

EVOLVE LEVEL 6, FINAL TEST B

LISTENING A

- Hannah** We've all read that thanks to technology, human attention spans are now shorter than those of fish. But what can we do about it? On today's show we have psychologist David Turner. Welcome, David.
- David** Thanks, Hannah! But I don't think you should believe everything you read. The idea that there is one single attention span for humans is ridiculous, and there is no evidence that human attention spans are shrinking.
- Hannah** That's good news, although my feeling is that it is more difficult to concentrate nowadays. Do you have any tips for improving concentration?
- David** I would suggest exercise. Research has shown that the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory systems, actually grows as you get in shape. Other studies show that you can remember foreign vocabulary more easily if you are walking or cycling while practicing. Don't overdo exercise though, as excessive exercise can increase stress which negatively affects your memory.
- Hannah** Is it possible to train your attention?
- David** It is. There are brain-training apps on the market, but I would recommend meditation. Just focusing on your breath for a minute each day can help you focus better. Over time you can build up to 20 minutes. The technique of bringing your mind to your breath can easily translate to bringing your mind back to your work.
- Hannah** Do you think technology is to blame for attention problems?
- David** I think we need to understand that our brains are designed to be always looking for new information. If anything, that is what attention is, noticing the changes to your environment, noticing new information. In the past, it might've been noticing a dangerous animal, today it is noticing an article that will make you rich. To concentrate better, you must eliminate potential distractions. It's that simple.
- Hannah** Thanks very much, David and now