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To: IELTS Prep Group  
Subj: IELTS Reading lesson 8-31-2016 (level: B1)

Section One

Power Words:

➤ Match the word with its definition:

<i>impede</i>	<i>giggle</i>	<i>to cramp up</i>	<i>numb</i>	<i>bait</i>
<i>undeterred</i>	<i>setbacks</i>	<i>purr</i>	<i>break free</i>	<i>plain</i>
<i>brusque</i>	<i>ache</i>	<i>shackles</i>	<i>depart</i>	<i>neat</i>

1. A continuous or prolonged dull pain in a part of one's body.
2. As noun: food used to entice fish or other animals as prey. As verb: deliberately annoy or taunt (someone).
3. To leave, typically in order to start a journey.
4. A place or thing arranged in an orderly, tidy way.
5. Something that happens that delays or prevents a process from developing.
6. A low continuous vibratory sound, typically that made by a cat or vehicle.
7. To cause a painful involuntary spasmodic contraction of a muscle. To cause a temporary paralysis of muscles from overuse.
8. To delay or prevent (someone or something) by obstructing them; hinder.
9. To free yourself forcibly from a confined or restricted situation. To break out of restriction.
10. Not decorated or elaborate; simple or ordinary in character.
11. Deprived of the power of sensation.
12. Persevering with something despite adversities.
13. Markedly short and abrupt. Blunt in manner or speech often to the point of ungracious harshness.
14. A metal link, typically U-shaped, closed by a bolt, used to fasten a prisoner's wrists or ankles together.
15. To laugh lightly in a nervous, affected, or silly manner.

Section Two

Reading Comprehension and Pronunciation skills.

Objective and procedure

- Ability to read, with clear pronunciation, and comprehend the meaning of the paragraph. The teacher will ask students to read one paragraph per student after which the student will be asked several questions to validate his/her comprehension of the text.

Story 1

All the Difference in the World

Every Sunday morning I take a light jog around a park near my home. There's a lake located in one corner of the park. Each time I jog by this lake, I see the same elderly woman sitting at the water's edge with a small metal cage sitting beside her. This past Sunday my curiosity got the best of me, so I stopped jogging and walked over to her. As I got closer, I realized that the metal cage was in fact a small trap. There were three turtles, unharmed, slowly walking around the base of the trap. She had a fourth turtle in her lap that she was carefully scrubbing with a spongy brush.

"Hello," I said. "I see you here every Sunday morning. If you don't mind my nosiness, I'd love to know what you're doing with these turtles."

She smiled. "I'm cleaning off their shells," she replied. "Anything on a turtle's shell, like algae or scum, reduces the turtle's ability to absorb heat and impedes its ability to swim. It can also corrode and weaken the shell over time."

"Wow! That's really nice of you!" I exclaimed.



Questions:

1. What was different about this morning from all the previous ones?
2. In what other polite ways would you ask the same thing to the woman?

She went on: "I spend a couple of hours each Sunday morning, relaxing by this lake and helping these little guys out. It's my own strange way of making a difference."

"But don't most freshwater turtles live their whole lives with algae and scum hanging from their shells?" I asked.

"Yep, sadly, they do," she replied.

I scratched my head. "Well then, don't you think your time could be better spent? I mean, I think your efforts are kind and all, but there are fresh water turtles living in lakes all around the world. And 99% of these turtles don't have kind people like you to help them clean off their shells. So, no offense... but how exactly are your localized efforts here truly making a difference?"

The woman giggled aloud. She then looked down at the turtle in her lap, scrubbed off the last piece of algae from its shell, and said, "Sweetie, if this little guy could talk, he'd tell you I just made all the difference in the world."

Questions:

- 1. The woman is there every Sunday for two main purposes. Which are they?
- 2. In what way is she making a difference in these turtles' lives?

**The moral:** You can change the world – maybe not all at once, but one person, one animal, and one good deed at a time. Wake up every morning and pretend like what you do makes a difference, because it does.

**Question to all students in the class:** Are you doing anything to make a difference in this world? If yes; what is it?

Story 2  
The Weight of the Glass

Once upon a time a psychology professor walked around on a stage while teaching stress management principles to an auditorium filled with students. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be asked the typical "glass half empty or glass half full" question. Instead, with a smile on her face, the professor asked, "How heavy is this glass of water I'm holding?" Students shouted out answers ranging from eight ounces to a couple pounds.



