

11 Life's little lessons

1 **SNAPSHOT**

rites of passage

Some important life events

- First birthday
(or first 100 days, as in Korea)
- First haircut/losing your first tooth
- First day of school
- Confirmation or bar/bat mitzvah
- Sweet 16
(or Sweet 15, as in Latin America)
- First job
- High school graduation
- 20th birthday
(or 21st birthday, as in the United States and Canada)
- Marriage
- Becoming a parent

Source: Peace Corps Handbook for RPCV Speakers

Which of these rites of passage, or life events, are important in your country? Check (✓) the events.

What are three other rites of passage for people in your country?

Have any of these things recently happened to you or someone you know?

2 **CONVERSATION** I was really immature.

A Listen and practice.

Alan: So what were you like when you were younger?

Carol: When I was a kid, I was kind of irresponsible.

Alan: You? Really? What made you change?

Carol: Graduating from high school.

Alan: What do you mean?

Carol: Well, until I graduated, I'd never had any important responsibilities. But then, I went off to college. . . .

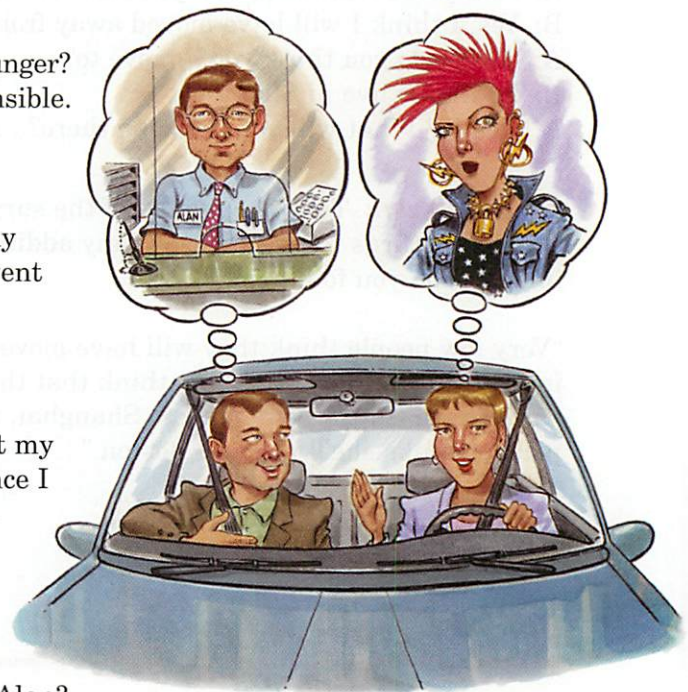
Alan: I know what you mean. I was really immature when I was a teenager.

Carol: So what made *you* change?

Alan: I think I became more mature after I got my first job and moved away from home. Once I had a job, I became totally independent.

Carol: Where did you work?

Alan: I worked for my dad at the bank.



B Listen to the rest of the conversation. What was another turning point for Carol? for Alan?

3 GRAMMAR FOCUS

Time clauses

Before I had my first job, I was really immature.

After I got my first job, I became more mature.

Once I had a job, I became totally independent.

The moment I moved away from home, I felt like a different person.

As soon as I got my own bank account, I started to be more responsible.

Until I graduated, I'd never had any important responsibilities.

By the time I graduated from high school, I had already started working.

A Match the clauses in column A with appropriate information in column B. (More than one answer is possible.) Then compare with a partner.

A

1. By the time I was 15,
2. Until I started working part time,
3. The moment I got my first paycheck,
4. As soon as I left home,
5. Once I started sharing an apartment,
6. After I began a relationship,
7. Before I traveled abroad,
8. Until I got really sick,

B

- a. I didn't appreciate my own country.
- b. I began to understand the value of money.
- c. I learned how to communicate better.
- d. I realized that I wasn't a child anymore.
- e. I had learned how to take care of myself.
- f. I learned how to get along better with people.
- g. I had never saved any money.
- h. I hadn't understood the importance of good health.

B Which of the clauses in column A can you relate to your life? Add your own information to those clauses. Then compare with a partner.

C Group work What do you think people learn from these events? Write sentences using time clauses in the present. Then take turns reading and talking about them.

