

1.1

W = Woman M = Man

Extract 1

W: It's true that clothing is a basic need, like food or water. But I think we can all agree it's become so much more than that. In today's world, the clothing we wear is a mirror that reflects who we think we are and who we want to be.

M: But is that really new?

W: Well, yes and no. Of course, clothing has always been meaningful. Traditionally, the clothes people wore symbolised cultural affiliations and values, age and ethnicity. But these days our wardrobe choices encompass all that plus a sense of fashion and personal style. Not to stray too much into jargon, but this is why we behaviour theorists call clothing an 'artefact of extended self'.

M: And that's where brands come in, which I know is a particular focus of yours.

W: Exactly. Thanks to globalisation and the internet, most of us, in our own way, are becoming brand conscious consumers. We splurge on certain clothing brands because of their association with celebrities, subcultures or leisure activities – or, more often than not, as much as we are loath to admit it, to project a sense of having arrived, mixed with a certain vibe of aspiration.

Extract 2

W: Are you saying your job defines you?

M: I'm not sure I'd go that far, but I would say that jobs in general tend to reinforce certain traits. For example, as a news editor, I'm being trained every day to prioritise what's happening right now. At this moment. And it's not hard to see how that mindset spills over into the rest of my life. If only I were a bit better at compartmentalising things.

W: Yeah, same here. Being a dentist, I'm so much less trusting than I used to be. Day after day, people who are decent and upstanding in their everyday lives, well, they cancel their appointments, saying something just came up. Sure it did. And when they do show up, they sit down and start lying to me straight away about how much they've flossed. And the next time I see them, what do you know? They've continued to neglect their teeth, despite their promises. Being in this particular psychological environment for years, well, it's definitely affected me. Instilled particular habits of mind.

Extract 3

M: Let me just read you a quotation from an oral history interview. It's from a man who as a child worked in the circus during the 19th century:

'Most children, their parents are proud when their kids grow. Not mine. One day my dad's measuring me for a new costume and discovers I've sprouted up. Oh my, does he curse. You see he's hoping I stay small, so it's easy to throw and catch me.' Memorable, isn't it? You see, it's one thing to read facts and figures about the lives of working-class children a century ago; it's quite another to hear about it from someone first-hand. In their own voice. In their own words.

You see, at the end of the day, history consists of stories, and what stories get told and who gets to tell them is important. Traditional history courses usually only touch on major events – on the whos, whens and whats. Oral history brings depth to our understanding of the past, giving apparently peripheral characters a starring role. Through the exploration of their identities, we are drawn closer to their reality. And this tends to complicate the story a bit. It helps avoid the sort of sweeping generalisations that reinforce prejudice, stereotype people and overlook key variables in the historical context.

2.1

What made me want to write about travelling in the desert? I guess the short answer is that, after years of travel writing, I'd walked along so many tropical beaches and looked out at so many mountain views, and I was getting a bit tired of it all. Deserts sort of felt like the last frontier, you know? Over the past few years, I've been visiting and writing about deserts and today I'll share a bit about what I've learned.

Deserts are such special places. Where else can you see land so dry that it cracks? Or rock formations, formed by centuries of weathering and erosion, that are every bit, if not more, beautiful than the sculptures you find in art museums? For me, photos never do justice to a desert. You need to experience it for yourself. In the desert, even the sound of your own footsteps is different.

There are actually four main types of desert. Subtropical deserts are very hot and dry all year-round. Coastal deserts, on the other hand, have cool winters and warm summers. While in cold winter deserts, summers are long and dry and winters are extremely cold, in polar deserts, it's below freezing all year-round.

I must admit, before I started my research, I didn't know that the Arctic and Antarctica were deserts, but I now know that any place that receives less than 25 centimetres of precipitation a year counts as one – no matter how cold it is!

My most recent trip was to the Sahara – the most legendary and expansive of the subtropical deserts. After flying to Marrakech, I took a scenic 10-hour car ride into the desert. I had fallen asleep during the last leg of the journey and woke up just outside the town of Merzouga to views of the towering and majestic Erg Chebbi dunes. Soon I found myself on the back of a camel, walking slowly into the sands of the Sahara. That night I slept out in the open, under a sky full of stars.

Before going into the Sahara, I was warned to prepare carefully. Sunglasses, sun cream, extra water – any sensible person will bring these. But you'll also need specialised gear like wide-brimmed hats and hooded shirts that breathe well and provide UV protection. Long trousers are a must. They protect you from abrasion caused by camel fur, which is quite rough, but above all from local shrub brush that can easily pierce the skin.

When it comes to travelling in the desert, there's a lot to be said for layers. Bring like 20, I'd say. You begin piling them on in the evening, when temperatures drop quickly, and then start stripping them off at dawn. Oh, and don't forget a waterproof – night-time can get quite damp from the heavy dew.

One thing I didn't see much of in the Sahara was wildlife – apart from camels, of course. This is because most desert animals like beetles, hedgehogs and owls are nocturnal. On the last day of my trip, though, I did see a scorpion. I almost stepped on it – and it scared the life out of me!

There is one kind of desert animal that I love – a rare antelope called the addax. Their heads are marked with black patches, forming an 'X' over their noses, and they have scraggly beards and prominent red nostrils. Their spiral horns are strikingly beautiful. I'd love to see an addax on the trip I'm currently planning to the southern Sahara, but I may not get the chance. It is estimated that the current population living in the wild could be in the low hundreds, or possibly even less. Time will tell whether or not they can be saved.

Unfortunately, it's not just desert animals that are in danger these days but desert landscapes themselves. Recently I've been looking into 'desert greening,' where great swathes of land are irrigated intensely with the goal of growing crops, supposedly in the name of saving mankind from the climate crisis. This I don't like one bit. If there is one thing I've learned in my travels, it's that deserts are not barren wastelands, but rather places worth saving in their own right.

3.1

Speaker 1

Good training relies on objectivity. That's why baseball coaches like me were such early adopters of video analysis way back in the days of reel to reel. They came to depend on it in a big way. Review footage allowed them to praise or correct without bias. These days though it's a whole new ball game. You can create a database that accurately shows the progress your players have made – great for morale – and that's what got me into video analysis initially. The tech has a long way to go, though. There's still way too much fiddling about, endlessly moving things between different programmes and apps. And the ability to easily capture motion in 3D – now that would really be something.

Speaker 2

I bet most of you out there in the audience have never worked without email, but I have. Back then we welcomed email as a way to open up channels with business partners in faraway places. And how many trees we ended up saving when we reduced paper-based office correspondence, I can only imagine. But for most of us, the shine has thoroughly worn off. In the modern office, we take it for granted that a good chunk of our working day will be dedicated to emptying our inboxes, like people bailing out a leaky lifeboat. Our very sanity is under attack, and every day the deluge continues with no solution in sight. People today talk about 'techno-stress.' I'd say, in all likelihood, email is one of the main culprits.

Speaker 3

I don't know what I'd do without the software and that worries me a bit. And I do see the ethical issues people have with police like me using facial recognition tools to identify suspects. But, at the end of the day, it's just another tool. It might be less time consuming to track people down, but the technology is susceptible to error and doesn't replace traditional police work. It's not as if computers are solving crimes in seconds all by themselves. People who think that have watched too much TV. I will say, however, that police themselves have not been immune to this sort of wishful thinking, which is one of the reasons why we demanded access to the software and quickly embraced it.

Speaker 4

This year we took the plunge and installed crop sensors around the farm. The goal is to decrease leaching and runoff into groundwater, but the technology should create other knock-on effects. The sensors can communicate information about the level of moisture present at certain depths in the soil, which means I can save time and money by making adjustments to my irrigation systems on the spot from a phone or computer instead of driving to each field. In theory, anyway. To be honest, the whole system is still a bit temperamental, and the farm is seriously lacking when it comes to connectivity infrastructure, but I'm sure these are just bumps in the road.

Speaker 5

Like most of my patients, I was wary of virtual visits at the outset. I saw it as yet another decision aimed at improving the hospital's bottom line that would come at the expense of patient care, which it undoubtedly was, but with time – what do you know? – I've come to embrace it. Talking to people on a computer has obvious limitations, but if your ailment is minor, say a fever, cough or cold, I can offer decent care from a distance. And virtual visits are so much more convenient for underprivileged patients, who sometimes don't have access to transport or are unable to leave their homes. Plus, I like how quickly I can check in with my patients, just to see how they're getting on.

3.3

I = Interviewer P = Professor
W = Woman M = Man

Extract 1

- I:** Professor Yavuz, what first attracted you to blended learning?
- P:** Well, going back nearly 20 years, I was working as an associate lecturer, teaching on a module designed to inspire creative entrepreneurship, and I had an unusual group – or at least that's what I thought at the time. Attendance at lectures was dreadful but the students would turn in brilliant work and respond instantly to any email I sent. This was a real 'aha moment' for me. These days, emerging talent has different expectations, but we're still trying to lure students into traditionally structured courses because it's more effective for our institutions. This experience made me think outside the box and consider what parts of the course might work better online.
- I:** Is it hard to get the balance right?

P: The principles of blended learning are largely in place now: a large part of the material is still learned synchronously, through what we call 'contact moments,' i.e. in class, while much of the preparation and processing happens asynchronously, essentially freeing up space for higher-quality interaction during those contact moments. The exact ratio is dynamic, however. There are didactic factors to consider but also practical ones like available technology, the intensity of the course, predetermined student competencies and needs, and so on.

Extract 2

W: It's not hard to see why the electronic spreadsheet has been such a hit. Imagine writing down individual numbers by hand in rows and columns across the double spread of an A2 ledger. The electronic spreadsheet has made it infinitely easier to manipulate data, in the process wiping out millions of jobs for desk clerks and giving birth to the world of modern finance. The problem is, though, that we have become so enchanted with spreadsheets, they've become a curse.

