

Make People Like You: Social Skills That Work in Any Language

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

377 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Last week somewhere, you had a conversation in English.

Maybe at work.

Maybe at the school gate.

Maybe with a neighbor.

And you made mistakes.

Let's say five mistakes.

A wrong verb.

A missing word.

A strange pronunciation.

Now here is today's question.

How many of those five mistakes

does the other person actually remember?

Think about it for a second.

The answer is zero.

Not one, zero.

Because the human brain does not record conversations

like a camera, it keeps two photographs.

And today you will learn exactly which two.

And when you understand that,

your fear of speaking English changes forever.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox

where we train your ears step by step.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.



Friends, we are so happy you are here today.

Before we begin,

remember that this episode has a home.

YourEnglishToolbox.com.

There you will find the interactive transcript

of this episode.

With translations in Farsi, Spanish,

German, and French.

Plus vocabulary cards, flashcards, mini games,

and PDFs you can download, all completely free.

Today's episode is about something everybody wants.

Everybody.

Good social skills.

The ability to walk into a room and connect.

To make people feel comfortable and to be remembered.

And here's the beautiful secret, friends.

Social skills are not a talent.

They are not magic.

And they are not a charisma you are born with.

They are a set of small behaviors that anyone can learn.

In any language.

If you stay with us until the end,

you will walk away with three things.

One, the science of the first 10 seconds.

What to do before you say a single word.

Two, the listening techniques

that make people feel truly seen.

Including two traps almost everyone falls into.

Three, the peak end rule.

The scientific reason nobody remembers



your English mistakes.

That last one is going to change

how you feel about speaking English.

So let's start at the beginning.

The first 10 seconds.

Science tells us something uncomfortable.

People form an opinion of you almost instantly.

Before your grammar.

Before your vocabulary.

Before you say one single word.

So what happens in those 10 seconds?

Four things.

And none of them need perfect English.

Number one, stand up.

When you meet someone new,

if you are sitting, stand up.

It is such a small gesture,

but it says you matter and I am fully here.

Number two, your body.

Turn your whole body towards the person.

Not just your head.

A half turned body says I am already leaving.

Number three, your eyes.

Natural eye contact.

Steady, warm, relaxed.

Too little says I want to escape.

Too much says something a little scary.

Ha, true.

The goal is a friendly gaze.

The way you look at a good friend.



Number four, the handshake in cultures

where people shake hands.

Firm, but gentle.

Not a dead fish.

And not a machine that crushes.

Calm and confident.

And notice something important, friends.

We have not used a single word of English yet.

Exactly.

Your first impression is already made

before your accent even enters the room.

For a language learner, that is wonderful news.

Now I'm at the first words.

And here science gives us a gift.

The most powerful sound in any language

is a person's own name.

When you use someone's name,

something lights up in their brain.

They feel seen, they feel distinct.

Not just another face in the room.

So when you meet someone, catch the name.

Use it once when you say hello.

Nice to meet you, Sarah.

Use it once when you say goodbye.

It was lovely talking to you, Sarah.

But what if the name is difficult?

What if you did not understand it?

This is where learners think they have a problem.

And actually, they have an advantage.

Sorry, could you say your name again?



I want to say it right.

Do you know how that feels for the other person?

It feels like a compliment.

You are the person who cared about their name.

Most native speakers never ask.

They just avoid the name for the whole conversation

and hope nobody notices.

You, my friend, can do better than the natives.

Now we arrive at the heart of all social skills

and it is not speaking.

It is listening.

Here is a phrase to keep forever.

People remember how you made them feel

far more than what you said.

Far more.

And nothing makes people feel better

than being truly listened to.

So how do you listen like a master?

Three tools.

Tool one, react, nod.

Smile, say small things.

Really?

Wow, that makes sense.

Your face should be a mirror of their story.

Tool two, send their words back.

If they say, the flight was a disaster.

You say, a disaster?

What happened?

You take their word and you return it as a question.

It shows your brain is with them,



not waiting for its turn to speak.

And this tool is perfect for English learners.

Because you are practicing their vocabulary in real time.

Tool three, the follow-up question.

Whatever they tell you, go one level deeper.

And how did you feel?

And what did you do next?

One level deeper is where real conversations live.

Now, the two traps.

Trap number one, the one-up trap.

They say, I just came back from Italy.

And you say, oh, I went to Italy last year.

It was amazing.

We visited Rome and Florence and-

Stop.

You just stole the spotlight.

The conversation was about their trip

for exactly four seconds.

The rule is simple.

Their story is not an invitation to tell yours.

Ask about their Italy.

Yours can wait.

Trap number two.

Fake empathy.

Someone shares something difficult with you.

And we all say the same thing.

I know exactly how you feel.

It sounds kind.

But it can feel dismissive.

Because you don't know exactly.



Nobody does.

The master class answer is,

I can only imagine how hard that was for you.

I can only imagine.

Those four words respect their experience.

Instead of borrowing it.

Let's talk about questions.

Because questions are the steering wheel

of every conversation.

And most people drive with the handbrake on.

Closed questions produce one-word answers.

How was your weekend?

Good.

And the conversation dies right there.

Open questions produce stories.

What was the best part of your weekend?

Now they have to think, choose, remember.

Now they are talking.

Here are three magic question starters.

What was the best part of?

