people take notice

You should try and be more assertive.

assertive behaviour

assertiveness *BrE* / ə'sɜ:tɪvnəs /, noun

an assertiveness training course

bold *BrE* / bəʊld /, adj

1 (of people or behaviour) brave and confident; not afraid to say what you feel or to take risks

It was a bold move on their part to open a business in France.

The wine made him bold enough to approach her.

pull your weight

to work as hard as everyone else in a job, an activity, etc.

rough and tumble

~ (of sth) a situation in which people compete with each other and are aggressive in order to get what they want

the rough and tumble of politics

unwavering *BrE* / ʌn'weɪvərɪŋ /, adj

(formal)

not changing or becoming weaker in any way
unwavering support

intimidate *BrE* / In'tImIdeIt /

~ sb (into sth/into doing sth)

to frighten or threaten sb so that they will do what you want

They were accused of intimidating people into voting for them. She refused to be intimidated by their threats.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

‘What If..?’ 7th Women’s Forum Has the Answer

17/10/11 17:29 CET

‘What if...’ is the theme of the Seventh Women’s Forum, a bit like Davos but without the **billionaire bling**. Meeting this year in Deauville, 1,400 delegates from 80 countries set a new record for this gathering, bringing women together from the economic, political, professional, academic and artistic worlds.

‘What if’ opens a world of possibilities and, notably, what if women could at last **break through that ‘glass ceiling’** in the way between them and the top jobs?

On average only one director in 10 in Europe’s top boardrooms is a woman. Ninety seven percent of the time the big company’s CEO is a man.

Yet 60 percent of university graduates are women.

European Commission Vice President Viviane Reding was a guest at Deauville, and with her Justice responsibilities in mind was **talking tough**: “All the scientific evidence goes in the same direction: women in companies at top level management mean **more revenue for companies**. I gave the companies until March next year in order to get this talent taken in their companies freely without political pressure. If nothing changes, then we might think of having a European legislation going towards quotas.”

Five EU member states have made a start, setting 30 to 40 percent quotas on large company boards.

France is one of them, **spurred into action** in part by a report from the Employment ministry’s Brigitte Grésy, who said: “Quotas open the doors. After that, it’s up to their skills.”

And quotas **bring some unexpected benefits**, too. Grésy’s background in Social Affairs meant she was quick to spot a new trend: “What happens is that training improves. As soon as we decide to let women in there’s a reaction ‘ahh, they won’t be able to do it, they have no management skills...’ So there’s

training, and training for everyone, the men too, **on an equal basis**. It just goes to show that when equality is established women and men benefit. **Knowledge is shared, and a mentoring process takes place.**”

Christine Ockrent became a star journalist in the 1980s, and knows how hard it was to get her way **in the very masculine world** of the French media: “Women still have this problem of having **to prove themselves, even if they get to the very top**. It’s as true in the media as any other profession where once a man gets to a certain level, a certain reputation, he’s made it.”

The fact is men and women just seem to speak a different language.

“Women tend to say ‘we’ instead of ‘I’. This modesty leads women to ask questions when they don’t understand something, whereas men **will feign** understanding. So even if her question is useful for everyone in the group some will say ‘She’s useless, she doesn’t get it.’ This can lead to a lot of misunderstandings in companies, and men saying ‘women aren’t ambitious enough and don’t want power,’” says psychologist Laurence Dejouany.

While women have had to adapt to the men’s professional codes, their presence in the world of work means men have to learn another language, and that is not so easy.

Some companies find it so hard that for coaches like Mary Boy business is booming. She explained: “There’s a **whole feminine dimension of intuition, sensations and emotions** whose place in the business world simply isn’t recognised. For several years now I’ve had companies ask me to teach their managers how **to take this dimension into account** when following their careers, or when evaluating the people around them.”

But attitudes are changing, especially among the young. One of the reasons? Once again, it is that great driver of social change the internet, and its **omnipotent social networks**.

“Social networks are providing us with a weapon of mass construction for equality. Equality of dialogue, and the eternal conversation between men and women. This will have consequences for any company. Equality today starts with teenagers, and it is going to continue,” concluded sociologist Michel Ladet.

<http://www.euronews.com/2011/10/17/what-if-7th-women-s-forum-has-the-answer/>

bling (*informal*) , noun, adj

expensive shiny jewellery and bright fashionable clothes worn in order to attract attention to yourself

She has a fake tan and wears too much bling.

women with big hair and bling jewellery

bling culture/lifestyles

feign BrE / feɪn /

~ sth | ~ to do sth (formal)

to pretend that you have a particular feeling or that you are ill/sick, tired, etc

He survived the massacre by feigning death.

'Who cares?' said Alex, feigning indifference.

'A present for me?' she asked with feigned surprise.

omnipotent BrE / ɒm'nɪpə'tənt /, adj

(formal)

having total power; able to do anything

an omnipotent God

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Fighting Youth Unemployment In the Netherlands

25/01 12:07 CET

While youth unemployment rates in Greece and Spain hover around 60 percent, the figure in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands is below ten percent. How do the Dutch **combat youth unemployment**? How do they get young people into the labour market?

Inside the "Innovation Dock" in Rotterdam, 18-year old Gillian is working hard to make sure he gets the skills he needs to find a job **in a fast-changing labour market**. He spends one week a month at this vocational training college. The rest of the time, **he learns on the job as an apprentice in a company**.

This approach **combining training and practical learning forms** the basis of education in the Netherlands.

"I learn a lot here. I also **learn a lot at my workplace**. But here, at the **vocational training college**, on top of what I can learn at work, I **acquire very specific skills and a huge variety of up-to-date techniques** that you can't pick up in every job. School and work are **complementary**," says Gillian. "Innovation is very important for us as an educational institute," says Gillian's supervisor at Albeda College, André de Knecht. "We also try **to meet the demands of companies**: we go to trade fairs where we buy tools or try to update our teaching skills and techniques. We have all kinds of innovative machines and know-how, which are available to students and apprentices." The 22 million euros needed to transform the submarine shipyard into a vocational training center were co-funded by the European Union and the city of Rotterdam.

We ask one of the managers what the secret is to **fight youth unemployment** in the Netherlands.

“What I would advise other countries to do is: try to sell your traineeships to companies in your neighbourhood. Because if you do that, you get close to those companies and you **stay in touch with the latest standards of innovation**. I am sure that they will help you include their innovation into your traineeships,” says Michel van’t Hof, manager at Albeda College. The Netherlands’ latest **youth unemployment rate stands at 9.7%**. It’s a low figure, compared to the European average of around 23 percent.

But it’s **on the rise**. Which is why Rotterdam has decided to invest more in training schemes. While he welcomes an EU proposal for a “youth guarantee”, which would guarantee either a job or training to every unemployed youth, the city’s social affairs councillor says the pressure is **first and foremost on the job-seeker**: “They should be forced to accept every job offer that is in the real labour market and in the real economy,” says Marco Florijn, Rotterdam City Councillor for Social Affairs. “They shouldn’t be given **social security**, they should be sent back, because they have to look for a job themselves, we are not their parents,” he adds. 9.7 % – The EU’s statistics bureau figure for the Netherlands looks nice on paper, but it doesn’t reflect reality according to this Dutch labour market expert:

“What’s very different here is that young people are very often both in education and in employment at the same time, but in small jobs – that situation is ten times more frequent here in the Netherlands than in Italy, for instance,” says Wiemer Salverda, from the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies. “At the same time, since the financial crisis, the employment rate of young people in the Netherlands has fallen by one third and the employment rate of **young people of migrant origin** has fallen by half.” We are in one of the **nation’s hot spots, on the outskirts of Amsterdam**. Many young migrants live here. Among them, unemployment doesn’t stand at 9.7 percent but at 40 percent. The aim of the “Candidate Market Project” is to give these youngsters a chance. Some of them haven’t had that many in their lives. “I don’t have any work and I’m so ashamed. In the street, I sometimes **get harassed**, I have to run. I haven’t had much luck in life...,” says Yafutu, who breaks down in tears.

“He’s not a junkie, but he is forced to avoid aggressive people in the street. If we don’t find solutions for people like him, one day, he, too, will lose it,” says Dyron, who is also unemployed.

Yahya is convinced there will be work for those who work hard enough: “You’ll get by if you study hard. You can never learn too much,” he says.

Brahim says he just wants a job, any job: “I will do anything: cleaning, anything, but they don’t hire me because they don’t give me a chance. There are a lot of companies here in Holland that still discriminate. That’s what I want to say to them: that they, too, should wake up and give young people more of a chance.” Rodney agrees. He says **attitudes towards young migrants needs to change**: “If you don’t want to invest in young people, especially those who are really keen to do something, if you don’t give them a chance on the labour

market, what will they do? They will probably **take another path**, they will **turn to crime**, because there is no other way out for them... So in the end, this will **cost authorities and society much more**.” Patricia Zebeda is the founder of Filenetwerken, a “social business incubator” in the West of Amsterdam.

Set up in a former garage, the incubator is a place for young people with ideas and skills but no job. Patricia says everyone has strong points but doesn’t always have the social skills to put them to good use.

“Youngsters who have these difficult backgrounds often struggle a lot in life, they have a lack of supportive networks around them,” says Patricia. With her connecting-people-method, Patricia **has a stunning success rate**: 60 percent of youngsters she has coached have found work. Ivo Hoedt is one of them. He now runs a sports centre.

He has this message for other young people looking for a job:

“Don’t give up, we are young and we are the future. So if it does not work the first five times, 10 times, 20 times: keep on trying.” Inspiring advice, but not always easy to follow for **young people with disabilities**.

We head south, to the city of Utrecht, where we meet Bastiaan. A qualified administrator, he is struggling to find a job.

Today, e-coach Laura is briefing him about how to use social networks to approach employers.

According to Dutch law, companies are recommended to include between two and five percent of people with disabilities in their workforce. But there is no legal obligation. One third of people with disabilities are out of work.

“I think it would make a big change for me if companies were obliged to hire a minimum of five percent of people with disabilities. I hope the law will change, so that many young people will be able to find a job, not just myself but many others,” says Bastiaan. “I think it makes sense for employers to hire people with disabilities because it’s a chance for them to improve their image and demonstrate that they are socially responsible,” says Laura ter Beeke, e-coach at De Realisten Project. Gillian, Marco, Ivo and Bastiaan all have something in common.

Their country is fighting youth unemployment by investing in training, by **creating strong links between education and the real world**, but also by asking them to be more flexible.

Figures show something must be working... a path to follow for fellow Europeans?

<http://www.euronews.com/2013/01/25/fighting-youth-unemployment-in-the-netherlands/>

So You Want to Be a Success

We live in a society increasingly obsessed with material success. We are exhorted to “Get on!” “Get ahead!” “Get a step on the ladder!” “Make it to the top!” If you don't prosper, it's easy to feel like a flop, that you've wasted your life and failed your family.

But is such success open to all? Do we all have the potential to be millionaires, and can success be taught? What can we learn from those who do make it to the top?

Becoming a millionaire is a surprisingly haphazard affair. At school we are told that if we work hard and pass exams we will do well. But a recent study by Professor Cary Cooper, of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, refutes this advice. When he studied the lives of successful entrepreneurs, he found that nearly 60 per cent left school early either because they were thrown out or were “bored”. Other studies suggest there is little correlation between how well children do at school and the salary and job satisfaction they achieve as adults.

The most certain route to riches is to start out wealthy. Over half the people in the most recent *Sunday Times* survey of the richest 200 people in the country inherited money. Twenty-five per cent of those who head large corporations were born into affluent families.

If you're not born wealthy, you may be able to capitalise on another advantage: good looks. “Good looks make early life easier. Teachers and other children will expect you to be kinder, cleverer and to do better than plainer peers,” explains Dr Raymond Bull of Portsmouth University, expert on the effects of facial appearance.

Being tall is also an advantage. Other qualities being equal, employers are more likely to select taller and more attractive people. However, unless you want to work with children, it can be a handicap having too pretty a baby face. You are likely to be regarded as kind, but not very efficient. You may fare better by taking to crime - juries are far more likely to acquit you.

In a new book, *Business Elites*, Professor Cooper compares a number of successful entrepreneurs with people Cooper calls intrapreneurs. He defines intrapreneurs as those who rise through the ranks to the top of large corporations.

Cooper found major differences between the two groups. “Intrapreneurs tended to be the kids everyone thought would do well. Over half went to university, they are good organisers and get on well with people.”

But the entrepreneurs often had early reputations as trouble-makers. “They probably left school early, had several business disasters and are awkward personalities. They are also intuitive and very determined.”

The most dramatic difference between entrepreneurs and corporation high-fliers was that only five per cent of Cooper's entrepreneurs had both

parents present throughout childhood, compared with 91 per cent of the intrapreneurs. In some cases the parent had died, in others they had been absent for long periods. "Coping with disaster early in life appears to give people vital resilience later on," suggests Cooper.

Nearly half of Cooper's entrepreneurs also felt that they had been the victims of discrimination early on - some were Jewish, some were immigrants, some were just physically small.

But even if you are born poor and ugly to parents who refuse to absent themselves from you, there's still plenty you can do to influence your chance of success. A range of courses and self-help manuals are available to help you forge your way to the top.

Go into any large bookshop and you'll find a section with titles such as *The Magic of Thinking Big*, or *Riches While You Sleep*. There's even a magazine called *Personal Success*, filled with ads for courses that will "unleash the power within" or "transform your thinking, behaviour and relationships".

"Successful people," says Breen, an organisational consultant, "are the ones who, when something doesn't work, try something else. Unsuccessful people keep on doing the same thing, only harder."

