

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
- ◀ 18th birthday
(or 21st birthday, as in the U.S. and Canada)
- ◀ Marriage
- ◀ Becoming a parent

Source: Peace Corps Handbook for RPCV Speakers

Talk about these questions.

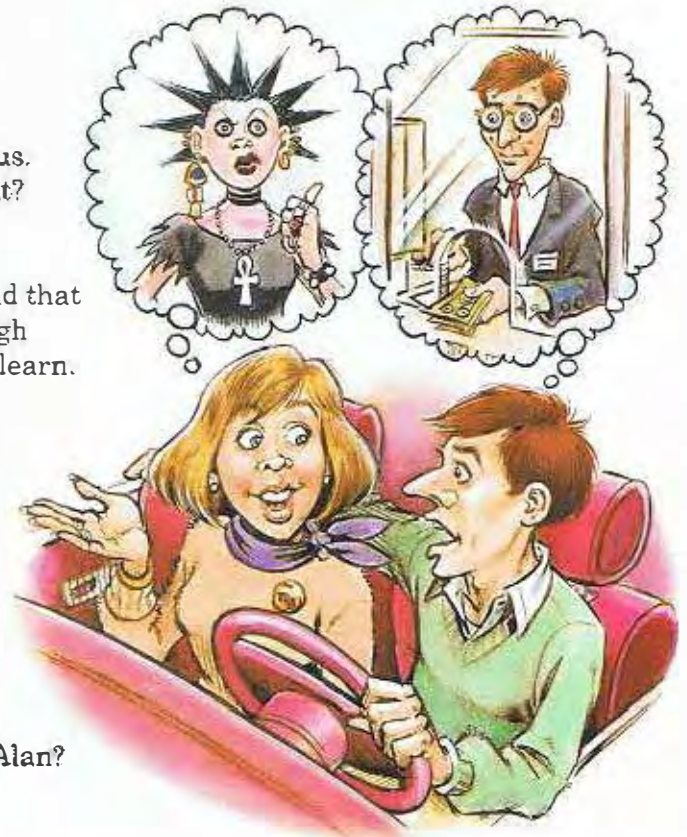
Which of these rites of passage, or life events, are important in your country? Which are not?

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


2 CONVERSATION

A  Listen and practice.

- Alan: So what were you like as a kid?
 Carol: When I was a kid, I was kind of rebellious.
 Alan: You? Really? What was the turning point?
 Carol: When I graduated from high school.
 Alan: What do you mean?
 Carol: Until you graduate, you don't understand that life is just beginning. After I finished high school, I realized that I still had a lot to learn.
 Alan: I know what you mean. I was really immature when I was a kid.
 Carol: What changed?
 Alan: I think I became more mature after I got my first job. Once you have a job, you learn to be more independent.
 Carol: That's true. Where did you work?
 Alan: In my father's bank.



CLASS AUDIO ONLY

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

3 GRAMMAR FOCUS

Time clauses

By the time I was in high school, I had gotten my first job.
 The moment I got my first job, I felt like a different person.
 Before I had my first job, I was really immature.
 Once you have a job, you learn to be more independent.
 After I finished high school, I realized that I still had a lot to learn.
 As soon as I graduated, I started to be more sensible.
 Until you graduate, you don't understand that life is just beginning.

A Match the clauses in column A with appropriate information from column B. 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

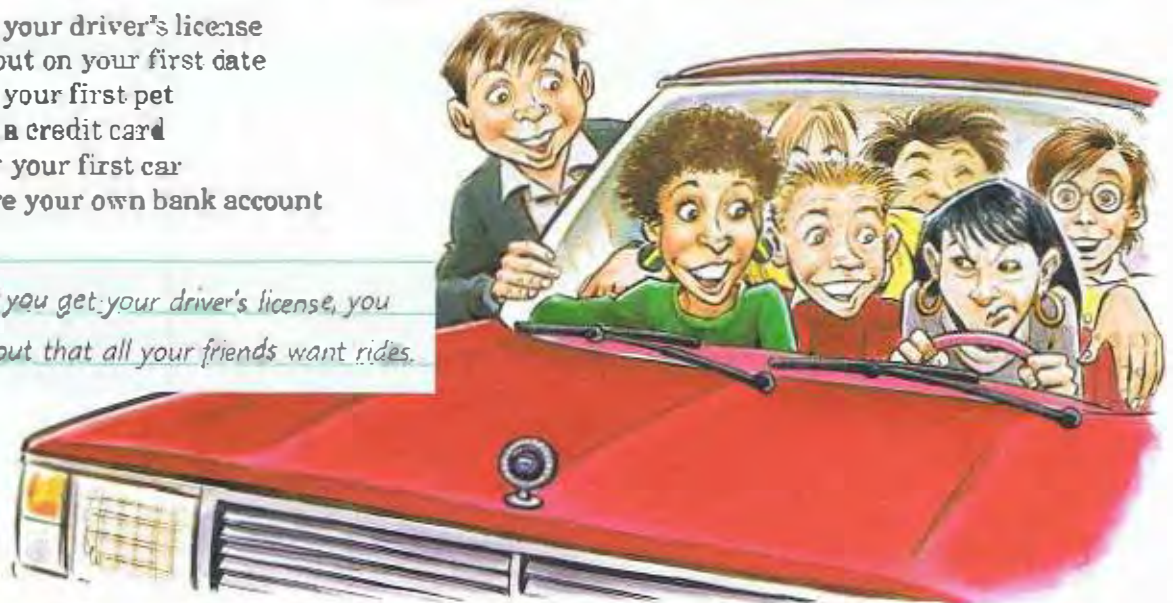
- a. I didn't appreciate my own country.
- b. I began to understand the value of money.
- c. I learned how to communicate better.
- d. I realized that I wasn't a child anymore.
- e. I didn't understand the importance of good health.
- f. I had learned how to take care of myself.
- g. I learned how to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

