

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 47

# Atomic Habits for English

Full episode script · English

243 lines

Your English Toolbox

Welcome to Your English Toolbox, your slow English podcast where we train your ears step-by-step.

I am Julia.

And I am Martin.

Martin!

What are we going to talk about today?

Today we are going to explore the power of tiny changes.

We are going to look at the book Atomic Habits by James Clear.

And we will see how small actions can completely transform your English learning.

If you stay with us until the end, you will understand why  
you often fail to reach your goals.

You will learn how to build a system that works automatically.

And you will discover how to stop fighting against your own brain.

Let's start with a hard truth.

Most of us approach English the wrong way.

We definitely do.

We set massive goals.

We say, I will become fluent this year.

Or I will study grammar for two hours every Saturday.

It sounds very ambitious.

It feels good to say it.

what happens in reality?

Reality hits us.

We do it for one week.

Maybe two.

Then we get tired.

We miss one day.

We feel guilty.

And eventually we quit.

Exactly.

James Clear calls this the problem of goals.

He says you do not rise to the level of your goals.

You fall to the level of your systems.

That is a powerful sentence.

Can we break it down?

What does he mean by systems?

Think about a messy room.

If your goal is to clean the room, you motivate yourself.

You clean it for three hours.

Now you have a clean room.

But if you don't change your habits, the room will be messy again in three days.

Precisely.

You treated the symptom, not the cause.

In English it is the same.

If you study hard for one exam, you might pass.

But you haven't become a fluent speaker.

You have just memorized information for a moment.

So we

need to stop thinking about the finish line.

We need to think about the daily process.

Part 3 The 1% rule There is a concept in the book called the 1% rule.

It is my favorite part.

It is simple math, but it is magic.

If you get 1% better each day for one year, you will end up 37 times better. 37 times?

Yes, it is compound interest.

But if you get 1% worse each day, you go down

to nearly zero.

The problem is that 1% is invisible.

If I learn one new word today, I don't feel fluent.

If I listen to this podcast for 10 minutes, my accent doesn't change immediately.

That is why it is so hard.

We want immediate results.

We go to the gym and we look in the mirror.

We see no muscles, so we quit.

But English is a long game.

It is not a sprint.

It is a marathon.

Actually,

I think it is not even a marathon.

It is a lifestyle.

Your results are a lagging measure of your habits.

That sounds technical.

What is a lagging measure?

It means your reality today is the result of what you did six months ago.

Your weight is a lagging measure of your eating habits.

Your English knowledge is a lagging measure of your listening habits.

So we need to ignore the current result.

We need to trust the process.

Yes,

do not worry about being fluent.

Worry about being consistent.

Part 4.

Identity Change This leads us to the deepest part of the book.

Changing your identity.

This is crucial for our listeners.

Imagine two people who are trying to quit smoking.

You offer them a cigarette.

The first person says, No thanks, I am trying to quit.

That sounds like a good answer.

It sounds good, but it implies they are still a smoker who is making a sacrifice.

Now imagine the second person.

They say, No thanks, I am not a smoker.

Oh, I see the difference.

It is a small shift in words.

But a huge shift in mindset.

Exactly.

One is fighting against themselves.

The other is simply stating a fact.

How do our listeners usually talk about themselves?

They say, I am a student.

Or, I am trying to learn English.

Or even worse, I am bad at languages.

We need to delete those sentences.

You need to start saying, I am an English speaker.

Even if you make mistakes?

Especially if you make mistakes.

An English speaker is simply someone who uses English to communicate.

If you listen to this podcast, you are doing it.

You are an English speaker.

It feels scary to claim that identity.

It feels like we are lying.

It is not a lie.

Every time you practice, you cast a vote for that identity.

You are proving it to

yourself.

The goal is not to read a book.

The goal is to become a reader.

The goal is not to pass an exam.

The goal is to become a learner.

Now let's get practical.

How do we actually build these new habits?

James Clear suggests a technique called habit stacking.

The formula is very simple.

After I do current habit, I will do new habit.

This works because you use your existing neural networks.

You already have strong habits.

You brush your teeth.

You make coffee.

You sit on the sofa.

We do these things without thinking.

Exactly.

So we attach the new English habit to the old one.

Can you give us an example?

Sure.

Instead of saying, I will listen to English today, be specific.

Say, after I pour my morning coffee, I will press play on the podcast.

I like that.

The coffee is the trigger.

Or, after I get into my car, I will repeat

one sentence aloud.

Or, after I brush my teeth at night, I will read one page of an English book.

The key is specificity.

Most people fail because their intention is too vague.

They wait for the right time.

But the right time never comes.

You have to design it.

Part 6.

Environment Design Another powerful concept is environment design.

This means changing your physical space to make the habit easier.

Motivation is overrated.

Environment is underrated.

If you want

to eat more fruit, put a bowl of apples on the table.

If you hide them in the fridge, you will forget them.

So, if I want to read in English...

Put the book on your pillow.

When you go to bed, you cannot ignore it.

If I want to listen more...

Put your headphones on top of your keys.

Make the cue obvious.

We are visual creatures.

If the cue is invisible, the habit will not happen.

It sounds

almost too simple.

We think learning a language requires complex suffering.

That is a limiting belief.

We think it must be hard to be valuable, but James Clear says, make it easy.

Reduce the friction.

If you have to search for your book, search for your pen, and find your glasses, you have too much friction.

You will probably give up before you start.

So prepare everything the night before.

Make the path of least resistance the path of learning.

Part 7.

The Two-Minute Rule.

This brings us to the final rule.

The Two-Minute Rule.

This is the best rule for lazy days.

And we all have lazy days.

The rule states, when you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to do.

Wait, two minutes of English?

Is that enough?

The point is not the duration.

The point is the showing up.

You need to master the art of showing up.

A habit must be

established before it can be improved.

So, if I want to read, I just read one page?

Just one page, or even one paragraph.

If you want to study vocabulary, just review one card.

It feels like cheating.

It is not cheating.

It is psychology.

Once you start, it is much easier to continue.

The hardest part is the first two minutes.

It is the inertia.

Exactly.

You are breaking the static energy, and even if you stop after two minutes, you did something.

You kept the identity alive.

You were the person who showed up.

That is better than the person who planned to study for an hour and did nothing.

Much better.

A zero day destroys your confidence.

A two-minute day keeps your momentum.

Part 8.

Conclusion.

So, friends, let's recap.

We don't need massive goals.

We need tiny systems.

We don't focus on the result.

We focus on the identity.

You are not learning English.

You are

an English speaker.

Use habit stacking.

Connect English to your coffee, your car, or your toothbrush.

Design your environment.

Make it obvious.

And use the two-minute rule.

Make it so easy that you cannot say no.

English is not a mountain you climb once.

It is a garden you water every day.

Some days you water it a lot.

Some days just a little.

But you never let it dry out.

I feel much calmer thinking about it this way.

The pressure is gone.

That is the point.

When the fear goes away, the learning begins.

You are capable of this.

You are already doing it right now.

Part 9.

Farewell.

If you enjoyed this episode, please write a small comment before you go.

Your comments show the platforms that our community is real, active, and growing.

This support is crucial for us to continue creating new episodes every week.

---

Tell us, what is one tiny atomic habit you will

---

start today?

---

Will you listen while you cook?

---

Will you read before you sleep?

---

We need your comments because your voice is more important than ours.

---

Your voice and comments will show us the right path.

---

Thank you for listening.

---

See you in the next episode!

---