



All Ears English Episode 139: Four Lessons for You from Gabby's Ironman Race

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 139: “Four Lessons for You from Gabby’s Ironman Race.”

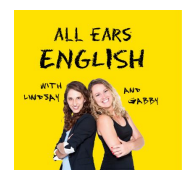
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Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel’, from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, guys. We’re holding a live event called the “Key to Connecting with Americans” because a lot of you have told us that you don’t feel confident; you actually feel awkward and you don’t know what to say at professional networking events in English. So we’re here to help you and we’re holding this event to share with you five real natural English phrases that we use every day in professional networking situations. Also, as a bonus, you’ll learn to avoid one cultural mistake you don’t know you’re making. So join us, Lindsay and Gabby, for this free live event on Tuesday, June 10th, at 9 am EST. That’s New York, Boston time. To reserve your spot, go to www.AllEarsEnglish.com/Key, k-e-y.

[Instrumental]



Lindsay: In this episode, Gabby's going to share with you four valuable things that she learned during this 113K competition that you can use to become a better English learner.

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Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. How's it going today?

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. I'm doing very well, thank you. How are you?

Lindsay: I'm excited and I'm excited to talk to about the experience that you just went through. You just finished the Ironman...

Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: ...out in Hawaii. Can you tell us what the Ironman is, first of all?

Gabby: Absolutely. The Ironman is a company that puts on races; they're endurance races. So you have a swim portion of the race, you have a bicycle section of the race, and you have a run part of the race and it's very long.

Lindsay: How many miles is it total?

Gabby: (Um), well the Ironman that I did is actually a half Ironman and that's 70.3 miles.

Lindsay: Wow!

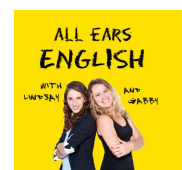
Gabby: The full Ironman is double that. So...

Lindsay: Geesh!

Gabby: ...140.6.

Lindsay: That's insane.

Gabby: It's, it's, it's a very long distance. (Um), so the, the swim was 1.2 miles, the bike ride was, (um), 56, and the run was a half marathon, so 13.1. So for our listeners that, (um), are more used to kilometers, I can tell you, (um), let's see the – well the full Ironman here is, (um), (uh), 2.4 mile swim or 3.8



kilometers, 112 mile bicycle ride – that's 180 kilometers and a marathon, which is 26.2 miles or 42.2 kilometers. So what I did was a half Ironman, half of that.

Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: Which is still a long time.

Lindsay: Congratulations, first of all.

Gabby: Thank you.

Lindsay: Way to go. That's awesome. (You know), it's a really good example for all of us...

Gabby: Aw.

Lindsay: ...when you, you set your mind to something, and you prepare way in advance. So maybe you can help us, (like), let us know what English learners can actually learn from you and from this experience.

Gabby: Yeah, thanks for asking because, (um), we've been talking about this experience and there are things I learned from it that apply to English learning, (right).

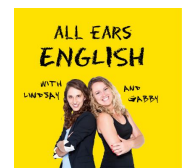
Lindsay: So what's the first thing that you learned?

Gabby: (Right). Well, during the race day, it's very intense. And the only way that I got through that distance is by not thinking about the entire distance. That's very overwhelming to think, 'I have 70 miles to go.' (I mean), that is, that is really overwhelming. So the only way I got through that day was to ask myself, whenever I felt too tired to go on, I would ask myself, 'Well, do I have the energy and the ability to take one more step?'

Lindsay: Aw, that's great.

Gabby: If the answer's "yes," then I took that step.

Lindsay: I like that. It sounds like the only thing you could do in that situation.



Gabby: That's right. We say, (you know), put one foot in front of the other. Just keep taking that step and that next step, little steps eventually add up to long distances.

Lindsay: Totally. I completely agree with that. And, and so for English learners, for our listeners, what would that mean? Would that mean not thinking about becoming fluent, and becoming an expert English speaker?

Gabby: Absolutely. Absolutely. Don't, (um), (I mean), yes, have goals, right. My goal...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ..was to finish the Ironman, but do not focus on everything that you need to do to reach that goal because that's overwhelming.

Lindsay: Totally.

Gabby: There is a lot that we need to do to become, (um), competent and then fluent in a language, but if you just focus on the next smallest action that you can take, taking one more little step in your English to advance, you'll see that over time, those little steps will add up to the full distance, your full goal.

Lindsay: Awesome. That seems very doable...

Gabby: Yeah, absolutely.

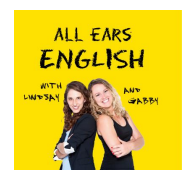
Lindsay: ..for our, for our listeners.

Gabby: And just keep it moving.

Lindsay: Keep it moving. Very cool.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And so then you said you had another idea regarding training, preparing, what was that?



Gabby: Absolutely. Well, (um), even for someone who's somewhat athletic, which, which I've always been a little bit athletic, not, not like Ironman, but (um) it does take time to prepare. So it took about six months of training on almost daily, an almost daily basis. (Um), so each day, it was like making a deposit into my training bank.

Lindsay: (Hm). Cool.