Most of today's courses on positive thinking originate in America. Many start by advising you to try "positive affirmations" such as this one from *Success Magazine*. "Look in the mirror every morning and say to yourself: "You are rare, unique and different. You were designed for accomplishment, engineered for success." Sounds embarrassing? Don't forget that self-belief is crucial for success.

In his training programmes, Breen shows people how to banish negative thoughts and put themselves in a more productive frame of mind. Motivation is the key. Working in a big organisation can provide motivation (if only because the boss shouts at you), but entrepreneurs have to learn to "gee" themselves up.

Breen gets students to concentrate on immediate specific tasks that need attention, rather than allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by a mountain of things waiting to be done.

"We get them to imagine getting one thing done, and how good it will feel when they've finished," says Breen. "If you really concentrate on those thoughts for just two or three minutes you'll find you can't wait to start work instead of dreading it."

Class in the United States

A recent poll on class found that 40 per cent of Americans believe that the chance of moving up from one class to another had risen over the last 30 years, a period in which new research shows that it has not. Thirty-five per cent said that it had not changed, and only 23 per cent said that it had dropped. More

Americans than 20 years ago believe it is possible to start out poor, work hard and become rich. They say hard work and a good education are more important to getting ahead than connections or a wealthy background. "I think the system is as fair as you can make it," said one respondent. "I don't think life is necessarily fair. But if you persevere, you can overcome adversity. It has to do with a person's willingness to work hard, and I think it's always been that way."

One difficulty in talking about class is that the word means different things to different people. Class is rank, it is tribe, it is culture and taste. It is attitudes and assumptions, a source of identity, a system of exclusion.

To some, it is just money or it is an accident of birth that can influence the outcome of a life.

Some Americans barely notice it; others feel its weight in powerful ways. At its most basic, class is one way societies sort themselves out. Even societies built on the idea of eliminating class have had stark differences in rank. Classes are groups of people in similar economic and social position; people who, for that reason, may share political attitudes, lifestyles, consumption patterns, cultural interests and opportunities to get ahead.

When societies were simpler, the class landscape was easier to read. Marx divided 19th-century societies into just two classes; Max Weber added a few more. As societies grew increasingly complex, the old classes became more heterogeneous. As some sociologists and marketing consultants see it the commonly accepted big three - the upper, middle and working classes - have broken down into dozens of micro classes, defined by occupations or lifestyles. A few sociologists say that social complexity has made the concept of class meaningless: But many other researchers disagree. "Class awareness and the class language is receding at the very moment that class has reorganized American society," said Michael Hout, a professor of sociology at Berkeley. "I find these "end of class" discussions naive and ironic, because we are at a time of booming inequality and this massive reorganization of where we live and how we feel, even in the dynamics of our politics. Yet people say, "Well, the era of class is over." Many Americans say that they have moved up the class ladder.

In the recent poll, 45 per cent of respondents said they were in a higher class than when they grew up, while just 16 per cent said they were in a lower one. Overall, 1 per cent described themselves as upper class, 15 per cent as upper middle class, 42 per cent as middle, 35 per cent as working and 7 per cent as lower. "I grew up very poor and so did my husband," said one respondent. "We're not rich but we are comfortable; we are middle class and our son is better off than we are." The original exemplar of American social mobility was almost certainly Benjamin Franklin, one of 17 children of a candle maker. About 20 years ago, when researchers first began to study mobility in a rigorous way, Franklin seemed representative of a truly fluid society, in which the rags-to-riches trajectory was the readily achievable ideal, just as the nation's self-image promised. But new studies of mobility, which methodically track people's

earnings over decades, have found far less movement. Mobility happens, just not as rapidly as was once thought. “We all know stories of poor families in which the next generation did much better,” said Gary Solon, a leading mobility researcher. “But in the past, people would say, “Don’t worry about inequality. The offspring of the poor have chances as good as the chances of the offspring of the rich.” Well, that’s not true. It’s not respectable in scholarly circles any more to make that argument.’ Americans have never been comfortable with the notion of a hierarchy based on anything other than talent and hard work. Class contradicts their assumptions about the American dream, equal opportunity and the reasons for their own successes and even failures. Americans, constitutionally optimistic, are disinclined to see themselves as stuck. Blind optimism has its pitfalls. If opportunity is taken for granted as something that will be there no matter what, then the country is less likely to do the hard work to make it happen. But defiant optimism has its strengths. Without confidence in the possibility of moving up, there would almost certainly be fewer success stories.

MARRIED LIFE

Marriage In Recovery: Together Again

R and I are back together and I'm trying to be 'good enough'.

The Guardian, Saturday 3 May 2014

'Our daughter is **reticent** about R being back in the house; angry too.'

"Well that's good," my mother says when I tell her over the phone that R and I are back together. I ask her to pass the news on to my father because one slightly awkward conversation is enough for a morning.

We say goodbye and I feel an **immense** sense of relief – the type I get when I've let go of something big and can breathe easily again because the phase of "telling everybody that needs to know what's going on" is over.

Now I'm trying for "good enough" in all areas of life. Yes, the catastrophic, brilliant or intensely dull phases will still occur, but the good enough will hopefully bring everything back into balance when times are **erratic**. Often, helpful advice I've had from others takes more than a decade to sink in.

Years ago, I chatted to my lovely, now-retired General Practitioner, during an appointment for eczema that had appeared on my face. "Do you find being a mother stressful?" he asked, examining my skin. "No! Not at all!" I replied, through **gritted, euphoric teeth**.

But looking back, I was as tight as a clenched fist. I wanted everything to be fabulous. I wanted more than anything to be an excellent mother. The doctor was kind and could probably sense my neurosis by the fact that I had brought home-baked mini-scones in a Tupperware box for my daughter's snack. He wrote me a prescription for some cream and as I left he said, "Aim for good enough in life. Everything else is a waste of energy."

I get that now. It means dressing when I need to go out, making sure the children do their teeth, even if they miss the back ones occasionally. It means checking on my friends every now and then and not always trying to bring the conversation back to me. It means, in all, aiming for good enough, rather than good, and I hope it will be something I can remember now that R and I are back together.

We've told our friends. Initially I imagined they'd think I was crazy because I asked R to come home. But now, I wonder if they think we were both **bonkers** for breaking up in the first place.

The separation was important for me, though. I didn't feel much love or empathy for R a few months ago, and I can't say how he felt about me at all

because his thoughts were so **pickled in booze**. I needed, therefore, to take responsibility for my own sense of welfare.

Now he's back, R has no need to people-please or hand out empty promises because I'm backing off, refraining from handing out any threats or ultimatums because they never worked and only made him feel like a child, and made a **martyr** out of me. We're certainly both happier for it. We haven't talked much about the drink recently, which is refreshing because drink – and my compulsion to talk about it – has dominated our lives for years and is becoming rather dull. We've done plenty of self-analysis in therapy and have to get on with actually being together. "The **onus** is on me to stay sober now, and that's both scary and liberating," R said recently.

Our daughter is reticent about R being back in the house; angry too, and that's totally understandable. She's lived through much of the chaos that has arisen from my unstable relationships (she is estranged from her birth father, and that fact looms large in her mind sometimes; a father who is alive, but whom she never sees because his behaviour is unpredictable).

"Why did you have to get married again and have more children?" she often asks me, because she can picture an alternative life, just me and her, wealthier, with a tidy hallway, better holidays and no one else to disturb the peace. I can very much relate to this. As a teen I used to look at my mother, children at her feet, and think, "Why did you allow yourself to get pregnant so many times? It could just be us two if you'd only used contraception."

The idea of the only child was something I was envious of, the entry to a **flawless** adult life unspoiled by imperfection and mess. But I'm very glad of my siblings now – which makes me think that the things that once seemed bad, have in fact turned out all right.

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/03/marriage-recovery-together-again>

reticent *BrE* / 'retɪsnt /, adj

(*formal*) unwilling to tell people about things

reserved, uncommunicative

She was shy and reticent.

~ **about sth** *He was extremely reticent about his personal life.*

immense *BrE* / ɪ'mens /, adj

extremely large or great

enormous

There is still an immense amount of work to be done.

The benefits are immense.

erratic BrE / ɪˈrætɪk /, adj

(often *disapproving*)

not happening at regular times; not following any plan or regular pattern; that you cannot rely on

unpredictable

She had learnt to live with his sudden changes of mood and erratic behaviour.

grit your teeth

1 to bite your teeth tightly together

She gritted her teeth against the pain.

'Stop it!' he said through gritted teeth.

bonkers BrE / ˈbɒŋkəz /, noun

[**not before noun**] (*informal*)

completely crazy and silly

*I'll go **bonkers** if I have to wait any longer.*

*He thought I was stark raving **bonkers** to give up my job.*

booze BrE / buːz /, noun (*informal*)

alcoholic drink

*Now he's off the **booze** (= he has given up drinking alcohol) , he's a different person.*

martyr BrE / ˈmɑːtə(r) /

2 (usually *disapproving*) a person who tries to get sympathy from other people by telling them how much he or she is suffering

He makes a martyr of himself whenever it's his turn to do the housework.

onus BrE / ˈɒnəs /, noun

(*usually the onus*) [**singular**] (*formal*)

the responsibility for sth

*The **onus is on** employers to follow health and safety laws.*

*The **onus of proof** lies with the prosecution.*

*The report puts the **onus of children's early education** firmly on the parents.*

flawless BrE / ˈflɔːləs /

without flaws and therefore perfect

perfect

a flawless complexion/performance

Her English is almost flawless.

Marriage and Family Relations **(Class Discussion)**

- I'd like to begin today's talk by suggesting a starting point. What's the basis of a happy marriage?
- (Class) Oh! It is a bit unexpected! It sounds O.K. How on earth shall we start?
- What with some students being married and others standing on the threshold of matrimony this seems an important topic. There's no denying the fact that we are greatly concerned with marital problems and behaviour.
- But let's return to the subject. What makes a marriage happy?
- (Class) Love! Mutual understanding! Financial security and self-reliance! Passionate attachment!
- I rather think marriage involves living with a person, not merely loving him. In my opinion comradely affection and companionship matter more in the long run than passion.
- I don't see, Mary, why you haven't mentioned such significant factors as cultural similarities and intellectual compatibility. They are very important in choosing the right partner. Like should marry like. It stands to reason. People should have much in common in order to get along with one another.
- I, for one, think financial security is of primary importance for marital success. Of course, money doesn't automatically bring happiness, but a lack of money certainly causes stress in any relationship.
- There's a lot to be said for money. But love comes first, I believe. In modern society people needn't any longer marry for convenience.
- Don't they? It depends on what we understand by a marriage of convenience. If a person marries for such reasons as having children, emotional security, a home of his own, is it a marriage of convenience? If it is, I'm all for it.
- I see what you mean, Kate. But let's face it. Some people nowadays marry for reasons of convenience and advantage: to promote a career, to come into money or just to please their parents.
- By the way, parents may make a better choice than their children. They are wiser and may be better judges of character than young people. They know well what qualities are desirable in a spouse.
- I'm sure neither a marriage of love nor a marriage of convenience is bound to be a success. Both kinds of marriages take work, patience and perhaps a bit of luck. Happy homes are so rare!
- But what's wrong with marrying for love?
- I don't think marriage is for everybody. I fell in love a dozen times and out of love as often. I don't consider it a steady relationship. I'd rather stay a bachelor.

– (Class) Poor George! You sound too pessimistic! That's bad luck! Don't lose heart! Wait and see!

– Let me have my say! I believe marriage is what two people make it. The trouble with many modern couples is that they hurry into marriage. Being madly in love with each other they don't weigh up all the factors important for a life-long union. They regard romance as the primary basis of marital success.

– That's true. Marriage is different from love. That is why young people are so often disappointed. The ideal they fall in love with has so little to do with reality.

– What really happens during the period of romance is that young people see their partners through rose-coloured spectacles. The faults of their characters are not so obvious because they try to please their loved ones. If those faults sometimes do come into the open, they are happily ignored, while the virtues are magnified and exaggerated out of all proportion.

– You have explained it in such a way that it seems to leave no hope for young people in love.

– I never meant to be so discouraging. You have a reasonable chance of matrimonial happiness if you know the person you are marrying very well, if you carefully weigh up all the pros and cons and if you do not expect marriage to be an everlasting honeymoon.

– Oh! Marriage needs to be worked at.

State of the Union

Ivy Gould (The 40s).

Ivy married John Gould in 1947, when she was 23 and he was 26. He is now 73, and a retired engineer and she is 70, a former secretary. They have a daughter, Jayne, 41.

We lived in the same road, so we knew each other very well. Then when John came out of the airforce we met at a dance. I John proposed at the same ballroom a few months later. He took me out on to the balcony and showed me a diamond ring. It was quite romantic.

I didn't want a big wedding, but my parents did, and in those days you did what they wanted. I'd done a tailoring apprenticeship, so I made my gown, all the bridesmaids' dresses and my going-away outfit. My parents had a big house, so we moved in with them and my grandmother. We had our own room but we shared the kitchen with Mum. It wasn't difficult. I stopped work when I got married; you did then. The man was supposed to be the breadwinner and it was his job that mattered. Because it was such a large house, I had plenty to do. John didn't do any housework, but he's changed since he retired.

When you first get married you think it's going to be brilliant. I'm not sure it lived up to all my expectations at first but it has since. I do think young

couples who split up in the early years must regret it later. John and I have given each other a lot of security.

Sally Graham (The 50s).

Sally married Gordon Graham on February 19, 1955, when she was 26 and he was 30. He is a retired insurance worker, 71, and she is 67, a former secretary. They have two children and two grandchildren.