For example, back at my first data analyst gig, I was tasked with creating a tool to track and analyse the performance of my company's suppliers. A spreadsheet was the natural choice, but once the team started using the file in their daily workflow it quickly became bloated and burdensome to use. Sound familiar? But that's not all: as the operations got more complex, with formulas referencing other formulas – sometimes incorrectly – it got harder to trace back how some calculations were being performed. I've since learned that there are programming languages that allow for a more systematic manner of performing analytics, making it much easier to troubleshoot, and that data can be stored more sustainably through SQL databases, where it can be queried in a centralised location.

Extract 3

M: Lobsters have developed a remarkable way of seeing the world. Their eyes are mounted on long stalks and each eyeball is made up of thousands of tapered square tubes. Unlike a human eye, which relies on 'refraction' or the bending of light, a lobster's eye reflects tiny amounts of light from a wide viewing area and then focuses them into a single image. Outside of their natural habitat, lobsters are effectively blind, but in the dark murky water at the bottom of the sea they can spot predators without so much as moving their heads.

What does all this have to do with space, you might be wondering? Well, scientists have copied the design of the crustacean's eye to create a new type of telescope that can monitor a wider section of the sky. With this brilliantly innovative technology, still in the works, scientists aim to detect X-rays emitted by marvellously rare events in the cosmos – the sort of fleeting, hard-to-capture energy unleashed when neutron stars or black holes collide. These are hard to find because we don't know their location in advance. But a lobster's eye telescope, whose 'eye' is curved and dotted with tiny tubes, could be able to pick up X-rays coming from a wide variety

of angles. Who would have ever thought a lobster would help us see into space?

4.1

I = Interviewer H = Hanya
J = Jeffrey

- I:** Welcome to the programme. Today our guests are the sociologists Hanya Richardson and Jeffery Walsh, who study friendship. Hanya, friendships too easily fall by the wayside in adulthood, don't they?
- H:** They do indeed. In the research for our book, we found that people make the most friends between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, and then, try as we might to keep up with people, our friendship circles shrink as we move into adulthood. We become engrossed in our careers. We get married, have kids. We might even end up relocating for one reason or another. In our daily lives, we're still surrounded by people, of course, but they are in the same position as ourselves – busy, short on energy and free time.
- J:** We have fewer friends as adults, but not usually by choice. One study found that the average adult won't have made a new friend in the last five years, even though about half would have liked to.
- H:** And so the question is, how can we fill this friendship gap? It's a bit of an uphill battle, as we all know. It can take between forty and sixty hours to develop a casual friendship. But of course it's also possible to spend hundreds and hundreds of hours with someone and think of them as just a workmate or an acquaintance.
- I:** So, what else can be done to turn these everyday encounters into real friendships?
- J:** Most of us, we assume friends will just sort of fall into our lives, and it's not entirely unreasonable that we should make this assumption, because it fits with the way many of the friendships developed when we were younger. Back then, we were stuck in the same building with lots of potential friends, and it was as simple as going through shared experiences. As adults, we have to put ourselves out there a bit more.
- H:** And it can't be a one-off thing. It's not enough to go to just the one networking meeting. Better to look for a professional development group. Don't go to a book lecture; look for a book club.
- I:** What about those of us who find it hard to relax and be ourselves around people who we don't know?
- J:** That's very common, and it's often due to a cognitive bias known as the 'liking gap.' This describes people's tendency to underestimate the degree to which they are liked by strangers they interact with.
- H:** Like it or not, to make new friends, we simply have to get used to those small bouts of anxiety that come from engaging with new people. All too often we resort to overt or covert avoidance strategies, like looking at our phone or playing with the host's pet. We ought not to let ourselves fall into this common trap. By trying to protect ourselves from rejection, by limiting our eagerness or enthusiasm, we only make the chances of rejection more likely. Other people, after all, are just as afraid of getting the brush off as we are.

- I:** So let's say you meet someone you really click with. What then?
- H:** Here also a bit of courage can pay dividends. We sometimes get too caught up in our own heads about who chose to invite whom to do what when, and whose turn it is now. But the truth is there are a lot of people out there who really appreciate being asked but are really terrible at asking. It's normal to worry about being clingy, but we probably underestimate that nice-to-be-wanted feeling that people get when you pick them to spend time with.
- J:** And, to fast forward a bit, once a friendship is established, if or when things don't live up to our expectations, we shouldn't get too hung up about it. Because they won't. People need the space to be imperfect. With friends, it's best to avoid resentment and reserve judgement when life gets in the way.
- I:** Speaking of tough times, these days there is a school of thought that says we should ditch one-sided friendships and take better care of ourselves. Hanya, what's your take on that?
- H:** So, I wouldn't advise anyone to be friends with a person who actively does things to hurt them. But this kind of self-focused attitude, you know, avoiding toxic people and all that – it muscles out the reality that we're all imperfect. Friends need us most when they're acting poorly and not thinking about the consequences. True, it can be tough when a friend is doing all the talking and you're doing all the listening. But they still deserve your respect and attention. And you know what? In the long run, it's actually very good for us to stick through other people's struggles. It's how we become better people.

4.4

Hello. My name is Samira Joshi and I've been asked to come here and talk to you about my job as a professional mediator. Workplace mediation, in a nutshell, is an informal way of resolving employment-related disputes. It involves a mediator, like me, acting as an impartial third party, who facilitates a meeting between two or more people in conflict. When considering mediation, there is no need for a company to take seniority into account, but voluntary agreement from both parties, on the other hand, is essential. Without this commitment to proceed, the mediation process is not really worth pursuing. Workplace mediation is by no means a panacea, but it can be an effective way of dealing with many common workplace issues, including relationship breakdown, personality clashes, miscommunication and so on. In my experience, though, it's workplace incivility that company representatives most often mention when they contract my services. This could involve any kind of behaviour with an intent to harm, with social undermining on the low end of the spectrum and bullying on the more serious end. Generally speaking, mediation is a chance to resolve disputes without resorting to legal processes or disciplinary action or,

ultimately, dismissal. Ideally, it's better to mediate a conflict at the beginning – that can avoid escalation – but even if a conflict is well entrenched and employees have, say, resorted to sick leave to escape anxiety generated in the workplace, mediation can still be an effective way to get them back at their desks.

So what does the mediation process look like in practice? Well, in the first stage, I meet with each individual in separate rooms. Everything said here is completely confidential; note-taking is usually fine, but recording devices are generally prohibited. My job here is to actively listen while each party walks me through their experience of the dispute. This helps me wrap my head around the key issues. Here flip charts are a mediator's best friend. They're a great place to brainstorm ideas.

In the second stage, called the facilitated joint meeting, both sides come together and try to settle their differences. I act as facilitator, first letting each side say their piece – with no interruptions – and then I lead a discussion of the key aspects of the dispute. Here mediators need to keep a close eye on pace, because the goal is to reach a mutually acceptable solution on the day. At the same time, though, we need to be led by the parties in terms of what they are ready to discuss. It's a delicate balance.

Particularly during this second stage, emotional intelligence is crucial, I think. To excel in this profession, you really have to be able to understand not just what people are saying but also what they aren't saying – listening between the lines, so to speak. Good problem-solving skills also come in handy, not to mention lots of patience. You might think of these competencies as innate, but in my experience it's possible to develop and greatly improve them over time.

On a personal note, I've long thought the key to successful mediation is to get people to move away from the past – that is, their grievances and obsessed-over life experiences – and focus on the future. This sort of subtle alteration in mindset can be hard to achieve but is ultimately very powerful.

All right, so, if the first two steps of the process have gone well, we then move into the final stage, where I prepare a written agreement for both parties to sign up to. Everyone involved has to not only agree to the statement, but also to share responsibility for its enactment. It's important to note that this agreement is morally, but not legally binding.

Talking of legal questions, I should mention that whether or not the mediation process succeeds or fails – and every so often it does fail – the entire process is what lawyers would call 'without prejudice,' meaning that if an employee wants to go on and pursue an employment tribunal, for example, they can take their case straight on and don't have to worry about any information from the mediation process being disclosed.

So, before I move on, I thought this would be a good time to open the floor to any questions you might have ... [fade]

5.3

Speaker 1

Still to this day, I can't believe it happened. I wanted to visit my uncle in Australia, and *there was this flight* I saw online that was a bargain. To be fair, I was in a rush and the kids were playing up, so I suppose I only had one eye on what I was doing. We didn't even realise the error until we were on the plane... to Sydney Nova Scotia, Canada! It took both me and my wife a while to find the funny side – but we made the best of it, and spent three weeks there, seeing the area. Obviously, our luggage was completely unsuitable. We'd packed for 30 degrees and ended up in around 0 degrees! But it was a trip to remember!

Speaker 2

I still feel like an idiot when I think back to this. I'd generally consider myself quite bright, which is why when I read this story about someone falling out of a plane and surviving, due to a *type of cloud*, I was amazed! Apparently, it was particularly dense, and I'm no scientist, so I took it as read. Anyway, I was telling this to people for years – always ending with an exclamation like 'Isn't it incredible?' or something like that. It turns out it is incredible, because it's simply not true. I checked it years later only to realise that the lucky survivor had a parachute. I must've misread the article all those years ago. Mortifying! I still wonder how many people are telling *that ridiculous 'fact' of mine*... simply because of my stupidity!

Speaker 3

In my job, communication is key and I'm often flying around the world. Well one day, I was in Japan interpreting for an important US dignitary who for some unknown reason decided to go off-script and make a joke in a bid to get everybody on side. It's so hard to plan for *those sorts of deviations*, and the joke just couldn't work in Japanese at all, so I had to think on my feet. I told the audience 'Mr Shephard told a funny story. Everybody please laugh now.' And thankfully they did! Although I did get some looks from the dignitary himself who asked me what I'd said as it was far shorter than his joke. I had to come clean about it and thankfully he saw the funny side!

