GERUND OR INFINITIVE

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Which one to use and why?

Put the verb between brackets in the correct form.

Leila stopped (say) hello to her friends.

What a quandary! Shall I use the infinitive **'to say'** or the gerund '**saying**'? I asked my teacher about it but all that she said was:

"It depends ...!"

But it depends on what? I figured out that she wanted me to work out my brains to see to what extent I could solve this enigma. Well!

1. Leila stopped **to say** hello to her friends.
2. Leila stopped **saying** hello to her friends.

I bet they are both correct, but they bear each a completely different meaning. I got it now; the teacher meant that it all depends on what I wanted to say!

Grammatically speaking, example "1" respects the rule which says that in a successive verb situation the second should be in the infinitive. That's why I used the infinitive with its particle 'to'. As for example "2", the verb "stop" is followed by the gerund just like other verbs such as, *remember, forget, regret* etc.

Meaning will probably make things clearer:

1. Leila was walking around or riding a bike when she saw her friends and stopped to greet them.
2. Leila used to say "Hello!" to her friends, but now she stopped doing that. She no longer greets them because of something. It could be a quarrel or whatever. That's none our business.

Now let me tell you something! To get rid of such dilemma, one has to read a lot and from time to time to check for rules, they really help. The verbs that are followed by both the gerund and infinitive are to my mind tricky and fiddly. Look at this one:

1. He remembered telling her the news.
2. He remembered to tell her the news.

1. I tried to tell her the news, but she refused to listen.
2. I tried telling her but in vain.

In the first example the telling has taken place before thinking about it, in the second, however, the speaker thought about telling her then he did it. Many other verbs give the same headache: *start, begin, continue, love, hate, like, neglect* and others. Is it clear? If not allow me some time to give you more situations where the gerund and the infinitive are the main actors.