

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 55

# Think For Yourself A Challenge

Full episode script · English

240 lines

Your English Toolbox

Welcome to your English Toolbox, your Slow English Podcast, where we train your ears step by step.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Pa, Julia, have you ever felt like you were living someone else's life?

That is a deep question to start with, Martin.

Today, we are exploring how to break free from the mental programming that keeps us from being ourselves.

We will learn why most of our thoughts are not actually ours and how to find our own voice.

By the end of this episode, you will have the tools to think for yourself and stop living on autopilot.

Julia, what exactly are we talking about today?

We are diving into the core ideas of the book Think for Yourself by Thibaut Maurice.

If you keep listening till the end, you will learn to spot social manipulation, gain the courage to disagree, and build a mind that is truly yours.

Before we begin today, I want to share something very honest with you.

I agree, Martin, because the topic we are discussing today might feel a little scary for some people.

Thinking for yourself is not just a mental exercise.

It is an act of deep courage.

Many people are more comfortable not questioning their own thinking.

It is often easier to just stay quiet and let yourself go with the flow of the crowd.

But to stop and look around your world with fresh eyes requires real bravery.

And to stop and look into your own chain of thoughts requires even more courage.

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It means looking behind the mask of who you think you are.

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If you feel a little nervous right now, that is actually a good sign.

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It means you are standing at the door of your own freedom.

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Imagine you are walking through a beautiful forest, but you cannot see the trees.

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You only see the path that someone else cleared for  
you decades ago.

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This is how most of us live our lives without even realizing it.

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We follow a script that was written by our parents, our teachers, and the society around us.

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This episode is a journey into the center of your own mind.

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Julia, have you ever felt like your opinions were just a collection of things you heard on the news?

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I think we all feel that way if we are being honest with ourselves.

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It is

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much easier to repeat an opinion than it is to form one.

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Teebo Maurice explains that our minds are like computers with pre-installed software.

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This software is designed to make us fit in, not to make us happy.

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We are social animals, and for thousands of years, fitting in was a matter of survival.

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If the tribe rejected you, you died.

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This is a site start, so our brains are naturally wired to seek approval from the group, Site 426.

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But in the 21st century, this instinct often leads us into a trap.

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We stop asking if a belief is true and only ask if a belief is popular.

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Thinking for yourself is not just an intellectual exercise, it is an act of courage.

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It requires you to stand alone in a room full of people who are all pointing in the same direction.

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Are you ready to look in the opposite direction today?

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To think for ourselves, we must

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first understand the filters through which we see the world.

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Maurice talks about cognitive biases as the primary obstacles to clear thinking.

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One of the most dangerous filters is called confirmation bias.

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Site 416.

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This is our tendency to look for evidence that supports what we already believe.

If you believe that the world is a dangerous place, you will only notice the bad news.

You will ignore the millions of acts of kindness that happen every day.

Your brain

wants to be right more than it wants to see the truth.

Another major filter is the availability heuristic.

This means we give more importance to information that is easy to remember.

If we see a dramatic story on the news, we think that event is very common.

Even if the statistics show that the event is actually very rare.

Our emotions hijack our logic because dramatic stories are available in our memory.

Thinking for yourself means slowing down and

looking at the data, not just the drama.

It means recognizing that your perspective is always limited.

Imagine your mind is a house with many windows.

Most people only ever look out of one window their entire lives.

They see the same garden, the same street, and the same sky.

Intellectual independence is the process of walking to the other side of the house.

It is the willingness to look out of a different window, even if the view is

uncomfortable.

Julia, why do you think people are so afraid of looking out of a new window?

Because if they see a different reality, they might have to change their life.

Change is expensive in terms of mental energy.

It is much cheaper to stay in the corner where everything is familiar.

But the cost of staying in that corner is your freedom.

Site Start Maurice suggests that we should treat our thoughts as tools rather than as our identity.

Site 373-401.

If a tool is broken, you throw it away and get a better one.

But if you believe you are your thoughts, then changing your mind feels like dying.

We need to learn how to detach our ego from our opinions.

Site has start.

I am the observer who chooses which ideas to keep and which to discard.

Site 369-406.

Part 3.

The power of first principles.

One of the most effective ways to think for yourself is  
a method called first principles thinking.

This is a technique used by some of the most successful people in history.

Site start.

Instead of thinking by analogy, you break a problem down to its most basic truths, site 415.

Thinking by analogy means doing something because that is how it has always been done.

It is like following a recipe without knowing why you are adding the salt.

First principles thinking is like looking at the chemical components of the  
food.

You ask, what is absolutely true here and what is just an assumption?

Most of what we call common sense is actually just common assumptions.

If you want to start a business, the analogy says you need a lot of money and a big office.

But the first principle says you only need a product that solves a problem and a way to reach  
customers.

When you break things down to the foundations, you realize that the rules are  
often flexible.

This allows you to innovate instead of just imitating.

Site start.

But this requires a lot of deep work and mental effort, site 368404.

It is much easier to just copy what the person next to you is doing.

Maurice points out that we are currently living in an imitation economy.

We imitate the lifestyles of people on social media.

We imitate the career paths of our friends.