Speaker 4

I used to work as a runner on a news show... this basically means running around helping out and being a general dogsbody. I was straight out of college and was completely out of my depth to be honest. One day, we had someone who was going to be interviewed for a slot about industrial waste. I ran into reception and saw a guy sitting there. 'Are you here for the interview?' He nodded his head, so I had him miked up and ready within 10 minutes. But the interview was really strange. It was like he didn't know the first thing about industrial waste. It was only after that I found out here was in the building for a job interview, not to talk about environmental problems on the TV! Needless to say, I didn't last long there.

Speaker 5

Back in the day, I volunteered at a local community organisation. They would put on talks and events, mainly to keep retired people busy. Anyway, it was when one of these events was being organised... on local history as I remember, and the organiser mentioned that 'Enis and Margaret were doing the slide show'. Well, I was dumbfounded! *Princess Margaret* doing the slide show?! What a coup! I diligently spread the word, totally unaware that I had got the wrong end of the stick. *Well, that error of mine* caused the biggest turnout they'd ever had! And probably the most disappointed audience too. To be honest, I did think it was a little out of the ordinary, I mean, why would a member of the royal family turn up in our village to talk about local history!?

5.4

M = Man W = Woman

Conversation 1

M: Did you hear what happened to Katie?

W: No, what's that? Spill the beans!

M: Well, I'm not really sure I should really.

W: Come on! Don't beat around the bush! Tell me!

M: Well... she's been fired from her job!

W: Katie?! No way...but she's normally so responsible. What did she do?

M: I'm not totally sure. It was news to me! And probably to her too!

Conversation 2

W: When you send the agenda out, can you let me know please?

M: I've already done it – I thought it was ready.

W: Oh no! I had to make some tweaks to it. Well, don't worry, I think we probably got our wires crossed. I wanted you to just double check it.

M: Oh, I'm sorry.

W: Don't worry. Can you make sure the catering is all organised? I think it's going to be a long meeting if you catch my drift...

M: Yes, there are some quite difficult items on the agenda.

W: Still, it will be nice to catch up with all the other department heads...

6.1

W = Woman J = Jacob Z = Zandra I = Interviewer N = Nick

Extract one

W: Provided that you don't want to earn a fortune, the job is great. I mean the hours are not for everyone, you're on duty from the crack of dawn until whenever the clients want, but if they're good people, and you get the right captain, being First Officer is not a bad job at all. You're responsible for supporting the captain and offering those extra touches that really make the difference and guarantee the onboard experience is second to none, which I find really fulfilling. Not to mention the fact that you get to sail these amazing vessels in some spectacular locations.

The downside is that the number of good crewing jobs has plummeted in recent

years, largely due to the soaring costs of fuel. The knock-on effect has been that a lot of people have realised that they're paying through the nose for their hobby and that it's no longer financially viable. People generally think that yacht owners are rolling in it, but you'd be surprised. Most people are drawn to them for the same reason as me – they love sailing, not the flashy lifestyle that people associate with them. And of course, the range of crafts is vast so anyone can own one if they want, even if their budget isn't enormous.

Extract two

Z: I really wish I had a job that allowed me to travel more. Sitting in that office all day, with a view of the car park is so depressing, it's like life is passing me by.

J: We're all in the same boat here though. It doesn't look like any of us is going to quit and have a massive career change any time soon, does it?!

Z: Hey! thanks for the vote of confidence. I guess no one knows what's around the corner.

J: True. Supposing your job was remote, like a digital nomad, so all you need is a laptop and your passport and you're good to go. Where would you go?

Z: Um, well, so long as money were no object and I could afford to come back and see my family as and when I wanted, I think I'd opt for a village in the mountains. I wouldn't want to be too isolated, but I've always wondered what it would be like to just pack up and move on whenever you fancied a change.

J: Mmm, I can see this working for you, but I suspect I'm in my comfort zone workwise. I can't see me moving on anytime soon.

Extract three

I: So, Nick Morgan personal finance advisor at Life & Futures always gives us some real food for thought on making our money go further on everyday expenses, but there's something that he's keen to talk about in more detail today. Over to you Nick.

N: Thanks, Jess. Okay, well, I've been getting some emails from listeners asking for advice about what to do in the event that an unexpected expense arose. These happen far more frequently than you might imagine, and even if you don't earn plenty of money, it's not that hard to future-proof your finances in order to give you some peace of mind. Or at the very least feel like you're somewhat prepared. Just putting aside a small amount per week would mean you'd build up a large enough nest egg soon enough in case of any nasty surprises. Then there won't be any stress or panic if, for instance, a household appliance breaks down without warning.

I: Yes, I see what you mean. Squirrelling money away little and often could help make sure life ticks along a lot more smoothly.

N: Indeed. When it comes to money, we want our resources to gradually swell over time as opposed to everything being a rollercoaster. And this really just comes down to being sensible. Unfortunately, there's no magic bullet here.

6.3

When it comes to work, we humans have always been tempted to shun hard graft in favour of earning a quick buck for no real effort. Some of these get-rich-quick schemes are nefarious scams selling products of dubious quality. Some could even be described as downright criminal, such as asking people to invest in non-existent companies. But in recent years a more wholesome variety has emerged. Enter the side hustle. Essentially this is just a second job, but it has morphed into an attitude towards life for many, or perhaps even an extension of their identity.

The phrase was coined in the 1950s but it wasn't until the early 21st century that it really took off with the rise of the internet and the gig economy. They presented opportunities for entrepreneurship that many people hadn't previously considered and enabled those with a pioneering spirit to capitalise on their untapped creative skills and talents.

Many of these side hustles combine the internet and creativity: online stores selling thousands of items of jewellery or hand-crafted kitchenware, millennials posting hours of videos on cosmetic techniques, the list is endless. To be honest, much of the creative output is mediocre at best which then begs the question of why people are willing to spend countless hours trying to grow a side hustle, yet they seem incapable of devoting the same energy levels to their career in marketing or retail. After all, one brings clear and obvious paths to increased wealth over time whereas the prospect of an actual, sustainable income from the other is far lower.

But the tantalising promise of being master of your own destiny seems to have much more appeal for some. There's that famous quote that gets attributed to various philosophers which claims that if you choose a job you love, you'll never work a day in your life, the implication being that doing something you love will bring more meaning to your life or to your career. This is in contrast to jobs that feel more burdensome because they don't spark a sense of feeling joy even if they come with a hefty pay check.

Added to that is the sheer number of online videos about 'how I made millions from such and such a hobby'. It is quite astonishing to see how content of this type has soared as well as the number of hits that some of these videos get. This relentless promotion of working for yourself from these self-styled business experts that claim to have foolproof ways for all of us to make millions out of our hobbies is real clickbait.

What I want to know though is whether or not side hustles are too good to be true? When you think about the number of hours people are putting into these side hustles, one wonders whether they would be better off channelling their energy elsewhere in their lives.

It turns out that there are three main categories of side hustle. One is freelancing, that is selling your professional skills to companies for a fee determined by yourself. This is nothing new, but with the rise of online working, these people are able to be

digital nomads. The key to earning power is in the words 'professional skills'. Contrast that with the gig workers delivering food or using the family vehicle as a taxi. These people sit at the bottom of the side hustle ladder when it comes to income and do not get a snappy job title. Their existence serves as a reminder of how the idea of a side hustle being something desirable rather than necessary has been co-opted by tech start-ups and large corporations. Finally there is the entrepreneur who creates a scalable business from scratch and represents the ideal of this whole concept – while the risks may be high, the carrot of greater rewards is forever present and achievable for a few.

7.1

**I = Interviewer H = Helena
A = Anthony**

I: Today, we're talking to acclaimed film director, Antony Murphy, and Helena Fitzpatrick, an expert on psychology of film and lecturer at Central University. Both masters of mystery in their own way today, we hope to unlock the secret of why people love a mystery so much and what tricks are used to keep viewers hooked. So, Antony, some people call you the master of this genre, tell us how you keep the audience on the edge of their seats...

A: Well, in my films, there's one thing I want to give the audience, and that's suspense... that anticipation you have right before something happens. To get that as film-makers we've always got to keep something back and make the audience keep guessing what happens. We don't need to draw this out, it can be done in short sharp shocks. Think of a door opening – it's not the end result that excites us, it's the potential threat lingering behind that door.

I: And what makes us enjoy that so much Helena? It's not exactly pleasant, is it?

H: Well, science shows that this kind of suspense gives humans a physical pay-off too. When we watch a suspenseful film, we're actually micro-dosing ourselves with neurological signals that would be activated in a real-life emergency. This gives us a rush, but in controlled conditions, because thankfully we're highly unlikely to have to cope with the conditions we see on screen, and in the cold light of day, we know that too.

A: Yes, and these rushes should happen at set moments throughout a film too... and in the overall story arc. In films, you can't just rely on the story to create this effect. Music, lighting, timing all ramp up the tension. Film-makers are an old hand at using these effects these days, but sometimes they fall flat by over-maximising these tense moments, which can stop the audience caring. You've got to keep the stakes high ... know that the character might well end up in grave peril and hope they don't. The excitement can be tangible. Thrillers are THE genre that makes suspense such an incredible experience, and we as film-makers have got to be careful not to waste it. It's a whole other ball game from other genres like mystery

books, and their film adaptations. And I imagine the psychology is quite different too.

