



All Ears English Episode 135:

Why You're Not Fluent in English: Fear of Success

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 135: "Why You're Not Fluent in English: Fear of Success."

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you'll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the 'English Adventurer' and Gabby Wallace, the 'Language Angel,' from Boston, USA.

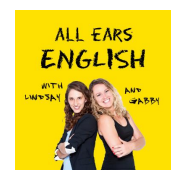
[Instrumental]

Gabby: Lindsay, I've heard from our listeners that they just want to connect with native speakers.

Lindsay: I know. I've been talking with some of our listeners also. I've heard the same thing.

Gabby: Yeah, that's incredible. And I think that's so valuable to build relationships with native speakers while you improve your English. So, we want to make a product for you, our listeners that you can buy that will link you up with native speakers to do exactly that.

Lindsay: Absolutely. But in order to do that, we need to know that you guys are listening and that you love All Ears English.



Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: Because we're gonna (going to) put a lot of work into this new product.

Gabby: Yeah, we love you guys. We just want to hear back from you and the way that you can do that is to leave a review in iTunes. We must have 50 new reviews in iTunes by the end of June and if we see those 50 new reviews – that's 5-0 – 50...

Lindsay: Not 15.

Gabby: ...then in the fall, we're going to release a product that will let you connect with native speakers.

Lindsay: So please go on over to iTunes now and leave us a review. We love you guys. Thank you.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: If you want to sound like a native speaker, you're one step from success. Why? At this moment, your biggest problem is not fear of failure, but fear of success. Find out in this episode.

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Gabby: Hey, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby.

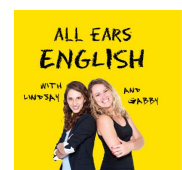
Gabby: How (are) you doing?

Lindsay: Excellent, and you?

Gabby: Great. Thanks for asking. Cool. So, are you scared of anything? Does anything scare you?

Lindsay: Well, I'm not scared of failure, but one thing I'm scared of sometimes is success.

Gabby: Not like spiders or...?



Lindsay: No, success.

Gabby: Success.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Okay. 'Cause (because) some people are afraid of spiders or rats.

Lindsay: Oh, no. I don't worry about...

Gabby: But you're afraid of success.

Lindsay: It's success.

Gabby: What?!?

Lindsay: I know. It sounds so counterintuitive, doesn't it?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: But the idea of succeeding scares me sometimes.

Gabby: But doesn't everyone want success though? Isn't that what everyone says they want?

Lindsay: That's what we say, but...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Human beings aren't simple.

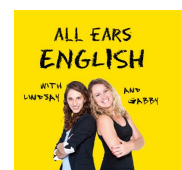
Gabby: Right. I know what you mean.

Lindsay: And what is it that – oh, sorry. Go 'head (ahead).

Gabby: No, (I mean) we say we want one thing, but then inside, sometimes we have other feelings that hold us back.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: What is it that you've heard from a lot of our listeners that they really want? What do they want?

Gabby: Oh, they wanna (want to) be fluent in English.

Lindsay: They wanna (want to) sound natural.

Gabby: Absolutely, like a native speaker.

Lindsay: (Um-hm).

Gabby: Right. But, there's an issue with that because if you sound like a native speaker, you somehow lose your own first language identity in some ways.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: (Uh), it's not to say you can't keep both identities. You can. You can be bilingual and bicultural, but you'll notice that as you get better and better in English, you're going to experience things, like your accent will change.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: Your behaviors maybe change. Even your cultural ideas, like the way you see things in life, your values may even...

Lindsay: Absolutely.

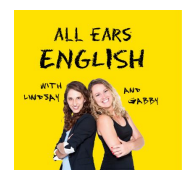
Gabby: ...change. (Uh), and you may be able to have two identities, but when you're developing the second identity in American culture and American English, you might feel (kind of) scared because it's like a whole new person and do you, do you wanna (want to), (like) go ahead with that or...

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: It's scary because it's unknown, right?

