



Dialogue 3

(James Norton and Alice, at a restaurant)



JN: Well, Alice, can you finally tell me what we are celebrating today?

A: We are celebrating the successful business year of a small interior design company, which started off with a loan from a very generous uncle and which has been doing well enough to repay the loan with proper interest.

JN: Oh, has it already been a year? Congratulations then. I must say I didn't think you'd settle this debt so soon.

A: You mean you didn't believe I'd make it at all, did you?

JN: No, not at all. I knew you'd do fine. After all, I've known you since you were a kid and I know how **perseverant** you are. You have that after your mother.

A: She says it's Polish roots, you know. Never give up **in the face of** obstacles.

JN: Well, what I mean is that you've done a tremendous job so far – I have a feeling that you didn't expect to be so successful either.

A: Not in my wildest dreams! It was a hectic year, though. From the very **inception** of my humble enterprise, everything went so fast I didn't have time to ponder on what was actually going on! Trust me, there were days I was **at the end of my tether**. For instance, when I was simultaneously talking to three clients on the phone, working on a design, and writing an email to a particularly obstinate client, asking him to pay the bloody invoice I had sent him.

JN: Sounds like the usual day at the office. I hope that you don't regret your decision.

A: No, no way. Obviously, there are some **drawbacks**. One of them is the lack of time for doing anything else other than work. It seems that running *Inner Harmony* burns out most of my energy or creativity. I have hardly any time to meet my friends or have some fun in life.

JN: Sounds familiar. I can't promise it will get much easier with time.

A: Well, the truth is I'd thought I would develop at a **snail's pace** for at least two or three years of business. Surely, I wouldn't get rich, but this never had been my primary motivation. But it didn't happen. Instead I had a **rough ride** through more and more challenging commissions and I had to constantly look for ways to make them happen. I realised that the **transition** from the gratifying career of an art teacher into being an entrepreneur would be **taking the plunge** into something completely different, but, honestly, what followed was not quite what I had **bargained for**.

JN: This is how it goes with business. Either you expand as fast as possible or you go down, and soon somebody else takes your place. But you've made it. I hear that *Inner Harmony* has already **made a name for itself**. I've seen some very positive reviews; am I right in saying that there has been a program with you on the local TV? I also might have heard expressions like "**epitome** of style and elegance" being used with respect to the works done by my little niece.

A: You have been talking to Mum, haven't you?

JN: She is very proud of you, Alice. Look, there is something else I wanted to talk to you about. A business opportunity if you will. You probably don't know this, but last year we have **posted** a much bigger **profit** than we forecasted and we had a penny to spare. So we spent some time rethinking our strategic goals, and we decided to **gain a foothold** in the Central European markets. To cut a long story short, one of our first major projects will be in Poland....

A: And...?

JN: And we are going to establish a few branch offices in the major Polish cities. They should have a uniformed look, but on the other hand, they can't be identical. Basically, we need a talented designer – preferably one that can speak Polish a little – who would go there and **have a shot at** this project. It's not nepotism, before you ask. There is still going to be a small tender that you have to win. Here's the phone number of the guy who is running this project. Good luck!

Glossary

perseverant (<i>adj</i>)	persistent, determined
in the face of (<i>idm</i>)	despite sth
inception (<i>n</i>)	beginning, commencement
be at the end of one's tether (<i>idm</i>)	be extremely tired
drawback (<i>n</i>)	disadvantage
at a snail's pace (<i>idm</i>)	very slowly
rough ride (<i>idm</i>)	difficult time
transition (<i>n</i>)	passage from one point to another, change
take the plunge (<i>idm</i>)	decide to do sth difficult
bargain for (<i>idm</i>)	expect
make a name for oneself (<i>idm</i>)	gain respect and recognition
epitome (<i>n</i>)	symbol, essence, personification
post a profit (<i>col</i>)	make your company earnings public
gain a foothold (<i>idm</i>)	find a secure position in a market
have a shot at (<i>idm</i>)	give sth a try

Exercise 1



Listen to the dialogue again and decide if the statements are true or false.

- | | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| 1. Alice owed James Norton some money. | T | F |
| 2. Even Alice herself is very surprised with the success of her enterprise. | T | F |
| 3. Despite the workload, Alice has always managed to carefully consider her next step. | T | F |

4. In her work, she has been forced to cope with increasingly demanding projects. T F
5. The company run by James Norton has been planning to enter the Central European market for a long time. T F
6. James Norton has done something wrong to help his niece. T F
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Exercise 2

What do the underlined expressions mean?

- I agree that Johnson is very bright, but he is not perseverant enough to manage such a long-term assignment.
 - motivated
 - knowledgeable
 - determined
- Working as a PR manager for PlastiCorp was a rough ride all the way through. They've done many things that people objected to.
 - adventure
 - difficult time
 - great time
- The transition from office-based employment to letting our employees work from home was easier than we thought.
 - transport
 - revolution
 - change
- When I accepted the promotion, I didn't bargain for running such an incompetent team.
 - expect
 - hope
 - intend

5. The support offered by KB Associates to young mothers working for them is the epitome of an employee-friendly policy.

- a) policy
- b) example
- c) symbol

6. The major drawback of your plan is that there is too much wishful thinking in it.

- a) disadvantage
- b) strength
- c) point

7. The inception of the restructuring plan has been delayed by resistance of trade unions.

- a) implementation
- b) preparation
- c) beginning





Exercise 3

Fill the gaps in the sentences with suitable phrases from the box.

plunge	face	tether	foothold
pace	name	profit	shot

1. We intend to gain a _____ in the Polish market through merging with one of the local companies.
2. The report I need has been downloading at a snail's _____. I think I'll get a coffee in the meantime.
3. Initially, we intended to use our own resources to launch our business, but then we took a _____ and applied for a bank loan.
4. The requirements set by PlastiCorp for their contractors are difficult to meet, but why don't we just have a _____ and see what happens.
5. I think you may find their financial results on their website. I'm sure they post their _____ on a regular basis.
6. The company made a _____ for itself by encouraging celebrities to endorse their products.
7. Every single month my salary comes late. I am at the end of my _____.
8. I've always admired James Norton for being so composed – even in the _____ of the worst crisis.





Exam practice

Complete the text with some of the words and phrases from the table.



contractors	only	management	media
brand	profitability	sole	paperwork
solvency	royalties	commissions	base
board	expertise	job	group

The *Inner Harmony* interior design agency was launched by Alice Norton as a (1) _____ proprietorship. It was a huge challenge for her: she had received no formal training in (2) _____ and had virtually no experience in being an entrepreneur. The first months were fairly difficult. Alice had to learn how to cope with the usual (3) _____ – invoices, tax returns, records and so on; she also struggled to attract enough clients to maintain financial (4) _____. Fortune, however, seemed to be on her side. She got a few (5) _____ lucrative enough to help her stand on her feet. Also, she established a close cooperation with a team of building (6) _____ who were able to transform her designs into outstanding living spaces. Having secured her position, she decided to bring someone on (7) _____ who would take over most of the administrative tasks, thus allowing her to focus on doing creative work and consulting clients. Eventually, she hired David Evans who had previously done a nine-to-five (8) _____ until he left his company as a result of the conflict with his supervisor. David's contribution to agency's work were his administrative skills, accounting (9) _____ and knowledge of marketing tools. Working together, Alice and David were able to come with more effective forms of advertising for *Inner Harmony*, including such (10) _____ as the Internet and local press. Over time, *Inner Harmony* became a recognizable (11) _____ offering quality services at a reasonable price, with a solid (12) _____ of regular customers. It seems that Alice Norton has come a long way from being an ex-art teacher to becoming the manager of a successful business.