H: Mmm, it is. Although there is one common strand for both experiencing mystery AND suspense. Both offer a way to be absorbed by something that is far away from our own worries and this is what people enjoy in general, but whereas the audience are generally all squirming through a suspenseful film, with something like a detective novel, there is far less of that and much more mulling over all the possibilities. People tend to be attuned to information related to survival, and in a way trying to solve a mystery is a subconscious effort to hone this skill. Along with this is our inherent desire to know all the facts. That's also what keeps us hanging on with a mystery novel.

A: It's got to be quite tricky to write that kind of story, because the main event has usually happened before the start, and the whole story is the unravelling of the truth. It's a completely different approach to how we as film directors work in general.

I: And do you think that mystery and suspense ever has a negative side psychologically?

H: Well, yes, and one that's relatively novel. It's the rise of on-demand, series, or seasons as we now nearly ubiquitously call them. Watching a series like that can be quite a stressful activity. In the days of terrestrial shows, it was easy enough to avoid a spoiler, because each episode was aired at a certain time. Now, you can binge everything in one night, and spoil it for others around you sometimes unwittingly. Even if someone is just ahead of you, the speculation of who could or couldn't have been the culprit, suddenly becomes terrifying. I've inadvertently done it to other people and it drives me up the wall when someone does it to me... It's not generally a conscious activity. People sometimes try to avoid this kind of frustration by trying to steer clear of social media, and the overpicking of ideas, and even sometimes their friends, just in case they stumble across what's going to happen. As a psychologist, I would say that's not a particularly healthy recourse of action, but I think it's a very common one.

8.1

Speaker 1

Understandably, my job involves paperwork. It's vital that before any new requests for solar panels to be put on public buildings or offices are given the go ahead, the application has no legal loopholes. If companies get things right at this stage, it's far more likely that the permissions will be granted quickly further down the line. It stops the painfully slow progress of applications that we used to see. Before, after several months people would get requests for more documents and still be no further along in the process. Over the last couple of years there's been a marked increase in those that we've authorised. I get a real kick out of being able to tell companies that their project has been given the green light straight away.

Speaker 2

Rewilding projects are becoming more popular these days. But I'm constantly amazed at how many people are bitterly opposed to them around here. I'm forever getting emails from people in the local community who don't like the idea of leaving nature alone – which is what rewilding is all about after all. Unfortunately, all they see is a blot on the landscape, and trying to explain the environmental benefits to them doesn't make the slightest difference. Nonetheless, I'm firmly committed to the cause. I've noticed that in the last few talks I've given at the town hall, more people seem to be coming around to the idea, so at least that's a start.

Speaker 3

The national park suffers from a lot of forest fires, and prevention is our main focus of attention. Managing the ecosystem here is a delicate balance of a variety of strategies for all the team and I am involved in considering where the budget goes. It's a lot of analysis but it's never wasted as the insights I get help us decide how to use what we've got and where, so we get the most out of it. The only issue is that climatic conditions are so changeable these days that we have to review everything year on year. Often there are a couple of overriding concerns though and that helps with the decision making.

Speaker 4

Here at the Nature Society, we carry out a series of surveys every year to determine how well the local bird and mammal populations are managing in woodland habitats. Once I've laid out the objectives, the team gets to work. The scientific side of things is far beyond me I'm afraid, but my team are as competent a group as you'd find in any university research department. During the course of the surveys, the team works in conjunction with a local wildlife group. That's a real advantage because it gives us more eyes on the ground so to speak. They are genuinely concerned about the local wildlife and their data has been invaluable in informing a lot of what we do over the years.

Speaker 5

I don't know whether many people would find my job particularly stimulating, but I enjoy working on complex problems. And to be honest, figuring out how to reduce air pollution is tantamount to figuring out the size of the universe! I'm often in touch with the council. They provide me with all sorts of statistics and reports on air quality, as does the environment agency. In return, they get our insights on the most effective measures for the community as a whole. We ruled out pedestrianising the city centre last year in favour of congestion charging. Although highly controversial at the time, it has proved itself to be the better decision by a long way.

8.2

So, today I want to focus on the issue of household waste and when I say that, I mean the appliances and gadgets which we can no longer live without and the utterly disastrous effects that this throwaway culture we live in is having on the environment.

The problem of electronic or 'e-waste' is one that has been building up significantly and now we desperately need to get to grips with it as part of the ongoing fight against climate change. I would go as far as to say that we are currently living in what is tantamount to the era of waste rather than the era of technology since the world economy is, to a large extent, dependent upon it. The cycle of production, use and waste is constant and is repeated across almost all industries.

Even so, I want to stress that humans are not wasteful by nature. In fact, until very recently, (relatively speaking) the way in which humans were able to forage for food and materials from their surroundings, the way they would fashion rocks, wood, metal and what have you into reusable tools that could improve their lives, can best be described as extraordinarily resourceful. Part of this was due to having to use what was available locally, whereas today, innovations in transportation, which have dramatically sped up international trade, allow us to access materials easily and as a result, create and consume more.

It wasn't until the birth of the modern consumer lifestyle in the mid-20th century that we became passive over-consumers instead of active makers and menders. And yet here we are a few decades later in a world where most of the world's gold reserves can be found not underground as had always been the case, but in the vast number of electronic devices already in existence.

Now, let's talk about how modern products are made. Part of the problem these days comes down to a concept known as planned obsolescence, a modern term which refers to the idea of forcing customers to buy replacements by making products which are bound to fall to pieces after a short time, and which are difficult to repair. The rise of large factories and the rapid growth of corporations competing for a share of the market drove companies to sell things at cheaper rates too, thereby making it far less important for people to maintain their possessions as they could easily afford to go out and get a new one. This trend became especially prevalent in small consumer electronics and led us to the state we are in with e-waste.

Planned obsolescence is not a new phenomenon, but over the last couple of decades it has become more widespread, so much so that in France there is now a law which states that manufacturers must provide clear information on how to repair products. This is mostly due to the success of a company that started publishing free online instructions for repairing household products such as laptops and washing machines and who put pressure on governments to amend laws to remove planned obsolescence.

The future of electronic waste may well be based on a wholesale change in materials and processes. Using completely different materials is as attractive as upping the amount we recycle. For instance, rather than investing in ways of dealing with hazardous byproducts from devices, scientists and engineers are exploring ways to make some components from natural materials so that they either biodegrade or can be dismantled easily via a method known as e-processing. This means that materials could be artificially

grown and that destruction of natural habitats in order to extract metals could become a thing of the past. Currently the list of viable options for more sustainable manufacturing includes plants such as hemp, bamboo and seaweed all of which have a range of advantages over mined materials. Researchers are really excited about the future – they are convinced that the materials science and engineering are the key to improving the e-waste situation and bringing in a new era.

9.1

Architecture has an aim that diverges from art at some level because it involves pushing the boundaries of what it is physically possible to make when something has to be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing on such a vast scale. As such it presents far greater opportunities to shock and surprise, at times being a real eye opener into the creativity of the human mind. A quick glance around the world's most renowned buildings – be they ancient or modern – will confirm that the architects of these kinds of landmark buildings are extremely single-minded people, dead set on leaving behind some kind of legacy project or grand statement that might earn them a reputation for all eternity.

If I were to ask you to illustrate this point, no doubt you'd come up with some classics – the Colosseum in Rome, the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Sydney Opera House, the list goes on. But these buildings all have one common function in that they're designed for pleasure and entertainment and, as a genre, have been reimagined and reworked over and over. However, what we're going to home in on today, is the lowly office building, where many of us spend our days. As we will see, this is an area where architects have really blazed a new trail. The eye-watering costs of these buildings are clearly beyond all but the most ambitious or wealthy organisations and therefore it is no surprise that many are located in financial districts in capital cities. It is worth noting that these have been met with mixed reviews.

Take Lloyd's of London – considered by some to be the first step into innovative workplace architecture. Opened in 1986, its pioneering high-tech architecture can be seen in the fact that the building's services – including lifts, water pipes and staircases, are actually located on the building's exterior, opening up the interior and creating a space of breath-taking proportions. It reimagined what an office space could look like. However, with the plans having been drawn up with attention to function rather than form, it is perhaps unsurprising that the initial reception could be described as lukewarm at best. It was variously nicknamed an oil rig and a motorbike engine with some even going so far as to call it an eyesore. However, over the years the building has been embraced, being seen as iconic and a game changer of its time. In fact, it was granted Grade I building protection, affording it the same elite status as other key buildings and monuments in England, such as Buckingham Palace, the Royal Albert Hall and Nelson's Column.

Another fascinating example for us to look at is the F&F building, in Panama City, completed

in 2011. And look, it is in the shape of a corkscrew. What is particularly intriguing to note, is that the spiral design actually started out as merely a theoretical project by the architect company, but despite not having been intended as an actual building, it caught the eye of one the company's clients and the decision was taken to go ahead with this design. The building is covered in glass and so appears to shimmer in the sunlight and is really eye-catching. It is also remarkable insofar as its budget was relatively low for a building of this magnitude – \$50 million. Again, opinions are divided on its appeal, although this could be down to the fact that a considerable amount of the space has not been able to be rented out, so for some, it might be deemed a waste of money.

These buildings seem to have been more controversial than their cultural counterparts that I mentioned earlier like the Guggenheim, and these could also be described as not fitting everyone's ideas of great design, although it's not altogether clear why this should be. Anyway, both these buildings are definitely imposing, intended to communicate the expertise of their designers in addition to the success and dominance of the companies that are located in them.

Let's now compare those with this one which I'd say is much more whimsical – the office of the National Fisheries Board of India in the city of Hyderabad, which was based on Frank Gehry's Golden Fish in Barcelona, although it possesses none of his trademark flowing design and is instead an altogether more simple representation of a fish. Motives for a design like this? Well, I suppose it offers employees who would otherwise be stuck working in some bland, nondescript government building an element of fun, or perhaps a topic for the watercooler, but I wonder what you think of this. Do you think its novelty value will wear off in the future? Is it liable to date quickly and require a revamp or replacement?

