

## 70 INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OPEN TO DEBATE



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# OPEN TO DEBATE 2

70 passages on diverse topics of international interest  
70 authentic and idiomatic conversations  
490 lively discussion questions

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## UNIT 01

### The Five Biggest Regrets before Death

**John:** Min-Ji, I heard that your grandfather passed away. I'm so sorry for your loss.

**Min-Ji:** Thank you, John. Well, he was 88 when he died, and he went peacefully.

**John:** Well, that's good to know. Did you talk to him just before he passed away?

**Min-Ji:** Actually, I did. I visited him in the hospital the day before he died.

**John:** Did he have any last words or memorable advice?

**Min-Ji:** Yes, he did. He said that he regretted working so hard during his life and not spending more time with family and friends.

**John:** Well, I'm sure that his generation had to work very hard just to make ends meet.

**Min-Ji:** Yes, that's true, but he reminded me always to spend time with those that I love.

**John:** That's very touching and sound advice.



- What are your biggest regrets?
- I have six regrets, including five that average people have, such as not being true to myself and working too hard.
- Then what is your last one?
- I should have gotten some life insurance! Then when I die, you would have some money.
- Why don't you do it now?
- It's too late.
- Oh, no. It's never too late! I will contact the insurance company and help you get some life insurance!

**W**hat regrets do dying people most often have about their lives? Fortunately, an Australian nurse named Bronnie Ware saw the value of trying to answer this question. She spent years caring for the dying and counseling them during the final weeks of their lives. She began to record their comments about their lives and any regrets that they expressed. Common themes surfaced among the patients' comments, and Bronnie recorded the top five themes in her blog. The top five regrets that people expressed were as follows:

(1) *Not being true to yourself.* Patients regretted that they had focused too much on what others expected of them and had left their own dreams unfulfilled.

(2) *Working too hard.* By focusing too much on work, patients were sad that they had missed much of their children's youth and their partner's companionship.

(3) *The courage to express your feelings.* Many people regretted that they had buried feelings of anger and bitterness inside them instead of expressing their views and dealing with issues head-on.

(4) *Distance between old friends.* True friendships are one of the most valuable possessions of life, and many patients regretted that they had let old friends slip away.

(5) *Loss of happiness.* Many people felt as though they had wasted too much time worrying and stressing about matters that were ultimately not so important. As a result, they had lost the feeling of pure happiness.

How can one avoid having regrets? One answer is to follow the advice of Steve Jobs: "For the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And whenever the answer has been 'No' for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something."

## What do you think?

- (1) Have you ever talked with an older person about their life regrets? What did they say?
- (2) Do you feel now that you are really fulfilling your own life's dream? Why or why not?
- (3) Do you spend as much time with your family and friends as you would like?
- (4) Do you feel as though you are working too hard, not hard enough, or just the right amount?
- (5) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your own level of happiness nowadays?
- (6) If you could change anything in your past, what would you change?
- (7) Mark Twain said, "A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." What did he mean?

## UNIT 02

### Dangerous Sports

**Kayla:** The Summer Olympics are coming soon! Are you excited Min-Seok?

**Min-Seok:** Yes, of course. I'm looking forward to the archery and volleyball competition.

**Kayla:** Yeah, I like those sports. The only sport that I don't like is boxing.

**Min-Seok:** Oh? Why don't you like boxing?

**Kayla:** I think it's just too brutal and dehumanizing. There have been over 2,000 deaths in the boxing ring since the early 1700s.

**Min-Seok:** Oh, wow! That's shocking. I had no idea.

**Kayla:** Yes, it's true. There's a list you can find on the Internet that names every boxer who died in the ring.

**Min-Seok:** Oh, that sounds so gruesome. I don't want to see such a list.

**Kayla:** Yeah, it's a morbid sport, and I think it should be banned altogether.

**Min-Seok:** Well, I've never thought about it that much, but maybe you're right.

Let's make the world safer!

The Olympics Swimming Committee is now demanding that every swimmer wear a life jacket to avoid any possibility of drowning.



In the sport of cycling, riders must use only tricycles to avoid falling down.

In the boxing ring, boxers need to take off their gloves so they don't suffer a concussion.

**A**t the age of 30, the boxer Peter Nebo was so battered both physically and mentally by that brutal sport that he was committed to a mental institution for the rest of his life. His friend, Manuel Velazquez (1904-1994), was sickened by what happened to Nebo, and he became a lifelong opponent of boxing. Velazquez began to compile an exhaustive list of all deaths that had occurred in the boxing ring throughout history. Though Velazquez died in 1994, the list continues and now contains the names of over 2,000 boxers who died in the ring since the early 1700s.

No boxing death was more tragic than that of the Korean Kim Duk-Koo (1955-1982). Kim grew up poor and worked odd jobs until he got into boxing in 1976. He compiled a record of 29-4 as an amateur before he turned professional in 1978. In 1982, he was scheduled to fight the American boxer Ray Mancini in a bout that was televised live on CBS. It was only his second time to fight outside of Korea. Before the fight, Kim was quoted as saying, "Either he dies or I die." For much of the fight, the two fought evenly in a very ferocious competition. Kim tore up Mancini's left ear and puffed up his left eye. Mancini's left hand swelled up to twice its normal size. However, in the latter rounds, Mancini began to dominate. In the 14th round, Mancini hit Kim with a hard right punch. Kim hit the ropes, and then his head hit the canvas. The referee stopped the fight and declared Mancini the winner by technical knockout (TKO). Minutes later, Kim collapsed into a coma and was rushed to the hospital. He died four days later.