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: And, if I can share, (you know), a little example, when I was living in Japan and learning Japanese, I was trying to become more native-like in my pronunciation and my speaking and I, I emulated some women around



me. It means I, I (kind of) I tried to act like them to be more fluent and they were really feminine, (like) speaking in, in a very feminine way -- even the body language was very feminine, and, (you know), it's not to say, (like), I'm a masculine person, but my American self, my female, American self was different than the female, Japanese identity. And, so I felt like in a way I was losing myself or changing a lot...

Lindsay: Wow!

Gabby: ...when I spoke Japanese. And, (um), just little things like my voice pitch would go up, (you know). (Like)...

Lindsay: So interesting, isn't it?

Gabby: Yeah, yeah. So...

Lindsay: That's a great example.

Gabby: And, so it was a little scary.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So this came to our attention, (uh), through Mandy. So last week we had Mandy on the show, that's All Ears...

Gabby: From Pronuncian.

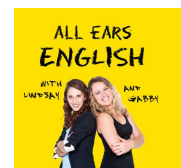
Lindsay: From Pronuncian, the podcast Pronuncian.

Gabby: Pronuncian.

Lindsay: (Um), and so, that's AllEarsEnglish.com/128.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So if you wanna (want to) listen to that interview with Mandy, she told us about this, that she's actually noticed -- (um), she has a great, (uh), pronunciation program going on that's working.



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And she's noticing as a result of that some students end up struggling with their new identity of sounding natural. Isn't that...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...so interesting. So it's a fear...

Gabby: It really is.

Lindsay: ...of success. And Gabby how can – so now we know that this might be a problem.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: So, how can our listeners, (uh), know if they're actually having this problem?

Gabby: (Um). Procrastination. Delaying, (uh), some learning. (Uh), (you know), maybe you have the chance to improve your English, (uh), but you're not taking the leap.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: You're holding back in some...

Lindsay: Totally.

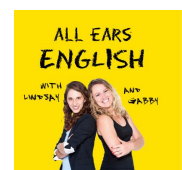
Gabby: ...way.

Lindsay: Totally. And I can share an, an example from my own life. (Um), so as I said at the beginning, I'm a little bit afraid of success. As an entrepreneur, I might have a little bit of fear of success.

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: And a few months ago -- now it's six months ago...

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: ...I had an opportunity to be mentored by someone who's pretty amazing...

Gabby: Wow.

Lindsay: ...(um), and unfortunately, I didn't follow through on that opportunity...

Gabby: Oh!

Lindsay: ...even though part of me really wanted to. I wanted to learn from him and the other part of me said, 'No, I'm afraid. I'm not worthy of his time.'

Gabby: Wow!

Lindsay: Or 'My project, my idea isn't worthy of his time.'

Gabby: Wow.

Lindsay: So I sabotaged my own success.

Gabby: Well, isn't that interesting if we think about, (uh), English learners. You guys will often say, "Oh, my English isn't good. (You know), I'll never be like a native speaker." Don't tell yourself that. You are worthy...

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: ...of having excellent English.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's a, that's a horrible, that's a feeling that will just screw up your life...

Gabby: Yeah.

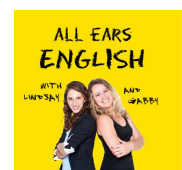
Lindsay: ...that sense of feeling unworthy. And we all have those thoughts, right?

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: We talked about the voices in the head a few weeks ago.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And I know you guys really enjoyed that lesson...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...that podcast. So what's another way that students can know if they're, if they're (sabota-), sabotaging their own success?

Gabby: Well, if you're, (you know), skipping around, (uh), (you know), you're, you're not really following – let's say you, you're looking at a course, right, and you don't follow it from A to Z – you maybe get halfway through and then you decide, "Oh, the teacher isn't good," or, "(You know), the class isn't good. That's probably...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Gabby: ...an excuse or a sign that you're not ready.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: You're scared.

