

Learning English podcasts ... from the
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Lower Intermediate

Lesson: 8

Title: "Soul Mates"

Summary:

Vanessa and Denise talk about people's need to socialize.

Vanessa and Denise are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Vanessa: Hello to all our listeners. Denise is here with us today to tell us about how people are becoming more socially isolated. Welcome Denise. Are people today more socially isolated than they were in the past?



Denise: Hello everyone, yes, statistics show that Americans today find it more difficult to find a true **soul mate**.



Vanessa: Yes, but **why's that?**

Denise: Our listeners need to understand that this is an ongoing study; the results so far have showed that the vast majority hold more than one job to **make ends meet**.



Vanessa: And they just **can't be bothered** going out or giving dinner parties.

Denise: Exactly, this leaves them with little free time to socialize...

Vanessa: Has this study revealed anything else **worthwhile** mentioning?



Denise: Well, yes, something rather unexpected has come up. It seems that people are likely to be more social when living in greener areas.

Vanessa: Hmm, there seems to be some **light at the end of the tunnel!**



Denise: Yeah, things might be not as **gloomy** as we think they are...but I would like to remind our listeners that this is an on going study so...

Vanessa: Yes, of course the final results might be totally different! Thank you for being here today.

Denise: Thank you for inviting me.



Now answer the following question...

What are Vanessa and Denise talking about?

They're talking about loneliness.

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on the details...

Part 1

Vanessa: Hello to all our listeners. Denise is here with us today to tell us about how people are becoming more socially isolated. Welcome Denise. Are people today more socially isolated than they were in the past?

Denise: Hello everyone, yes, statistics show that Americans today find it more difficult to find a true **soul mate**.

Vanessa: Yes, but **why's that?**

Denise: Our listeners need to understand that this is an ongoing study; the results so far have showed that the vast majority hold more than one job to **make ends meet**.

Vanessa: And they just **can't be bothered** going out or giving dinner parties.

Denise: Exactly, this leaves them with little free time to socialize...

Now answer some questions...

1. Denise says: "...statistics show that Americans today find it more difficult to find a true **soul mate**." What does "soul mate" mean?

"Soul mate" means a very close friend and is used in informal spoken English.

2. Vanessa says: "**Why's that?**" What does "why's that" mean?

"Why's that?" is an informal question used to find out the reason something happens.

3. Denise says: "... the vast majority hold more than one job to **make ends meet**." What does "make ends meet" mean?

"To make ends meet" means to have enough money to pay for your expenses.

4. Vanessa says: "they just **can't be bothered** about going out or giving dinner parties." What does "Can't be bothered" mean?

"Can't be bothered" is an informal expression and it means "not interested".

Now listen to the second part of the dialogue.

Part 2

Vanessa: Has this study revealed anything else **worthwhile** mentioning?

Denise: Well, yes, something rather unexpected has come up. It seems that people are likely to be more social when living in greener areas.

Vanessa: Hmm, there seems to be some **light at the end of the tunnel!**

Denise: Yeah, things mightn't be as **gloomy** as we think they are...but I would like to remind our listeners that this is an on going study so...

Vanessa: Yes, of course the final results might be totally different! Thank you for being here today!

Denise: Thank you for inviting me!

Now answer some questions...

1. Vanessa says: "Has this study revealed anything else **worthwhile** mentioning?" What does "worthwhile" mean?

"Worthwhile" means important; so Vanessa wants to know if there's something else important to be mentioned as well.

2. Vanessa says: "...there seems to be some **light at the end of the tunnel!**" What does "light at the end of the tunnel" mean?

"Light at the end of the tunnel" is an expression used when we want to show that a bad situation starts to get better.

3. Denise says: "things mightn't be not as **gloomy** as we think they are..." What does "gloomy" mean?

"Gloomy" means hopeless, without hope.

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.

GLOSSARY

Gloomy (adjective): without hope, unhappy
e.g. The vet is rather gloomy about my cat's chances of recovery.

Isolation (noun): the state of being alone without social contact.
e.g. He lived in total isolation in a village for many years.

Isolate (verb): to separate something or someone from others.
e.g. A high wall isolated the house from the rest of the village.

Make ends meet: to have just enough money to pay for the things that you need
e.g. It's hard to make ends meet on a pension.

Majority (noun): more than half the people or things in a group
e.g. The majority of people who took the test passed

Ongoing (adjective): a situation which has been continuing for a long time and will probably continue in the future.
e.g. There has been ongoing research into the causes of cancer.

Remind (verb): to make someone remember.
e.g. She keeps on reminding me of the money I owe her

Reveal (verb): to make people aware of something
e.g. Her biography revealed that she was not as rich as everyone thought.

Statistics (noun): facts obtained by analyzing data or information
e.g. Statistics show that one out of every 5 people smoke.