9.2

- 1 At some level architecture has an aim that diverges from art.
- 2 so, instead of showcasing a building that might earn its designers both money and a good reputation, it could be deemed a waste of money.

9.4

O = Olga E = Edward

O: So, the working life of a reproduction artist must be quite rewarding? I mean, having a studio chock full of masterpieces from throughout the ages – is it like being immersed in the sum of all western art day in day out?

E: At times you could say so, and while I know it does sound fantastically creative and a bit risqué, it's driven by the tastes of my clients who mostly tend to commission typically populist things, which essentially can be quite dull. You know, those paintings which despite having been lauded by critics over the years are actually not that difficult to do – between you and me I can knock out a Klimt or a Monet in no time, but I'd far rather be presented with something

that I could get my teeth into a bit more, something very technically demanding that needs some real thought put into it.

O: Yes, I can totally see where you're coming from. Essentially, it's like when people ask me to stick a vase back together that's just some old family heirloom with only sentimental value. It's hardly a ringing endorsement of my finely honed technical skills. What I really want is to have someone bring me something which entails getting out my microscope and chemical testing kit, not a tube of super glue.

E: For me, the bottom line is people just want to look at a painted version of their favourite painting, because of the kudos of having an actual piece of art in the house, even if there were no way it could be an original. The whole technical prowess part of my job doesn't interest the average buyer either. Then it all becomes more of a chore than a pleasure since, like you, I don't feel like I'm being stretched – it's more like a paint by numbers gig and now and again I feel like telling them to get a print offline.

O: I can imagine! My situation is slightly different in that I'm more embedded within large organisations. They can be pedantic in their requirements, but a technical challenge is almost always there. Especially when working with pigments that have a complex, historical and lengthy production process or certain types of canvas.

E: And how do you go about the research for something like that? How much leeway are you given in terms of time allocated and where do you even start?

O: Well, often I'm part of a team working on a collection and at the outset there'll be at least one art historian and a chemist or forensic art expert tasked with working this out. Sometimes we work to deadlines, but more often than not it's contingent on the problems we uncover as we go along. Working out how to cope with something we hadn't foreseen can mean the deadline goes out the window. For large museums and country houses or palaces, getting it right is paramount so actually they're usually quite generous. The objects restored have to be historically accurate before they are allowed to go on display to the public.

E: Mmm. I see. I'm not sure I'd be any good at heading up that kind of project, I wouldn't like to be constantly juggling so many bits and pieces, but the team aspect sounds nice. As it stands my job can be a bit solitary – you know, isolated up in the studio for hours on end, not that I'm complaining. I'm not sure I want someone around all the time, but I'd often quite like to be able to get someone to cast an eye over what I'm doing when I'm painting something like a Rembrandt. You have to painstakingly layer on the colours and gradually build it up – it's quite time-consuming and tiring and you can lose focus if you're not careful. Obviously, you have the option of going back and correcting what you've done but I find that disrupts my flow.

O: Yes, I see what you mean. With what I do, there's quite a lot of stop start since we're working on small parts of a painting rather than the whole thing at once. It's vital to

regularly step away from the microscope to check what we're doing fits in with the work, and we haven't accidentally made a section look out of place. Anyway, going back to the time issue, what about your clients – do they have reasonable expectations as to what is achievable in their timeframe? How do you go about managing this?

E: I have a fairly reliable approach actually, which always works, which is to meet with the customer and talk through timescales and prices, but I have an ace up my sleeve! I show them three examples of the same painting – one which took a couple of days to complete and the others which took a couple of weeks and a month respectively. They soon get the picture so to speak.

10.1

Speaker 1

The recording should have been straightforward since we'd contracted an experienced freelancer, so we only had the studio for two days. The author, some up-and-coming novelist who was on the radar of the literary magazines, decided she wanted to come to the recording, which I thought would be a nice touch. Well, it was an utter disaster; she kept interrupting the voice artist to explain how she wanted certain lines delivered. This obviously didn't go down well, and they went back and forth bickering about it for hours. At the end of day one, we'd barely even finished the first chapter. I had no one to blame except myself though and next time I won't get carried away with any notions of bringing people together to collaborate on an audiobook and will just get it done.

Speaker 2

I had reservations at the outset to be honest. The network had gotten itself all worked up about a movie version of Gina Lee's latest novel and asked me to write the screenplay. I suppose I was flattered even though it was a daunting task to say the least. Anyway, one day, all of a sudden, production halted, and we were all sent home. Only later did I discover that they'd gone way over budget on the CGI and the investors had pulled out so, the whole thing was shelved. But at least I now know that, were I to ever get asked to be involved in something similar, I should just walk away – it's not worth the stress regardless of any promises of potential box office fortunes.

Speaker 3

Had I known how it would end up, I would have definitely approached things differently. It turns out that subtitling is actually really technical, but we wanted to avoid having to hire a load of dubbing actors. With all the characters in the film, it would have taken forever and been incompatible with our schedules. And the production team was pretty bilingual, so we went with subtitling instead, thinking it would be way less effort. But it soon became apparent that there's much more to it than meets the eye. Subtitling is all about where you split the sentences to fit logical sections on to the screen so that people can follow what's going on, but with these never-ending monologues from some of the characters

it was a nightmare and we had to get some actual closed caption specialists in to review everything at the last minute, which was unimaginably stressful.

Speaker 4

Never have I been involved in such a disastrous film adaptation of a book. As the lead scriptwriter I should have been more outspoken and dismissed their suggestions out of hand. I know that there's a place for artistic licence, but I should have stood my ground. I tried to warn the production team not to cast an actor with blond hair if they didn't want to alienate the legions of fans loyal to the book. For them the protagonist's flaming red hair is fundamental to his character. Then, inexplicably, they decided to omit the part where he abandons his homeland, the very part that drives most of the narrative. Instead, they gave the film a romantic slant for reasons best known to themselves. It's not surprising it bombed spectacularly at the box office.

Speaker 5

We wanted to stimulate good discussions amongst professionals in order to get the most accurate translation, so we had our translators work in mini groups of three for each language. We expected them to self-manage and were pretty hands off at the beginning. What we did not predict however, was such vastly different team dynamics and so our schedule went out the window as some teams got on with it while others went round in circles. Anyway, we acted fast and got two of our in-house project managers to step in and impose some kind of order. No sooner had they started coordinating the discussions than the production schedule got back on track, and we managed to publish the translations simultaneously in China, Brazil, Germany and Turkey.

10.3

- 1 Only later did I discover that they'd gone way over budget on the CGI.
- 2 Had I known how it would end up, I would have definitely approached things differently.
- 3 Never have I been involved in such a disastrous film adaptation of a book.
- 4 No sooner had they started coordinating the discussions than the production schedule got back on track.

10.4

S = Stefan C = Carla

S: As I see it, reading is the most valuable skill we can give our children. It's fundamental to getting on in life and I'm a firm believer in parents taking every opportunity they can to read with their kids.

C: Well, I'm not sure that forcing children to read more than they want to is particularly beneficial.

S: Um, sorry. What I meant to say was parents should read with their children often, but in a way that generates a love for it.

C: Ah, okay I see what you mean. You know it doesn't always follow that children who read a lot continue to do so as adults.

Reading can become more or less attractive at different times in our lives.

- S:** Hmm. Now you mention it, maybe it depends on the child and their circumstances. As you say, we all change our interests even as young children and adolescents.

11.2

C = Councillor W = Woman

M = Man I = Interviewer M = Matt

Extract one

C: We want our city to be the envy of the country, somewhere that people can look up to as a place ahead of its time. As such, we're inviting all residents to consult on our plans to raise the quality of life here for all residents via new technologies. Plans that past councils have woefully neglected to implement. The proposal we have encompasses a range of green, smart initiatives from monitoring pollution levels to wildlife counts, as well as creating 'green buildings' – spaces at one with nature and accessible to all. We're also proposing enhancements in cycling provisions around the city, like bike lanes and information on rentable bike availability which, we hope, will be an incremental step in making commuting not just easy, but carbon zero. We believe it is an exciting time for our city, but we want to narrow down your priorities as residents in terms of smart cities and that's where we need you. We'll be holding public consultations over the coming months, and everybody is welcome to air their views. There is a full proposal document which can be downloaded from the council website, so please do take a look and get to know our propositions in more depth.

Extract two

W: Look I've really had about enough of this centre, and I want you to do something about it for a change.

M: I'm so sorry to hear that. We've got a complaints form if you'd like to...

W: When I spoke to you before, you advised me to fill out a complaint form, which I did and I've heard zero back. I want some action here! Look at the place... it's littered with rubbish and it's all from your groups here. I don't mind you putting things on for the most vulnerable, but they shouldn't be lurking around outside at all hours. One of them even went off at an old man last week, I saw it for myself. No, it's not on at all.

M: Ah yes, I remember your form now. I've taken it to the manager, and she should be in touch with you about it. I'm sorry I can't help more.

W: Well, I should hope so too. And I'm not the only one... I'm sticking up for the whole community here. Everyone has had it up to here.

Extract three

I: Matt Reid, thank you for joining us today. So, for any budding transport planners out there, can you give us what you consider the most important factors when planning routes?

M: Good question. The paramount factor has to be safety, and planners like me have to anticipate any potential hazards – these could be blind spots, bottlenecks et cetera.. But after that, I suppose it's thinking about all the road users – not just car drivers... because people aren't very sympathetic towards a new route when it's more inconvenient. And no detail is too small when it comes to factoring in problems. Take for example the bridge that was added near the town hall. Lorry drivers were, understandably, up in arms about it because, well, while height was considered, the tunnel underneath couldn't fit wide loads.