Lindsay: Absolutely. And before we keep moving forward, I just want to mention that these – some of these ideas came from the Internet Business Mastery podcast...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...that Gabby and I both listen to and these are just awesome ideas. So we wanna (want to) (a-), adapt the examples, add a few of our own ideas and help us out -- use this to help you guys.

Gabby: Right.

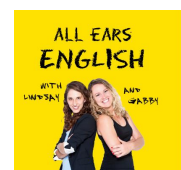
Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: Absolutely.

Lindsay: So, that's a great point Gabby.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (You know), when you try to do too many things at once...



Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...you're probably sabotaging, you're probably afraid of success. Yeah.

Gabby: Well, yeah and I think the way that we can get past this, (you know), you're probably wondering what am I gonna (going to) do, how can I get past this fear. We can get past this by, (um), coming to terms with having two identities. Like for language learners, (right), you can have your native identity. Let's say you were born in Italy. Okay, you can be Italian Lindsay.

Lindsay: (Hm), cool.

Gabby: Or, what would your name be in Italian? I don't know.

Lindsay: I have no idea.

Gabby: Linda Yeah, and then you'd have your American Lindsay, right? If you're trying to start your own business, you can have, (you know), your successful entrepreneurial Lindsay, but you can also have your, (you know), maybe you're, (uh), how can I say, (like), your home town, small town, (like), non-entrepreneurial – I don't know. What...?

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Who, who your family....

Lindsay: Small town girl.

Gabby: Small town girl, right. And you have those two identities and they can actually exist simultaneously. It's not...

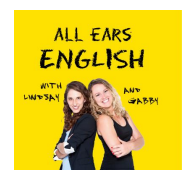
Lindsay: I like that idea.

Gabby: ...not giving up one or the other.

Lindsay: Right. It doesn't mean that you're any less of one or the other.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So that's a really good point. So work to have both identities and be okay with balancing the two.



Gabby: There's a song that came to mind.

Lindsay: Wow!

Gabby: I know this might be a little cheesy.

Lindsay: Are you gonna (going to) sing it for us?

Gabby: (Um), okay. Okay. (Um), wait, I forgot all of it, but the, this, the line that's important -- this is a J-Lo song. We all know how Jennifer Lopez has become so popular, but in one of her first hit songs in (like) the '90's, she said, "I'm still Jenni from the block."

Lindsay: Oh, right. That's a good point.

Gabby: Right. So, don't forget where you come from...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...but it's okay to be successful.

Lindsay: Totally.

Gabby: Go out there and get your "J-Lo" on you guys.

Lindsay: Yeah, yeah. And, so that's really why we're talking about this today. So the takeaway is the things that you can do, like how you can make sure that this is not a (prob-), doesn't sabotage your career, or your English speaking, (you know), life.

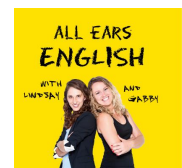
Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Recognize that it's an issue. Recognize when it's happening, (right).

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: When you have that, when you see yourself procrastinating, start to think, 'Oh, is this because I'm afraid of succeeding?'

Gabby: Right.



Lindsay: Right. (Um), and go ahead and just try to override that, (right). You notice that you're doing that, then you're gonna (going to) move forward, you're gonna (going to) make that phone call. I should've gone and set up that meeting anyways.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: But it's too late, so I can't.

Gabby: Well, that's another topic. Is it too late?

Lindsay: Is it too late?

Gabby: Is it ever too late?

Lindsay: Good question.

Gabby: Maybe you guys could leave us a comment, (uh), on AllEarsEnglish.com/135. Leave a comment for Lindsay, let her know what she should do.

Lindsay: And one other thing you can do is create accountability systems, (right). So tell people about your goal to become fluent in English.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Tell your family members, your friends. Once it's public and it's out there, it's gonna (going to) be a lot harder for you to show up and say, "Oh, I gave up."

Gabby: Yeah, that's right. Great suggestions and we wish success to all of you. Thanks for listening.

Lindsay: Thanks, guys.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