We helped out with the cost of the wedding. We didn't have grand weddings then, and it horrifies me how much people spend today. Then marriage was a step you took for better, for worse, for ever. I didn't know anyone who was divorced. We spent time getting to know each other and becoming friends before we married.

I was always busy. Babies didn't have disposable nappies, so I had washing every day. There were no women's rights, but we didn't moan or groan - we just got on with it. Of course, I gave up work; I didn't know anybody who worked when their children were small. My husband paid the bills - he was very much in charge - and gave me money each week to cover food and any make-up or stockings I wanted. We had friends in to play cards but we only went out on birthdays and anniversaries because there wasn't the money.

I think the 1950s were the best years to get married. It was before the explosion of everybody wanting to do their own thing. You can't do that without somebody suffering. We had to fit in and show consideration. And I think we did, by and large. Certainly in my circle, our homes and families were everything.

Lady Vincent (The 70s).

Christine married Sir William Vincent in 1976, when she was 24 and he was 25. He is now 44 and an investment consultant and Christine, 43, is a novelist. They have three sons, Eddie, 17, Charlie, 16, and John, 14.

The house we wanted to buy was way beyond our means, so we decided that when we were married we would put off having children for three years. In the event I got pregnant a bit sooner than we'd planned but I was absolutely thrilled. I meant to go back to work after Eddie was born, but I couldn't face it.

I had three children in three years, and luckily with each baby William seemed to get promotion. But I was careful not to become too obsessed with the babies. You have to take care your husband isn't an accessory instead of a companion. We both hate rows. I could row with a stranger but never with the family; you say such hurtful things that can't be unsaid. William is so diplomatic; he's just ace quietly getting his own way and I don't even realise until a week later. The only thing we really disagree about is driving. I'm more aggressive than William, who is so well-mannered he gives way too often. We balance each other pretty well. I'm ebullient, William's reticent; he's a pessimist, I'm a dreamer.

Amanda Russell (the 80s).

Amanda Russell, a part-time designer, married Chris Gower, a market researcher, in 1982, when they were both 24. Now 37, they have two children, Imogen, 8, and Oscar, 5.

My parents wanted us to have a big party when we got married and I'm very glad we did. It was important to me, making the commitment with all our friends and family there. I kept my own name. I always wanted to get married and have children, but I didn't really see myself as an appendage. I don't want to be just Mrs Something. But the children have Chris's name; it just seemed to be the way to do it.

I wasn't particularly interested in housework, but fortunately Chris didn't expect an instant housewife. We shared most of the chores, though I do most of them now because I'm the one at home. I worked until Imogen was 18 months old, then gave up completely when I was expecting Oscar. We decided bringing up children was an important job in itself.

I don't suppose anybody else would read our marriage as perfect. But after 13 years we're still in love and we have a lot of mutual respect. I don't feel smug. I expected marriage to be quite hard work and it has been. It's almost like a job.

Stephanie Walter (The 90s).

Stephanie married Richard Walter in 1994, when she was 22 and he was 21. He is an insurance broker and she is a recruitment consultant.

I was the one who proposed to Richard, but when I said 'Let's get married', he told me to wait until I was asked. Six weeks later he proposed on one knee.

We dropped the promise in the marriage vows that I had to obey Richard; it's only a word but it's not a modern word and it's just not us. However, it never crossed my mind not to change my name; if you're not prepared to do that, why bother to get married?

We opened a joint account and now we each pay in half our wages, while the other half's our own, to do with as we wish. Housework was a novelty to start with, so I did everything - and Richard let me. It was my own fault but it really annoyed me in the end. We had a few barneys and now he does his fair share of most things.

They say it's the first year of marriage that is the hardest and I'd go along with that; it's difficult just learning to live together. But we argue a great deal less now; we've both mellowed. Eventually we'd like to have children, but not yet. Richard said he wanted them by the time he was 30, but now he's upped that to 35. It will depend on how my career is going. That's fairly important to me.

Why I Won't Walk Down That Aisle

Trends

As new figures show that Generation Y is putting off marriage, Rachel Hirons explains why - despite a £5,000 bribe - she won't be saying "I do".

In my defence, my mother takes every opportunity to criticise what I do, what I wear (apparently I have "a lovely figure but no one would know underneath the rags"), what I eat (according to her, "not enough"), how often I go out... It's endless.

So recently, when I was walking with my mother past a "wedding special" bus and she said: "They'll be doing it in spaceships by the time it's your turn", and I completely ignored her, I wasn't too pleased that my marital status had now been added to that list of things for her to change.

I didn't even think of this exchange again until two weeks later when my father called me up (this never happens) and said: "I have put £5,000 aside for when you get married." In hindsight, I should have said "thank you" or something else that shows gratitude. Instead I said: "Why? I don't want to get married."

It seems I'm not alone. According to the Office for National Statistics, marriage rates in Britain are at an all-time low, and recent research by the Future Foundation for the Cooperative group also shows my generation is putting off walking down the aisle.

Compared with nearly a third of couples over 60, just one in seven aged 26 to 30 had met their other half before hitting their twenties.

Now, I'm not ungrateful for my parents' generosity. I was not raised to expect anything from anyone. My parents didn't contribute to my university fees or student rent, the deposit for a house I want to start saving for, and while I, like everyone, could have used some help, I knew they couldn't afford it: "Can I not have the £5,000 as a contribution towards a house deposit instead?" I asked my father when he called. His reply was only concerned with one thing: "Why don't you want to get married?"

Ah. You see, up to this point my reasons were also unclear and unthought out. This would not do for my Catholic father, so I replied, "I don't know" and moved on.

After this phone call, I began to analyse why marriage had never registered highly on my list of priorities. If truth be told, I hadn't ever given it more than a minute's thought. Not even when I attended weddings of family or friends.

Don't get me wrong - I've had a fine time eating cake and throwing small bits of paper over newlyweds but I never quite saw the point.

Of course, I've had the fantasy of one day marrying that elusive one who can somehow tolerate my yo-yo moods and inability to dye my hair without

dying upholstery, while at the same time making me laugh hysterically. Although this makes for a great fairy tale, it doesn't seem so appealing in reality.

This notion of "for ever" doesn't seem either attainable or necessary in our lives any more. Today we are all about convenience. If something isn't working, we stop using it. If our phone breaks, we get a new one. We don't seem to have the time or inclination to "keep trying to make something work" if it isn't. And our view of relationships has become much the same. As one of my friends pointed out: "Why have one partner when you can have as many as you like?"

Marriage is fundamentally based on religious beliefs. My Catholic grandparents married because they believed they should in order to have sex, procreate and become one in the eyes of the Lord. Many of us don't feel the need to establish our relationships in terms of legal documentation any more, or "through the eyes of a Lord" that we don't believe in.

Divorce has become normalised and we have been taught that nothing lasts for ever. While my parents divorced when I was only a few months old, my dad went on to marry soon after and has remained so, while my mum has had two marriages and several long-term relationships without finding "the one". Merely "the one for now".

Of course, I don't speak for everyone. Some of my friends are married, some of them even happily, and I certainly believe marriage is something we should all be entitled to, should we be so inclined.

Yet despite the fact that I have a fantastic partner who I really do hope to spend as much time with as I'm able, there isn't a bone in my body that has the urge to dress up and make promises to him in front of everyone we know.

When a friend of mine in her late twenties recently mentioned that her parents were still together after decades of marriage, there was shock and surprise around our pub table. "You just don't hear of it these days, do you?" replied one.

But who knows, maybe I will still be with my partner in 30 years. Maybe I won't. Is marriage really going to change that? Would I tolerate less without a ring on my finger?

Wouldn't I try as hard if I didn't share his last name? I'd like to think not. Maybe I'll change my mind one day. In the meantime, I asked my father: "And if I don't get married?" "Well, you're not having the money, then."

Casual Cohabiting. Clever or Crazy?

Think hard before you move in with the man of the moment. It could seriously damage your future.

It can happen before you know it. One minute you're complaining about having to go to work in last night's clothes, the next you're a fully-fledged

couple, washing his socks and discussing microwave meals in Sainsbury's on Saturday.

One in four couples now live together. It's increasingly common to start sharing a home not because you're deeply in love, but because you spent the rent money on a holiday in Goa or you resent the taxi fares from his place to yours. Then, before either of you know it, you've spent years on a relationship that, without four walls around it, wouldn't last a summer.

Casual cohabiting is to a real relationship what a baggy old cardigan is to a designer suit. Comfy convenience is all very well, but unless you think about the long haul (what you really want from the relationship), you could be setting yourself up for problems you never dreamed of.

Caring and sharing?

Anne, 29, rolls her eyes at the memory of her casual cohabiting days. "I'd only been going out with Jamie for a month," she says. "The lease on his flat was running out. He hinted he wanted to move in with me - whinging about the cost of renting. I'd never lived with anyone and I thought it might be grown up to have a live-in boyfriend. So he moved in — for a while. But the minute he arrived — complete with his awful furniture - he simply stopped looking for his own place." Before she knew it, Anne was moaning about the washing up to a man she didn't like very much, let alone love. Not only did Jamie come with a van-load of Seventies cane furniture, he came with a social circle that Anne had previously been able to ignore the worst aspects of. "At first it was OK," she admits. "But he didn't pay any rent, he lounged about all day and he invited his revolting friends round to watch TV and make a mess. I started to resent him more and more. It sucked any romance out of our relationship."

Janine's experience was equally bad. "I jumped into living with my boyfriend after three months and I regretted it at once," she says. "One minute we were going on dates - with me spending hours getting ready, feeling incredibly excited, and him arriving on my doorstep with a huge bunch of flowers - the next minute we were slumped in front of the TV eating M&S curries. I feel we missed out on all the wonderful, fizzy feelings when you first get to know each other and are on your best behaviour. What's the point of getting all dolled up to go out together when he's seen you slopping about all day with greasy hair?"

Rose-tinted no more.

Without the sheen of romance to smooth over the getting-to-know-you period of any new relationship, little things can so easily begin to grate when you're casually cohabiting. Like the way he eats. The way he leaves the fridge door slightly ajar. His oh-so-intrusive breathing.

Psychologist Susan Quilliam explains, "All relationships start off romantically, but around two years in they go through a stage where you lose the

rose-tinted spectacles and start to see each other's flaws more clearly. By moving in together too soon you can shorten the romantic period, which is a shame."

The disadvantages of casual cohabiting go way beyond just wanting to scream every time he slurps his tea. A live-in relationship makes you seem different to the whole world. To you, he may be just this man who happens to be staying in your house. To everyone else he is practically your husband. This can make you feel very mature and sophisticated — not to mention cutting the gas bill in half. But it can also make it darned tricky when the real Mr Right gallops into your life.

Let's go back to Anne. "I went on a business trip and I met Alex. We clicked straight away," she says. "But it was very awkward. I told him, 'I'd really go for you if I wasn't living with someone.' But I didn't have the heart to do anything about it. When you live with someone it's not as simple as just saying, 'Let's finish it.' Jamie didn't have anywhere else to live." When told this story, Katie squeals with recognition. "When I lived with John, I knew it wouldn't last," she says. "But whenever I met a man who I was vaguely interested in, I couldn't give him my home phone number because of John. It always felt so furtive. It was like a hideous trap."

Casual cohabitation can be part of one partner's I-wanna-commitment strategy. Lisa moved in with her boyfriend Gary after two years. "I was fed up with renting a shared flat and secretly thought it would be more adult and sophisticated to be part of a 'real' couple. I begged Gary to let me move in so I could save up to buy my own place. He agreed reluctantly as he's very fussy about his flat and although we were having a great time, we'd never talked about the future. I loved living with him. I'd cook for us, we'd snuggle up to watch TV, I painted his balcony. It was so cosy.

"He didn't feel the same way: he felt trapped by all this intimacy. After four months, he asked how my savings account was doing and offered to come and view places with me. I burst into tears because I felt so rejected. I said if he didn't want to live with me, we didn't have a future. He accused me of being manipulative, and we had a huge row. I moved out a week later. I still regret the whole thing, and suspect if I hadn't forced the pace by moving in, we could have been together now, quite possibly living in a place we'd bought together. I should have gone to my mum's to save up instead of playing house."

Talking it through.

Susan Quilliam says, "Living together must be what you both want, not something one partner feels pressured into. Also you must talk through what you expect from the relationship, and what you mean by moving in together. If one thinks it's leading to marriage, while the other believes it's just a convenient solution to a problem, that's when things go wrong." As for Anne, she finally

dispatched Jamie and she's now married to Alex. "After Jamie, I was determined I wouldn't live with a man until I knew it was serious."

Breaking the mould.

Helen, 34, takes an even stronger view. "I drifted into living with boyfriends when I was in my early 20s. It was always a mess.

I remember one man who I invited to come and share with me and my flatmate. He had horrible personal habits and sex went out of the window. I didn't feel like we were a couple, but his mother was on the phone the whole time saying, 'Make sure he has a good meal.' One day I woke up and thought, 'That's it. The next time I live with someone I'm going to have a ring on my finger.' And I stuck to it. I'm not saying marriage is the perfect solution for everyone, but it's a lot more romantic than letting someone drift into your life." "Don't move in together unless you want to move the relationship on a stage," says Susan Quilliam. "You should feel you are running towards something, not away from a problem - whether it's loneliness, a financial crisis or the unreliability of the night bus. If you just drift into it, you won't have the emotional stamina to keep the relationship going - it's like not having enough fuel for the car."

Psychologist Dorothy Rowe warns, "Relationships entered into purely for convenience won't work. Two people living together need to have a huge amount of tolerance; even people who are madly in love can find cohabitation is dreadful.

