



All Ears English Episode 222:

The One Question That All Successful People Ask Themselves and How You Can Ask it Too.

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 222: “The One Question That All Successful People Ask Themselves and How You Can Ask it Too.”

[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]

Lindsay: Today we are back with our temporary co-host, Kristy, the ‘Fearless New Yorker’. Let’s get to the show.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Today we’re gonna (going to) go back to a topic from Monday, the Zone of Genius. Lindsay and Kristy are gonna (going to) reveal their zones of genius and we’re gonna (going to) help you find yours today.

[Instrumental]



Lindsay: Are you on our email list yet? Join more than 5,000 other All Ears English listeners and make sure you don't miss any of our amazing All Ears English episodes. Get on our list now and we'll send you a weekly summary of the most exciting and interesting All Ears English moments every week. These episodes are HOT, so go to AllEarsEnglish.com/HOT. That's AllEarsEnglish.com/H-O-T.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, Kristy. How you doing today?

Kristy: Lindsay. I'm awesome. How are you doing?

Lindsay: Excellent. Thank you for asking. I am here and I'm excited to chat with you today about a topic that, (you know), I find so inspiring.

Kristy: Yeah.

Lindsay: Yeah. So the other day we had Laura Garnett on the show and she talked to us about this concept of the Zone of Genius.

Kristy: That's cool.

Lindsay: ...(right). So that was Episode 220. So I've always thought about the concept of intelligence as being so narrow, (right), so conceptual intelligence.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: But what if we define [crosstalk]...

Kristy: Do you wanna (want to) tell those in the audience what conceptual intelligence means?

Lindsay: Oh, that's a good point, (right). So your traditional way of thinking about intelligence, (right). Einstein type of intelligence. That I think is what we... how we define intelligence, but intelligence can be looked at so differently...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).



Lindsay: ...can't it?

Kristy: Yeah. There's been a wider view of what makes someone smart, like emotional intelligence and creative intelligence. Exactly.

Lindsay: Absolutely. And in Episode 220, on Monday, Laura Garnett came on and told us about the Zone of Genius. Do you wanna (want to) know the formula, Kristy, for the Zone of Genius?

Kristy: Yes, please tell me.

Lindsay: Okay. The formula is it's your innate talent...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...plus your greatest passion or purpose. So it's the way you do what matters to you the most.

Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: So when we find the convergent point between those two areas we get our zone of genius.

Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: Yeah. So Kristy, do you have any idea what your zone of genius is or any clues?

Kristy: That's a good question. I think that I've been really trying to (uh) search into that in the past four or five years and I think a lot of people in their late 20s can relate to that trying to understand about themselves, like what do they like to do and what should they do. (Um), I think for me when I took some time off from running BumbleBee Tennis, the tennis school, I – that's the most what I was focused on, (like) finding my happy place and figuring out what I really wanted. Because before I felt, well – if someone asked me, "What do you wanna (want to) do?" I said, "I wanna (want to) start a business." That's (wha-) – and I thought that was, that was my thing. But I realized that – it's like what kind of business do you wanna (want to) start and in what area and what do you wanna (want



to)... what roles you wanna play in that business and I realized how much more specific I still needed to be.

Lindsay: Absolutely. I think we can all drill down into this a little bit more.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: So you've started a tennis business in New York.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: And I think that's one of the hardest things to do is start a, a brick and mortar, a real business, like – well, n-not an internet business. Internet businesses are real businesses of course, but you started a brick and mortar tennis business in New York City and what was your (kind of) special passion inside of that? Was it tennis or was it helping people get active or get into shape or what was it?

Kristy: Oh, that's a good question and I have to say that the BumbleBee Tennis for me was really a learning process. I learned a lot of what I didn't like to do.

Lindsay: (Hmm). Hey, we have to learn that in life, don't we?

Kristy: Yeah, (um), and when I – I think – I remember before I started BumbleBee Tennis, we had a garage sale in Hawaii and we were selling stuff and when someone bought something from me, that, that moment where somehow I was giving them something good enough for them to give me their hard earned money gave me such a thrill that – I think that in its essence was exciting, (um), to me to create a business where people actually were willing to buy something from me.

Lindsay: (Umm). So kind of an exchange for value.

Kristy: (Uh-hmm).