I: That must be rather tricky!

M: Not really, nowadays we can model these kinds of things, which really takes the headache out of working out any unintended problems before they happen. The real uphill battle can be working with multiple stakeholders who all tend to have their own agenda... and these don't always meet in the middle. Fortunately, this has never resorted to full-blown arguments, but it hasn't always been pleasant!

12.1

I = Interviewer A = Alex

N = Nadiya

I: Today we're discussing access to hiking trails in our outdoor spaces and specifically national parks. With me are Alex Rogers from local community action group, Access All Areas, who advocate for improved access for people with disabilities, and Nadiya Thompson from the National Parks Service. Alex, let's start with you. Could you give us an outline of what the key issues are for disabled people in this particular context.

A: Sure. Our countryside is criss-crossed by a network of fantastic walking and hiking trails, many of which can be found in national parks, and yet the vast majority of them are completely inaccessible to those people living with disabilities. This is in contrast to many urban settings where provision is quickly becoming more widespread. I mean just think about public transport, municipal buildings, hospitality and tourism. These sectors have been making great strides in accessibility either due to legal obligations or for commercial reasons. It sends a positive message about inclusivity that is absent in our national parks.

I: Nadiya, how would you respond to that?

N: The National Parks Service is fully committed to improving accessibility and is working hard to implement positive changes in this area as soon as possible. We understand full well that disabled people have as much right as everyone else and are just as keen to get out and about in our beautiful natural spaces. In recent years complaints have been mounting up from groups such as yours, Alex, and after a lot of consultation with charities, local government and health experts, I believe we've now got a solid and workable proposal finalised which will improve access for wheelchair users,

as well as for people with other health conditions or impairments.

A: It's good to finally get this plan agreed, but it is a shame that it takes so much effort to move things in the right direction. Community action groups like mine have to constantly pile on the pressure and keep at it in order for change, however frustrating the process can be.

N: I appreciate your frustration Alex, but we are making progress. We've come a long way in the last decade, and I agree that we mustn't let up now. One of the largest obstacles that I think the National Parks Service faces is a lack of funding both government and private. What we're trying to do with our latest funding applications is highlight the benefits of spending time in nature and make it clear that the National Parks Service has a responsibility to provide access for all citizens. That's why we're now consulting people like Alex to help us present our case.

I: And do you think that this is a good approach Alex?

A: We have been trying to get more involved for some years now, so yes. However, there is not much that we can do when it comes to attracting investment. We can definitely continue to make the case for the health benefits though.

I: Is this a fair assessment of the situation in your view Nadiya?

N: In my view, yes, it is. We see the role of community action groups as more connected with campaigning and raising awareness among the disabled community. Their data gathering is also a valuable support.

A: We focus on encouraging participation; you know, taking groups of wheelchair users on a hike to give them the confidence they need to open their eyes to the possibilities. We want to urge them on to be more adventurous and challenge themselves through outdoor activities like hiking. More than just inspirational, their lived experiences can be very powerful at persuading people of the need to upgrade paths and trails so that they are wheelchair-friendly and cater for people with other disabilities, such as prosthetic limbs. We have started running workshops for the national parks service employees so they can learn about the achievements of disabled hikers in places with proper access. It's about getting everyone on board to change the mindset of wider society.

I: Yes, I see how they could be really meaningful to a lot of people. How have the parks service employees reacted to these workshops?

N: Very enthusiastically in all the parks we've tried them in. Working with Alex on this has not only been really enlightening but also given us a fresh perspective on why it's needed. Actually, among the national parks and other organisations that manage outdoor spaces, there are plenty of initiatives being thought up, but the key thing is that we have to actually go through with them and not just pay them lip service. Unfortunately, some of these

plans can lay idle on someone's desk, gathering dust while other things take priority.

- I:** Ah, right. And do you have any way of addressing this?
- N:** We're trying to make Alex and groups like hers more of an integral part of what we do.
- A:** And we are delighted to bring a raft of experience to the table.

0.1

N = Newsreader W = Woman

M = Man I = Interviewer

Mi = Minister

Extract 1

N: The city centre is seeing its fifth day of gridlocked traffic thanks to the closure of the south side of the inner ring road. The road is closed to allow repairs to the tarmac to take place. However, residents only learned about this closure through social media posts of photos as the cones were put in place to block off entrance and exit points to the road. The council had said that the roadworks were due to take place towards the beginning of last month, and duly notified city residents, but due to issues with materials, this had to be delayed. No further updates were issued however. Local residents, hauliers and taxi drivers are only some of the groups to have severely criticised what they consider to be the council's ineptitude, inundating their offices with calls of complaint. In a statement to us this afternoon, the council, while explaining the necessity of the works, remains defiant in the face of the complaints of citizens. A response which will almost certainly leave citizens wanting further answers.

Extract 2

- W:** Did you see the news last night? They had scenes from all over the US – it appears that the cold snap has really hit them hard.
- M:** It's incredible really, how the infrastructure there just isn't prepared for extreme weather. Especially as blistering cold weather isn't really anything new for them.
- W:** Well actually, I read that apparently these acute cold weather events are getting fewer and further between, so maybe that's why it's caused so much havoc. I mean, why plan for the unexpected? It's really the animals I feel sorry for rather than us humans...
- M:** Really? I hadn't even considered that. I suppose they must really be feeling it...
- W:** No doubt... Most animals are accustomed to being in the elements, which is the last place to be at the moment, so a lot of them are in a bad way, even those that are built to deal with the cold. I think most animals tend to retreat as winter approaches, but they simply aren't equipped for what can come out of the blue. Poor things. Lots of volunteers have been out there lending a hand, but, needless to say, they can't get to them all.

Extract 3

- I:** So, today, you're announcing a new housing scheme. Tell us about it, and why you think this is adequate to address the

real long-term housing problems we're facing in this country?

Mi: We think this scheme is an ideal way to deal with the issues we have with housing at the moment. Basically, our towns have been laid to waste in recent decades following the influx of people to the core cities, and we want to regenerate these areas. Anyone with empty housing in these places can apply for a grant to restore their property, improve its energy efficiency and basically give it a new lease of life. Making these places more attractive would eliminate the need to keep building on our green spaces, and now in the days of remote working, towns, not just cities, are a much more viable offering.

- I:** But why not tackle the real problem head on by investing in our cities and the lack of affordable and decent accommodation?
- Mi:** We mustn't be too city centric in our thinking. Policies also exist for our cities, they have been fruitful, especially recently.
- I:** And do you really think that people will flock from cities into these, might I call them, deserted towns? Being a pioneer in a place with limited services hoping for better days doesn't sound ideal to me.

0.2

Thank you for inviting me here today to talk about new and inventive ways people are harnessing energy, which I hope some of you might adopt. In modern life, energy has become somewhat of a predicament for both individuals and countries, as costs of energy prices soar, and the environmental costs of energy production become increasingly obvious. But this does not necessarily need to be the case, and research into non-traditional energy production is coming on leaps and bounds with solutions showing great inventiveness, both in small- and large-scales which are either ready, or almost ready, to deploy.

Let's start with a case study. You might not think of the force of gravity as a viable energy source, but surprisingly, it is used in the production of energy in some forms and has much higher reliability than solar or wind energy, as it is a constant. It has been put to use in some localised projects to make a huge difference to certain groups of people. Take for example, the GravityLight in Kenya, a device which is bringing light to homes which are normally off-grid, and doing it, safely and cost-effectively. Where they once used kerosene to power their lighting, they are now doing it with rocks linked to a dynamo with a pulley system. It may be a small amount of power that is generated, but it's making a real difference to communities in far flung areas, especially as running costs are virtually non-existent. And there is no reason why this couldn't be scaled up. In fact, there are some companies that are considering gravity, in terms of energy storage this time, on a much larger scale, so it seems as if this is just the tip of the iceberg for its potential.

The next step for small-scale energy production might lie in exploiting the kinetic energy we generate all around us. In the UK, there are smart panels in some pavements to capture the energy of the pedestrians, channelling it into the streetlights. In Japan,

some nightclubs are using similar techniques but on their dancefloors. This kind of energy could change our daily lives as we know it, perhaps for example to the point where we are using our fingers as a charging device every time we send a text message or scroll on our mobiles. That could also mean that we never run out of battery again!

Now these are great inexpensive energy sources, but, while having potential for expansion, at present they are localised projects. However, there is one rather unusual resource which involves the adaption of an existing energy source – solar energy – and this could be a game-changer. While solar energy is considered, and quite rightly, as one of the green energies, it's not as perfect as it at first seems. The actual construction of the panels is where the problem lies, because of the need for silicon as a conductor in the panels, which is neither cheap nor particularly environmentally friendly due to its energy-intensive production process. The replacement scientists are working on for this actually comes from a creature of the deep – the jellyfish. A specific protein is being developed that is derived from the green fluorescent protein, or GFP, contained in jellyfish that gives them their distinctive glow. This protein reacts to UV light which in turn activates electrons... mirroring the kind of process that happens in solar panel energy. Scientists have the ability now to artificially create this protein, so there is little reason why this couldn't be commercially sold in the form of solar panels, and also deployed as bio cells floating in the ocean, collecting power whenever the sun shines.

These are just some of the ways that our traditional sources of energy can be complemented, or even replaced over time, both on a local and global scale. As I mentioned at the start, it's an exciting time for energy, as talented young scientists are shooing away finite generators of power to look to things that are abundant and limitless in our natural world. And this is essential if we are to counter the challenges that climate change, limited resources, and population growth, present to us.