I wouldn't recommend it unless it's thought through very carefully." But even the most casual cohabitation can be turned around. Alannah started casually cohabiting with David, in his flat, after college. Six years later she wanted to marry him, but David wasn't ready. So Alannah moved out, rented a flat, went on holiday and had a fabulous time. Suddenly alone, David felt lonely. The relationship he'd taken for granted, the one that started so casually, suddenly seemed important. The other day Alannah called me, hysterical with delight. David had proposed - and this time they're going to live in a house they've bought together.

Are You a Married Single?

In the post-feminist "I can have it all and handle it all" noughties, dependence has become a dirty word. But, says Anna Moore, a spot of good old-fashioned neediness may be just what you, erm, need for a happier relationship.

Helen and Jim, both 30, have a thoroughly modern marriage. For a start, they hardly see each other Jim is a doctor who works 12-hour shifts; Helen runs a catering business and spends her Saturday nights at weddings, her Sunday

mornings at christenings and two or three evenings during the week at business functions. “We tried to keep track of each other at first (they’ve been married for two years), but it became impossible,” she says. “Now when I walk through our front door, I never know whether or not Jim’ll be at home.”

They both still keep separate bank accounts: “Jim pays the mortgage and most of the bills; I pay for food, holidays, domestic treats such as new curtains, and my own day-to-day expenses. I’ve no idea what else Jim does with his money. He once casually mentioned he had £14,000 of debt on his credit card. He doesn’t know how much I make year on year and we’ve never had a proper discussion about our pension provision.”

On the rare occasions when they’ve got time for it, the pair also socialise separately. Jim’s friends are his fellow ex-medical students and his colleagues; Helen’s are her old university crowd. Does she ever wonder why they bothered getting married? She looks blank. “We married because we fell in love and wanted to be together,” she says, seemingly unaware of the irony. Welcome to the curious living-together-apart world of the new married single. Sound familiar?

The new Mr & Mrs.

You’ve exchanged vows, slipped on rings and cut the cake and yet you bear little resemblance to the conventional image of Mr and Mrs. You plough on with your career plans, hardly bothering to consult when a long-awaited dream promotion sentences one of you to even more hours apart.

And, like Helen and Jim, you believe that what’s yours should stay yours - even after you’ve said those “I do”s. According to Lloyds TSB, the number of women setting up their own accounts has risen by more than a million in the last five years. Now, the bank has 19% more female current accounts than joint accounts and 21% more female savings accounts than joint savings accounts.

And some married singles are even choosing to live apart. The market in “second homes” is booming, according to a 2005 study by Direct Line Home Insurance and the Centre for Future Studies - 19% of them are city pads where one working spouse is based during the week. Central London has the largest concentration of second homes, while Bradford, Leeds and Glasgow are also on the up. Why is this happening - and does it matter?

“Yes, it *absolutely* matters,” says Mira Kirshenbaum, therapist and author of *The Weekend Marriage: Everything Harried Marrieds Need To Know About Love And Romance* (Three River Press, £7.44). “A number of powerful forces are at work, pushing married people into leading separate lives,” she explains. Couples are marrying later: the average knot-tying age is now 29 for women and 31 for men, compared to 23 and 26 respectively 40 years ago. And when you’ve spent your twenties forging a career, making friends, buying your own home, it becomes a lot harder to surrender that independence.

Defensive measures.

“With most couples, both partners work, so, automatically, they have a lot less time for each other,” says Kirshenbaum. “Then add the threat of divorce...” She points out that with divorce in the UK currently at its highest level in eight years - the Office for National Statistics saw the fourth successive annual increase in 2004 - couples are, whether they know it or not, taking pre-emptive action. “Knowing there’s a very high risk of divorce leads people to take defensive measures, both emotional and financial, so they can protect themselves against getting hurt,” she says. “This includes working hard to preserve a separate identity in terms of friends, finances and work, so that if divorce does occur, it won’t lead to a loss of identity. Tragically, all this built-in distancing seriously increases the risk of relationship breakdown.”

“Dependence has become a dirty word,” agrees psychologist Dr Janet Reibstein. To be “dependent” on anything - alcohol, drugs, another person - just isn’t part of the “mature ideal”. But what do we mean when we depend on someone? It means that we rely on someone, that we have some kind of security, someone we in share with. These aren’t bad concepts.”

Relationship glue.

In her book, *The Best Kept Secret* (Bloomsbury, £12.99), Dr Reibstein interviewed couples who have been together for a long time and discovered that there has to be “a converging script” - a shared experience of life observed through the same eyes - for a relationship to thrive. “There has to be a meeting point and a “jointness” over important aspects of life, otherwise resentments build up and the need for intimacy is taken elsewhere,” she says. Without these “meeting points”, a couple could find that there’s barely anything holding them together. “We need a minimum amount of glue to keep a relationship going, because even the happiest partnerships go through rough patches,” she continues.

“When friends, social lives, financial arrangements, mealtimes and bedtimes are separate, the cost of breaking up can be almost zero. Unless you go to bed or get up together, share a meal every couple of days, have a map for how your career goals will support each other and have shared social lives, you’re just room-mates who sleep together from time to time. And sometimes not even that. Relate counsellor Paula Hall says a lack of sex is often the first sign of drifting: “The point at which couples come for help is often when their sex life is suffering,” she says.

Anthony, 42, is a successful restaurateur whose wife is a dynamic PR. “On paper, Jenny is everything wanted,” he says. “Gorgeous, intelligent, vivacious and strong- minded.” But after only three years of marriage, Anthony admits that, privately, he yearns for a wife who is a little more old-fashioned in her ways - someone who feels she can turn to him for comfort, help and support. “There’s a joke in our house that I come a very poor sixth to our son, two dogs

and the chickens,” he says grimly. “I work exceedingly long hours, while Jenny works at home and has everything under control. I sometimes feel that if I didn’t bother coming home at all, it would take her a week to notice, and perhaps another week to get over it”

The good news is that there is a way back. “People seem to think they only have a choice between independence and dependence,” says Hall. “As therapists, however, we like to encourage the idea of interdependence: in other words, you depend on each other, but in a way that feels rewardingly mutual.”

According to Reibstein, once you’ve both accepted the concept of “jointness”, “you need to discuss what to change. This requires compromise and negotiation and it’s not always a comfortable process,” she says. “It’s critical that you work out exactly what in the relationship will be shared. Different couples have different ideas about what’s important - the critical thing is that you agree. If you find it impossible to reach a consensus, the relationship probably won’t last.’

The first steps can be teensy: “Introduce change gradually,” says Hall. “It could start with deciding to share a bedroom again, after drifting into separate rooms.”

Happy ever after.

Gail, formerly a teacher and now a full-time mum, has recently made the transition from independent to interdependent “When we first met, I was earning more than Adam,” she says. “I had a strong bunch of friends and, for the first five years of our marriage, we led very separate lives.” But by the time their second child was born, Gail had given up her job, her social life was curtailed and she and Adam had opened a joint bank account ‘At first, there were loads of rows,” she admits. “I really struggled with the lack of freedom - and hated not having money of “my own”. But I started to see the sacrifices Adam was making, too. We were working as a team, because we loved each other and wanted a certain set-up for the children. I realised it wasn’t relevant to talk about “my” money and “his” money; it was “our” money. Now I know I need Adam and he needs me. He’s a soulmate.” She pauses and then adds, laughing, “It just took me five years and two children to realise that.”

This need to be needed and to need someone else is a natural human state and a happy ending. The first thing we have to do is embrace it, says Dr Reibstein. “As human beings, we have an innate need to be interdependent. As a matter of fact, you’re at your most vulnerable when you deny that hunger - if you do, one way or another, you’ll always be alone.”

You know you’re a married single when...

- It’s midnight on Thursday, you’re tucked up in bed and you have no clue where your husband is. Instead of calling him, you switch off the light and fall asleep.

- Something big's afoot – you've just scored tickets to the hottest movie premiere in town. Who do you call - your best friend or your man? Think about that for longer than a second and you're less together than you think.

- You wouldn't dream of doing his washing. You once picked up one of his socks, left lying by the laundry basket - then let it drop. That way madness lies.

- You've been sharing a landline for at least five and a half years, yet his mates and yours only ever call you on your respective mobiles.

- You can't remember the last time you asked him: "How was your day?" - and really listened to his answer.

Go on, give yourself permission to need him.

1. "Tell your partner what's bothering you," says therapist Mira Kirshenbaum. "Highlight the areas where you feel you've become too separate, without blaming him. At least twice a week share what's on your mind."

2. Make sure things are balanced and fair in your life together. Periodically check the loads you are carrying. Sitting down every month and calmly discussing them over a glass of wine works wonders. Having an equal arrangement where you rely on each other - but in separate areas - will make you genuinely and joyfully interdependent.

3. Discuss your vision of the future regularly, so that you can be confident you're travelling towards it together - and can help one another, if necessary. If your vision changes, talk about it.

4. Have one real connection a day, no matter what. This could be a lingering kiss, a hug or simply a conversation in which you ask, "How are you feeling?" and listen to each other.

5. Spend time together. Whenever possible, eat, wash the dishes, fall asleep together. Also, schedule time just to be with each other, relaxing and enjoying each other's presence.

HOME UPBRINGING

How Big-Hearted Babies Turn Into Selfish Monsters

*Our natural instinct for **altruism** is being destroyed by the demands of modern life, says a new book.*

The Observer, Sunday 4 May 2014

If you've been planning a shopping trip with the kids for bank holiday Monday, you might not want to read any further, because teaching your children consumerism is helping to turn them into selfish, immoral creatures without a **streak** of empathy, according to a new study. You may be making them just like stressed-out adults, whose potential as human beings is killed off as genuine altruism is suffocated by their greed and anxiety.

In a new book which suggests that social changes and the shift towards an ever more unequal society are making us cold-hearted and mean, psychotherapist Graham Music says we're more likely to be born big-hearted and kind but then pushed towards being selfish and cold than the other way around.

"We're losing empathy and compassion in dealing with other people in our society," said Music, a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist at the Tavistock and Portman clinics in London. "There is a lot of evidence that the speed of life and the resultant anxiety have an enormous impact on how we deal with other people. We all know it anecdotally. You live in a **dog-eat-dog** world and it makes sense to be highly stressed and **vigilant** to cope with it. From that stress come some really fundamental shifts in behaviour, along with pretty poor outcomes in everything from health to life expectancy and happiness."

A study last year by Michigan University showed that adolescents exposed to the cruelties of reality television – where nasty spats along with vicious judgments of others is the entertainment – made them even more socially aggressive. Music says the casual meanness on shows like X Factor and Britain's Got Talent is an example of how cold-hearted we are becoming.

In his new book, to be published at the end of the month, called *The Good Life: Wellbeing and the New Science of Altruism, Selfishness and Immorality*, Music disputes the notion that children are born selfish. He points to a series of experiments at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, when a group of 15-month-olds were placed in a room where an adult pretended to need help.

"There is a proven urge to help. The toddlers love helping, they get an intrinsic reward just from the act, until they start to reward them for that behaviour with a toy. The group of toddlers rewarded 'extrinsically' – that is,

with a toy – quickly lost interest in helping. The unrewarded children – who don't know the other group are getting rewards – keep on helping, content with no other reason than the act of helping."

Other studies have shown that toddlers feel happier giving treats than receiving them, says Music. "Then we have evidence that adolescents asked to do a good deed once a day become less depressed. We've evolved to be helpful and to do things without reward. Rewards don't make

The book details several social experiments, including one from 1973, when theology students were told they had to give a talk about the **parable** of the Good Samaritan. Half were told to do it immediately; the rest were given time to prepare. As they left the room, they passed an actor who was in some trouble. Those who had to prepare quickly ignored him, while the others stopped to help.

"The speed of life has an impact on our altruism," said Music. "This is going on in schools as well. Stress is **seeping** into our schools with this heavily academically-based curriculum, an audit culture. I'm really worried about that from the children I see in my clinics."

Music says there is a desperate need to rethink our materialistic tendencies. "A very monetised western world is going to make us more and more lose touch with our social obligations," he said.

Maybe it's not too late to rethink that shopping trip.

[http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/04/
how-babies-turn-into-selfish-monsters](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/04/how-babies-turn-into-selfish-monsters)

altruism *BrE* / ˈæltruɪzəm /, noun

[**uncountable**] (*formal*)

the fact of caring about the needs and happiness of other people more than your own

Politicians are not necessarily motivated by pure altruism.

streak *BrE* / stri:k /, noun

2 a part of a person's character, especially an unpleasant part

a ruthless/vicious/mean streak

a streak of cruelty

(a case of) dog eat dog

a situation in business, politics, etc. where there is a lot of competition and people are willing to harm each other in order to succeed

I'm afraid in this line of work it's a case of dog eat dog.

We're operating in a dog-eat-dog world.

vigilant BrE / 'vɪdʒɪlənt /, adj
(*formal*)

very careful to notice any signs of danger or trouble

alert , watchful

A pilot must remain vigilant at all times.

The thief was spotted by vigilant neighbours.

parable BrE / 'pærəbl /, noun

a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson, especially one of those told by Jesus as recorded in the Bible

seep BrE / si:p /, verb

(especially of liquids) to flow slowly and in small quantities through sth or into sth

Blood was beginning to seep through the bandages.

Water seeped from a crack in the pipe.

(*figurative*) *Gradually the pain seeped away.*

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Sibling Rivalry

Nine-year-old Tom and five-year-old Camilla can fight like cat and dog. Never mind that their father is an eminent child psychologist. "Sibling rivalry" - as the professionals smoothly term these quarrels - is as old as the Bible and affects most families.