Lindsay: And what's – so maybe that's your passion or your purpose. And what's the way that you do it? What's that innate talent? Is there a, a special way that you exchange value that could – where we could find your zone of genius here?



Kristy: Yeah, that's a good question. (Um), I, I thought about it and I think that – (um), I'm not a big level thinker where I – I can think of all the different pats and how the customer experiences it, how to make sure the, the product gets delivered well, (um), how to do the finances and, and so, from a bigger level I think that's helpful because as an entrepreneur, you, you're kind of (ultimate-), you are a (smit-) responsible for everything.

Lindsay: Of course.

Kristy: Everything.

Lindsay: That's... yeah.

Kristy: And that was good. (Um) and then the side story is that (um), I think we can also (f-), often get insights about our zone of genius by asking other people.

Lindsay: Yes.

Kristy: (Uh), yeah. Do you have any experience with that Lindsay?

Lindsay: Yeah. So I think one of the things that Laura said in 220 is go out and ask people that you've worked with. Guys, you can do this. Get on the phone, send an email to your former colleagues and ask them how they experienced you and how you, how they felt as a result of interacting with you. But for me, I think that my zone of genius might be... (um), I think teaching is a passion and development, developing – helping people develop themselves and live a better life is my purpose.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: And the way I do that is by inspiring. It's not by drilling grammar rules or having people repeat pronunciation, it's about inspiring them...

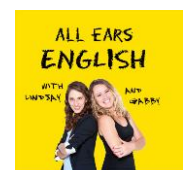
Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: ...right?

Kristy: (Uh-huh).



- Lindsay:** So we, we find the two, how they come together and for me, I think that that is my zone of genius.
- Kristy:** (Uhn), (uh-huh).
- Lindsay:** (Uh), so we wanna encourage our listeners to go out today guys, and try to see if you can figure out your zone of genius in life and also within learning English.
- Kristy:** Yeah, I think that's good. Almost like your zone of genius with communication because [crosstalk] everyone has, (you know), within, (um), a certain area, so maybe communication, there's something you could do really well. Like maybe, maybe there's somebody who doesn't have perfect English, but they make the person feel comfortable through their facial expressions, (you know), (uh)...
- Lindsay:** Ooh, that's a good one Kristy.
- Kristy:** Communication is more than just words, it's (um) body language. It's tone of voice. It's your cues of smiling and laughing and, and someone could just...
- Lindsay:** Yeah.
- Kristy:** ...(um), totally get what you're saying or totally be attracted to talking to you even without having perfect English.
- Lindsay:** Oh, I just wanna (want to) highlight what you just said Kristy because I think our audience needs to hear that. Guys, you know that at All Ears English, we are not about (connec-), we're not about perfection. We're, we're about connection and a big part of connection is what Kristy just said. (You know), smiling, tone of voice, facial expressions, supporting the [crosstalk] other person.
- Kristy:** (Uh-hmm).
- Lindsay:** Eye contact. So maybe what you do as a genius within English, guys, is that. It's more the interpersonal side and maybe that's okay if you don't



have perfect grammar. Maybe you wanna (want to) focus more on the eye contact, on the facial expressions, on the laughter and supporting the person you're listening with, listening to. I like that.

Kristy: Yeah. Yeah, so it's definitely helpful. (I mean), if anything, one thing about communication and – i-is smiling. Smiling is like the best thing and there's people where I've just – they've just smiled at me and I [inaudible] said much to them or they didn't even speak much English, but I liked them.

Lindsay: I know everyone likes a smile and I wonder if that's the, the same across cultures...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...(right). Sometimes I wonder. (You know), I know that here in the US, we, we love smiles, (right). So the default – if (some-), if something isn't going well, we can just smile and it works. And I don't know, what do you think Kristy? Do you think it's the same across cultures around the world? Do you think the smile is like the universal sign of peace?

Kristy: (Um) I think it definitely could be. I-it could be and so, it's like I just – I think for, (um), English learners and people learning something difficult, it's probably easy to express maybe your – in an anxiety about how you're speaking. (Um)...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Kristy: ...and maybe you're not smiling or (you know), you're – seem unsure. (Um), but instead of – focus on like – when – the English partners that you do have, focus on the positive things they've told you about your interactions with them, so that naturally, you can smile and feel good and it can come out in your conversation.