1. you get your driver's license
2. you go out on your first date
3. you get your first job
4. you get a credit card
5. you buy your first bike, moped, or car
6. you have your own bank account
7. you get married
8. you become a parent

1. After you get your driver's license, you find out that all your friends want rides.



4 LISTENING *Important events*

A Listen to three people describe important events in their lives. Complete the chart.

Event	How it affected him or her
1. Sally
2. Henry
3. Debbie

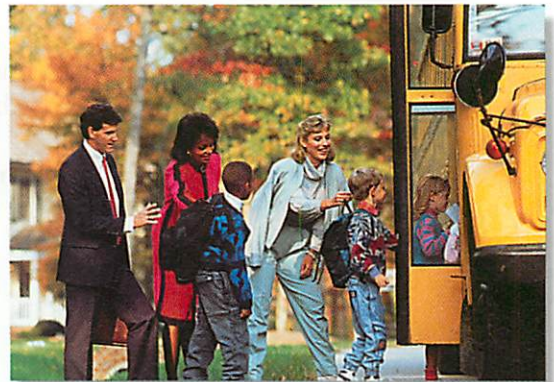
B Listen again. What do these three people have in common?

5 SPEAKING *Milestones*

A Pair work In your country, how old are people when these things happen?

go to school for the first time	get married
get a driver's license	become a parent
move out of the parents' home	retire

B Group work Think of two ways in which each event in part A is important. What do you think life is like before and after each event? Join another pair and discuss.



"Before I went to school, I was quiet and shy. Once I started going to school, I realized how exciting it was to be around so many other children!"

6 WORD POWER *Behavior and personality*


A Pair work At what age do you think people tend to behave in these ways? Check (✓) one or more ages for each behavior.

	In their teens	In their 20s	In their 30s	In their 40s	In their 60s
ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
argumentative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
carefree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
conscientious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
naive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
pragmatic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
rebellious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
sensible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
sophisticated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B Group work Take turns using words in part A to describe people you know.

7 PERSPECTIVES *I should've . . .*

A Listen to Maya Misery talk about her regrets.



“If I’d listened to my mother, I would have learned to play a musical instrument.”
 “I should have studied something more practical when I was in college.”
 “If I hadn’t been so irresponsible, I could have made better grades.”
 “If I’d been more ambitious in college, I could have learned to speak another language.”
 “I shouldn’t have waited so long to choose a major.”
 “If I hadn’t wasted so much money last year, I would have my own apartment now.”

B Do you have any similar regrets? What do you suggest to help Maya feel better?

8 GRAMMAR FOCUS

Expressing regret and describing hypothetical situations

Expressing regret

I **should have studied** something more practical when I was in college.

I **shouldn’t have waited** so long to choose a major.

Describing hypothetical situations

If I’d **been** more ambitious in college, I **could have learned** another language.

If I **hadn’t wasted** so much money last year, I **would have** my own apartment now.

A For each statement, write a sentence expressing regret. Then talk with a partner about which statements are true for you.

- I was very rebellious when I was younger.
- I didn’t pay attention to what I ate as a kid.
- I didn’t make a lot of friends when I was in high school.
- I was very argumentative when I was a teenager.
- I was too naive when I started looking for my first job.

1. I should have been more conscientious when I was younger.
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B Match the clauses in column A with appropriate information in column B.

A

- If I’d listened to my parents,
- If I’d been more active,
- If I’d been more ambitious,
- If I’d studied harder in school,
- If I’d saved my money,

B

- I wouldn’t be as broke as I am now.
- I could have learned a lot more.
- I would have made more pragmatic decisions.
- I wouldn’t be overweight.
- I could have gotten a promotion.

C Add your own information to the clauses in column A. Then compare in groups.

9 INTERCHANGE 11 *If things were different . . .*

Imagine if things were different. Go to Interchange 11.

10 PRONUNCIATION *Reduction of have and been*

A Listen and practice. Notice how **have** and **been** are reduced in these sentences.

I should ~~have been~~ less selfish when I was younger.
 If I'd ~~been~~ more ambitious, I could ~~have~~ gotten a promotion.

B Pair work Complete these sentences and practice them. Pay attention to the reduced forms of **have** and **been**.

I should have been . . . when I was younger. If I'd been more . . . , I could have . . .
 I should have been . . . in high school. If I'd been less . . . , I would have . . .

11 LISTENING *Regrets*

A Listen to people describe their regrets. Complete the chart.

