

ISSUE 10

What's On Your Mind Now?

People seem to think about money more often than any other thing. Or they are obsessed with their looks. Maybe it's their love life that is uppermost in their thoughts. Frivolous things such as gossip, football standings, movies, music, games, and celebrities preoccupy a lot of folks. I suppose some ambitious people are focused on achieving success. And maybe a few concentrate on leading upright, moral lives, but these definitely seem to be in the minority these days.

What's on your mind?

- (1) Money
- (2) Appearance
- (3) Health
- (4) Improving relationships
- (5) Getting a promotion
- (6) Getting a new job
- (7) The in-laws
- (8) The future
- (9) Skill acquisition



Sample Answers

(A) What's wrong with being worried about how I look? It's a *known fact* that the so-called beautiful people get the best jobs, make the most money, find the best mates, and are the most popular, no matter how well they do in school. So any time I put into improving my appearance is just a good investment in life. If others think I'm *vain*, that's their problem; they're probably just jealous anyway.

(B) I don't think I have just one thing on my mind at all. Like other people, I go from subject to subject throughout the day. At work, I concentrate on my job. When I'm with my friends, we are concerned with our mutual interests. When I'm by my myself, *my thoughts wander* over many fields: sometimes I worry about mistakes I made, sometimes I think about what I need to do to get ahead, sometimes I'm not much interested in anything at all. We don't really have any control over the contents of our thoughts; our brains just randomly surf across whatever *stimuli* they happen to encounter.

Speak Your Mind

1. What is the most *urgent* thing for you to do now?
2. What should you accomplish this year?
3. What is your 10-year plan?
4. What is the ideal retirement situation?
5. What would your next job be if you had a choice?
6. What are your most pleasant memories?
7. What are your worst memories?
8. Do your relatives give you headaches or happiness?

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M : I feel very lucky to have the in-laws I do. Sometimes I think they care more about me than my real parents do.

F : You are lucky indeed. I don't think my in-laws have ever forgiven me for marrying into their family. I don't think they believe anyone is good enough for their son, and I'm the unfortunate evidence of that belief.

M : Maybe you're over-reacting. Have you tried to get close to them? They can't be expected to do all the work, can they?

F : I've tried many times, but *to no effect*. Whenever I think we've achieved some sort of *breakthrough* in our relationship, they make sure that I am quickly *disabused* of that notion. If I didn't love my husband I'd get a divorce just to get rid of his parents.

M : Wow, that sounds pretty bad. My in-laws and I had to make a rough adjustment in the very beginning, but we all learned to make the necessary *compromises*, and then everything worked out fine. I don't know what I'd do without them. If I ever have any problem, they are always there to help me out. I think that my wife and I may have actually *split up* without their support.

F : It's very strange. We can't choose who our parents are, and sometimes people get very bad ones. But usually we can depend on our parents to love us and help us, no matter what. Then, when we grow up, we actually get to choose someone to share our lives with; but we also inherit their parents as well. I'm glad that this has worked out for you, but I don't think that most people get along very well with their in-laws.

M : Maybe not. I guess that it's because of some sort of rivalry in their affections. Your in-laws must love their son very much and can't *tolerate* the notion that he has to share his love between themselves and you.

F : But they should realize that their interference in our lives makes him unhappy too. It isn't just me who is hurt by their actions. If they truly loved him, as you say, they should want him to be happy, not miserable.

M : Yes, you're right, of course. I suppose there is nothing you can do about it, though. But I hope you can remember how bad you feel now, when your own children get married. Then maybe their spouses can say how lucky they are to have such a wonderful mother-in-law!

- **to no effect** : with no result

- **disabuse** : point out a wrong idea

- **compromise** : settlement in which each side gives up some of what it wants

- **split up** : end a relationship

- **breakthrough** : major achievement or success that permits further progress

- **tolerate** : put up with (sth); endure