How did you end up?

What is it like to?

For example, how did you end up working here?

Or, what is it like to live in that neighborhood?

Every one of them opens a door.

And here is the learner bonus.

While they answer, you rest.

A good question buys you 30 seconds of listening practice.

And they think you are fascinating.

That is the secret economy of conversation.



Speak less, connect more.

One more tool for your box.

The specific compliment.

Generic compliments are weak.

You're nice, you're smart.

They slide off people like water.

Specific compliments stick.

You stayed so calm in that meeting.

How do you do that?

A specific compliment says, I truly saw you.

And it usually opens a beautiful conversation too.

Now let's turn you into a reader of people.

Three signals.

Easy to see and almost impossible to fake.

Signal one, the feet.

Faces are polite liars.

But feet always tell the truth.

If their feet point toward you,

they are enjoying the conversation.

If their feet point toward the door,

their body has already left.

Be kind when you see it.

Finish warmly and set them free.

Signal two, the smile.

A real smile lives in the eyes.

Little wrinkles appear.

The eyes almost close a little.

A polite smile only moves the mouth.

Once you see the difference,

you cannot stop seeing it.



Signal three, mirroring.

When two people truly connect,

their bodies start to copy each other.

Same posture, same rhythm.

They lean in at the same time.

If you see mirroring, the connection is real.

And here is the beautiful part.

All three signals work in every language on earth.

Your body language vocabulary, mine is already fluent.

Let us tell you about Yusuf.

Yusuf is a barber in Birmingham.

He arrived from Syria six years ago

and his English is still simple.

Short sentences, basic vocabulary, a strong accent.

And his chair is the most requested chair

in the whole shop.

People wait 40 minutes for Yusuf

while other barbers are free.

Why, because Yusuf remembers.

He remembers your name.

He remembers that your daughter had exams

and he asks how they went.

He puts down the scissors

when you tell him something important.

He looks at you in the mirror and he listens.

And when you leave, he says your name

and one warm sentence.

People do not come back for the haircut.

They come back for how the chair feels.

Yusuf has maybe a thousand words of English.



And better social skills than most people with 50,000.

Remember him.

Connection is not built with grammar.

And now the idea we promised at the beginning,

the two photographs.

Psychologists call it the peak end rule.

They discovered something very strange about human memory.

Your brain does not record an experience minute by minute.

It keeps two moments

and it builds the whole memory from them.

Photograph one, the peak.

The most emotional moment of the interaction.

A shared laugh.

A moment of real understanding.

A nice surprise.

Photograph two, the end.

The last thing that happened.

The goodbye.

And everything else fades.

The small silences.

The awkward moments.

The mistakes.

Gone.

So if you want to be remembered well,

you only need two things.

One good peak and one good ending.

The peak can be simple.

One genuine laugh.

One moment where you really truly listened.

And the ending, friends,



is completely under your control.

Never leave with a flat empty bye.

Leave with a specific warm goodbye.

It was genuinely lovely to meet you.

I hope we talk again soon.

One sentence and it becomes the final photograph of you.

And now, let's point all of this at your English.

Because friends, if you are afraid of speaking,

this part is for you.

Think about what the peak end rule really means.

The other person is not recording your grammar.

Their brain keeps the peak and the end.

Your five little mistakes are not in either photograph.

So here is the sentence of the day.

People will forget your mistakes,

but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Say it again with us.

People will forget your mistake,

but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Now, your social survival kit in English.

Number one, learn your three open questions by heart.

What was the best part of your weekend?

How did you end up living here?

What is it like working there?

Three questions, memorized, always ready in your pocket.

Number two, learn your three listening reactions.

Really?

That makes sense.

Tell me more.

Three tiny phrases, enormous effect.



Number three, the name move.

Catch the name, use it twice.

And if you miss it, ask again.

Remember, asking for a name is a compliment.

And number four, prepare your high note goodbye.

It was genuinely lovely talking to you.

Practice it tonight until it comes out smooth and warm.

That single sentence will be the last photograph

in every conversation you have.

And notice something, friends.

Nothing in this kit needs advanced English.

10 small phrases, maybe 50 words in total.

50 words and that do the work of 5,000.

Because today's lesson is bigger than English.

The people we remember are the people

who made us feel seen.

And you can be that person at any level of English.

Quick recap, friends.

The first 10 seconds, stand up, turn your body,

warm eyes, calm handshake.

The name, catch it, use it,

and never be afraid to ask for it.

Listen like a master.

React, send their words back.

Go one level deeper.

Avoid the one-up trap.

And trade, I know how you feel,

for I can only imagine.

Ask open questions, give specific compliments.

Read the feet, the eyes, and the mirroring.



And design your two photographs.

One real peak, one warm ending.

Everything from today is waiting for you

at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

The interactive transcript, the translations,

the vocabulary cards with every phrase from this episode,

the flashcards, the games, the PDFs,

all of it, completely free.

So here's your mission for this week.

One conversation.

Just one.

Use one open question, one listening phrase,

and your high note goodbye.

And watch what happens to the other person's face.

Because from today,

you are not just someone learning English.

You are someone who knows how to make people feel seen.

And that, friends, is a superpower in every language.

Thank you for being here with us.

It was genuinely lovely to spend this time with you.

See what we did there.

Ha, take care, friends.

Bye for now.