She replied, "From my perspective, the absolute weight of this glass doesn't matter. It all depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute or two, it's fairly light. If I hold it for an hour straight, its weight might make my arm ache a little. If I hold it for a day straight, my arm will likely cramp up and feel completely numb and paralyzed, forcing me to drop the glass to the floor. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it feels to me."

As the class shook their heads in agreement, she continued, "Your stresses and worries in life are very much like this glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a bit longer and you begin to ache a little. Think about them all day long, and you will feel completely numb and paralyzed – incapable of doing anything else until you drop them."

**The moral:** It's important to remember to let go of your stresses and worries. No matter what happens during the day, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the night and into the next day with you. If you still feel the weight of yesterday's stress, it's a strong sign that it's time to put the glass down.

Questions:

- 1. What does a glass of water and stress have in common?
- 2. What is the only factor that will change the weight of the glass of water without adding more water?

Story 3  
Shark Bait

During a research experiment a marine biologist placed a shark into a large holding tank and then released several small bait fish into the tank. As you would expect, the shark quickly swam around the tank, attacked and ate the smaller fish. The marine biologist then inserted a strong piece of clear fiberglass into the tank, creating two separate partitions. She then put the shark on one side of the fiberglass and a new set of bait fish on the other. Again, the shark quickly attacked. This time, however, the shark slammed into the fiberglass divider and bounced off. Undeterred, the shark kept repeating this behavior every few minutes to no avail. Meanwhile, the bait fish swam around unharmed in the second partition. Eventually, about an hour into the experiment, the shark gave up.



This experiment was repeated several dozen times over the next few weeks. Each time, the shark got less aggressive and made fewer attempts to attack the bait fish, until eventually the shark got tired of hitting the fiberglass divider and simply stopped attacking altogether. The marine biologist then removed the fiberglass divider, but the shark didn't attack. The shark was trained to believe a barrier existed between it and the bait fish, so the bait fish swam wherever they wished, free from harm.

**The moral:** Many of us, after experiencing setbacks and failures, emotionally give up and stop trying. Like the shark in the story, we believe that because we were unsuccessful in the past, we will always be unsuccessful. In other words, we continue to see a barrier in our heads, even when no 'real' barrier exists between where we are and where we want to go.



**Questions:**

- 1. What was the purpose of this experiment?
- 2. There was a clear barrier between the two swimming areas; what do you think it would have happened if the bait fish would have swum all over the place in the end of the experiment

**Question to the whole class:** Did you revisit any previous failed attempt from past yet?

**Story 4**  
**Being and Breathing**

One warm evening many years ago...  
After spending nearly every waking minute with Angela for eight straight days, I knew that I had to tell her just one thing. So, late at night, just before she fell asleep, I whispered it in her ear. She smiled – the kind of smile that makes me smile back –and she said, “When I’m seventy-five and I think about my life and what it was like to be young, I hope that I can remember this very moment.”



**Questions:**

- 1. He gave special attention to one specific moment of the day over eight days. What moment was that?
- 2. What do you think he told her?

A few seconds later she closed her eyes and fell asleep. The room was peaceful – almost silent. All I could hear was the soft purr of her breathing. I stayed awoken thinking about the time we’d spent together and all the choices in our lives that made this moment possible. And at some point, I realized that it didn’t matter what we’d done or where we’d gone. Nor did the future hold any significance. All that mattered was the serenity of the moment. Just being with her and breathing with her.

**The moral:** We must not allow the clock, the calendar, and external pressures to rule our lives and blind us to the fact that each individual moment of our lives is a beautiful mystery and a miracle – especially those moments we spend in the presence of a loved one.

**Question:**

- 1. What was more important than anything in this life for him?

**Question to the whole class:** What life experience or realization brought on a significant change in your way of thinking?

**Story 5**  
**The Elephant’s Rope**

As a man was passing a circus when he suddenly stopped by the elephants, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, break away from their bonds but for some reason, they did not.



He saw a trainer nearby and complained about the low security and suggested to use metal shackles instead of ropes. “Well,” trainer said, “when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it’s enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.”  
The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn’t, they were stuck right where they were.  
Like the elephants, how many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before?

**Moral:** Failure is part of learning; we should never give up the struggle in life.

**Questions:**

- 1. Why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away?



Story 5  
A Dish of Ice Cream

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10 year old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" - "50 cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. "How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient. "35 cents," she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were 15 cents – her tip.



- Questions:
1. Where and when did this take place?
  2. What was the waitress surprised about?

**Moral 1:** we should not underestimate people; even the most humble and least thought person could give us a nice surprise.  
**Moral 2:** Even children can set the example.

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