We even imitate the way other people relax.

If we

do not consciously choose our path, the current of the world will choose it for us.

And the current of the world usually leads to a very average, unfulfilling destination.

To think for yourself, you must be willing to be wrong in the eyes of the crowd.

You must be willing to be misunderstood for a long period of time.

Site start.

This is why personal development is the foundation of intellectual independence.

Site 391395.

You need a strong inner

core to survive the external pressure to conform.

Part 4.

Curating the mental garden.

Your mind is like a garden and the information you consume is the seed.

If you plant weeds, you cannot expect to grow roses.

Site start.

Most of us are planting digital weeds every time we scroll through our phones, site 398.

We are consuming low-quality information that is designed to make us angry or anxious.

This is not an accident.

It is the business model

of the attention economy.

To think for yourself, you must go on an information diet.

Site start.

This does not mean you stop learning.

It means you start choosing site 416.

You choose books over headlines.

You choose long-form conversations over short-form clippa.

You choose silence over constant noise.

Maurice emphasizes that solitude is the school of greatness.

When you are alone with your thoughts, you finally get to meet the real you.

Without the influence of your friends or

the internet, what do you actually believe?

Many people find this silence terrifying.

They use podcasts, music, and social media to drown out their own inner voice.

They are afraid of what that voice might say.

It might say that they are in the wrong job or the wrong relationship.

Site num start.

But that voice is the only thing that can lead you to a meaningful life site, 377-411.

We need to create protected spaces in our day for  
deep reflection.

This could be a 20-minute walk without headphones.

It could be 10 minutes of journaling in the morning.

These small moments of non-consumption are where original ideas are born.

If you are always taking in information, you have no room to process it.

It is like eating all day long without ever digesting the food.

Eventually you just become mentally sick.

Intellectual independence requires mental digestion.

It requires you to sit with an idea and look at it  
from every angle.

Is this idea useful?

Is it true?

Does it align with my values?

Part five, escaping the social trap.

One of the biggest obstacles to thinking for yourself is the fear of being different.

We are terrified that if we speak our truth, we will be cast out of the group.

This is why people often stay silent even when they know something is wrong.

This is called pluralistic ignorance.

It happens when everyone in a group  
disagrees with something, but everyone thinks they are the only one who disagrees.

So everyone stays silent and the bad idea continues to grow.

Thinking for yourself often means being the first one to say, wait, this doesn't make sense.

It is the role of the truth-teller in the tribe.

Sight is start.

It is a dangerous role, but it is the most necessary one for the health of society.

Sight, four hundred four.

Maurice also warns us about the

expert trap.

We often assume that because someone has a title or a degree, they are always right.

We outsource our thinking to experts because we are lazy or insecure.

But experts are human beings with their own biases and their own scripts.

You should listen to experts, but you should never let them have the final word on your life.

Sight start.

You are the only expert on what it means to be.

You, sight three hundred seventy-three, four

hundred five.

Another trap is historical momentum.

Just because something has worked for a hundred years does not mean it will work tomorrow.

The world is changing faster than our social scripts can keep up with.

If you follow the safe path from 1980, you might find yourself in a very dangerous place in 2026.

Thinking for yourself is a survival skill in a rapidly changing world.

It allows you to pivot when everyone else is still moving toward a

cliff.

It allows you to see opportunities that the crowd is too distracted to notice.

You cannot see these things if your eyes are glued to the back of the person in front of you.

You have to lift your head and look at the horizon.

Part six.

Designing your operating system.

So how do we practically start thinking for ourselves today?

Sight start.

Maurice suggests we create our own personal operating system.

Sight three hundred ninety-five.

This starts with

identifying your core values.

Most people have never written down what they actually value.

They value what their culture tells them to value.

Money, status, and youth.

But what if you value peace, curiosity, and deep connection instead?

When you know your values, your decisions become much easier.

You no longer ask what should I do, but what aligns with my values?

Sight start.

This is the difference between being a slave to circumstances and a master of your destiny.

Sight three hundred eighty-eight.

We also need to build a circle of competence.

Know what you know and be very honest about what you do not know.

Thinking for yourself does not mean having an opinion on everything.

In fact, the more you think for yourself, the more you say the words, I don't know.

It is much better to have no opinion than to have a borrowed one.

Protect your intellectual integrity like it is your most valuable possession.

Because it is.

If you lose your ability to think, you lose your ability to be free.

Sight start.

Every time you choose the truth over comfort, you become stronger.

Sight three hundred seventy-five.

Every time you ask why, you break a link in the chain of groupthink.

This journey never ends.

The social script is updated every day and it will try to pull you back in.

But once you have tasted the freedom of an original thought, you

can never go back to being a copy.

You have learned that the invisible script is just a suggestion, not a law.

You have learned that your mind is a territory that only you have the right to govern.

We hope this episode has given you the courage to look out of a new window today.

Thank you for training your ears and your mind with us.

I am Martin.

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And I am Julia.

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We will see you in the  
next journey through the English language.

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Take care of your thoughts.

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And remember to breathe.

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Step by step.

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Word by word.

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Until next time.

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Bye bye.

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Bye.

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The end.

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