During half term, Britain will resound with maternal cries of "stop fighting" and childish rejoinders of "he hit me first". Now that the quick smack is increasingly out of fashion, especially since the recent Scottish Law Commission's recommendations that hitting a child violently should be made illegal, how should a parent retain their sanity?

"Break the rules," says Charlie Lewis (lecturer in Psychology at Lancaster University and father of Tom and Camilla). "Bribery is not only acceptable, but essential. Offer them chocolate or a trip to the park if they stop quarrelling."

Sending a child to a grandparent's or friend's house can also help, says Dr Lewis, who battled with his four brothers in an 18-year-long fight. "If you can't do this, avoid pressure building up during the day by organising an outing during the later afternoon or early evening. A walk can ease tension and calm you down for the forthcoming bath and bed battles."

If warfare has already broken out, Dr Lewis will threaten the aggressor with “severe trouble” if the fighting escalates. If that does not work, punishments range from sending children to separate rooms and (for gross misdemeanours) a withdrawal of treats. In the heat of the moment, it is easy to be rash. Dr Lewis recently forbade Tom from playing in a long-awaited football game but relented without losing face by making him tidy up his room as an alternative correction.

Sarcasm, adds Dr Lewis, is a handy retort for the common childish accusation that “you love her better because you never tell her off. If he replies “yes, that’s right,” in a joking way, it takes the power away from Tom’s statement because his son can see his father is not taking him seriously. Ask yourself too if there’s a grain of truth in the complaint,” says Tim Kahn, father of two and co-ordinator of Parent Network, an advisory organisation. “Pay some attention to the aggressor and find out why he’s behaving badly.”

This is precisely the stage 1 when one feels like smacking. So what does the organisation End Physical Punishment of Children advise? The best method is diversion, says Peter Newell, the organisation’s co-ordinator and father of Finn, aged two, Joe, five, and Matthew, six. “If the two-year-old has the five-year-old’s construction bricks, I produce something which the younger one is equally interested in.”

“And how about multi-age activities like cooking? That’s something you can get all the children involved in. Introduce laughter - arguments often start because a parent is tired. It’s easy for that mood of desperation to affect them. When I come home at night, I stand on the doorstep for a few moments to ask myself what kind of mood I am in and to jolly myself up.”

Analysing your own reactions is wise according to Dr Penny Munn, a psychologist at Strathclyde University; who (with Dr Judy Dunn) studied 43 toddlers and their siblings at play. “Mothers who reprimanded children by talking about feelings (“He didn’t mean to hurt you”) had more effect than those who simply said “Don’t do that”, Dr Munn says. She confesses to being “speechless with admiration” at other techniques displayed by mothers who would “nip in with drinks or other diversions when the atmosphere got tricky”. Persuading your children to sort out their own fracas is a technique learned by Jan and Peter Breed through a counselling course run by Parent Network. “If they’re arguing over a toy, get them to tell you their side of the story,” advises Mrs Breed, whose offspring (Rhiannon, aged seven, Cerys, five and Joel, two) are constantly at each other’s throats. (The baby - 12 week old Sadie - is as yet too young to join in.) “Then say: “This is the situation. You want it and he wants it so what are you going to do about it. They usually come up with a solution such as taking it in turns.”

If all else fails, tell yourself that sibling arguments can be positive. So says Dr Lynn Beardsall, a psychologist at Sunderland University who sat in on 20 six-year-olds with their older brothers or sisters aged between seven and 12

when writing her thesis on conflicts between siblings. “Younger children who had had physical fights with older brothers or sisters were best at identifying how people feel. We tested them by playing audio tapes of adults discussing their own problems. These children were more sensitive at identifying with the dilemma than others.” The study also revealed that out of the younger children, those who were most often the victim were better peace keepers partly because they had learnt sharing and negotiation strategies.

Gender, too, made a difference. Boys tended to be more physically aggressive, whereas girls favoured the sneaky pinch. There was also proof that some fighters are best left alone. “One third of the children reached a mutually acceptable solution over an argument without parental interference,” Dr Beardsall says. “I watched some very nasty punch-ups which mothers ignored before the children sorted it out themselves.”

Family Matters

My Daughter.

James Mitford: My wife and I only had the one child. It might have been nice to have a son, but we didn't plan a family, we just had Amy.

I see her as my best friend. I think she'd always come to me first if she had a problem. We have the same sense of humour, and share interests. I don't mind animals, but she's completely obsessed with them, and she has always had dogs, cats, horses, and goldfish in her life.

We were closest when she was about four, which I think is a lovely age for a child. They know the parents best, and don't have the outside contacts. She must have grown up suddenly when she went to school, because I remember her growing away from her family slightly. Any father who has a teenager daughter comes across an extraordinary collection of people, and there seemed to be an endless stream of strange young men coming through our house. By the time I'd learned their names they'd gone away and I had to start learning a new lot. I remember I told her off once in front of her friends and she didn't talk to me for days afterwards.

I wanted more than anything else for her to be happy in what she was doing, and I was prepared to pull strings to help her on her way. She went to a good school, but that didn't work out. She must have upset somebody. When she left she decided she wanted to become an actress so I got her into drama school. It wasn't to her liking so she joined a theatre group and began doing bits and pieces in films. She was doing well, but then gave it up. She probably found it boring. Then she took up social work, and finally went to work for a designer and he became her husband. And that's really the story of her life. She must be happy with him — they're always together.

We have the same tastes in books and music, but it takes me a while to get used to new pop songs. I used to take her to see the opera, which is my big passion, but I don't think she likes it very much, she doesn't come with me any more.

I don't think she's a big television watcher. She knows when I'm on, and she might watch, but I don't know. It's not the kind of thing she tells me.

We're very grateful for Amy. She's a good daughter as daughters go. We're looking forward to being grandparents. I'm sure she'll have a son.

My Father.

Amy Mitford: I don't really know my father. He isn't easy to get on with. He's quite self-centred, and a little bit vain, I think, and in some ways quite unapproachable. The public must think he's very easy-going, but at home he keeps himself to himself.

He can't have been at home much when I was a child, because I don't remember much about him. He's always been slightly out of touch with family life. His work always came first, and he was always off somewhere acting or rehearsing. He loves being asked for his autograph, he loves to be recognized. He has won several awards, and he's very proud of that. He was given the Member of the British Empire, and we had to go to Buckingham Palace to get the medal. It was incredibly boring — there were hundreds of other people getting the same thing, and you had to sit there for hours. He shows off his awards to whoever comes to the house.

I went to public school, and because of my total lack of interest and non-attendance I was asked to leave. I didn't want to go there in the first place. I was taken away from all my friends. He must have been very pleased to get me into the school, but in the end it was a complete waste of money. I let him down quite badly, I suppose. I tried several jobs but I couldn't settle down in them. They just weren't challenging enough. Then I realized that what I really wanted to do was live in the country and look after animals, so that's what I now do.

As a family, we're not that close, either emotionally or geographically. We don't see much of each other these days. My father and I are totally different, like chalk and cheese. My interests have always been the country, but he's into books, music and above all, opera, which I hate. If they do come to see us, they're in completely the wrong clothes for the country — mink coats, nice little leather shoes, not exactly ideal for long walks across the fields.

He was totally opposed to me getting married. He was hoping we would break up. Gerald's too humble, I suppose.

He must have wanted me to marry someone famous, but I didn't, and that's all there is to it. We don't want children, but my father keeps on and on talking about wanting grandchildren. You can't make someone have children just because you want grandchildren.

I never watch him on television. I'm not that interested, and anyway he usually forgets to tell me when he's on.

When I Was a Child

Writer Maeve Binchy recalls her idyllic childhood in Ireland.

“My parents brought me up to think I was the centre of the universe. They showered me with love and attention and gave me terrific self-confidence. I was the eldest of four. There were three girls and then finally the longed-for boy arrived. We were all indulged, all special. I don't think any one of us was the favourite.

My father was a barrister and my mother had been a nurse before she married. She was a big, jolly woman, as big as I am, with a great smile that went right round her face. We never had a lot of money but we had great comfort and lived in a big, shabby old house with nearly an acre of garden looking out over the sea in Dalkey, near Dublin. We each had our own bedroom and we had a maid, Agnes, who is still a friend.

We all went to school on the train from Dalkey to Killiney to the Convent of the Holy Child. It was just three miles down the line and now I see it as the most beautiful place, but we never noticed the view when we were children.

I was a terrible goody-goody. At school I was the girl who was always approached if somebody had to write a thank-you letter to a visiting speaker or make the speech of thanks. I was an extrovert. I don't remember any time until I was 16 or 17 that I ever felt self-conscious. I thought I was marvellous because my parents made me feel that way. When I was little they would take me out of bed and bring me down to entertain their friends - to whom I now apologise.

I was a very devout little girl. I was going to be a saint, not just a nun. I intended to be the first Saint Maeve. At home we kept hens and when they died of old age we buried them and held a Requiem Mass. I was the priest, of course, and prayed for their souls and put flowers on their graves. We had an honorary grave for the tortoise once because we thought he was dead, though we couldn't find the body. He turned up again - he had only gone away for the winter.

I was a placid child, very content. I never rebelled. It sounds terribly smug, but all I wanted in life came to me. There is a lot of me in the character, Benny, in my book. *Circle of Friends* (Coronet, £4.99). I remember lovely birthday parties as a girl - jellies and cakes with hundreds-and-thousands on them and people singing *Happy Birthday*, and giving me little bars of soap all wrapped up. And like Benny, despite my size, I longed to be dressed in silly frocks in crushed velvet. I was so innocent. My mother told me the facts of life when I was about 12 and I didn't believe her. I told my father I thought Mother must be having delusions!

I was a big, bold, strapping schoolgirl but, in fact, I had nothing to be self-confident about. I wasn't very academic; I was quick-minded, but I was very lazy. My reports weren't good, which distressed my parents. In Ireland in those days you had to pay for education after the age of 14 and I remember my father saying that a good education was all he could afford to give me. Homework was considered very important and every evening the breakfast room would be set up with dictionaries and pens and paper and a big fire going. Daddy would often work with us. I always finished as quickly as possible so I could go off and read my *Girl* or *School Friend* comics.

Without any doubt, my favourite teacher at the convent was Sister St Dominic. She was a wonderful woman who made a tremendous impression on me. She saw something in every child and thought we were all great. She managed to put some sense into teaching because she always enjoyed herself so much.

Because of her I became a teacher.

At school I lived a fantasy life. I had a book called the *ABC Shipping Guide* and dreamed of travelling the world. My teachers always said of my essays, "Try to stick to the facts, Maeve," because I embroidered and exaggerated so much.

The nuns warned us a lot about lust and sex and I was a bit disappointed during my last two years at school to find there wasn't as much lust and sex going on as we'd been told. By then my friends had boyfriends and I became very self-conscious. Because I was told at home that I was lovely, I thought I was. When I went out to dances and didn't fare so well, I was bitterly disappointed. I then realised that I was big and fat and not so lovely. Nowadays I can't believe how quickly time passes, but when I was a child, the summer holidays seemed to last for ever. They were idyllic, and I put a lot of that into my books. Everything about my childhood has been useful material.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Climate Change Is Clear and Present Danger, Says Landmark US Report

National Climate Assessment, to be launched at White House on Tuesday, says effects of climate change are now being felt.

theguardian.com, Sunday 4 May 2014 15.50 BST

Climate change has moved from distant threat to present-day danger and no American will be **left unscathed**, according to a landmark report due to be unveiled on Tuesday.

The National Climate Assessment, a 1,300-page report compiled by 300 leading scientists and experts, is meant to be the definitive account of the effects of climate change on the US. It will be formally released at a White House event and is expected to drive the remaining two years of Barack Obama's environmental agenda.

The findings are expected to guide Obama as he rolls out the next and most ambitious phase of his climate change plan in June – a proposal to cut emissions from the current generation of power plants, America's largest single source of carbon pollution. The White House is believed to be organising a number of events over the coming week **to give the report greater exposure**.

"Climate change, once considered an issue for a distant future, has moved firmly into the present," a draft version of the report says. The evidence is visible everywhere from the top of the atmosphere to the bottom of the ocean, it goes on. "Americans are noticing changes all around them. Summers are longer and hotter, and periods of extreme heat last longer than any living American has ever experienced. Winters are generally shorter and warmer. Rain comes in heavier downpours, though in many regions there are longer dry spells in between."

The final wording was under review by the White House but the basic gist remained unchanged, scientists who worked on the report said.

"One major take-home message is that just about every place in the country has observed that the climate has changed," Gary Yohe, an economist at Wesleyan University and vice-chair of the NCA advisory committee, told the Guardian. "It is here and happening, and we are not cherrypicking or fearmongering."

The draft report notes that average temperature in the US has increased by about 1.5F (0.8C) since 1895, with more than 80% of that rise since 1980. The last decade was the hottest on record in the US. Temperatures are projected to

rise another 2F over the next few decades, the report says. In northern latitudes such as Alaska, temperatures are rising even faster.

"There is no question our climate is changing," said Don Wuebbles, a climate scientist at the University of Illinois and a lead author of the assessment. "It is changing at a factor of 10 times more than naturally."

Record-breaking heat – even at night – is expected to produce more drought and fuel larger and more frequent wildfires in the south-west, the report says. The north-east, midwest and Great Plains states will see an increase in heavy downpours and a greater risk of flooding. Parts of the country are getting wetter, parts are getting drier. All areas are getting hotter. The changes are not the same everywhere.

Those living on the Atlantic seaboard, Gulf of Mexico, and Alaska who have **weathered** the effects of sea level rise and storm surges can expect to see more. Residents of coastal cities, especially in Florida where there is already frequent flooding during rainstorms, can expect to see more. So can people living in inland cities sited on rivers.

