

SÈRIE 2**TOXIC FRIENDS****Part 1: Reading Comprehension**

1. According to the text a 'toxic friend' is ...
 - a) a friend who improves your self-esteem.
 - b) an invention of psychologists.
 - c) a friend who can make your life difficult.**
 - d) a friend who is a drug addict.

2. 'Toxic friend' is an expression thought up by...
 - a) the self-help industry.
 - b) therapists.
 - c) no one in particular but it's becoming widely accepted.**
 - d) the American Psychological Association.

3. Which of these definitions best describes a naysayer?
 - a) A tactful friend, always trying to be polite to his/her friends.
 - b) A friend who will never be supportive of things we want to do**
 - c) A violent person who denies his/her real mean intentions.
 - d) A busy person having no time to say anything to his/her friends.

4. Christine Northman affirms that we should...
 - a) visit friends more often to keep up our emotional health.
 - b) visit friends to keep reciprocity in friendship.
 - c) analyse our relationships with our friends very often.**
 - d) not care too much about friendship.

5. When treating the 'toxic friend' problem, counsellors advise us to...
 - a) see them within the boundaries of the city.
 - b) avoid them forever.
 - c) give those friends a chance.
 - d) avoid them from time to time.**

6. Most therapists agree that the 'toxic friend' problem...
 - a) mostly affects stressed women.
 - b) does not affect happy people.
 - c) is more frequent among weak people.
 - d) is easier to solve for men.**

7. A 'crying sister' could be defined as a person who...
 - a) ditches you on the last minute.
 - b) is always crying on the phone.
 - c) tires you telling you about her problems.**
 - d) takes away all your energy.

8. Mike Albo thinks that...
- a) therapy can solve all your problems with undesirable toxic friends.
 - b) self-help books are the only solution for our psychological problems.
 - c) the toxic friends's problem cannot always be solved by therapy.**
 - d) toxic friends not therapists always tell you the truth.

Listening comprehension.

Michael Palin: the "travelling comedian"

In this radio programme you are going to hear some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean.

scholar: acadèmic / académico

engage: atraure /atraer

abuse: maltractar / maltratar

Ready?

Now read the questions on the next page. Read them carefully before listening to the radio programme.

Welcome to "Celebrities" our weekly interview programme. In today's programme Mary Smith interviews Michael Palin, a famous actor well-known for his comedy roles as part of the Monty Python team, but also for his being an explorer. He is one of Britain's most loved comedians and travellers.

Adapted from an interview in "Outlook" (BBC Radio)

[now listen to the rest of the interview]

Mary: Good afternoon, Michael, and welcome to our programme.

Michael: Thank you. It's a pleasure being here today.

Mary: Michael, many British children have been inspired by your taste for adventure, but when you were a child, did you experience travelling and adventure yourself?

Michael: No, not really. I was living in Sheffield then, in the north of England, and unlike now when you can probably get onto a plane for ten pounds and go across Europe, travelling was very expensive and there was very little chance for me to go anywhere, so I was really 'travelling' through other people's experiences and through geographic magazines and programmes on television and things like that.

Mary: Where does your passion for travel come from? Is this a family thing?

Michael: No, not really. They are not great travellers... But I found a notebook belonging to my Irish great-grandfather. He was a **scholar** at Oxford University and he once went walking on his own in the Alps and he left behind his diaries when he was about 38... And he very much liked... what I like really... what he saw and what he enjoyed, you know... well there's a fellow spirit you know, he loved getting away, and he loved the mountains and all that. I think with travel... I do love landscapes, you know, and I can find places that are beautiful, spectacular, but it is usually people that **engage** me most of all.

Mary: Your first career was in acting. Did you have your travel passion at the same time as your drama and comedy?

Michael: Yes I did. I mean I remember the excitement of feeling that we were doing something like Monty Python and this would take us abroad to do some filming... We went to Tunisia I remember to film "The Life of Brian", one of our films, and then we went to America to do publicity for it, and ended up in New York, Los Angeles... but I didn't really feel I was seeing much of the world, I was seeing the inside of television studios, hotels, conference centres... and then suddenly you'd be at home again. So in a way I had the opportunity to travel but it wasn't the right kind of travel.

Mary: Back in the sixties you did Monty Python and now you are doing travel. Which of these jobs do you enjoy most, do you prefer seeing yourself as a travelling actor or as an actor travelling

Michael: Well... I think I somehow managed to put the acting to one side and the travelling to another side. So generally speaking travel is myself talking about things through my own eyes rather than through the eyes of an actor.

