

The Different Places I Have Lived

F: Can you tell me about the different places you've lived, Bill?

M: I grew up in a big city, New York, but I always thought I would want to live somewhere else.

F: And did you move?

M: I did. What finally drove me out New York was the traffic. I felt stuck in the city, like I was trapped. I'd always spent summers in the country — in Maine, in the woods, on a lake, and I felt free there, but I wasn't ready to be in the country full time, so for the next seven years we lived in a small town.

F: And was that better?

M: No, I never liked it. I moved back to New York because of my kids. I didn't want them cheering for different sports teams!

F: Do you feel better about life in the city now?

M: Well, I have my ups and downs. What bothers me most about the urban lifestyle is still the traffic. And the parking. Here's an example for you. One time my mother was dropping my daughter off after taking her to play. This is just a law-abiding grandmother doing what normal grandmothers love to do, hanging out with her grandchildren and taking her to a show. OK, so she comes to drop my daughter off and of course there's no parking. My mother is seventy-five, and she needs a little break, so despite not having a legal parking spot, she steps inside the house before driving another forty-five minutes home. She was in the house five minutes, and it cost her fifty dollars! She got a parking ticket! I mean, taking a grandchild to a show doesn't cause stress in the suburbs. But in the big city it's a big deal.

F: How does your wife feel?

M: Well, for my wife, it's the dirt that bothers her.

F: Doesn't that bother you, too?

M: No, I don't really mind the dirt -- I suppose I'm used to it. Other people complain about graffiti, but that doesn't really bother me, either.

F: So, on the whole, would you say you prefer city living to other places?

M: Well, the thing is I like big cities, I also like wild, remote places in the country. I don't like

anything in between, like small cities or suburbs. I think small towns are the worst. I mean, if you gonna have a lot of buildings and cars, at least you should have a lot of interesting people. People are the best part of cities. If you're not gonna have people on the streets, then please give me some trees, streams, boulders, animals.

F: Well, besides the interesting people, is there any other thing you like about the city?

M: I know it's weird, but I especially love the city on gray drizzly days.

F: You do?

M: Yeah. It's beautiful how the gray of the buildings blends in with the gray of the sky. But on bright sunny days I hate it. I want to be on a mountain, hiking in the woods, something like that. But because of the traffic, I don't go anywhere except the park usually, it's frustrating on those sunny days. So I can only be truly happy in the city when the weather is bad.

F: So what's your idea of the ideal place to live?

M: The ideal place to live would be a big city that ends suddenly, and then right away you're in a rural area. So on rainy days, I'd stay home and watch the rain, and on sunny days I'd go mountain climbing. And at night, I'd have a choice: I could camp out and cook burgers or go home and order Chinese take-out.

Question:

1. Which of the following factors drove the man out of New York City at first?
2. The man and his family have lived in several places. Which of the following is NOT one of these places?
3. What happened to the man's mother when she took her granddaughter to a show?
4. How does the man's wife feel about living in the city?
5. Apart from the interesting people, which other thing does the man like about big cities?

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