

## Svend Brinkmann on Resisting the self-improvement craze

### WARM-UP

1. In pairs, discuss the following questions:
  - a) Have you ever had any life coaching session? If yes, what was it like? If not, would you like to try doing it?
  - b) What's your opinion about life/business coaching?
  - c) How important to you is to constantly develop yourself?



### VOCABULARY

2. Fill in the gaps with the words from the box to create some common pieces of advice on self-improvement.

TAKE ON	VERSION	AIM	DRAW	COMFORT
SKILLS	PURSUE	FULLEST	BROADENS	FLOW

- Let no one bring you down with negative views, you are who you are and only need to **be a better** ..... **of yourself**.
- **Step out of your** ..... **zone** and do something you've never done before.
- You can never be too good at something so continue **honing your** .....
- Life is an adventure so don't be afraid to ..... **your dreams**.
- Travel a lot as it widens horizons and ..... **perspectives**.
- Set the mission statement for your life, one that will drive you to **live your life to the** .....
- Always ..... **for the highest goals**, the best results, the grandest vision.
- Push your boundaries and ..... **more than you can handle**.
- Not everything has to adhere to a plan all the time. Allow yourself to just **go with the** .....
- Reflect on everything that happens to you because that's when you can ..... **lessons on what you can do better in the future**.

3. In pairs, decide which 3 tips from exercise 2 are most useful and which 3 you think are least helpful. Be ready to justify your picks.

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### VIDEO

4. Look at the introduction to the speech you are going to watch. Do you agree with what it says?

*The pace of modern life is accelerating, and the self-help shelves are full of advice on how to keep up. But the demands of life in the fast lane come at a price: anxiety, fatigue and depression are at an all-time high. Leading Danish philosopher and psychologist Svend Brinkmann argues that we must not be afraid to reject the self-help mantra. The secret to a happier life lies not in finding your inner self, but in coming to terms with yourself to coexist peacefully with others.*

- a) Watch the video and answer Yes, No or Don't Know to the questions below:

- b) Does ideology of improving yourself make us feel bad?
- c) Does the idea of constant development affect people's psychological problems?
- d) Is trust a precondition for being an ethical person?
- e) Did the speaker come to the meeting on time?
- f) Does the speaker believe that lifelong learning is dangerous?
- g) Did stoic authors write similar things as the self-help writers of today?
- h) Do stoic philosophers promote positive thinking?

### DISCUSSION

5. Discuss points below related to coaching and self-improvement.

- What do you think about the culture of constant self-improvement? Do you think it's a positive or negative phenomenon?
- Are people so incompetent in their lives now that they need a coach through life?
- What do you think of the idea that everyone should get in touch with a life/business coach to be a better version of themselves?
- How can self-improvement change your life?
- Should this profession be regulated like lawyers/doctors or psychotherapists are?