Mary: How has being a professional comedian helped you later on and what has it taught you?

Michael: I think being a comedian probably gives you a certain freedom to look at the world. As a comedian, you know, your job is to comment on things or see the human things going wrong that other people might take terribly seriously in a rather different way. And I feel sometimes as a comedian that I am on the outside looking in, and it's quite useful, I found it especially useful during travels.

Mary: Really? Are you suggesting that humour is somehow related to travelling?

Michael: Yes, indeed. Humour is something that is shared all over the world and you know you can make as big an idiot of yourself as we all do, you know, not learn the language, not learn the customs, and do all sorts of wrong things according to another culture and yet, if you can do it with humour, it somehow brings you closer to the people and everyone says "Well... never mind... we all do things like that".

Mary: Your first trip round the world became a successful TV programme, but I believe it was originally all planned by the BBC. What was the experience like?

Michael: Well... In fact I was very uncertain of what we were going to do. When I was offered the journey, they said: "we are going to actually see if you can get round the world in 80

days, there will be a camera following you all the way..." and ... and all I heard was... "we will be travelling around the world" and I thought "Well... Yes!", "I'll do that! Fantastic! The BBC can organize it for me". What I wasn't really hearing was there was going to be a camera there all the time, you're gonna have to interview people... but there was no script! It is all gonna be based on me improvising! "I'm just going to meet people and talk to them" and I thought... "Would anyone be interested? How are we gonna do this?" So until we got going I was really very worried.

Mary: You must have seen places in your travels where the environment has been **abused**. Do you think our society should do something?

Michael: Well... I don't believe in interference without consultation. You know what I mean... I don't think we can say... well we know the answers... and this is what you should do. I don't think we can impose our way of life on anyone else. So you have to understand why people are the way they are, why they live the way they do, and also learn lessons from poor people.

Mary: What kind of lessons?

Michael: For instance, we have a lot more than we need and we produce a lot of waste, so I suppose at the end of the week I send about twenty plastic bottles of water off to recycling, but if you throw one plastic bottle somewhere in Africa people will pick it up and use it, and I think this is exactly what should happen, so I think we can learn lessons about how to look after the planet from people who have less rather than from people who have more.

Mary: I'm afraid we've run out of time. Thank you, Michael, for being with us today.

Michael: My pleasure. Thank you.

QUESTIONS

1. When Michael was a child he...
 - a. often travelled across Europe by plane.
 - b. often had the chance to visit his family in the north of England.
 - c. watched TV programmes about travels because magazines were very expensive.
 - d. he had no opportunities to travel.**
2. Michael's great-grandfather...
 - a. enjoyed travelling as a means of getting away.**
 - b. wrote a book published by Oxford University about his trips to the Alps.
 - c. preferred landscapes and mountains to people.
 - d. was a great traveller of Irish origin.
3. While working as an actor with the Monty Python, Michael travelled a lot but...
 - a. he only went to boring places like New York.
 - b. didn't have the feeling that he was really travelling.**
 - c. he wasn't interested in the places he went to.
 - d. the only places he liked were the television studios they went to.

4. According to Michael, being a comedian allows you to ...
- be free and do whatever you want.
 - understand why people need to be free.
 - look at the world as an outsider.**
 - understand why people do terrible things.
5. According to Michael, humour is very important when travelling because ...
- it can bring you closer to the people.**
 - people will help you if they see you act like an idiot.
 - it can help you learn a foreign language.
 - it will help you understand other cultures.
6. At first Michael was very worried about the round-the-world trip proposed by the BBC because ...
- the BBC was responsible for the organization and he didn't trust them.
 - he thought it was impossible for a camera to follow him everywhere.
 - he thought it was not possible to get round the world in 80 days.
 - he had to improvise the interviews with the people he met during the trip.**
7. Michael thinks that our society should...
- interfere to stop other countries from abusing the environment.
 - not learn lessons from the way people live in other countries.
 - not impose our way of life on other countries.**
 - understand why other countries abuse the environment.
8. According to Michael a lesson to be learnt from the poorest people is that ...
- we produce too much waste because we have much more than we need.**
 - we recycle too many plastic bottles because we drink too much water.
 - it is a waste of time to recycle plastic bottles.
 - plastic bottles should not be thrown away in Africa.