What does he or she regret?	Why does he or she regret it?
1. Barbara
2. Alex
3. Yi-shun

B Listen again. What effect have the regrets had on each person's life?

12 WRITING *A letter of apology*

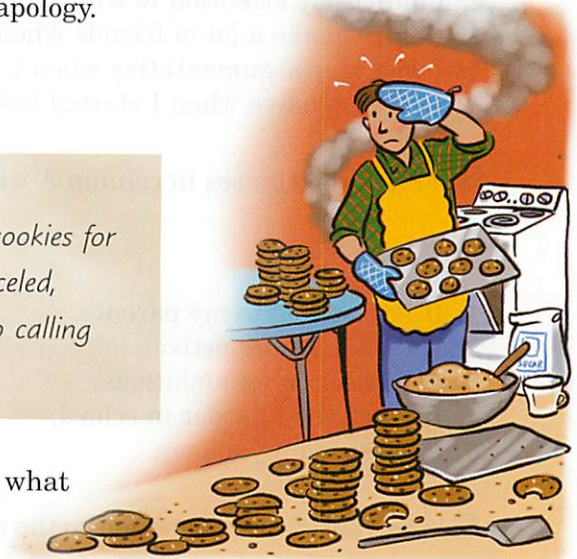
A Think about something you regret doing that you want to apologize for. Consider the questions below. Then write a letter of apology.

What did you do? What were the consequences?
 Is there any way you can undo those consequences?

Dear Jonathan,

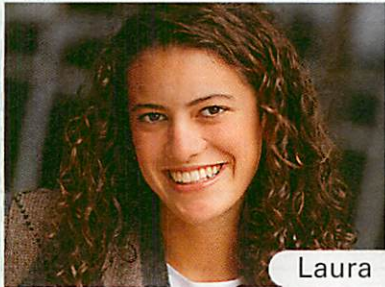
I'm so sorry you worked so hard making all those cookies for my party! I should've told you that the party was canceled, but I got really busy at work and didn't get around to calling everybody. If I'd been more conscientious . . .

B Pair work Read your partner's letter. Talk about what you would have done if you'd had a similar regret.



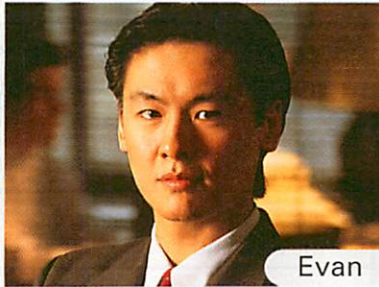
If You Could Do It All Again

Skim the article. Who wanted to be a teacher? Who wants to be a musician? Who wants to go to college?



Laura

After I finished high school, I just wasn't ready to go on to college. I really needed some time to figure out what I wanted to do. I had saved up a lot of money, so I used it to travel through Eastern Europe for six months. It was an amazing experience, and I learned a lot about myself. Once I got home, I was ready to start college. Now the only trouble is that I don't have enough money to pay for it! Before I decided to take such an expensive trip, I should have thought more pragmatically about my financial decisions.



Evan

By the time I was 22, I was the head of the public relations department in a major telecommunications company. Now I'm a vice president. I love the excitement, the status, the security, and the money. But sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and wonder, "What am I doing? Who am I?" When I was growing up, I always thought I would become a teacher or maybe an artist. Sometimes it seems like I have everything, and yet I have nothing.



Kelly

I started playing the violin when I was only five. By the time I was in high school, I knew I wanted to be a musician. Then last spring, I was chosen to participate in a summer music program in London! This was a huge honor that I wasn't expecting. Unfortunately, my brother's wedding was also planned for the summer. Of course, I couldn't miss the wedding, so I had to say "no" to London. Now I sort of resent that I couldn't go. Sometimes I think that if I'd been a little more selfish, I could have done both.

A Read the article. Then check (✓) the correct boxes to answer these questions.

	Laura	Evan	Kelly
1. Whose success could be described as . . . ?			
a. a financial success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. the courage to explore new things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. a commitment to family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Whose regrets could be described as . . . ?			
a. a missed opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. losing oneself to achieve success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. being shortsighted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Whose problem could be described as . . . ?			
a. a financial problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. feeling cheated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. feeling confused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B Group work Which of the three people seems the happiest? the least happy? Do you have any regrets about things in your past? What would you do differently?