

One Year of Love, Chaos and Podcasting: Martin & Julia's Untold Stories

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

224 lines

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

Can you believe it has actually been a year?

Fifty-two weeks.

Fifty-two Sundays of you asking me if the intro sounded "too enthusiastic."

It always sounds too enthusiastic on the first take.

That is the job, though.

Enthusiasm, then editing.

I genuinely did not think we would make it past episode ten.

I did.

I just did not say it out loud, in case I jinxed it.

That is very you.

That is very "anchor" of me, yes.

Do you remember our actual first session, before any of this existed?

Do not.

I am bringing it up.

You froze, Martin.

Completely.

For almost a full minute.

In my defense, I had never heard my own recorded voice used for something real before.

You had a tape recorder as a child.

You told our whole audience about it.

That was different.

That was me talking to myself in my bedroom.

This was a microphone that other people would actually hear.

And now you record three or four times a week without blinking.



Mostly.

Some weeks are still rough.

Some weeks Robert makes my whole week rough, and I bring that energy into the booth whether I like it or not.

Robert.

Do not get me started.

I will not.

Today is supposed to be a good day.

It is a good day.

I simply reserve the right to complain about Robert on principle.

Do you remember the garden hose episode?

Do not remind me.

Halfway through a take, there is suddenly a flooding sound in the background, completely out of nowhere.

My automatic watering system chose that exact moment to malfunction.

In my own garden.

During an episode about staying calm.

We kept the take.

It is still online.

People love it.

People love chaos, Martin.

That is the real lesson of this whole year.

Do you remember the week we recorded four episodes back to back because we were terrified of running out of buffer?

I do.

I could not feel my own voice by Thursday.

You sounded like a completely different person by the end of that week.

I sounded like a man who had said "friends" so many times the word stopped meaning anything.

We do not do that anymore, at least.

We learned.

That is the whole point of a year, isn't it?

You stop making the same mistake twice, and you find three brand new ones instead.

Honestly, though, a year of doing this has changed something in me.



Go on.

You know I never fully lost the stutter.

It is still there, underneath.

It just turned into slowness, mostly.

I know.

For years I thought that was something to manage, or hide, or work around.

And now?

Now I stand in front of a microphone and get paid, essentially, to talk slowly on purpose.

The thing I was most ashamed of as a child is the actual selling point.

That is not nothing, Martin.

It is not nothing.

I have changed too, you know.

Not just the Robert saga.

Tell me.

I used to think being "the anchor" meant staying calm no matter what, absorbing everything, never showing a crack.

I do not think that anymore.

What do you think now?

I think being steady does not mean being silent about what is hard.

I say more now.

On the mic, and off it.

That is growth, Julia.

It is terrifying, mostly.

But yes.

Let's talk about the episodes, then.

The ones that actually did something to us, not just to the download numbers.

Go first.

Episode ten.

Back in October, last year.

The childhood one.

The tape recorder, the piano, all of it.



I almost pulled it the night before it went out.

Why?

Because it is one thing to talk about a method on this show, and a completely different thing to tell strangers that I used to stand in front of a classroom and stutter through four lines of poetry.

And then?

And then people wrote in.

Not about the vocabulary.

About the stutter.

About their own kid, or their own younger self, who never got a Danny whispering the poem back to them.

That episode is the reason half our listeners trust us, I think.

Not because we are experts.

Because we admitted we were not always fluent, in any sense of the word.

I remember reading your first draft of that script and thinking, Martin, are you sure you want to give people this much of yourself.

I asked myself that about four times a day for a week.

And?

And then I thought about Aunt Nora.

About "he doesn't struggle, he's just composing his sentences." If she could hand me that sentence when I was five, the least I could do was hand it to a few thousand strangers thirty years later.

Let's do the next one.

Actually, before that, can I ask you something.

Go on.

Can I ask you about Claire?

Claire is my flatmate, Julia.

I know that, obviously.

I meant is something going on there.

Nothing is "going on" with Claire.

We split the rent on a flat near the studio, she leaves passive-aggressive notes about the dishwasher, and that is the entire relationship.

People heard episode one-oh-seven, from the start of this month, and assumed "partner." She is not my partner.

Fine.



Duly noted, for anyone confused.

Claire: flatmate.

So who has had you smiling into your coffee for a solid week straight?

Her name is Elena.

Finally.