The results of the fight were shocking. Mancini blamed himself for Kim's death and was never the same again. Three months later, Kim's mother committed suicide. The following year, the referee of the match also committed suicide. Sadly, the entire match can still be viewed on YouTube.

### What do you think?

- (1) Do you think that boxing should be banned as a sport due to its brutality?
- (2) Can you think of any other sports that are dangerous? Should they be prohibited?
- (3) Do you ever watch boxing matches on TV? Why or why not?
- (4) Have you ever watched an American football game? Do you think it is a barbaric game or just a normal competitive sport?
- (5) Do you think that YouTube should remove this ghastly boxing match from its website? Why or why not?
- (6) Would you want your child to learn how to box? Why or why not?
- (7) What do you think is the best sport for staying in good physical condition?

## UNIT 03

### Internet Addiction

**Yu-Ri:** Caleb, I think I have a problem. I need your advice.

**Caleb:** What sort of problem are you talking about?

**Yu-Ri:** I think my little brother is addicted to computer games. He's always playing this game called "World of Warcraft."

**Caleb:** Oh, I've heard of that. Don't your parents try to control his playing time?

**Yu-Ri:** Yes, they've made a strict schedule for him, but he secretly plays the game late at night when he should be sleeping.

**Caleb:** Oh, my! It sounds as though he is truly addicted. He needs to enter a detoxification program.

**Yu-Ri:** What does that mean?

**Caleb:** It refers to a process by which a person overcomes a physical or psychological dependency.

**Yu-Ri:** I see. Well, I don't know if we even have that kind of program in Korea.

**Caleb:** Oh, I'm sure there are such programs. Just search online for "National Center for Youth Internet Addiction Treatment."

**Yu-Ri:** Well, thanks for the tip!

What's happening?  
The monitor is sucking  
me in! Is this good or  
bad? Maybe I can join  
the game for real!



A life of luxury is  
possible on the flying  
carpet called Facebook!

Online shopping is based on  
timing. I have replaced one  
hand with a mouse so that I  
can shop more quickly and  
less expensively!

In 1995, when the Internet was in its infancy, a psychologist coined the phrase “Internet addiction.” Actually, he meant the term as a joke. Nowadays, however, Internet addiction is not a laughing matter. In 2013, Bradford Regional Medical Center in Pennsylvania opened the first-ever hospital-based Internet addiction treatment center in order to combat this increasing problem. Patients admitted to the program must have been diagnosed with a severe Internet addiction. They spend 10 days in the hospital, undergo an extensive evaluation, and experience a program referred to as a “Digital Device Detoxification Program.” During a period of 72 hours, they have no access to a smart phone, a tablet, or the Internet. Instead, they attend therapy sessions and educational seminars whose focus is keep compulsive behavior under control. Participation in the program does not come cheap. Participants must pay \$14,000 by cash or check at least 14 days prior to admission.

What is Internet addiction, exactly? Kimberly Young, a psychologist and founder of the program, defines Internet addiction by its consequences. Does a person’s Internet obsession interfere with the normal functions of life? She explains, “Like any other addiction, we look at whether it has jeopardized their career, whether they lie about their usage, or whether it interferes with relationships.” The addiction program does not try to stop addicts from using the Internet altogether; that would be unrealistic. However, they are taught how to use the Internet in a healthy way.

The stereotypical Internet addict is a young man who is highly intelligent. However, he usually suffers from low self-esteem, and he finds social interaction extremely challenging. The majority of addicts are obsessed with online games, such as “World of Warcraft,” or online pornography. They are not usually obsessed with social media sites such as Facebook. In real life, they have a poor self-image, but online they can become someone else and even find admiration for their skills in playing online games.

## What do you think?

- (1) Do you think a 10-day in-hospital program can cure Internet addiction?
- (2) What sort of treatment is available for Internet addiction in your country?
- (3) Do you know anyone who shows signs of being addicted to the Internet or other digital devices?
- (4) Which do you use more in a day, your smart phone or your computer?
- (5) How many hours per day do you spend being connected to digital devices? Do you ever feel addicted?
- (6) Do you ever play any computer games? Which ones do you play?
- (7) Could you endure 72 hours without any sort of digital device? How would you react?

## UNIT 04

### Road Rage

**Sarah:** Ji-Hoon, you won't believe what I saw today!

**Ji-Hoon:** What happened?

**Sarah:** I was on a bus, coming to work, and our bus sideswiped a car.

**Ji-Hoon:** Oh, that's terrible! Was anyone hurt?

**Sarah:** Fortunately, no one was injured. However, the driver of the car became enraged and tried to attack the bus driver.

**Ji-Hoon:** Oh my! Did he injure the bus driver?

**Sarah:** No, because the bus driver kept the bus doors closed. However, they were arguing through the bus driver's window.

**Ji-Hoon:** That's terrible!

**Sarah:** Then the car driver put his fist through the open window and tried to hit the bus driver.

**Ji-Hoon:** Didn't someone call the police?

**Sarah:** Yes, of course. The police came in a few minutes and questioned both drivers.

**Ji-Hoon:** What a harrowing ordeal!



You didn't yield! This is  
totally your fault!

Nonsense! You must be DUI.  
I'm going to call the police!

It's mine! I saw it  
first! Go away!

No way! Let's decide by  
flipping a coin!