Some changes are already having a measurable effect on food production and public health, the report will say. Rising temperatures increased the risk of heat stroke and heat-related deaths.

Eugene Takle, convening lead author of the agriculture chapter of the NCA report, and director of the Climate Science programme at Iowa State University, said heatwaves and changes in rainfall had resulted in a **levelling off** in wheat and corn production and would eventually cause declines. In California, warmer winters have made it difficult to grow cherries.

Some of the effects on agriculture, such as a longer growing season, are positive. But Takle said: "By mid-century and beyond the overall impacts will be increasingly negative on most crops and livestock."

This year's report for the first time looks at what America has done to fight climate change or protect people from its consequences in the future. Under an act of Congress the reports were supposed to be produced every four years, but no report was produced during George W Bush's presidency.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/04/climate-change-present-us-national-assessment>

unscathed *BrE* / ʌn'skeɪd /, adj

[**not before noun**]

not hurt

unharmed

The hostages emerged from their ordeal unscathed.

exposure *BrE* / ɪk'spəʊʒə(r) /, noun

on TV/in newspapers, etc.

[**uncountable**] the fact of being discussed or mentioned on television, in newspapers, etc.

publicity

Her new movie has had a lot of exposure in the media.

weather BrE / 'weðə(r) / , verb

[**transitive**] ~ **sth** to come safely through a difficult period or experience

The company just managed to weather the recession.

*She refuses to resign, intending to **weather the storm** (= wait until the situation improves again) .*

level BrE / 'levl / , verb

level off/out

1 to stop rising or falling and remain horizontal

The plane levelled off at 1 500 feet.

After the long hill, the road levelled out.

2 to stay at a steady level of development or progress after a period of sharp rises or falls

Sales have levelled off after a period of rapid growth.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Businesses Need to Look After Their Water Supplies – or We All Perish

As climate change exacerbates world water shortages, companies realise they must **exercise stewardship** to survive.

The world's leading authority on climate change science, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has issued in recent weeks its strongest warnings yet on just how serious a test climate change presents to us all. While intergovernmental agreement on how best to respond has been slow, many businesses have been **compelled** to tackle climate challenges.

This corporate action comes in direct response to the growing evidence that rising temperatures, coupled with other **drivers**, are putting our natural resources at risk. The price tag for these risks is already high: severe flooding in the UK earlier this year cost small businesses £830m and counting.

With water, the irreplaceable lifeblood of our economy, these risks are already happening. Back-to-back hurricanes in the US in 2008 had an impact on the operations of Baker Hughes, the world's third largest oilfield services provider, resulting in an estimated £46.4m loss in **revenue**. There are political and social risks, too: Newmont Mining's £2.9bn gold and copper mine in Peru continues to face an uncertain future because opponents **allege** that it will

threaten local water supplies. Risks aren't confined to borders either: studies suggest that Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in 2013, could indirectly affect 21% of US production through supply chain issues.

Water, and its **diminishing** availability in a world expected to grow by another billion people over the next decade, also has the potential to spark conflict in certain regions. Couple this with growing **competition** between industries such as energy and agriculture, and you have a complex cocktail of challenges that governments alone cannot solve.

Importantly, some companies are already improving their ability to identify water-related risks. But there are others making the key move towards comprehensive water stewardship strategies that safeguard valuable water resources.

While there is no globally agreed view of **best practice** for corporate water stewardship, industry leaders are nevertheless attempting to commit to this new thinking in practice by looking beyond water usage in their direct operations and seeking opportunities for collaborative action. The world's largest listed companies are reporting their water impacts and strategies to investors through CDP's water programme, which is designed to help put businesses on the path to water stewardship.

Nestlé in North America spends nearly £5m a year to maintain and protect the quality of its **spring sources** and immediate **watershed** areas (the region that drains into a body of water like rivers or lakes). It also runs water resource field assessments to see how its operations might have an impact on a community's right to water and the long-term availability of water resources, in turn helping it achieve long term security in its own water supplies. In 2012, H&M entered into a three-year partnership with WWF to implement a water stewardship strategy that considers the impacts that 750 of its direct suppliers have on water, helping it to map water risks across its supply chain, demonstrating that these risks exist at every level of its business operations.

There are economic **incentives** for companies, too. A report released last year by CDP and Eurizon Capital shows that in the metals and mining sector, businesses using CDP to manage water strategically performed better financially.

While a leading few are beginning to understand the strategic value of water and the benefits offered by a water stewardship approach, there are still too many who are failing to take a broader view of their water-related risks. And for the companies attempting to deal with the complexity of water challenges, there is a **steep learning curve** that they cannot necessarily overcome alone.

Our timeframe to tackle these issues is quickly closing as climate change continues to **exacerbate water risks**. Companies that are not yet taking action towards water stewardship or the **mitigation** of climate change need to act fast and can begin to measure and manage progress through CDP.

On the world stage, we are fast approaching the UN climate change conference in Paris 2015, with the objective of negotiating a new global deal. Industries and investors are expecting governments to rise to the challenge and secure a regulatory **framework** that values both our economy and our environment. As Rajendra Pachauri, the IPCC's chairman, noted this April: "The high speed mitigation train would need to leave the station very soon and all of global society would have to get on board." Businesses are demonstrating their willingness to join this ride. Will governments follow?

• *CDP is an international, not-for-profit organisation that enables companies and cities to share environmental information. He is a member of the World Economic Forum's global agenda council on measuring sustainability, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change high level clean development mechanism panel.*

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2014/may/02/climate-change-businesses-water-supplies>

steward ship BrE / 'stju;ədʃɪp /, noun

[**uncountable**] (*formal*)

the act of taking care of or managing sth, for example property, an organization, money or valuable objects

The organization certainly prospered under his stewardship.

compel BrE / kəm'pel /, verb

(**-ll-**) (*formal*)

1 to force sb to do sth; to make sth necessary

~ **sb to do sth** *The law can compel fathers to make regular payments for their children.*

I feel compelled to write and tell you how much I enjoyed your book.

driver BrE / 'draɪvə(r) /, noun

one of the main things that influence sth or cause it to make progress

Housing is a key driver of the economy.

Young people are widely perceived as the big pop industry drivers.

revenue BrE / 'revənju: /, noun

[**uncountable**] (*also* **revenues** [**plural**])

the money that a government receives from taxes or that an organization, etc. receives from its business

a shortfall in tax revenue

Advertising revenue finances the commercial television channels.

The company's annual revenues rose by 30%.

allege BrE / əˈledʒ / , verb

[**often passive**] (*formal*)

to state sth as a fact but without giving proof

~ **(that)**... *The prosecution alleges (that) she was driving carelessly.*

it is alleged (that)... *It is alleged that he mistreated the prisoners.*

diminish BrE / dɪˈmɪnɪʃ / , verb

[**intransitive** , **transitive**] ~ **(sth)** to become or to make sth become smaller, weaker, etc.

decrease

The world's resources are rapidly diminishing.

His influence has diminished with time.

*Our efforts were producing **diminishing returns** (= we achieved less although we spent more time or money) .*

competition BrE / ˈkɒmpəˈtɪʃn /

[**uncountable**] ~ **(between/with sb) (for sth)** a situation in which people or organizations compete with each other for sth that not everyone can have

There is now intense competition between schools to attract students.

*We are **in competition with** four other companies for the contract.*

*We won the contract in the face of **stiff competition** .*

best practice

[**uncountable** , **countable**]

a way of doing sth that is seen as a very good example of how it should be done and can be copied by other companies or organizations

*These schools have been specially chosen to **spread best practice** in the region.*

The aim of this report is to promote best practice among smaller companies.

watershed BrE / ˈwɔːtʃəd / , noun

[**countable**] a line of high land where streams on one side flow into one river, and streams on the other side flow into a different river

incentive BrE / ɪnˈsentɪv / , noun

[**countable** , **uncountable**] ~ **(for/to sb/sth) (to do sth)**

something that encourages you to do sth

There is no incentive for people to save fuel.

There is an added incentive for you to buy from our catalogue—a free gift with every purchase.

exacerbate BrE / ɪɡˈzæsəbeɪt /, verb

~ sth (formal)

to make sth worse, especially a disease or problem

aggravate

His aggressive reaction only exacerbated the situation.

The symptoms may be exacerbated by certain drugs.

learning curve

the rate at which you learn a new subject or a new skill; the process of learning from the mistakes you make

We have all been through a steep learning curve to master the new procedures.

We expect a learning curve as we develop the project.

mitigation BrE / ˈmɪtɪˈɡeɪʃn /

[uncountable] (formal)

a reduction in how unpleasant, serious, etc. sth is

framework BrE / ˈfreɪmwɜ:k /

the structure of a particular system

We need to establish a legal framework for the protection of the environment.

the basic framework of society

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

China Says More Than Half Of Its Groundwater Is Polluted

Number of groundwater sites of poor or extremely poor quality increases to 59.6%, Chinese government says.

theguardian.com, Wednesday 23 April 2014 12.21 BST

Nearly 60% of China's underground water is polluted, state media has reported, underscoring the severity of the country's environmental woes. The country's land and resources ministry found that among 4,778 testing spots in 203 cities, 44% had "relatively poor" underground water quality; the groundwater in another 15.7% tested as "very poor".

Water quality improved year-on-year at 647 spots, and worsened in 754 spots, the ministry said. "According to China's underground water standards, water of relatively poor quality can only be used for drinking after proper treatment. Water of very poor quality cannot be used as source of drinking water," said an article in the official newswire Xinhua, which reported the figures on Tuesday. The Chinese government is only now beginning to address

the noxious environmental effects of its long-held growth-at-all-costs development model. While authorities have become more transparent about air quality data within the past year, information about water and soil pollution in many places remains relatively well-guarded. Xinhua reported last year that about one-third of China's water resources are groundwater-based, and that only 3% of the country's urban groundwater can be classified as "clean". A land ministry report from last year said that 70% of groundwater in the north China plain - a 400,000 sq km swath of some of the world's most densely-populated land - is unfit for human touch. "The situation is quite serious - groundwater is important source for water use, including drinking water, and if it gets contaminated, it's very costly and difficult to clean," said Ma Jun, director of the Beijing-based Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs. "But still I consider this disclosure a positive move - greater awareness can help people prevent exposure to health risks, and eventually, motivate society to try and tackle this serious problem." Few Chinese urban dwellers consider tap water safe to drink - most either boil their water or buy it bottled. Earlier this month, a chemical spill poisoned the water supply of Lanzhou - a city of 2 million people in China's north-west - with the carcinogen benzene, causing a panicked run on bottled drinks. Last week, China's land ministry released some statistics from a nationwide soil survey, which was previously classified as a state secret. The ministry found that 16% of sites tested over a nine-year period were polluted, some with cadmium, mercury and arsenic. China's "overall national soil environment" is "not optimistic," the report concluded. While Beijing's noxious smog has become internationally infamous, drought and water pollution may pose even greater existential threats to the city. Beijing's annual per capita water availability is about 120 cubic metres, about one-fifth of the UN's cut-off line for "absolute scarcity".

Last week, state media reported plans for a seaside desalinisation plant to provide one-third of Beijing's tap water by 2019. The state-run Beijing Enterprises Water Group will spend 7bn yuan (£667bn) building the plant in neighbouring Hebei province's Tangshan city, more than 200 km from the capital.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/23/china-half-groundwater-polluted>

Climate Change "More Dangerous Than Terrorism"

It was, and still is, one scary movie. Thanks to global warming, in *The Day After Tomorrow*, the world literally freezes over. Yet how real was the science behind one of the decade's big disaster movies?

"Climate change is a far greater threat to the world than international terrorism," says the science adviser to the British government. "Temperatures

are getting hotter, and they are getting hotter faster than at any time in the past,” says the international weather expert. “Climate change is poised to change our pattern of life,” says an African ecologist. But successive governments in the US and elsewhere won’t listen.

The number of extreme weather events has doubled from the decade before: lethal heatwaves in Europe, floods in Africa, droughts in Asia and the United States. A record 300 million people flee their homes from natural disasters. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere hits record levels. Warming increases the range and virulence of diseases. Trees die in New England. Glaciers melt faster in Alaska. There’s a major influx of freshwater in the North Atlantic and a slowdown of ocean circulation below the Arctic Circle. Antarctic ice flows faster into the ocean.

What could be next? Rising sea levels swamp coastal cities. Famine in Europe. Nuclear wars for water. A million species threatened with extinction. The end of life on Earth as we know it.

Sounds terrifying, but these aren’t scenes from *The Day After Tomorrow*. They’re from the real world. Everything in the second and third paragraphs has happened or is the statement of a real person (including Sir David King, chief science adviser to the British government). Everything in the fourth paragraph is science - based speculation.

The movie itself exaggerates the speed with which global warming brings on a new ice age, but the paradox that more heat might lead to more ice is real. If cold water from melting glaciers really does change ocean currents like the Gulf Stream, Manhattan could get colder pretty quickly - though in a decade, not a New York minute, as *The Day After Tomorrow* would have it. But all by itself, heat is already causing problems like drought, crop failures, disease, violent storms - and is threatening much more as the century proceeds.

Meanwhile, why haven’t we noticed all this? Why are we determined to be oblivious? While 72 per cent of Americans said they were concerned about global warming in 2000, by 200 this had gone down to 58 per cent and only 15 per cent believed it had anything to do with fossil fuel consumption. The combustion of fossil fuels (such as when you drive your car, or fly in a plane) produces carbon dioxide that contributes to the greenhouse effect and releases particles that are dangerous to breathe. Surely Mums and Dads, at least, should be worried about the effect on their children’s health and their grandchildren’s world? But perhaps it’s hard to get upset about something that sounds so moderate and nice as “global warming”? Even the ‘greenhouse effect’ sounds decidedly unthreatening. Who’s afraid of a greenhouse?

