

Introduce yourself. Tell where you are from and where you live now. Fill in the blanks. In my country there are too many _____, but not enough _____.

FAST FOOD WAS OUR LOVE LANGUAGE

It's autumn, the eighth since my father died, and I am craving chicken nuggets. My father would have understood. He never told me he loved me. He wasn't great at talking about his feelings. His love language was the simple pleasure of processed food. I have a picture of me when I was two standing with my father in front of the McDonald's in Beijing. I'm feeding my father a fry. We are both smiling.

1. What is a "craving"? What do you sometimes crave? Did you have cravings when you were pregnant?
2. What was Father's "love language"?
3. Did you have any special things you did just with your father?

My father was the fun parent. He was very indulgent. My mother would punish me for eating junk food. She wanted me to eat healthy. So Dad and I would sneak out and get hamburgers and fries and ice cream. It was our secret from Mom.

1. Who was the "fun parent" when you were growing up?
2. How did your parent indulge you?
3. Do you think it was wrong of Father to sneak out with his daughter to get fast food?

My father wasn't a great man. He was a man of vices. He smoked like a chimney. When I told him that smoking would kill him and begged him to stop, he would say OK, but I could smell smoke on his clothes. He was sneaking out to smoke so I wouldn't know. He loved gambling, too. He spent money the family needed to buy food, gambling on the horse races. He would sneak off to casinos when he was supposed to be working. He wasn't always faithful to my mother, either. They finally divorced.

1. What does she mean when she says her father, "smoked like a chimney"?
2. What were some of Father's vices?
3. Did your father or mother have any vices?

As I grew older, I stopped hanging out with my father. I was mad at Dad for not being a better person. He wasn't the kind of dad I wanted. I was ashamed of him.

My father died two years after I graduated from college. He was 49. I was 22. I grieved his passing. And I grieved the fact that I didn't know him well. I had always blamed my dad for his unhealthy lifestyle and his gambling addiction. But the older I got, the more I could understand him.

1. As she grows older, she is more tolerant of her father's vices. Are you more tolerant of your parent's vices now?

My dad loved his home in China and didn't want to leave. But my mom insisted we would have more opportunities in the U.S. So my dad agreed to move. My dad never learned to speak English well and always felt like a stranger in the new culture. He could only get minimum wage jobs because he didn't speak the language. He was embarrassed and ashamed that he had to use food stamps to feed his family

1. How did her Father fare in the United States?
2. Have you or any of your family had a hard time adjusting to living in America?

I see, now, that the junk food and the gambling was a distraction for him. It gave him a few minutes of happiness in his depressing life. I began to understand that my demand that he be a perfect man was cruel. It was something he wasn't capable of. I began to realize that I am not perfect either. I play stupid games on my phone and sometimes eat food I know isn't healthy. I've always felt guilty about my behavior. But, I've begun to ease up on myself now. Occasionally eating those forbidden foods or playing dumb games when I should be working is not evil. It's just a brief distraction. So next time I sink my teeth into a chicken nugget and enjoy the taste of all that fat and salt, I'll think of my dad and understand him completely.

1. What did her father use as a distraction from his troubles?
2. What do you think of this woman?
3. Is it OK to give in sometimes and eat junk food or do something you know you shouldn't do?
4. Do you have any vices?
5. Is there anything you wish you could change about yourself?

Talk about these dilemmas. Tell what you would do. Have you ever been in a situation like this.

1-My 6 year old daughter has been invited to a classmates house for a play date. She really wants to go. But I know this family has two large dogs. I was bitten by a dog as a child and I am very afraid of dogs. I worry that my daughter will be attacked. I don't know these dogs and don't know if my daughter will be safe around them. I will break her heart if I tell her she can't go. What should I do?

2-I love my next door neighbors. They are nice people. We don't know them that well because they keep to themselves. But they watch our house when we are gone and pick up our newspapers. The problem is that they have just built some shelves in their backyard right next to our fence. The shelves are very poorly made and they stick up about 3 feet over the top of our fence. They look very ugly. We see them every time we go outside. I am angry about the shelves and I don't want to keep looking at them. But I don't want to make my neighbors angry. Should I ask them to move them or just ignore the ugly shelves. What should I do?

3-The neighbor children always come over and play in our yard. We have a big play structure with swings and slides. They enjoy playing on them. Our children are grown now and we don't want to have our yard filled with children. They are noisy. Sometimes they bring snacks over and leave the trash in our yard. We have spoken to their parents and the parents agreed to tell the children they couldn't come over. But the children ignore the parents. They continue to come. What should I do?

4-I have a great boyfriend. We have dated for several months and I like him very much. However, I do not like his parents. They are not at all like my parents. They are very lazy and their house is very messy. His mother doesn't cook. They eat fast food for every meal. The father doesn't mow the yard or take care of the plants. The house looks run down. I don't like going over there. I don't have anything in common with them. When we go over, we just sit on the couch in front of the TV and eat chips. I can't imagine having any kind of relationship with them. I don't know what to do. Should I break up with my boyfriend because of his parents? That seems wrong? Please tell me what I should do.

PREPOSITIONS AFTER VERBS

Put the correct preposition in the blank.

1. He didn't respond _____ my question.
2. You must comply _____ the rules or move out.
3. Try not to dwell _____ your problems
4. I don't object _____ your parents coming for a few days.
5. She is putting a lot of pressure _____ him.
6. I wish you wouldn't laugh _____ my mistakes.
7. We rejoiced _____ the news.
8. Father grumbled _____ all the money he had to spend on us kids.
9. He resigned _____ disgrace.
10. The poor animal trembled _____ fear.
11. I can't concentrate _____ my studies when I am worrying about paying my tuition.
12. Grilled octopus doesn't appeal _____ me.
13. My wife never agrees _____ me.
14. I can't relate _____ people who are always late.
15. Please listen _____ my side of the story.
16. Kelly asked _____ a raise, but she didn't get it.
17. She apologized _____ being late.
18. We searched _____ the missing puzzle piece.
19. We are hoping _____ a miracle.
20. I heard _____ a new restaurant in town. We should try it.
21. I worry _____ getting old.
22. My brother and I always compete _____ each other.
23. I will meet _____ our lawyer next week.
24. The lesson began _____ a short quiz.
25. The majority of children under 6 believe _____ Santa Claus.
26. She insisted _____ paying for the meal.
27. He could benefit _____ some more music lessons.
28. She dreams _____ becoming a pilot.
29. I don't approve _____ my daughter's boyfriend.
30. He nodded _____ me as if he knew me.