Vast (adjective): extremely large.
e.g. The people who have taken our advice have saved themselves vast sums of money.

Activity 1

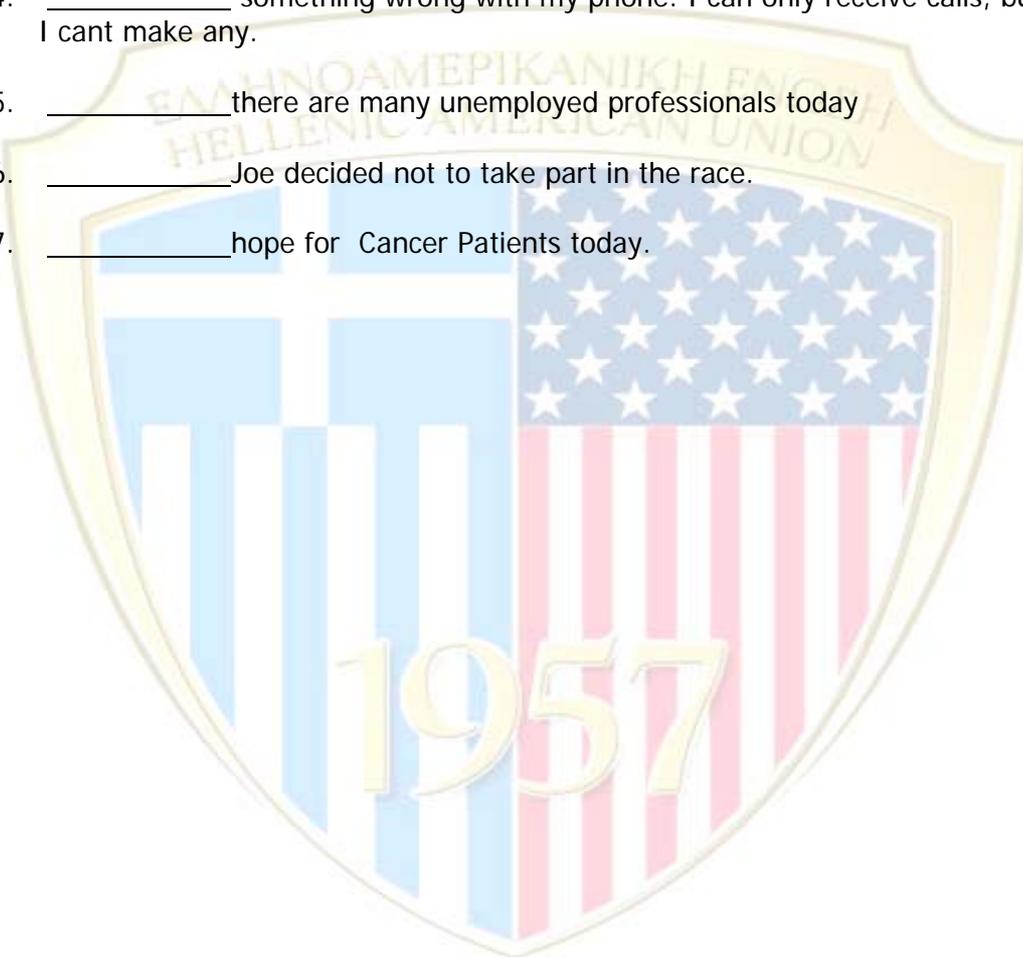
Practice using the words in the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word to complete the sentences.

1. A survey of the British diet ____ _____that a growing number of people are overweight.	A. gloomy
2. Many disabled people are ____ _____from the community.	B. isolated
3. _____ show that more and more young people smoke.	C. isolation
4. There have been ____ _____debates about the use of steroids in sport.	D. majority
5. The _____of people who work in this company are smokers.	E. make ends meet
6. Could you please _____me to buy my mother a birthday present?	F. ongoing
7. The amount of detail the book contains is _____.	G. remind
8. He took a second job in order to _____when their second child was born.	H. revealed
9. The cemetery is a _____place.	I. statistics
10. He was _____ kept in _____from all the other prisoners.	J. vast

Activity 2

Complete the sentences with *'There seems to be...'* or *'It seems that...'*

1. _____ a problem with my car
2. _____ young people today prefer Math to English
3. Why is Mary angry with you? _____ she thinks I started a rumour about her.
4. _____ something wrong with my phone. I can only receive calls, but I can't make any.
5. _____ there are many unemployed professionals today
6. _____ Joe decided not to take part in the race.
7. _____ hope for Cancer Patients today.



KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. 1. h. 2. b. 3. i. 4. f. 5. d. 6. g. 7. j. 8. e. 9. a. 10. c.

Activity 2. 1. there seems to be 2. it seems that 3. it seems that 4. there seems to be 5. it seems that 6. it seems that 7. there seems to be

