

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 82

# First Steps: Living in English

Full episode script · English

147 lines

Your English Toolbox

You left everything behind.

Your language, your people, your routines.

The streets you knew without thinking.

The shops where they already knew your name.

And now, you are here.

In a country where everything is in English.

And some days, that feels like an enormous wall.

But here is what nobody tells you at the beginning.

The wall is not as solid as it looks.

And you are stronger than you think.

Welcome to your English toolbox.

I am Robert.

And I am Miranda.

And today, we are doing something a little different.

You may have noticed that Martin and Julia are not here today.

They are taking a well-deserved holiday.

And if you miss them, do not worry.

They will be back very soon.

But while they are away, Robert and I have stepped in.

We are here with a short special series, built specifically for one type of listener.

Someone who is living in an English-speaking country right now.

Or someone who is about to make that move.

Someone for whom English is not just a school subject.

It is a daily survival tool.

And today, we want to talk about what that actually feels like.

The real experience, not the textbook version.

So let's start there.

Robert, do you remember the first time you had to handle something completely in English?

I do.

It was a phone call.

I had just arrived.

My English was functional.

But functional in a classroom is very different from functional in real life.

The person on the other end spoke fast.

Too fast.

And I said yes to something I did not fully understand.

I still do not know what I agreed to.

That story is so familiar.

So many people have lived exactly that moment.

You understand the words individually.

But together, at speed, in a real situation, they just dissolve.

And the worst part is the silence after.

That moment when you know you should say something.

And nothing comes.

We call that the gap.

The gap between what you understand and what you can produce.

And closing that gap is exactly what this series is designed to do.

Miranda, let's talk about the emotional side of this.

Because I think people underestimate how hard it is.

They do.

And I want to say something very clearly to anyone listening right now.

What you are feeling is not weakness.

The anxiety that comes when the phone rings and you do not recognize the number.

The tension before a conversation you cannot fully predict.

The exhaustion of existing in a second language all day long.

That is not a personal failure.

That is a completely normal human response to an objectively difficult situation.

You left your country.

That is one of the hardest things a person can do.

You gave up your comfort, your fluency, your identity as someone who knows how things work.

And you started again from almost zero.

That takes extraordinary courage.

And yet most people who do it spend the first year apologizing for their English.

Instead of celebrating the fact that they are doing it at all.

So if you are listening to this today, stop apologizing.

You are not behind.

You are in the middle of something remarkable.

Let's talk about strategies.

Robert, what actually works?

The first thing, and this sounds simple, but most people do not do it, is to stop waiting until your English is perfect to use it.

Perfect English does not come before the conversation.

It comes from the conversation.

Every interaction is training.

Every phone call, every supermarket checkout, every conversation with a neighbor.

The people who improve fastest are not the ones who study the most.

They are the ones who speak.

Even when it is uncomfortable.

Even when they make mistakes.

Especially when they make mistakes.

There is a concept I find very useful.

Reactive English versus Proactive English.

Tell us more about that.

Reactive English is waiting for someone to speak to you and then responding.

Most learners live entirely in Reactive English.

They wait, they respond, they survive.

Proactive English means initiating, asking the first question, starting the conversation.

And that shift changes everything.

When you are reactive, you are always on the back foot.

When you are proactive, you control the pace, the topic, the direction.

You go from passenger to driver.

And you can start small, incredibly small.

Asking a shop assistant where something is.

Starting with good morning instead of waiting for them to speak first.

These are tiny acts of Proactive English that build enormous confidence over time.

Miranda, what about the days when it all feels too hard?

When the anxiety wins?

Those days happen.

They happen to everyone.

And on those days, I think the most important thing is to not make a big decision about your future based on how you feel right now.

A hard day is not evidence that you cannot do this.

It is evidence that you are doing something genuinely difficult.

I always say, measure your progress in months, not in moments.

Because in a single moment, you might feel completely lost.

But if you look back three months, six months, the distance you have traveled is extraordinary.

And anxiety specifically, the kind that comes from language, has a very particular quality.

It tells you that something matters to you.

If it did not matter, you would not be anxious.

The anxiety is proof that you care about this.

And caring is the beginning of everything.

Let's talk about the Survival Kit series, because this is what we are doing together for the next few weeks.

Yes, the Basic Survival Kit is a series of short episodes, around five minutes each.

Every episode focuses on one real situation.

The doctor.

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The phone call.

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The bank.

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The pharmacy.

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The landlord.

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Situations that cannot wait.

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Situations where you need the right words, right now.

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And in each episode, we give you exactly five sentences.

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Five sentences, chosen very carefully.

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Not because five is a magic number, but because five is manageable.

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You can learn five sentences before your next appointment.

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Before your next call.

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And we give you one more thing in every episode.

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The rescue sentence.

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One single phrase that works when everything else disappears from your mind.

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Because that moment happens to all of us.

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And now, you will be ready for it.

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Before we close, Robert, one last thought for someone who is really struggling right now.

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Yes, I want to say something I believe completely.

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Your accent is not a problem.

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It is proof that you speak more than one language.

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Your mistakes are not embarrassing.

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They are evidence that you are trying.

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And the fact that you are here listening to this in your second or third language means that you are already doing exactly what you need to do.

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Language learning is not a sprint.

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It is something much more interesting than that.

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It is the slow, steady rebuilding of who you are in a new place.

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And every word you learn, every sentence you use, every conversation you survive, is a brick in that new version of yourself.

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Keep building.

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We will be here, every step of the way.

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If you want to watch this episode with subtitles, find your English toolbox on YouTube and subscribe.

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It is the best way to follow the whole Survival Kit series and to support everything we are building here together.

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I am Robert.

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I am Miranda.

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And we will see you in the next one.

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