A. Conversation Questions

With your partner(s), use the questions below as prompts for conversation. Feel free to expand the conversation by going off-topic and talking about other things. When you feel a lull in the conversation, choose a new conversation question. You do not have to answer all the questions, nor do you need to answer them in order.

1. Were you surprised that the delivery man's nephew sold Einstein's notes for 1.3 million dollars? Do you think the notes were worth that much money? Why or why not?

2. One of Einstein's notes said, "Where there's a will, there's a way." This means, if you make enough effort there is a solution to any problem. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

3. Are there any expressions in your language about happiness? Try to explain them in English.

4. The other note that Einstein wrote said, "A calm and humble life will bring more happiness than the pursuit of success and the constant restlessness that comes with it." Do you agree that the pursuit of success can cause trouble in our lives?

5. Do you think Einstein was troubled by his own pursuit of success?

6. After Mo's son died, he blamed himself. Have you ever blamed yourself for something that was really outside of your control? What happened?

7. Mo changed his expectations. Rather than thinking that his son should never have died, he chose to be grateful for the times they had together. What do you think of Mo's decision? Explain.

8. Talk about a time you were disappointed or unsatisfied? Do you think changing your expectations and choosing to be grateful would have been possible?
9. Mo believed happiness could be captured in a computer code. He developed a formula with his son Ali. Do you think it's possible to develop an algorithm that could bring complete happiness?

10. Is ‘H ≥ e – E’ a useful formula? Why or why not?

B. Vocab Conversation Questions

Discuss the following questions with your partner. In your answer, try to use the highlighted word phrase as many times as possible. When your partner is speaking, count the number of times that he or she is able to use the highlighted phrase.

The purpose is to repeat the vocabulary terms as many times as possible. In this way, you will more deeply embed the term into your personal vocabulary bank and will be much more likely to use it in a future conversation.

1. On paper, Mo Gawdat’s life ticked every box for happiness. Do you feel that your life ticks every box?

2. What is something that, if you had the chance, you would do at the drop of a hat? Why would you do it?

3. Talk about someone you have heard of who is rich or famous but miserable as sin. Why do you think he or she is miserable as sin?

4. What is something you accomplished that you felt you nailed? Why do you feel you nailed it?

5. What is a piece of advice or an observation that someone made that struck a chord with you? Why did it strike a chord with you?

6. After Mo’s wife told him blaming other people would not bring Ali back he began to look at Ali’s death in a different light. Think of time when you changed your opinion on something important. How did you begin to see it in a different light?

7. Talk about a time when you were in a situation you weren’t comfortable or happy about, but you decided to make the best of it. How did you make the best of it?