Whatever the reason for our apathy, the climate crisis is the keystone issue of our time. Addressing it means addressing virtually every other significant environmental and energy problem and it must be done soon, because what is newest and most challenging about global warming is that once its effects are clearly apparent, it’s too late to stop them.

Last Chance to See...

The figures showing the rapid rate at which we are destroying the biodiversity around us are staggering. We are pushing a hundred species a day, four species an hour, into evolutionary oblivion. Some we know well - the elephant, the tiger, the rhino. Most are plants, insects, microbes and reptiles we haven't even figured out names for.

How are we doing it? Simply by demanding more and more space for ourselves. In our assault on the ecosystems around us we have used a number of tools, from the spear and the gun to the bulldozer and the chainsaw.

And as we destroy and reshape habitat locally and globally we will in the end be our own victims. Not only will we be creating a soulless place, devoid of birdsong with ever-expanding vistas of plastic and concrete, but the biodiversity we need to protect our bodies and sustain our spirits is the one thing we can never replace.

Endangerment is being caused not only in isolated habitats but almost everywhere, due to the effects of releasing agricultural and industrial chemicals into the eco-system. A small, isolated population of **Florida panthers** clings to existence at the edge of the Everglades. Many are in poor shape, unable to reproduce. Theo Colborn of the World Wildlife Fund in Washington, points to the chemical waste from Florida's massive agroindustry that ends up in the fish of the Glades, feasted on by the local racoon population. These racoons are the preferred dinner of the Florida panther.

The prevailing winds blow agrochemicals and airborne industrial pollution to the furthest reaches of the globe. The fragile Arctic ecosystem is far from the sources of contamination, yet high levels of chemical residues are showing up in the fat of **polar bears** and other Arctic mammals. Colborn feels that their fish-based diets, shared by local Inuit people, account for increased reproductive abnormalities.

The New York Conservation Society not only runs all of New York's zoos, but is in the forefront of the struggle to preserve the beleaguered animals, birds and reptiles that are being crowded out of the world by human beings. Don Bruning, the Society's 'bird man', points to the plight of the **Malaysian peacock pheasant** as typical of many of the world's birds. "Most of its natural habitat in lowland Malaysia has been logged and converted to oil - palm and rubber plantations. We hope that we can reintroduce captive birds into some of the few wildlife refuges that remain."

One of the birds that the Conservation Society has helped bring back from the brink is the Bali mynah. But now the poaching of these birds has dropped their wild population from 50 back to a perilous 35. Park rangers make \$15 to \$20 a month, while a **Bali mynah** sells for \$500. Don Bruning says: "The economics just aren't there. What we need to ensure is that enough Bali mynahs breed in captivity to swamp the market so it just isn't profitable to poach wild

birds. This has already been done with a number of species, including the American alligator.

The Society participated with several other zoos in the reintroduction to Oman of the **Arabian oryx** - a small antelope whose habitat is some of the toughest terrain in the world. Jim Doherty, the Society's general curator, is quick to point out that only the support of local people keeps these antelopes out of the rifle sights of wealthy hunters who once slaughtered them.

The Society understands the mix of tactics needed to curb endangerment and also the complexities involved. Outside the **snow leopard's** compound, a board gives the views of the different "players" in the preservation of this shy and nomadic cat. A Western conservationist focuses on the uniqueness and beauty of the leopard. A local Himalayan herdsman stresses he can ill afford to lose 25 per cent of his sheep and goats. The wife of a local ranger talks about the difficulty of punishing those found with skins - they might be old and pre-date the anti-hunting law, they might come from a cat already dead. How was one to know?

The first task of any successful conservation policy is to get the local people on your side. Bruning is particularly enthusiastic about the Society's project to save the habitat of the **bird of paradise** in Papua New Guinea. "We took 12 of the local leaders from a village in the centre of the bird's habitat and brought them down to the coast to visit two villages, one where logging rights had been sold and the area clearcut, the other where the forest had been protected. In the first village people told their visitors about the large amount of money they had received at the cost of their traditional forest livelihood. The money was now all gone. The other village never got the big payout but still had the forest, which they used to get a smaller but ongoing income from local eco-tourism. The group had never seen what clearcut forest looked like and they were devastated. These 12 people came back and discussed with all the local villages, and the first rule they came up with was that the area should never be logged. They are now looking at such things as local carving and handicrafts as well as butterfly farming. It gives them a stake in the forest and that's the key."

Smoothies and Fruit Juices Are a New Risk to Health, US Scientists Warn

Scientists say potential damage from naturally occurring fructose in apparently healthy drinks is being overlooked.

The Guardian, Saturday 7 September 2013

Fruit juices and smoothies represent a new risk to our health because of the amount of sugar the apparently healthy drinks contain, warn the US scientists who **blew the whistle** on corn syrup in soft drinks a decade ago.

Barry Popkin and George Bray **pointed the finger** at high fructose corn syrup in soft drinks in 2004, causing a huge headache for the big manufacturers, including Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

"Smoothies and fruit juice are the new danger," said Popkin, a **distinguished professor** at the department of nutrition at the University of North Carolina, in an interview with the Guardian.

He added: "It's kind of the next step in the evolution of the battle. And it's a really big part of it because in every country they've been replacing soft drinks with fruit juice and smoothies as the **new healthy beverage**. So you will find that Coke and Pepsi have bought dozens [of fruit juice companies] around the globe."

In the UK, Coca-Cola owns Innocent smoothies while PepsiCo has Tropicana. Launching Tropicana smoothies in 2008, Pepsi's sales pitch was that the drink would help the nation to **reach its five a day fruit and vegetable target**. "Smoothies are one of the easiest ways to boost daily fruit intake as each 250ml portion contains the equivalent of 2 fruit portions," it said at the time.

Nine years ago the two scientists had identified sugar-sweetened soft drinks, full of calories and consumed between meals, as a major cause of soaring obesity in developed countries. But they argue that as people change their drinking habits to avoid carbonated soft drinks, the potential damage from naturally occurring fructose in fruit juices and smoothies is being overlooked.

All sugars are equal in their bad effects, says Popkin – even those described on cereal snack bars sold in health food shops as containing "completely natural" sweeteners. "The most important issue about added sugar is that everybody thinks it's cane sugar or maybe beet sugar or HFC syrup or all the other syrups but globally the cheapest thing on the market almost is fruit juice concentrate coming out of China. It has **created an overwhelming supply** of apple juice concentrate. It is being used everywhere and it also gets around the sugar quotas that lots of countries have."

In a survey of sweeteners in US food products between 2005 and 2009 for a paper published in 2012, Popkin and colleagues found that fruit juice concentrate was the fifth most common sugar overall and the second most common, after corn syrup, in soft drinks and in babies' formula milk.

Further evidence supporting the theory came last week from a study published by the British Medical Association. Researchers from the UK, USA and Singapore found that, in large-scale studies involving nurses, people who ate whole fruit, especially blueberries, grapes and apples, were less likely to get type 2 diabetes, which is **obesity-related**, but those who drank fruit juice **were at increased risk**. People who swapped their fruit juice for whole fruits three times a week **cut their risk by 7%**.

Most of the attention from those concerned about growing obesity levels among children is still on soft drinks with added sugar, such as colas and lemonade, which are **consumed in enormous quantities**. In 2012 we drank nearly 227 litres of liquid each in the UK, according to the industry, which says 61% of those had no added sugar. Excluding water brings the "no added sugar" total to 54%. Fruit juices and smoothies are also included in the total. We each drank 17.6 litres of those. British health campaigners are calling for a soft drinks tax in the UK.

The British Soft Drinks Association says that consumption of soft drinks containing added sugar has fallen by 9% over the last 10 years, while the incidence of obesity has risen by 15%. "Obesity is a serious and complex problem requiring concerted action by a wide range of organisations as well as by people themselves. Soft drinks companies recognise the role they have to play," it said. Companies were reducing the calorie content of their drinks. PepsiCo, it said, had only advertised the no added sugar variants of its soft drinks since 2005.

Innocent Smoothies claims that people who drink juice have better diets and lower rates of obesity than others, although the studies it cited had funding from the juice industry.

"Smoothies are made entirely from fruit and therefore contain the same amount of sugars that you would find in an equivalent amount of whole fruit," it said in a statement.

Meanwhile, efforts by the soft drinks companies to grow the market continue. Coca-Cola in the UK this year declared its ambition to increase the market by £2.1bn by 2017, identifying six "moments" in the day when we could be persuaded to buy more soft drinks, including fruit juice and smoothies for breakfast and soft drinks for children when they come home from school.

"This is a business model that is unhealthy and unsustainable, perfectly highlighting the 'profit versus public health' conflict of interest endemic in the sugary drinks industry." said Charlie Powell, campaigns director of Sustain.

Coca-Cola argues that taxes do not change behaviour and that sugar should not be vilified. In a statement, it said: "We believe that rather than single

out any ingredient, it is more helpful for people to look at their total energy balance. This is because obesity and weight gain are caused by an imbalance in calories consumed and burnt off. Our products should be enjoyed as part of a **sensible, balanced diet and healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity**.

"For those that are watching their calorie intake, we offer a wide range of low or no calorie options, which represent more than one third of our sales."

To date, to the best of our knowledge every added amount of fructose – be it from fruit juice, sugar-sweetened beverages or any other beverage or even from foods with high sugar content – adds equally to our health concerns linked with this food component."

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/07/smoothies-fruit-juices-new-health-risk>

smoothie *BrE* / 'smu:ði / , noun

2 a drink made of fruit or fruit juice mixed with milk or ice cream

a banana smoothie

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,
8th edition

Butter and Cheese Better Than Trans-Fat Margarines, Says Heart Specialist

Aseem Malhotra says saturated fat is not a problem, low-fat products are often full of sugar and statins are over-prescribed.

The Guardian, Wednesday 23 October 2013

Butter is not as bad for the heart as has been maintained, says Aseem Malhotra.

Butter, cheese and even red meat are not as bad for the heart as has been maintained, a cardiologist has said in a leading medical journal, adding that it is time to "bust the myth" of saturated fat.

Aseem Malhotra, interventional cardiology specialist registrar at Croydon University hospital, London, also argues that statins have been over-prescribed because of the government's obsession with lowering cholesterol in an attempt to reduce heart disease – and that the side-effects outweigh the benefits for millions of people who take them every day.

Trans-fats found in many fast foods, bakery goods and margarine are indeed a problem, Malhotra writes in the *British Medical Journal*. But saturated fats in milk, cheese and meat are another matter.

The insistence that saturated fat must be removed from our diet has paradoxically, he says, increased the risk of cardiovascular disease. "Recent

prospective cohort studies have not supported significant association between saturated fat intake and cardiovascular risk," he argues. "Instead, saturated fat has been found to be protective."

He adds that it may depend on what sort of foods the saturated fat comes from. Dairy products contain vitamin D, a lack of which has been linked to increased heart disease, and calcium and phosphorus, which may have blood pressure lowering effects. Eating processed meat has been linked to higher rates of heart disease and diabetes, but not red meat.

Malhotra says people have wrongly embraced low-fat products thinking they are better for their health or will help them lose weight, when many are full of sugar. "Last week I saw one patient in her 40s who had had a heart attack," he told the Guardian. "She said she had gained about 20kg in the last six months. She had been drinking five low-fat drinks a day."

He calculated that each 450ml flavoured milk drink contained about 15 teaspoons of sugar, which meant she had consumed 75 teaspoons of sugar each day.

He tells his patients that butter and cheese – though not processed cheese – are better for them than low-fat spreads and that the odd steak will not hurt. Rather than take statins, he said, people with cardiovascular risks should eat a Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil, fruit, vegetables, fish and nuts. He pointed to a recent study that showed that adopting a Mediterranean diet after a heart attack is three times more effective in preventing further illness than statins.

"In the UK eight million people take statins regularly, up from five million 10 years ago," he writes. "With 60 million statin prescriptions a year, it is difficult to demonstrate any additional effect of statins on reduced cardiovascular mortality over the effects of the decline in smoking and primary angioplasty [a technique used by doctors to widen the arteries]."

In the original trials carried out by drug firms, only one in 10,000 patients given statins suffered a minor side-effect. But among 150,000 patients in a "real world" study – people who had been routinely given statins by their GP – 20% had side-effects that were so unacceptable to them that they stopped taking the pills, including muscle pains, stomach upsets, sleep and memory disturbance, and erectile dysfunction.

Neither Public Health England nor the British Heart Foundation agreed with Malhotra's argument. Peter Weissberg, medical director at the British Heart Foundation, said: "Studies on the link between diet and disease frequently produce conflicting results because, unlike drug trials, it's difficult to undertake a properly controlled, randomised study. However, people with highest cholesterol levels are at highest risk of a heart attack and it's clear that lowering cholesterol, by whatever means, lowers risk."

"Cholesterol levels can be influenced by many factors including diet, exercise and drugs, in particular statins. There is clear evidence that patients who have had a heart attack, or who are at high risk of having one, can benefit

from taking a statin. But this needs to be combined with other essential measures, such as eating a balanced diet, not smoking and taking regular exercise."

Alison Tedstone, director of diet and obesity at Public Health England, said: "PHE recommends that no more than 11% of person's average energy intake should come from saturated fats, as there is evidence to show increased levels of saturated fats can raise blood cholesterol levels, in turn raising the risk of cardiovascular disease.