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 pet
4. you get a credit card
5. you buy your first car
6. you have your own bank account

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



4 LISTENING *Important events*

CLASS AUDIO ONLY

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

	What was the event?	How did it affect him or her?
1. Sally
2. Henry
3. Debbie

5 DECADES APART

A Group work What are two important events for these age groups? Why is each event important? Talk about the events.

children people in their twenties
teenagers people in their forties

- A: Starting school is an important event for children.
B: That's true. Once they start school, they learn to get along with other kids.
C: I think another important event is

B Class activity What is the most important event for each age group?



6 WORD POWER *Behavior*

Pair work At what age do you think people tend to behave in these ways? Talk with a partner and 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"/>
generous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
immature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
naïve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
selfish	<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"/>
tolerant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- A: I think people in their twenties and thirties tend to be more ambitious.
B: Yes, but I think people in their teens can be ambitious, too, because

7 CONVERSATION

A  Listen and practice.

Peter: I'm thinking of going back to school to get another degree. It's so hard to find a job with a degree in literature.

Kay: Yeah, I know what you mean.

Peter: I should have studied something more practical. If I'd been more sensible, I would have majored in economics.

Kay: Why did you major in literature?

Peter: I don't know! I should have listened to my mother. She wanted me to major in business.

Kay: Oh? What does she do?

Peter: Mom? She's a literature professor.



CLASS AUDIO ONLY 

B  Listen to the rest of the conversation.

What does Kay regret about the choices she made in college?

8 GRAMMAR FOCUS

Describing regrets about the past

With should have + past participle

I ~~should~~ have studied something more practical.

With If clauses in the past perfect

If I'd been more sensible, I would have majored in economics.

If I'd listened to my mother, I wouldn't be working at this job now.

A Pair work Write a response using *should have* for each statement. Then talk with a partner about which statements are true for you.

- I was very selfish when I was younger.
- I didn't pay attention to what I ate as a kid.
- I never read very often before I went to college.
- I didn't make a lot of friends when I was in high school.
- I argued a lot with my parents when I was a teenager.

1. I should have been more generous when I was younger.

B Match the clauses in column A with information from column B. Then compare with a partner.

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

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

9 PRONUNCIATION *Reduced forms of have and been*

A  Listen and practice. Notice how **have** and **been** are reduced to /əv/ and /b:ɪn/ 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 . . . , I would have . . .

10 LISTENING

CLASS AUDIO ONLY 

 Listen to these people describing a regret they each have. Complete the chart.



	1. Barbara	2. Alex	3. Sonia
What does he or she regret?
Why does he or she regret it?

11 WRITING *Turning points*

A Think about a turning point in your life. Make notes about the event. When was it? Why was it important? Did it change your life for the better or worse?

B Write two paragraphs about the event. In the first paragraph, describe the event. In the second, describe how it changed your life.

A turning point for me was learning to speak Spanish. I'd always wanted to learn a foreign language. When I was 16, I lived in Mexico for a summer. Until then, I didn't think that I could learn a foreign language. . . .

Once I learned Spanish, I realized that it wasn't an impossible goal. It even helped me to learn English. . . . I should have learned a foreign language sooner.

12 READING

If You Could Do It All Again

Do you have any regrets about things you've done or haven't done?

What if . . . you could live your life over again? Everyone has some things they would do differently and some they would do exactly the same.



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, I don't have enough money to pay for it! I should have thought more about my finances before I took such an expensive trip.



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've got everything, and yet I've got nothing.

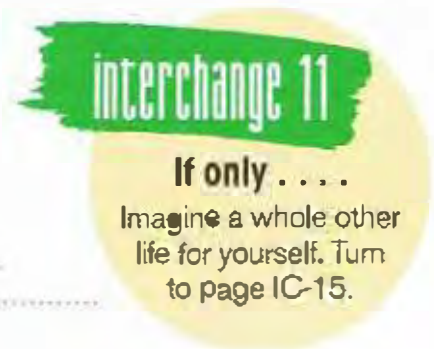


Rachel

Soon after Brad and I got married, his company transferred him to San Francisco. I had a very successful career, but I quit my job and we moved. Brad has been transferred twice since then. Now I work as an office temp. Sometimes I think if I had been a little more selfish, maybe I could have done more with my career, too. But Brad really means a lot to me. As soon as I met him, I knew I would spend the rest of my life with him.

A Read the article. Then write the correct name to answer these questions.

- Whose success could be described as . . . ?
 - a financial success
 - the courage to explore new things
 - happiness in a relationship
- Whose regrets might be explained in terms of . . . ?
 - being shortsighted
 - sacrificing what one wants for someone else
 - losing oneself to achieve what others see as success



B Pair work Talk about these questions.

- In your life, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?
- Which of the three people seems the happiest? Who seems the least happy?
- Some psychologists say that people today have more regrets because they have so many choices and more pressure. What do you think these psychologists mean? Do you agree?