0.3

I = Interviewer K = Kevin J = Julia

- I:** Today I'm joined by town councillor Kevin Eastwell and conservationist Julia Wright to talk about a much-loved household pet that's causing some controversy here in New Zealand at the moment... the cat. So, Julia let's start with you. Enlighten us on the problem. Surely everyone loves a cat.
- J:** Thank you, Dan. And yes, cats are close to our hearts, that can't be denied, but we shouldn't be blind to a much more significant issue they bring about – the elimination of a variety of species, particularly birds, here in the country. All countries have to protect their native species, but for New Zealanders the need is so much stronger, because whereas other countries may be able to repopulate depleted species by bringing the same species in from other countries, they just don't have that luxury as many of their

species are completely unique to their country. Cats are great pets, sure, but they're also predators, and they've killed off more than eleven bird species in New Zealand.

K: But let's make it clear that we're talking about feral cats, not the common domestic cat we find within homes, and while I do accept there is a sensitive problem to deal with here, we need to be careful not to demonise those with cats. I'd say nine out of ten of them already take their responsibilities as owners seriously.

I: But let's backtrack a moment...how has this occurred? I mean, it's common knowledge that cats kill birds... but are they actually responsible for killing off whole species of birds?

J: What you need to take into consideration here is how unique this country is. Never historically being home to mammals, unlike other countries, the bird population flourished. However, with very few threats to counter, they didn't cultivate the necessary survival skills for living amongst the varieties of life that have now been introduced. So, for example, a cat finds a bird and in other places that bird just flies away, hopefully, but some of their birds can't even fly!

K: This isn't a modern problem though as far as I'm concerned. It's been taking place over centuries since humans first populated the islands. Take for example the Lyall's wren, a bird which thrived in New Zealand, well, up until the first human settlement in the 13th century. Then fast forward to the start of the 19th century and this bird population was all but wiped out on the main islands. Numbers had dwindled to just a colony on St Stephens Island.

J: But, much later, when that became home to a lighthouse, with a cat that produced more feral cats, that was another nail in the coffin for the Lyall's wren, so to speak.

I: So, what can we do about this?

K: Well, I imagine Julia has much more drastic ideas than I do on what needs to be done. For me, it's fundamental to respect and protect the rights of our citizens, and as a nation where almost half of us are cat owners, we shouldn't bombard them with restrictions and make cat owning a headache. What we DO need to do, I believe, is to agree on a working system for the reduction of feral cats, which are the main problem, but this should be nationwide, not a localised initiative, as I'd argue the major damage is done in rural areas.

J: I'm sorry, but for me that's just burying your head in the sand and ignoring the simple fact that cats travel. Certainly, we shouldn't outlaw pet ownership, but we've got to cut this problem off at the source. The issue with household cats is twofold – of course they are predators themselves, but the fact that feral cats are born from household cats is the real nettle we need to grasp. Only around 90% of cats are spayed or neutered and that is 10% too low, especially when there's more than one cat within the home – and for me this is what needs to change,

or at the very least cats that are within that 10% need to stay indoors.

I: Is that a policy you see working?

K: Not for the residents in my town, I'm afraid, and I agree with them. We mustn't restrict freedom of choice and most importantly, we shouldn't scapegoat the household cat when the issue is far more complex. There are plenty of other predators affecting our wildlife that I think we should prioritise over this issue.

I: So, what is being done about the predator threat in general?

J: Well, there's a programme called Predator Free 2050, aimed at eradicating rats, stoats and possums, considered by some to be their most dangerous predators, which has received widespread backing from numerous areas. It is undeniably a noble cause, but one that would do well to stretch its ambitions by including feral cats. Nobody knows the feral cat population in the country, but it is estimated at around 2.5 million, and that is 2.5 million too many.

0.4

Speaker 1:

Ultramarathons are so much more than an endurance sport for me. There's no doubt to everyone around me that I'm a competitor that basically eats, sleeps and breathes the challenge. I think that's because people underestimate what ultramarathons are about and just train physically, but you've really got to be meticulous in your mental preparation. For example, nutrition is of the utmost importance when training for these events as being in peak condition not only externally, but internally too is an absolute must. To run a normal marathon, it's enough to be in shape, but an ultramarathon takes discipline, for months beforehand as well as during the race. This is something that catches people unawares but without a doubt it's the key to the finish line.

Speaker 2:

Occasionally I moonlight as an ultramarathon training guide where I train women like me to prepare for the experience. I became instantly hooked on ultramarathons after my first one, which took place in the Himalayas and was such a mind-blowing experience. My colleagues mostly think it's a ludicrous hobby, but I just love having a crack at things that are a little out of my league. In my talks, I make sure people know what they've let themselves in for, and, I know this might sound contradictory, but prepare yourself for a few curve balls. Carefully planned packing is essential as the most minute detail can make such a difference, but despite everything that you do you can't tell until you're out there, which is half the excitement.

Speaker 3:

One of the most common beginner training errors is focusing on just distance, but focusing on speed, particularly running slowly, is necessary too, constantly monitoring your heart rate so it's not elevated. What I'd have given for someone to have mentioned that before my first ultramarathon, and unfortunately also my first 'did not finish'.

Now, I understand that only a fine-tuned approach will get results, but that's also the joy of them... the constant progression. Now, I look to not only my physical program, but the course layout, poring over it meticulously for any red flags as this is crucial if you don't want to be in agony. And next time, to avoid the dreaded problem of getting sand in my running shoes, I'll definitely be tying plastic bags around my feet!

Speaker 4:

Having just finished my first ultramarathon last year, I'd say the experience was rather bittersweet, and to be honest, I feel like it could be my last. The preparation was tough enough, but I really had no idea what I was in for. I tested myself to the limits, at points on my hands and knees and in tears, but no matter what, I kept going to the very end and I'll always look back on it with a unique sense of accomplishment, without forgetting how tough it was. To anyone thinking of doing an ultramarathon, well, I'd say you've got to be a particular type of human being, one that can reckon with themselves in the darkest moments. While some competitors can do this, I, and many others, just aren't equipped for it.

Speaker 5:

I don't know where I'd be without ultramarathons as I completely relish the challenge that each one has presented whatever they throw in my path. Having struggled on a jungle night course after breaking a toe, very little can faze me now, neither at work or at home, and I'm hoping that will only continue. What people often don't tell you about ultramarathons is the likelihood of hallucinations, which has happened to me a few times. It's hard to counter this, but maintaining a high level of fluids is important, then try not to get sleep deprived, and rely on the other runners if you do have an episode because the teamwork can be incredible, and they'll always help you get through.

0.5

I = Interlocutor S = Sofia
M = Mario

I: Good afternoon. My name is Helen Walker and this is my colleague Scott Harrison. And your names are?

S: My name is Sofia.

M: I'm Mario.

I: Could I have your mark sheets please? Thank you. First of all, we'd like to know something about you. Where are you from, Mario?

M: I'm originally from Rome, the capital of Italy, but a few years ago I moved with my family to a town on the coast.

I: And you, Sofia?

S: I come from Jerez, in the south of Spain. It's a beautiful town and very popular with tourists.

I: Are you working or studying at the moment?

S: I'm halfway through a degree in Engineering, and right now I'm on an internship at a construction firm. I'm really enjoying it so far.

I: And you?

M: I've just finished university and I'm going on a year abroad. I'm actually leaving in two weeks!

I: Sofia, what made you decide to study English?

S: Most people study English in Spain from the age of five upwards, but not many people continue for as long as I have. When I realised I wanted to be an engineer, I knew I wouldn't be able to do it without English, so I've continued. It's an essential skill for me, as lots of Engineering journals are in English, and Engineering is also a field which is quite international. English is nearly always the language of any international projects in this area.

I: And Mario, what do you enjoy about where you live?

M: Well, as I said, I moved a while ago. My parents moved because my mum got a new job, and now we're in a coast town... coastal town. It's much more relaxed than city life, and it's easier to travel around. I can walk everywhere, so I guess that's what I like most.

I: Thank you.

0.6

**I = Interlocutor S = Sofia
M = Mario**

I: Now, in this part of the test you're going to do something together. Here are some pictures of people in different situations. First, I'd like you to look at pictures one and two and talk together about how these people might feel. You have about a minute for this, so don't worry if I interrupt you.

M: Well, in picture one they look pretty happy, but they seem exhausted too, don't you think?

S: Yes, it looks to me as if they've just completed a marathon. I think marathon runners, or long-distance runners at least, get those kinds of blankets when they finish a race.

M: Yes, I think they do ... and they've got medals too!

S: They must be feeling an immense sense of achievement I imagine. Both of them.

M: Why do you think that? Because it's a difficult thing to do?

S: Yes, but also because they must have trained quite hard. It's something that takes a lot of time and effort to achieve. And also, you can tell, not just by the medals but also by their expressions, that they've done something they are very proud of and pleased about!

M: Hmm.... and image two reminds me of when I'm playing with my niece! They both look really happy. What kind of relation do you think the little girl is to the man?

S: It's hard to tell, but they definitely look like family to me. It seems to me that the man feels overjoyed to be around the child, and they clearly have a close relationship. Perhaps it's a family member like an uncle who hasn't seen his niece for a long time and they're both delighted to be in each other's company. What do you think?

M: Yes, it could be.

S: It could even be a father and daughter, and this is just an everyday occurrence – where they play and really enjoy just being together. I say that because I could totally imagine that being me and my father when I was little.

I: Thank you.

0.7

**I = Interlocutor S = Sofia
M = Mario**

I: Now, I'd like you to imagine that a lifestyle magazine is planning an article on the theme of personal achievement. They want a picture to accompany the article. Talk together about the ways in which these activities contribute to personal achievement, as shown in these pictures. Then, decide on which image you think would be best to use. You have about three minutes to talk about this.

