

# IDEAS 84

**International Online Teachers Society  
Debate  
Educational Materials For  
Advance and Upper Intermediate  
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society  
Publishing Committee**



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## THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

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We face many challenges in life.

There are many among us who find the greatest challenge to be pleasing others. Getting other people to like them, approve of them and affirm their worth has always posed the biggest and tallest hurdle they need to go over. For these individuals, not being able to get others to tell them they have done well is tantamount to the biggest failure there is in the world. Unless people think of them in exactly the way they want to be regarded, they will never become fulfilled or satisfied.

Thus has come about the rat race. You and I endlessly fight our way to the top, in a world where getting to the top means accolades, honors and awards that tell the world we have arrived, we have overcome. We are better than others beneath us. But is that truly what makes life worth living? That you have been able to overcome the challenge of proving yourself before others?

Then there are a good number of us whose measure of success over challenges is the quantity of material possessions they have. There are those who work hard to reach-or luckily even surpass- company projections because they earn a quota trip to somewhere in the country or the world, win a car or get a house and lot. They work hard to make the cut despite the enormity of the challenge. They find affirmation of their worth once they are able to surpass the challenges of their job AND get the perks in the process.

There's nothing inherently wrong with the perceptions of overcoming challenges for those two types of individuals. However, there's the small matter of why challenge needs to be represented by how others look at you or by how many targets you are able to surpass. Wouldn't it be much more fulfilling to face the challenge of oneself?

Waking up in the morning and pushing oneself to rise before the birds start chirping is a challenge, specially when all other people are still in their beds. Facing the day with a prayer and a smile is a challenge that not everyone can prevail over. It's easier to just mumble and grumble one's way through everything. Getting oneself to prod the kids to prepare for school is a challenge. It could be easier to just leave the children to their own devices. Preparing oneself for work is a challenge. Racing against time while managing to remain sane in a not-so-sane world is a huge challenge. Tiny and mundane challenges that show how we try to conquer ourselves and become better persons in the process, those are things we need to look at more profoundly.

You and I overcome a wide variety of challenges. But the greatest challenge to overcome is our own self. Let us not be limited by what others think of us or by the number of times we meet our quota. Instead, find the wonderful potentials of conquering your own worst enemy: YOURSELF.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your biggest challenge in life? How do you think you will be able to overcome it?
2. How important is affirmation from others to you?
3. Why is it very difficult to overcome ourselves?
4. Do you like competing? Why or why not?
5. What was your greatest challenge during your younger years? Have you been able to conquer it?



## WHAT IT TAKES TO BE -CHALLENGED

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We hear such words as “mentally-challenged”, “vertically-challenged” and “horizontally-challenged” and automatically find humor in those euphemisms. Those kinder terms are simply used to mask the negative connotations they are attached to, but much like spraying perfume over a dirty garbage can, they still mean the same thing: having below average intelligence or mental deficiency, being short, and being fat. Owww! Man, those words can hurt!

When people laugh at us or mock us for our failure to come up to certain parameters, we find ourselves challenged. I, for one, am health-challenged. When God handed out all kinds of health problems, I probably stood at the head of the line. He gave out hypertension, I got the worse kind: asymptomatic hypertension. But that has slowly changed since I started going over 40; I feel the headaches and the nape pains immediately when my blood pressure spikes. He gave out back aches and body pains, I probably brought a sack to get me some of that, too. He gave out bad eyesight and hearing, I went in line to get spades for myself. My children have told me repeatedly that it’s all a sign of getting old. I protest repeatedly, but it’s simply no use. The bad eyesight I have gotten from staring at the computer for hours and the bad hearing I have derived from having a headset slung over my head and covering my ears from my very first job to my current one. Ayayay! My children will never understand!

There was a time in my younger years when I fought a hard fight with being horizontally-challenged. This was always after I’d given birth since the fat deposits did not work to make me a rich woman but served to make getting into my work uniform a tremendous battle everyday. And it wasn’t just the work clothes, too. Handheld mirrors were always too small. Covering my middle with blazers and pillows was kind of strange (It’s summer and you feel cold?). Now, I’ve reached that stage where I don’t care anymore. But why the heck does the after-six diet not work anymore? Age slows down metabolism? You’ve got to be kidding!

But for all of the challenges of these kinds, there’s only one true answer: self-discipline. It is discipline that will whisper a don’t-eat-that-it’s-fattening warning to you when you pick up that extra slice of cake or take that extra scoop of ice cream to your mouth. It is discipline that will deliver a hard slap on your wrist when you pick up that fatty piece of meat and stuff it in your mouth. It is discipline that will tell you to pick up your book instead of that gadget so you can study your lessons. It is discipline that’ll tell you to work out and do reaching exercises so you can grow slimmer and hopefully, taller.

Conquer yourself and you overcome many challenges along the way.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it difficult to be challenged in one way or another?
2. What do you consider your greatest personal challenge/s?
3. Is there ever a definite answer to all the challenges we face? Why or why not?
4. How do you face your personal challenge/s?
5. Is there any one person who has posed the greatest challenge to you? Be able to talk about that person in class and how you overcame their challenge.



## LIFE CHALLENGES - A STRUGGLE OR A TEST OF COURAGE?

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All of us experience life challenges and we cannot discount the fact that it can either be a struggle or a test of courage to each one. Our mental well-being handles these struggles in life in different ways. Of course it depends on how much challenges are we faced with. But whatever they may be, it will surely pose as a test of our courage. Although I think it also depends on a person on how he takes it.

In general, we all undergo minor and major life challenges. Most of the time these define what our purpose in life is. We all have our ups and downs in life and we struggle our way out of it. We also try to move on and later cope with what life wants us to have. Apparently, we do not have any control over the circumstances that lie with it. It therefore causes us problems that give pressure to us while we try to get out of it.

In fact, life challenges can bring out the best and worst of us. It is not even simple and as we tread along the path of our journey of life, we encounter difficulties. We realize that after all, life is not that simple (hoping that it is). Trying to overcome life challenges can be very difficult. We do not only experience several challenges but there are also problems and setbacks that go with it. Well, even strong and resilient persons will be most likely hit with setbacks and life problems.

This is the part where we need to brace ourselves and take courage. We need to stand up again from where we fell. This will give us an edge because we can learn and have the ability to be able to face life challenges in the right manner. At the end we will realize that this is what it takes to be successful in life. More importantly, it allows us to experience a happier and fulfilled life. Yes, all we have to do is, if at first you don't succeed, then all you've got to do is try again.

I just think that the greatest life challenges are when we struggle to find love, security, and assurance of the true meaning of life. Actually, we are unable to get over and cope with the circumstances that surround us. There is one thing that I am very sure of and that is, when you get to have a relationship with God, we will be able to cope with all these things. He will give us the wisdom and knowledge for us to discover how to really respond to any given situation. The bottom line is, we need him in our life to direct our path and to be able to respond and overcome any given situation.

Only then could we truly say and realize that life challenges can either be a struggle or a test of courage.

Questions for discussion:

1. Have you experienced to be down and out with life challenges? How were you able to overcome it?
2. Were you tried and tested with these life challenges making you a better person? Explain your answer.
3. Do you always have the courage and that urge to never give up in whatever circumstances that you are faced with? Justify your answer.
4. Describe what kind of life challenges do you encounter and have you encountered.
5. If you will have to choose to describe life challenges, will it be a struggle or a test of courage? Explain further.



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