

A new start after 60: one bite of chocolate led me to reinvent myself at 62

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Take a class survey about their favourite types of sweets.

1. What are your favourite types of sweets?
2. Do you prefer chocolate or other types of sweets?
3. Do you prefer plain chocolate bars or chocolates with fillings?
4. Do you prefer milk chocolate or dark chocolate?
5. Do you buy chocolate or other types of sweets often or only on special occasions?

b. Discuss as a class.

1. What types of sweets, if any, are associated with specific holidays or other occasions?
2. Are there any types of sweets that are specific to a certain region of your country?

2 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to complete the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

enthusiastic
encourage

hire
funding

herbs
moulded

barn

1. to begin to employ someone for a job _____
2. formed in a specific way _____
3. positive or excited about something _____
4. a building where animals live on a farm _____
5. money that the government gives to an organisation _____
6. plants that are used in cooking or medicine _____
7. to try to persuade someone to do something _____

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charity

path

reinvent

chocolatier

full-time

master

ganache

8. a person who makes chocolate _____
9. a job that is at least eight hours per day _____
10. an organisation that helps people who need help _____
11. the direction of someone's life or career _____
12. a mixture of chocolate and cream used in desserts _____
13. someone who does something extremely well _____
14. to produce something new from something that already exists _____

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity.

1. Her career _____ includes a university degree in chemistry.
2. We hope to get _____ to start a free lunch program for school children.
3. These ornaments are made of _____ plastic in different designs.
4. My brother has a(n) _____ job at an IT company. He works there from 9am to 5pm.
5. He loves his job and is very _____ about new technology.
6. My sister works for a(n) _____ that helps homeless people.

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Jane Swayne was devastated when her children's charity lost its funding. But she found another path and passion – and became a professional chocolatier.

Ammar Kalia

11 November, 2024

- 1 At 62, Jane Swayne ate a chocolate that changed her life. While visiting her daughter in Amsterdam in 2013, Jane bought a box of chocolates to take home to her husband in the UK. "I found a chocolatier who made these amazing sea salt and tarragon chocolates," she says. "I ate one and realised I hadn't tried anything like it before. I never liked chocolate as a child but this was miraculous. I decided I had to try to recreate them when I got home – one box wouldn't be enough."
- 2 Jane's husband, John, was equally enthusiastic and encouraged her. "I've always loved cooking but I had never tried making chocolate before," she says. She explained that it's a long process but ultimately very simple, and that the important thing is to use fresh herbs like the tarragon. After a few tries, she had a recipe that she liked.
- 3 Making chocolate was an enjoyable hobby, but Jane was very busy working with her charity, a summer school for children with special needs in Kosovo. For ten years, she travelled frequently between the UK and Kosovo. One day, while she was visiting friends in Scotland, she got a call from the charity. They told her that there were no more funds for the organization, and her job suddenly ended. Jane felt terrible, and she didn't know what to do.
- 4 Jane was in a café when the charity called, and after the call, she looked at the menu on the table. There was an advert for a course with master chocolatier Ruth Hinks to learn how to make moulded chocolates, and Jane felt that it was a sign about her future.
- 5 When she took the course, Jane realised that she needed to learn many skills in order to make good chocolate. She says she wasn't very good because food science was quite difficult, especially since she hadn't taken chemistry at O-level."
- 6 But Jane practised things like making ganache and heating and rapidly cooling chocolate to specific temperatures, and then she took another chocolate-making course with Ruth. The chocolatier was surprised to see her in the second course, but Jane was determined to learn how to make excellent chocolate.
- 7 Jane used an area in an old barn to create a workshop and began experimenting with flavour combinations like cardamom and ginger or coffee and cherry. She took her chocolates to the founder of a local company, and he loved them. He said he wanted to sell the chocolates in his shop, so Jane built a professional kitchen in order to produce enough chocolates for the orders.
- 8 By 2016, Jane's business, Gilbert & Swayne, included chocolate-making workshops and was making a profit. Now the company offers several workshops per year and employs a full-time chocolate-making assistant to help make the 22 flavour combinations and 160 designs of chocolates. Before Christmas, they make 5,000 chocolates a week, and Jane usually works from 5am to 9pm. She says it's stressful, but it's wonderful to see the happiness that her delicious chocolates bring to people.
- 9 Over ten years after she took the first course, Jane says she has no plans to work less or to retire. She wants to hire more chocolate makers and give more workshops. She says she can't believe that she is a chocolate-maker and that if one piece of chocolate could help her reinvent herself at age 62, anyone else can find their passion, too.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Choose True or False for each statement.

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. A very small item changed Jane Swayne's life. | True | False |
| 2. Jane's love of chocolate started when she was a child. | True | False |
| 3. Jane's husband supported Jane's idea. | True | False |
| 4. Making chocolate is a very difficult process. | True | False |
| 5. Jane started her chocolate business as soon as she got home. | True | False |
| 6. Jane went to Scotland to look for a chocolate-making course. | True | False |
| 7. Jane didn't take a second course immediately after the first one. | True | False |
| 8. Jane sold her recipes to a large international company. | True | False |
| 9. Jane's company is still a very small business. | True | False |
| 10. Jane thinks other people can find their perfect careers. | True | False |

4 Key language

a. Choose the correct forms of the verbs in parentheses.

- Jane Swayne **ate** / **was eating** a piece of chocolate in Amsterdam.
- Jane started **experiment** / **experimenting** with different chocolate recipes.
- Jane **has never liked** / **never liked** chocolate as a child.
- Professional cooking **requires** / **required** a good knowledge of chemistry.
- After the course, Jane was ready **try** / **to try** to start her own chocolate business.
- A local company decided **sell** / **to sell** Jane's chocolates in their shop.
- By 2016, Jane **has** / **had** a successful business.
- Jane says that she **can't** / **couldn't** believe that she's a chocolate maker.

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b. Answer the questions with complete sentences.

1. What is something that you started doing recently?
2. What is something that you have always loved doing?
3. What is something that you can't believe?
4. What is something that you have tried to do lately? Were you successful?

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- 'You have to make mistakes to become successful'.
- 'It's never too late to reinvent yourself'.

6 In your own words

a. Do some research about a business you would like to start.

- Is the business you are interested in a franchise or an independent business?
- How much does it cost to start the business?
- What are some ways to get funding for starting a business?

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinions.

Here are some phrases to help you when you discuss facts.

I / We would like to ...

This type of business is a / an ...

In our area, there are / aren't ...

According to my research, ...

Here are some phrases to use when stating your opinion.

I (don't) think (that) ...

In my opinion, ...

Another idea is ...

Maybe you could ...