M: It's an interesting subject, isn't it? For me, it's very obvious in picture four that it is about personal achievement. She's a young woman, and the picture indicates that she's just bought a house.

S: Yes, she looks very pleased. It's not surprising.

M: I think those are the keys of the house... the house keys. That's something to be proud of, don't you think?

S: Yes, especially being so young. That makes it quite a significant achievement. She looks over the moon to me.

M: Yes, she does. Let's look at image three maybe.

S: I don't think I'd use picture three as I can't really see how it's related to achievement. What's your opinion?

M: Yes, I'm not sure either. It looks like they are rehearsing for a play.

S: Maybe it's about writing a play or being an actor.

M: Well, being a famous actor would probably be quite a good achievement.

S: On second thoughts, it could be about getting outside of your comfort zone. After all, not everyone likes being up on stage. But maybe we should rule that picture out anyway.

M: Yes.

S: I mean, the link between the picture and the topic of the article isn't immediately obvious. I'm not very keen on two either.

M: Really? Why not?

S: I don't know. I suppose it's just a bit vague. I mean, can you "achieve" having a family?!

M: Hmm.... I see what you mean.

S: Also, even if it's just a relative playing with a child, I'm not sure that's really about achievement. In my mind, that would be more about contentment in your life. You don't really achieve being an uncle, do you? It's not something you do.

M: No, I suppose not. For me, it's between one and four.

S: Yes, I'm torn between the same two. They are just more obviously linked to what the article's about.

M: If I had to make a decision, then perhaps

I'd go for picture one. The one thing that stands out for me is that they've done something... challenging... and their sense of happiness. Also, sometimes people do these kinds of things for charity. I think that's an even bigger achievement!

S: Yes?

M: Yeah, because they are doing something hard, but for other people.

S: Well, let's go with that then. I agree with you. Picture one is probably the best for the article. I think it's got the most global appeal, rather than the others that just focus on certain sections of society. People can buy houses because they've got rich parents, or win some money. It's not always like an achievement, it can be down to luck essentially, whereas running a marathon is different.

M: Yeah, anyone can do it, and it's something that requires dedication and determination. One hundred per cent.

I: Thank you. Can I have the pictures please?

0.8

**I = Interlocutor S = Sofia
M = Mario**

I: Now, in this part of the test you're each going to talk on your own for about two minutes. You need to listen while your partner is speaking because you'll be asked to comment afterwards. So, Sofia I am going to give you a card with a question written on it and I'd like you to tell us what you think. There are also some ideas on the card for you to use if you like. All right? Here's your card. Please let Mario see the card. Remember Sofia, you have about two minutes to talk before we join in. Would you like to begin now?

S: I think competition can be a double-edged sword. There are lots of advantages and disadvantages to competition in all walks of life. In my opinion, in terms of sports, the sense of competition is the main reason that people like to take part and train so hard too. It spurs them on to be the best in their field. I mean, would we ever have had so many records broken if people didn't want to win against others? I'd probably say no. Also, it would make for pretty boring TV too, if sports had no sense of competition. Could you imagine a football match without scoring goals?! Who would watch that?

Competition at work, well, I think that's a bit different. People are usually competitive in jobs because they want to get promoted or get noticed and by that I mean getting noticed for the right reasons, instead of getting noticed for doing something wrong. But, I'm not sure it's the best attitude to have in the workplace. In many jobs, being a team player is an important skill and I think more competitive people aren't always great team players. On top of that, at work, being very competitive can be quite selfish, I believe. People can do all sorts of things to get one up on their colleagues... it's not a very nice trait. No, I'm not really sure I see the benefits of workplace

competition. I know I'd like to just be happy at work, not trying to be better than the rest and vying against my workmates all the time.

I also see no reason why anyone would want to compete with their friends for anything at all. I'm not a competitive person and my friends aren't either. In fact, we support each other as much as we can. I'm always borrowing things from them and giving and asking for advice. Overall, I think it's a much better way to be.

I: Thank you. Mario, are you a competitive person?

M: Yes, I suppose a little. I do a lot of swimming, and although I do it for me personally... because I enjoy it, I also find the competition side very exciting. I was quite competitive at school too with my exam results... always comparing them against my friends. But I always wanted my friends to do well too. I think just a small dose of competition is probably a good thing. It makes us try harder.

I: How about you?

S: No, not really. I suppose in some areas I am maybe a little bit competitive. I've entered a few competitions online to try to win things, like concert tickets, but I never have. I'm not a very sporty person so those kinds of competitions aren't really my cup of tea.

I: Thank you. Now, Mario, it's your turn to be given a question. Here's your card. Please let Sofia see your card. Remember, Mario you have about two minutes to speak and there are some ideas on the card to use if you like. All right?

M: Ohh! I find this question interesting. As someone who does sports myself, I'm quite a big fan of large events like the Olympics or the World Cup. In terms of benefits, well, I think there are...is... an overwhelming amount of benefits to these kinds of sporting events. To start off with, they provide amazing entertainment for people all around the world. You just need to look at a World Cup for example, and see the happiness in the faces of the fans on the screen. I truly believe people at home feel the same way. I know I do. I think these events also encourage people to have a more international outlook. Viewers often become interested about the host nation and want to know more about them. I remember when the Olympic games were held in Rio in Brazil, and my uncle and his friends went to it and came back telling incredible stories of what Rio was like. I think we could call him a... Brazilophile after that experience. But you don't need to go there in the flesh to see that kind of thing.

Normally the coverage on TV shows, not just sporting things, but cultural elements too, and we can all learn something from that.

I would say that there aren't many drawbacks to these kinds of competitions. Some people might think that it causes some anti-social behaviours like when football hooligans get violent but I think this is isolated. In my view, international sporting events bring everybody together,

not pull them apart. I also imagine that it brings in a lot of money to the host country, and the people in the country too. Also, governments can turn a whole area around when a sporting event is coming to their country. Look at Barcelona. When the Olympics were there, the local government transformed some parts of the city and they've stayed this way.

I: Thank you. Sofia, do you think competition in sports in general is a positive thing?

S: To be honest, I'm not really sure. Some people have more sporting ability than others, and I'd imagine this would make them more competitive. I'd definitely say that people are competitive only when they've got a chance of winning. If someone is not evenly matched against another person, well this can be quite demotivating and depressing. So, it's not always positive.

I: What do you think, Mario?

M: Yes, I agree one hundred per cent. You can see this kind of thing in professional sports, when a team just gives up... not actually, but in their spirit because they're outmatched. But also in everyday life too... people who aren't sporty, aren't generally competitive and don't like it.

I: Thank you.

0.9

**I = Interlocutor S = Sofia
M = Mario**

I: Now, to finish the test we're going to talk about competition in general. Do you think more competitive people tend to be more successful than people who aren't very competitive?

S: Shall I begin?

M: Okay, sure.

S: Unfortunately, yes, I think that's quite often the case. The problem with very competitive people is that they will stop at nothing to get what they want, whereas less competitive people won't do certain things. I believe this means that competitive people often win over others.

M: That's quite a depressing thought but I see what you mean. I think that's why sometimes politicians do well. The ones who are more competitive tend to succeed.

S: Yes. The problem with competition is when it affects the person's morals. There's a big difference to just, for example, wanting to win a quiz, compared to desperately wanting to be more successful than the people around you, and doing this for example by... well... I think the series *Succession* is a good example of that. Have you watched the show?

M: No, but I've heard of it.

S: Well, it's about the children of a media mogul and how they do some really underhand things to ensure their own success in the business, often at the cost of one another. This is naked ambition, but I think that's just another form of being competitive.

I: Do we learn to be competitive or are we born competitive?

M: I think we learn it... thinking back to what we talked about in terms of sport. I think competitiveness is always there a little, but it's something that grows inside us if we think we've got a chance of winning. I wonder how much difference it makes whether you win or lose a lot in your early childhood. Perhaps the feeling you get if you lose often when you're young makes you less competitive in your adult years, just because it doesn't make you feel very good. What's your opinion, Sofia?

S: I would say that how competition develops in children often depends on their influences. So, for example, if their parents are competitive people and show them this mentality, then they are more likely to be like that themselves. Whereas some other people grow out of that early childhood sense of competition and start to focus on other things that perhaps they think are more important... like understanding others, sharing or kindness.

M: That's an interesting point. I definitely think your parents can affect how competitive you are too, but so can everybody. I don't know if it was the same for you, but we used to have sports days and quizzes at school where there would be winners and losers. Competition is everywhere, not just at home.

S: Yes, I do agree that there is competition in many areas, but I think whether your parents encourage it is still pretty important.

I: Do you think it's ever a good thing to compare yourself against other people?

S: Hmm... yes maybe sometimes it is useful. Perhaps it depends on the ways in which you compare yourself. If you have a role model, and you compare yourself to this, then I think that can be a good thing.

M: Yes, but... Well, perhaps it depends on the role model.

S: That's true. While it might be a good thing to compare yourself to, for example, Malala Yousafzai, the girl who stood up for her human rights. But comparing yourself to someone who just poses for photos on social media all the time might not be so great. It seems to me to be about the underlying factors that you are looking to compare yourself to. Looking to others in terms of a sense of morals or achievement, well, I think that's worthy. But constantly comparing your looks or clothes to someone... for me I find that a bit shallow.

M: Yes, and also it's something that most people can never live up to. You look at these people in magazines or on social media, but you can never have a body like them.

S: Absolutely. What we don't see is the amount of time in the gym, or all the work they have done on their bodies and faces!

M: We must be realistic.

S: Yes, we can't be copies of other people. For me, the most important thing to remember is that we are all unique, and we must be ourselves.

I: Thank you. That is the end of the test.

M: Thank you

S: Thank you.