

Module 9A

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Ex. 2a

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I = Interviewer, M = Mandy

I: My guest today is Mandy Paghham, who, five years ago, won a million-pound prize after buying a single lottery ticket. Mandy, it must have been an incredible moment!

M: Well, at the time it was wonderfully exciting, of course. Although I'd bought the occasional ticket before, I'm not someone who usually gambles, so it wasn't as if I'd been building up my hopes or anything. I was just standing in a newsagent's shop with my friend Louise, who used to buy a ticket every week, and she just said, 'Go on, buy one - you never know, you might be lucky.' So that's what I did.

I: So how did you feel when your number was read out on the television?

M: Well, I wasn't even watching; I was helping my mum in the kitchen. I'd said to my dad, you know, 'Oh, check this ticket for me, will you?' and he'd laughed and said something about 'wasting my money'. And then a few minutes later, he walked slowly into the kitchen, as white as a sheet. I mean some people would've been jumping up and down and shouting but he was sort of speechless. So, it was a few minutes before we realised what had happened.

I: And when you did?

M: Well, we didn't know what to do at first, but you know, everyone at the TV station was very kind and helped us to cope. Then I went up to London to collect the cheque and so had my photo in the newspapers, although I never talked to any reporters. But that's when all the problems started. I mean, if I'd known, I'd have insisted on keeping my privacy but I was just too thrilled to think straight, I'm afraid.

I: So it was a problem, everybody knowing?

M: Oh yes. I mean, suddenly, we had phone calls from cousins we hadn't heard from in years, which was nice in a way, and all sorts of people I didn't know started coming up to me in the street for a chat and I thought, 'Gosh, this is what it must feel like to be rich and famous!' because you don't know whether people really like you or not. So that's when I started to have doubts about it all.

I: I see. So did people ask you for money?

M: Not friends and family, no. I bought presents for all the people I felt close to, including the friend, Louise, who I'd been with when I bought the ticket - I bought her a really nice necklace. But I lost her as a friend. She was jealous, I suppose, because it could so easily have been her. Anyway, she was very nice about it but we just drifted apart. I think she just didn't want to be with me anymore. But the worst bit was the begging letters.

I: Did nobody warn you about that?

M: Oh yes, we'd been told to expect them but it was still upsetting. People I'd never heard of started writing me letters, telling me all these terribly sad stories and asking me for money. I mean, the lottery people said, 'They're mostly untrue, throw them away - don't even open them.' I'm sure they were right but I read them nonetheless. And there were so many that it really began to get me down. I mean, I didn't regret winning the money but I did begin to think that it wasn't fair that I should have it. And that's when I made my decision.

I: To give it away?

M: Not all of it. I bought the things I wanted to buy - a house, a car, all the things people spend half their lives working for, so I'm certainly feeling the benefit of it now - and there's still a bit in the bank. But about half of it, I gave to charity. And I told everyone what I was doing, you know, gave newspaper interviews, let the whole world know that I wasn't enormously rich anymore, I was just myself - and fortunately, I have no regrets.

I: Mandy, thank you for joining us today.