"The government's advice is based on a wealth of evidence. The BMJ article is based on opinion rather than a complete review of the research.

"Evidence specifically linking sugar to cardiovascular disease is limited; however, on average the population needs to reduce its sugar intake. Eating more calories than we need, irrespective of whether they come from sugar or fat, over time leads to weight gain. Being overweight or obese increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes."

But Malhotra got support from those who think sugar is a leading cause of obesity and heart disease. Robert Lustig, paediatric endocrinologist at the University of San Francisco and author of *Fat Chance: The Bitter Truth about Sugar*, said: "Food should confer wellness, not illness. Real food does just that, including saturated fat. But when saturated fat got mixed up with the high sugar added to processed food in the second half of the 20th century, it got a bad name. Which is worse, saturated fat or added sugar? The American Heart Association has weighed in – the sugar many times over. Plus added sugar causes all of the diseases associated with metabolic syndrome.

Instead of lowering serum cholesterol with statins, which is dubious at best, how about serving up some real food?"

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/oct/22/butter-cheese-saturated-fat-heart-specialist>

Home Cooking In Decline As Low-Income Households Turn to Ready Meals

Retail analyst says consumers need more than a nudge to change habits, as spending on chilled ready meals is up 25-30% among working class groups.

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Despite interest in TV cooking shows with high profile chefs such as Jamie Oliver, British consumers are opting for prepared foods.

Britain's cookery skills and habits are in decline, with the least well-off consumers increasingly turning to a diet of calorie-laden convenience foods and fatty ready meals to beat austerity.

Despite our obsession with high profile chefs, cookery books, and foodie TV shows, data compiled by retail analyst Kantar Worldpanel shows that consumers, particularly those who are short of money, time or both, are spending a bigger share of their food budgets on unhealthy frozen and chilled products.

Home cooking has declined most among those whose food budgets are under the most pressure, especially families earning under £25,000 a year, as poorer consumers opt for cheap and "filling" prepared foods on offer in supermarket price promotions rather than fresh produce.

Giles Quick, director of Kantar Worldpanel, which electronically tracks the shopping habits of a sample of 30,000 British households, said the data showed British consumers had effectively cut their ties to the kitchen.

Quick said that recession and the pressures of modern life had changed both the way consumers shop and their relationship with food in a way that was causing many to eat unhealthily and exacerbating existing serious public health problems such as obesity.

He called for serious measures to be introduced to change consumer food buying habits, including reductions in VAT for the healthiest product lines, and restrictions on the ability of retailers to offer cheap "buy one get one free" promotions on food that is high in fat, sugar and salt.

Although ministers prefer supermarkets to sign up to a "softly-softly" approach to changing consumer behaviour, Quick said this was not enough to change entrenched habits: "The 'nudge' approach – the principle of working with the grain of human psychology – needs a push or perhaps even a shove."

According to Kantar Worldpanel, the average time taken to prepare the main family meal has reduced from 60 minutes two decades ago to around 32 minutes across all social groups now – a sign that many households do not have the time, resources or confidence to devote to home cookery.

Even baking appears to be in decline, despite the popularity of TV shows such as The Great British Bake Off. Just 20 years ago homebaked cakes accounted for a half of all cakes eaten in the UK; now just 20% are homemade.

In the past two years frozen food sales have grown by 11% (up 20% among skilled working class groups) and spending on chilled ready meals is up 19% (25-30% among working class groups) as hard pressed consumers seek "recession buster" value. Partly as a result, the proportion of home-made food eaten by children is decreasing, fuelling a further erosion in cookery skills.

Low-income families with young children on tight food budgets were most likely to buy food on cheap "special offer" promotions, Kantar Worldpanel found. Yet roughly a third of all sugar and saturated fat purchased by UK consumers was sold through these offers.

Quick added: "Consumers appear unwilling, unmotivated and unable to alter their current eating habits. There is clearly confusion over how to ensure real, tangible changes are made and with whom the responsibility lies to deliver them."

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/sep/05/home-cooking-decline-low-income-ready-meals>

How Do We Become Obese?

Why do people become overweight or obese? Researchers agree that the simple answer to this question is that most overweight or obese people take in more energy from food than they spend in maintaining their body systems and engaging in physical activity. In short, they either eat too much, exercise too little, or both. A more difficult question - one that remained unanswered in 2004 - was: Why are greater numbers of people becoming heavier today than at any other time in recorded history?

Scientists have found evidence that a person's weight is normally controlled within very precise limits by hormones (chemical messengers), such as leptin and insulin, and by brain cells that regulate appetite and energy use. Do these biological control systems break down in overweight and obese individuals? If so, how do the systems become damaged? Although researchers were hotly debating these questions in 2004, all agreed that some combination of genetic and environmental (social and psychological) factors must be involved.

Researchers had long suspected that body weight is, to some degree, an inherited characteristic. Leaner parents tend to have leaner children, and heavier parents, heavier children. However, researchers believe that a person's environment during childhood and adolescence also affects body weight. Thus someone may become heavier than other people of the same age because of inherited genes that make him or her susceptible to becoming heavier. At the same time, an individual's family may serve meals high in calories and rarely participate in physical activities.

Teen-agers purchase snacks at a vending machine stocked with foods high in sugar and fat. Many health care experts believe that easy access to such inexpensive, calorie-dense foods, as well as intense food advertising, and marketing, are helping to fuel the obesity epidemic among children, teen-agers, and young adults.

Flex Your Metabolism and Melt Off Pounds

On the 'Colorado Diet' activity goes beyond feeling the burn.

For years, obesity researchers James Hill and Holly Wyatt have been studying why so many people struggle with losing weight and keeping it off, and they have concluded that a big part of the problem has to do with lack of physical activity and its impact on metabolism.

“Not everyone agrees with me, but I believe that obesity starts with a lack of movement,” says Hill, founding executive director of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center at the University of Colorado in Denver. Studies show that when people stop being active, a host of things happen that can lead to weight gain: their metabolism slows, their appetite goes haywire, and they begin eating too much of the wrong kinds of foods, says Hill, co-author with Wyatt of *State of Slim: Fix Your Metabolism and Drop 20 Pounds in 8 Weeks on the Colorado Diet*, written with Christie Aschwanden.

Metabolism is the process in which your body converts food to energy, Hill says. It's more than just how many calories you burn — it's how you use different types of foods, including protein, carbohydrates and fat. Exercise keeps your metabolism working properly and your appetite balanced, he says, and he recommends 70 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity: walking briskly, biking, swimming, playing tennis — six days a week.

Not only will this amount of activity use extra calories, but it's “the basic threshold of activity necessary to rebuild your metabolism so you can stop stockpiling fat and prevent unwanted pounds from creeping up on you,” Hill says.

Here's the theory: “When you have a flexible (healthy) metabolism, your body efficiently burns whatever kind of food you eat.”

“When you have an inflexible (unhealthy) metabolism, your body doesn't switch very rapidly between types of fuel (carbohydrates, fats, protein), and it's during these periods when it doesn't switch quickly that your body accumulates fat,” he says.

To be clear, improving metabolic flexibility is not about boosting your metabolism so that you burn more calories while you're sitting down, but it allows your body to more efficiently burn whatever type of food you eat, he says. “I think metabolic flexibility is going to be the next big thing in weight loss and weight gain.” Tim Church, an exercise researcher at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, says, “Metabolic flexibility is a concept that can be difficult to grasp because people typically associate the word metabolism with the amount of fuel burned, not the type of fuel. I strongly agree that increasing your metabolic flexibility is likely to promote health and weight loss.”

Hill and Wyatt base some of their ideas on the habits of people in Colorado, the state with the lowest rate of obesity — about 21% of its residents. The authors also draw from their work at the Anschutz Center, as well as findings from the National Weight Control Registry, a database of more than 10,000 people who have dropped at least 30 pounds and maintained the loss for at least a year.

The authors recommend following one of two options for incorporating physical activity into your life: a structured plan in which you do up to 70 minutes of planned activity six days a week; or a flexible plan in which you do 35 minutes of planned activity, combined with moving more in your daily life.

Hill says he doesn't want to "oversell" exercise. Dietary restriction is the key factor in losing weight, but exercise is the key to maintaining that loss. If dieters try to maintain their weight loss without exercise, it makes it practically impossible to relax their diet vigilance even a little and constant diet vigilance is practically impossible, he says. "There is no way around it. The way to keep weight off has to include exercise."

Three strategies for three diet personalities.

In their new book, *State of Slim*, obesity researchers James Hill and Holly Wyatt identify three metabolism-personality types and what each group can do to trim down.

Easy gainers

THEIR PROBLEM: These folks feel as if they have to eat perfectly to lose weight. They religiously follow a diet — being hyper-vigilant about what they eat — and the pounds peel off, but the moment they start indulging, they gain it back

THE SOLUTION: Easy gainers need to move their bodies more and learn to eat smarter so they don't have to spend every waking minute thinking about food.

Healthy over-fuelers

THEIR PROBLEM: They eat very healthfully but never lose weight. They eat the right foods, including whole-grain breads, fish, grilled chicken, lots of vegetables, berries, almonds, natural peanut butter, hummus and nuts. They steer clear of sugary soft drinks and processed foods, and only occasionally allow themselves indulgences such as low-fat frozen yogurt and pudding. They do a moderate amount of physical activity. They have mastered the art of weight maintenance but skipped the weight-loss step.

THE SOLUTION: They need to get the weight off, and the quickest way to do that is to reduce food intake for a few weeks. This might include Phase 1 (a low-carb diet) and Phase 2 (more foods added back to the eating plan) of the Colorado Diet, outlined in the book. After they lose the weight, they might need to step up their physical activity only a little.

Aging gainers

THEIR PROBLEM: It's an unfortunate fact of life that your muscle mass naturally begins to decrease 5% to 10% per decade after about age 40. The number of calories you burn decreases, and many tend put on some fat. While exercise can help reduce loss of muscle, it can't prevent it totally. It's a process that happens so gradually that you r not notice it.

THE SOLUTION: A sluggish metabolism may feel like an added insult to an aging body, but unlike thinning hair, it's a problem you can do something about. The solution involves changes to both physical activity and diet. You have to ramp up your activity even more. You also have to eat smarter so your diet matches your changing metabolism.

The Risks of Cigarette Smoke

Discovered in the early 1800s and named nicotianine, the oily essence now called nicotine is the main active ingredient of tobacco. Nicotine, however, is only a small component of cigarette smoke, which contains more than 4,700 chemical compounds, including 43 cancer-causing substances. In recent times, scientific research has been providing evidence that years of cigarette smoking vastly increases the risk of developing fatal medical conditions.

In addition to being responsible for more than 85 per cent of lung cancers, smoking is associated with cancers of, amongst others, the mouth, stomach and kidneys, and is thought to cause about 14 per cent of leukemia and cervical cancers. In 1990, smoking caused more than 84,000 deaths, mainly resulting from such problems as pneumonia, bronchitis and influenza. Smoking, it is believed, is responsible for 30 per cent of all deaths from cancer and clearly represents the most important preventable cause of cancer in countries like the United States today.

Passive smoking, the breathing in of the side-stream smoke from the burning of tobacco between puffs or of the smoke exhaled by a smoker, also causes a serious health risk. A report published in 1992 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emphasized the health dangers, especially from side- stream smoke. This type of smoke contains more, smaller particles and is therefore more likely to be deposited deep in the lungs. On the basis of this report, the EPA has classified environmental tobacco smoke in the highest risk category for causing cancer.

As an illustration of the health risks, in the case of a married couple where one partner is a smoker and one a non-smoker, the latter is believed to have a 30 per cent higher risk of death from heart disease because of passive smoking. The risk of lung cancer also increases over the years of exposure and the figure jumps to 80 per cent if the spouse has been smoking four packs a day for 20 years. It has been calculated that 17 per cent of cases of lung cancer can be

attributed to high levels of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke during childhood and adolescence.

A more recent study by researchers at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) has shown that second-hand cigarette smoke does more harm to non-smokers than to smokers. Leaving aside the philosophical question of whether anyone should have to breathe someone else's cigarette smoke, the report suggests that the smoke experienced by many people in their daily lives is enough to produce substantial adverse effects on a person's heart and lungs.

The report, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (AMA), was based on the researchers' own earlier research but also includes a review of studies over the past few years. The American Medical Association represents about half of all US doctors and is a strong opponent of smoking. The study suggests that people who smoke cigarettes are continually damaging their cardiovascular system, which adapts in order to compensate for the effects of smoking. It further states that people who do not smoke do not have the benefit of their system adapting to the smoke inhalation. Consequently, the effects of passive smoking are far greater on non-smokers than on smokers.

This report emphasizes that cancer is not caused by a single element in cigarette smoke; harmful effects to health are caused by many components. Carbon monoxide, for example, competes with oxygen in red blood cells and interferes with the blood's ability to deliver life-giving oxygen to the heart. Nicotine and other toxins in cigarette smoke activate small blood cells called platelets, which increases the likelihood of blood clots, thereby affecting blood circulation throughout the body.

The researchers criticize the practice of some scientific consultants who work with the tobacco industry for assuming that cigarette smoke has the same impact on smokers as it does on non-smokers. They argue that those scientists are underestimating the damage done by passive smoking and, in support of their recent findings, cite some previous research which points to passive smoking as the cause for between 30,000 and 60,000 deaths from heart attacks each year in the United States. This means that passive smoking is the third most preventable cause of death after active smoking and alcohol-related diseases.

The study argues that the type of action needed against passive smoking should be similar to that being taken against illegal drugs and AIDS (SIDA). The UCSF researchers maintain that the simplest and most cost-effective action is to establish smoke-free work places, schools and public places.

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