Episode seventy, back in May, was the first time I mentioned her at all, even in passing.

I had gone eighteen months without a single date, and then I met her at a jazz club, completely by accident, and I panicked the entire walk over there about whether my shirt was too formal.

You, the guide of momentum, panicking over a shirt.

I coach people on taking action for a living, and I nearly did not walk through the door.

What was she like?

Calm.

Direct.

She noticed things about me in the first ten minutes that I had not admitted to myself in years.

She told me later that people spend so much energy trying to be interesting, and they forget that simply being observant is far more attractive.

I have thought about that sentence every day since.

And then episode seventy-three.

Episode seventy-three, mid-May, the forest walk.

Our second date.

I left my phone recording by accident, and somehow we still published the whole thing.

The bit where she tells you that you talk about the present moment all day and are only just beginning to live in one.

That sentence nearly finished me.

And after that?

After that, we kept walking.

Literally and otherwise.

We have seen each other most weekends since May, Julia.

It is slow, the way she likes things, but it is real.

Martin.

That is wonderful.

It is.



I did not want to make it into content again straight away, which is why I have been dodging you about it for weeks.

I noticed.

I was trying to be a good friend and not push.

You were terrible at not pushing.

I know.

I am delighted I finally get to stop pretending.

Third one.

Episode one-oh-two, back in July.

The World Cup episode.

I still get emotional about the closing lines.

You cried recording that, and pretended you had not.

You noticed.

I noticed.

That episode connected straight back to our Atomic Habits episodes, months earlier, the one-percent rule, the whole idea that you fall to the level of your systems.

Watching a national team prove that live, on television, while we had already told our audience the theory, it felt like the universe handing us a case study.

It also brought in the most messages we have ever had about people's own ten minutes a day.

Boubacar.

People still write in asking how he is doing.

He is not even a real person, and people ask about him like a neighbor.

That is the job, though, isn't it?

Make something true enough that it does not matter if it happened exactly like that.

Fourth.

Episodes one-oh-six and one-oh-seven, just last week.

The Four Agreements.

Interesting that you count them as one.

Because I use them as one.

Genuinely.

Not as content.

In my actual life.



Give me an example.

Robert sent me a one-line email last month that I read about eleven different ways before lunch.

And the eleventh time?

The eleventh time I just asked him what he actually meant.

Turned out it meant nothing.

He was in a hurry between meetings.

So the assumption cost you a whole morning, and the question cost you one sentence.

Exactly.

I am trying to remember that ratio.

Same, honestly.

Episode one-oh-seven is actually where the Claire confusion started, come to think of it.

I told the Claire story to explain not making assumptions, and half our listeners assumed "partner" anyway.

Which we have now, officially, cleared up.

Officially cleared up.

Claire, flatmate.

Elena, whatever this wonderful, slow thing actually is.

Okay, but seriously, thinking about all four of those together, the website has come a long way since we started.

It really has.

What began as one interactive transcript is now dozens of episodes deep, with translations, vocabulary cards, flashcards, the whole system.

And I still think people underestimate what we are actually trying to build there.

Say more.

It is not a podcast archive, Julia.

It is a place someone can actually learn, properly, at their own pace, with the parts of language learning that usually get forgotten.

Repetition.

Context.

Kindness, even.

That word again.

Kindness.

It matters.



Most people who come to us have tried and failed at English somewhere else, and they arrive a little ashamed of that.

A lot of them moved countries, Martin.

They are not sitting in a classroom for fun.

They need this for a job interview, or a parent-teacher meeting, or just to order their own coffee without rehearsing it three times in the car.

That is exactly why "slow" cannot just be a gimmick for us.

It has to actually respect where people are starting from.

And our whole job is to hand them the piano instead of the exam.

The piano instead of the exam.

I like that.

I am stealing it for the next outro.

Already stealing it, clearly.

What I want, a year from now, is for someone to tell us the website is the reason they finally had a real conversation in English.

Not "finished a course." A real conversation.

That is the whole thing, isn't it?

Not fluency as a trophy.

Fluency as a door that opens.

Your English Toolbox, dot com.

Free.

Growing every week, whether people notice it or not.

Whether people notice it or not.

Happy anniversary, Julia.

Happy anniversary, Martin.

Now go text Elena before we start recording properly.

I already did.

Twenty minutes ago.

Of course you did.

