

Before reading the text, discuss these questions:

1. Is it difficult for you to make decisions? Do you often look for the opinions of other people before you decide on something?
2. Are you the kind of person that looks for excuses when it comes to doing things that need a lot of effort? (ex. giving up smoking, exercising regularly, learning a foreign language on a daily basis etc.)
3. Do you regret not doing something in the past because you know that if you had done it, your present life would be better?
4. How do you understand the quote by Sun Tzu :

Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can?

THE /IF GENERATION

Nowadays, many people have issues with appreciating what they have; it is always the matter of 'If I were richer...', 'If I were younger...', 'If I were him...' etc. I don't have a problem with the fact that we want more from our lives; what annoys me is the fact that we keep saying what we would do 'IF' ...

When I was younger, I thought that if my parents had been richer I could have been more fortunate with my life. I was losing my time on thinking that if I had been born in the family of my cousin, I would have enjoyed private tennis lessons, skiing holidays in Austria or expensive, fashionable clothes. What I didn't take into consideration back then was the fact that I didn't really like sport, I absolutely hated skiing and expensive clothes often covered the lack of personality. In other words, I was jealous of the things that I didn't want in reality.

Nowadays I keep finding myself the new 'ifs' that can successfully keep me away from being happy. I think that if I had more time, I would start going to the gym; if I had more money, I would eat healthy etc. Result? An overweight 30-year-old woman, always complaining about how difficult life is.

But the problem of 'ifs' doesn't finish here. We tend to overuse the 1st conditional in quite straightforward situations. 'I'll visit you if I have time' usually means 'I won't visit you, I'm busy' or 'I will lend you the money if I can' equals: 'I will not lend you the money, don't put me in an uncomfortable situation'. Why do we choose to send confusing messages when we can simply say what we think? We have to be not only politically correct anymore, we must be socially correct too.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE TEXT

Answer Yes or No:

1. Is the author annoyed with the fact that nowadays people don't appreciate their lives?
Yes/No
2. Does the author regret not being able to train tennis? **Yes/No**
3. Does the author think that expensive clothes may compensate for an uninteresting character?
Yes/No
4. Is the author physically fit? **Yes/No**
5. Is the author happy with her life? **Yes/No**
6. Does the author think that people often say things which they don't mean? **Yes/No**

Answer the questions in your own words:

1. What is the author's opinion about the way we live today?

2. What does the author criticize in people's characters?
3. What does the author mean when she says that we must be socially correct?

What do you think?

1. Do you agree with the author's opinion that we are the 'IF' generation?
2. Do you find any similarities between your and the author's way of thinking?
3. Are you socially correct in the way it is described in the text.

THE IF GENERATION – VOCABULARY. Match the English words with their equivalents:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Nowadays | a. to make someone angry |
| 2 Issue | b. to put or spread something over something |
| 3 Appreciate (v) | c. to say that something is wrong or not satisfactory |
| 4 Matter | d. to recognize how good someone or something is and to value them |
| 5 Annoy (v)
to be given back | e. to give something to someone for a short period of time, expecting it |
| 6 To be fortunate | f. to continue or repeat an activity over and over again |
| 7 Fashionable | g. at the present time, in comparison to the past |
| 8 Cover (v) | h. not clear, difficult to understand |
| 9 Keep doing sth (v) | i. to be lucky |
| 10 Overweight | j. to be the same in value or amount as something else |
| 11 Complain (v) | k. a problem that people are thinking and talking about |
| 12 Overuse (v) | l. to use something too often or too much |
| 13 Lend (v) | m. fat |
| 14 Equal (v) | n. a situation or subject that is being dealt with or considered |
| 15 Confusing | o. popular at a particular time |

Fill the gaps with the vocabulary items given above. Change the verb forms if necessary:

4. I eating too much and that is why I am
5. Some clothes are, but definitely not comfortable.
6. I often money to my brother, but he never gives it back.
7. Old people about the fact that teenagers don't respect them.

8. When you write an essay, don't the words like 'good', 'bad' or 'nice'. They mean nothing.
9. I was really to be born in a rich family. I think my life was much easier than some of my friends'.
10. I can sense that you have an with me. Have I done something to make you angry?
11. Some words in English are because they resemble French words with totally different meanings.
12. It me when my neighbors play loud music after 10.00 p.m.
13. In the past, families spent a lot of time together;, people are more interested in watching T.V and surfing the Internet.
14. I really what you have done for me; you are a great friend!
15. $2 + 2$ 4