Gabby: (Um), I'm, I'm using an analogy here to, (you know), putting money in your bank account. I was putting my training time, maybe an hour a day, three hours a day, five hours a day in the, in the end. (I mean), it gets very intense, but each training session is a deposit into your training account or your, your energy account, your athletic account, whatever we want to call it -- I call it my training account -- so that when I needed those hours during the race, when I needed that energy and that ability, I could withdraw them.

Lindsay: Awesome.

Gabby: I could use them.

Lindsay: Awesome.

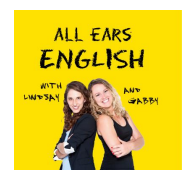
Gabby: And so this applies to English because one thing we encourage our listeners to do is to study a little bit every day. If you study, (you know), 15 minutes, half an hour, one hour a day, that time is being deposited in your account...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...so that when you need the language, when it really matters, when you need to have that conversation in English, you're ready.

Lindsay: Right. And we talked last week with -- a few weeks ago, with Bruce Stirling about TOEFL prep...

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: ...and also Jack Askew talked about one of the biggest mistakes that students make is not preparing.

Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: So if you want to feel confident when you go in for that exam, or you go to that party, ready to have that conversation...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...that's where the confidence comes from. It's not from...

Gabby: Absolutely.

Lindsay: ...(like) having, being lucky in that moment that I happen to feel like I'm speaking well. It comes from the daily training.

Gabby: Absolutely and I'm so glad that you brought up confidence because...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

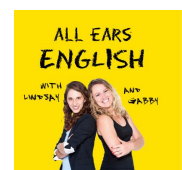
Gabby: ...even though it was my first time doing a half Ironman, I was confident that I could complete it. That was my goal, to finish the race within the allotted amount of time and I knew I could do it because I had put my practice time in.

Lindsay: Awesome. Love it.

Gabby: That was how I was confident. And I have one other thing, one other, (um), tip that I want to share. (Um) because -- it was (kind of) a personal story, but I, I knew that I wanted to do the, the Ironman. It's something that I'd had on my, my bucket list, so to say. (Um), but, (uh), I didn't do it with a group...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Okay. (Um), I – well, I took some swim lessons, but that was a different group. I didn't go to the race with a group. I didn't go to the race with a, a friend, and I didn't go to the race with family. Now, I had people supporting me and saying, "You can do it," but they stayed at home...



Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...and I decided that's okay and I'm still going to do it on my own. So I traveled on my own, I took my bicycle with me, but I traveled...

Lindsay: How'd you get that on the plane?

Gabby: Well a bike bag.

Lindsay: Wow!

Gabby: I had to disassemble or take apart my bicycle and then put it back together. That's a whole nother story. (Um), but I did it alone, and, (you know), the point here for our listeners is that even if you don't know other people who are learning English, you can do it alone. You have resources out there, like online resources. Obviously, you have this podcast. You can find information out there to support you and it's okay to do it alone.

And eventually, you will find other like-minded people who are studying English. (You know), through the Ironman...

Lindsay: Definitely.

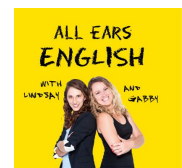
Gabby: ...I (learn-), I learned that there are thousands of people out there who love to be athletic and run triathlons, and so I'm meeting new people who are, (you know), my, my tribe or my community. Yeah.

Lindsay: Love it, love it. Or, that's a great point. That's fantastic. It's important, (you know), and sometimes that's hard to (gi-), when you're training by yourself and you don't, (you know), but – and the other thing is even if you have friends or colleagues who are learning English, you might be the only one who's taking on a proactive way of learning.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: (Like), you might be the only one consuming podcasts...

Gabby: Right.



Lindsay: ...or going out and finding a language partner. The rest of your friends or family members are going to a traditional class, or studying from books, or maybe they're doing it in a different way, and they're not finding improvement, they're not improving. So the same thing applies.

Gabby: Yeah. Well, one other bonus point – I, I said there's only three points, but I have one last bonus point is that, (um) -- one thing, if, if any of you listening like to be athletic, or you like to train, (um), even if it's, (you know), something different than triathlons, leave a comment on our, our blog post, (um), and let us know. And, and what happens when you train for an athletic event is that other aspects in your life improve as well. I noticed that as I, I became more, (um), (uh)...

I, I scheduled my training, I also had to schedule the rest of my day in a more methodical way and have some process there about how to get my work done with all these hours of training. But I noticed that that actually improved other aspects of my life. I was getting more done with the podcast...

Lindsay: Yeah.

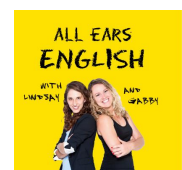
Gabby: ...with work and even in my social life. So once you start scheduling training, and, and putting some habits, positive, healthy habits into your life, it's going to affect other areas of your life too.

Lindsay: Excellent.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Thank you so much for letting us know how this adventure and this accomplishment of yours can actually help our English learners, our listeners as well.

Gabby: Absolutely. I'm so happy to share and I would love to hear from our listeners. If you all would share with us if you've ever thought about, (um), doing some kind of athletic events or if you played sports, just let us know on, on the comments for, for this episode.



Lindsay: Yeah, please come back to AllEarsEnglish.com/139 and that's where you can leave a comment for us and Gabby will be really excited to hear your comments...

Gabby: I will.

Lindsay: ...to read those comments.

Gabby: I look forward to it. Thanks guys.

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.

