974 Essential Stuff

Tom and Jess both talk about things they could not live without.

Jess: Right, Tom, tell me, what three things could you not live without?

Tom: Well, I guess you say me playing with my new toy just now. It's my iPod touch and it is fantastic. I often take long bus journeys at the weekend and on this little electronic storage machine with screen I can watch a movie and that's just ... makes bus journeys fly by. It also has wireless internet so I can carry it around and in a coffee shop I can check my e-mail and it has the added function of being able to play music, although I don't listen to music much. That's one. My iPod touch is with me all the time. It's kind of connected to my number 2. Number 2 is the internet. I couldn't live without the internet. I'm online every day - reading newspapers, checking out information about things I want to do and see that day. Keeping in touch with family and friends, although I don't do that as much as they would like. The internet is such a huge part of my life. I can't imagine what it was like ten or fifteen years ago, when nobody was online. Number three, I suppose is the sun, which sounds a bit facile because everything on the whole planet requires the sun, but for me it's not so much about the nutrition that plants and animals derive from the sun. It's just being able to lie and relax in the soft warmth, tanning by the pool letting my mind empty and clear. Those are my three. How about you?

Jess: Well, I have to agree with your second one, definitely the Internet is one thing couldn't live without either, for the same reasons you mentioned, really, just to stay in touch with people for things like reading the news, checking my e-mail, finding phone numbers, getting information. I really couldn't live without it. The second thing would be my family. I couldn't live without them. I think since I've moved away from Britain and I don't live close to them, and I don't see them regularly anymore, I've grown to love them even more. Kind of you don't realize what you've until it's gone, and that was true with my family. I really miss them all the time, and I love going back to see them, so they're my number two, and my number three would be music. Music's a huge part of my life and I think I remember things by what I was listening to at the time. I'll remember periods of my life by what's songs I was listening to or what album i bought, so for me my memories are very much brought back to me by music, so those are my three things: the Internet, my family, and music.

Vocabulary Quiz

flew by • live without • can't imagine
lets her mind • until it's gone • period

1. I went through a ______ of my life when I liked to go out dancing.
2. He ______ what it's like to not have a lot of money.
3. I was so busy today that the time just ______ .
4. After I graduated from university I wanted to go back to school immediately. You never know what you have ______ .
5. He couldn't ______ his dog.
6. She needs to do something that ______ empty.

Quiz

1) Tom likes his iTouch on bus journeys _____ .
   a) so he can listen to music
   b) so the time goes by fast
   c) so he does not have to talk to people

2) He uses the internet to ______ daily.
   a) maintain his blog
   b) catch up with family
   c) read the news

3) He says the sun helps him ______ .
   a) clear his mind
   b) derive nutrients
   c) dry by the pool

4) Jess likes the internet for _____ reason as Tom.
   a) a different
   b) the same
   c) a similar

5) She says she sees her family _____ .
   a) all the time
   b) quite often
   c) not often

6) She says music helps her ______ .
   a) reduce stress
   b) remember things
   c) get motivated

Audio Notes

fly by

It makes bus journeys fly by.

When time passes very fast we say it flies by. Notice the samples:

1. For me, reading a newspaper helps the time fly by.
2. We were having so much fun, the time just flew by.

**I couldn't live without**

I couldn't live without the internet.

We use the phrase 'I couldn't live without' to talk about people and things we love. Here are two samples.

1. I love music so I couldn't live without my MP3 player.
2. My mom just couldn't live without her daytime soap operas.

**I can't imagine**

I can't imagine what it was like.

The phrase 'I can't imagine' means something is difficult to think about. Notice the samples:

1. I can't imagine life without the internet!
2. Rich people can't imagine what it's like to grow up poor.

**Let my mind empty**

After a hard day I like to relax and let my mind empty.

When we let our mind empty, we relax and stop thinking about the serious things in our lives. Here are some samples:

1. She sat on the beach, watched the sunset, and let her mind empty.
2. When I was a kid I used to put on my headphones, listen to records and let my mind empty.

**you don't realize (what you have) until it's gone**

People often don't realize what they've got until it's gone.

Sometimes we are so worried about the future that we don't take time to enjoy the people and things in our lives now. Once they are gone, we feel sad. Notice the sample sentences:

1. He never spent much time with his ex-girlfriend. Unfortunately, he didn't realize what he had until it was gone.
2. My dad passed away about a year ago. We weren't close, but I miss him. You don't know what you've got till it's gone.

**period of my life**

I remember periods of my life.

A period of your life is block of time like maybe primary school or early teenage years. Notice the following:

1. I wasn't cute or popular so high school was a difficult period of my life.
2. Danielle spent a year studying abroad. It was a fantastic period of her life.