NEWS LESSON

The Kind Compliment That Turns a Pleasure into a Job



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you keep a hobby if you never improved at it?
2. What do you enjoy doing without showing anyone the result?
3. Does sharing a hobby online make it more fun or more work?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**recognise**	☐	A	changing something completely
2	**transforming**	☐	B	important things you have done successfully
3	**techniques**	☐	C	to notice and understand that something is true
4	**expectations**	☐	D	special ways of doing an activity well
5	**measurable**	☐	E	what people think should happen or how you should behave
6	**genuinely**	☐	F	able to be counted or measured
7	**achievements**	☐	G	truly, in a real way
8	**marketing**	☐	H	telling people about a product so that they will buy it

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Apps count our free time and friends suggest an online shop. A 2026 Forbes article weighed up what happens when an interest becomes an income.

1 A relaxing hobby can change surprisingly quickly. Somebody begins cycling for pleasure and soon measures every journey against a personal record. What began as free time becomes a series of targets, deadlines and comparisons. Sometimes the pressure arrives through a compliment. A friend tastes your cake and says, 'You should sell these!' What they mean kindly can turn a quiet pleasure into another obligation.

2 Many people recognise the change from their own phones. Apps record fitness results, social platforms display impressive achievements and online advice encourages people to turn personal interests into income. A May 2026 Forbes article examined the opportunities and risks involved in transforming a hobby into a business. It is practical business advice rather than research proving a trend, but it shows how common the question has become.

3 There is nothing wrong with ambition. Many people find satisfaction in developing a skill, joining competitions or sharing their creations. A person who loves photography might enjoy learning professional techniques, while someone who makes jewellery may find a genuinely rewarding source of extra income.

4 The difficulty creeps in when improvement stops being a choice. Reading becomes a monthly target rather than a pleasure; exercise produces guilt whenever progress slows. Once a hobby has customers, someone who originally worked for enjoyment may end up worrying about prices, marketing and complaints. The activity can begin to resemble the job it once offered an escape from. There is also room for two kinds of success. Someone can work hard towards a race time and still enjoy an afternoon when they leave the stopwatch at home.

5 Financial pressures also make the question more complicated. For some people, earning money from an interest is an important opportunity, not an unnecessary obsession. It would be unfair to suggest that everybody can afford to keep leisure completely separate from income.

6 Consider two people who enjoy the same activity for completely different reasons. One runs because they love training for races; another runs slowly to clear their mind after work. Neither approach is more authentic. Problems arise when external expectations convince the second runner that enjoyment without improvement is somehow inadequate. Social media makes those comparisons particularly easy because exceptional achievements are more visible than ordinary pleasure.

7 The same principle applies to creative interests. Someone might enjoy learning difficult techniques, while another is happy repeating a familiar recipe or playing simple songs. Recognising that goals are optional can protect the freedom that makes hobbies attractive. A successful hobby need not lead to a qualification, a paying audience or measurable progress; it can simply remain a satisfying part of everyday life.

8 Perhaps the healthiest attitude is to decide what you want from each activity. Sometimes competition is exciting and progress matters. At other times, the pleasure comes from being free to do something imperfectly, without needing to explain its value to anyone else.

Sources: Forbes. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Everybody can afford to keep leisure completely separate from income. T F NG
2. The Forbes article proves that more people are turning hobbies into businesses. T F NG
3. Most hobby businesses make a loss in the first year. T F NG
4. Seeing only exceptional achievements online can make ordinary enjoyment seem not good enough. T F NG
5. The text accepts that setting targets can be a healthy part of a hobby. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

ambition	authentic	convince	income	obligation	obsession	qualification	resemble

1. She joined the club on a free trial and then felt she had a moral _____ to stay.
2. He has enormous _____ and hopes to win a national title one day.
3. You do not need a _____ in pottery to enjoy it; a few free online lessons are enough.
4. Some phone apps _____ video games, giving points and rewards for every walk.
5. My friends tried to _____ me to enter the race, but I preferred to run alone.
6. A handmade gift can feel more _____ than an expensive one from a shop.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time she opened her shop, she _____ for friends for ten years. (BAKE)
2. If I _____ the baking would become so stressful, I would never have started selling. (KNOW)
3. Every candle in the shop _____ by hand, so orders often take weeks. (MAKE)
4. While she _____ for the marathon, she realised she had stopped enjoying running. (TRAIN)
5. He _____ to leave his stopwatch at home. (DECIDE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. The small word in a phrasal verb often changes the whole meaning. Read the full sentence before you choose.

along	down	into	off	out	over	up

1. Without meaning to, she ended _____ spending every weekend at craft fairs.
2. The first batch of jam turned _____ much better than anyone had expected.
3. Friends talked him _____ entering the competition, though he felt nervous.
4. He was so tired that he put _____ his practice until the weekend.
5. She cut _____ on screen time to make room for painting.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. When does a hobby start feeling like another job?
2. Would you rather be average at something you loved or excellent at something you disliked?
3. What could help someone try a hobby without feeling judged?

9 Role-play: should you sell your cakes?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the friend

You love your friend's cakes and think they should open an online shop. Give at least two reasons. Listen to their worries and answer them.

Student B · the baker

You bake for fun and your friend says you should sell your cakes. You are not sure. Explain what you enjoy now and what worries you.

Useful phrases

You should really sell these!

I'd love to, but I'm worried it'd feel like work.

What's stopping you?

I bake because it's relaxing, not because I want money.

We could start small and see how it goes.

That's a fair point, I hadn't thought of that.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the baker decide to sell, and what made the difference?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 A · 3 D · 4 E · 5 F · 6 G · 7 B · 8 H

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 obligation · 2 ambition · 3 qualification · 4 resemble · 5 convince · 6 authentic

6 Verb forms

1 had been baking or had baked · 2 had known · 3 is made · 4 was training · 5 decided

7 Language focus

1 up · 2 out · 3 into · 4 off · 5 down

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