Helen Keller’s Speech Quiz

Directions: Answer the questions below about Helen Keller’s speech on page 9 of this issue of Scope.

1. Helen Keller says, “... my thoughts used to beat against my fingertips like little birds striving to gain their freedom.” This sentence contains
   A a metaphor comparing Keller’s fingertips to birds.
   B a simile comparing Keller’s thoughts to birds.
   C hyperbole, exaggerating Keller’s sense of frustration.
   D personification, describing birds as though they were human.

2. Which of the following best summarizes Keller’s experience with discouragement and disappointment?
   A She never felt discouraged or disappointed; she always trusted that everything would work out.
   B She was frequently overwhelmed by discouragement and disappointment, and often felt like she would never achieve her goals.
   C She often felt discouraged, but she kept trying, knowing that if she tried hard enough and long enough, she would achieve her goals.
   D She experienced discouragement only once.

3. Which of the following expresses the idea that you shouldn’t settle for achieving less than what you know you are capable of?
   A “One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.”
   B “Do not think of today’s failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow.”
   C “Remember, no effort that we make to attain something beautiful is ever lost.”
   D “Sometime, somewhere, somehow we shall find that which we seek.”

4. Which words best describe the tone of this speech?
   A informative, impersonal
   B entertaining, humorous
   C angry, pessimistic
   D inspiring, optimistic

5. What is Keller suggesting in the following line:
   “... you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles—a delight in climbing rugged paths, which you would perhaps never know if you did not sometimes slip backward.”
   A Fear of failure stops many people from achieving their dreams.
   B We feel a greater sense of pride when we accomplish something difficult than when we accomplish something easy.
   C It is senseless to compare yourself with others, because there is only one person you were meant to be: you.
   D You have to try something to know if you’ll enjoy it.

6. Where and when did Keller present this speech?
   A a school for the blind, 1920
   B a college graduation ceremony, 1896
   C Lexi Youngberg’s high school graduation, 2011
   D a organization that helps the deaf learn to speak, 1896

7. Which of the following does Keller identify as a key ingredient to success?
   A a positive attitude
   B perseverance
   C focusing on your dreams
   D all of the above

8. Keller delivered this speech to people who were deaf and trying to learn to speak, and their teachers. Could Keller’s speech help or inspire other people as well? Explain.

9. Choose one sentence from the speech. Explain what it means in your own words. Then explain how it applies to you.