Lindsay: Absolutely. And especially if that smiling aspect or that interpersonal aspect is part of *your* zone of genius...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).



Lindsay: ...(right). So coming back to that concept, (you know), one thing that I mentioned to Laura, (uh), on Monday was that, (you know), ever since we were in school, like we were kids, we've always been told, "Oh, you're weak in Math, so you should improve your Math skills."

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: But this is a whole different idea...

Kristy: Right.

Lindsay: ...isn't it Kristy? It's not about improving your weakness, it's about amplifying your strengths.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: And I just find that so free.

Kristy: Yeah. That's true. So I (th-) – if you amplify your strengths and you think about that, naturally, you feel good overall and I think you bring up your other, maybe weaker points and that could be the same for when you speak English. (I mean), I remember this time, I (uh) went – I was in China, I was learning Chinese (um)...

Lindsay: Oh, cool.

Kristy: ...yeah, and I got drunk and they said I spoke the best Chinese ever.

Lindsay: Oh, so your inhibitions were lower. Yeah...

Kristy: So...

Lindsay: ...it always helps to have a few beers.

Kristy: Exactly. So I wasn't focusing. I was "Oh, my god, I said that wrong." I just let go because I was feeling good and if, (you know), if I was...

Lindsay: Absolutely.



Kristy: ...focusing on maybe my zone of genius for (like) my language, (um), 'cause (because) there's certain things I was decent at with my language, (um), maybe I would've spoken better.

Lindsay: Yeah, and I think that's really true. (You know), inhibition is something that we talk about a lot in this show and that really inhibits, (you know), holds people back from succeeding in English. And I just wanna (want to) highlight, (you know), thinking about the most successful people in the world. This morning I was thinking about Robin Williams, (right).

Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: So he passed away about what, about a month ago, two months ago.

Kristy: Yeah.

Lindsay: That was really sad and – but, (you know), I was thinking about his career. So...

Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: ...if you guys don't know Robin Williams, he is just... he was a phenomenal comedian...

Kristy: (Uh-hmm).

Lindsay: (Um) an American guy. He played – what, what movies was he in? Do you remember Kristy?

Kristy: *Birdcage*.

Lindsay: Oh, *Birdcage*. (Uh), *Mrs. Doubtfire*.

Kristy: Oh, that was a good one. *Mrs. Doubtfire*. (Uh), *Jumanji*. Wait, what's that?

Both: *Jumanji*.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: Yep. Which by the way was filmed in my hometown.



Kristy: Oh.

Lindsay: Thank you very much.

Kristy: Okay.

Lindsay: So he was phenomenal. World-class. Why? Because he knew what his zone of genius was.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: And he acted and he lived inside of his zone of genius. When he – around the time that he passed away, I saw a lot of interviews with him, (you know), (um), just in his element.

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: Just throwing jokes constantly, not holding back, not fearing who he really was, but stepping into it...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...stepping into the zone of genius. So we're just here today guys to encourage you – we didn't wanna (want to) pass over this topic so quickly because I think that this is the key to success in English and in life and in business.

Kristy: Yeah.

Lindsay: So, we want to encourage you guys to find your zone of genius, not just within how you learn English, but also in life and in business and in your career. Don't be afraid to do it. Investigate.

Kristy: Yeah. And can I add in (uh)...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Kristy: When I searched for that zone of genius, for me, what I found is I had to put myself in situations where I didn't think I was so good at things and ask myself if I wanted things that people might have told me are impossible



and, and strive for it. And actually people tell me I was lost and not have validation...

Lindsay: Oh.

Kristy: ...for a long time because I was searching. (Um), lots of times your zone of genius is not in your zone of comfortability. (Uh)...

Lindsay: Of comfort. Right. [crosstalk]. Absolutely.

Kristy: ...not a zone of validation, not a zone of familiarity. (Um), and so if you feel afraid when you try to do something, unsure, you might be on the right track and that was the case for me.

Lindsay: Ooh.

Kristy: I'm still figuring it out. (Um), but you have to ask yourself maybe that could happen and then you're... if you're gonna (going to) be, 'Oh, my god. That's so afraid, why would I think that?' But keep going with it.

Lindsay: Oh, I like that Kristy. I like that. So if you feel afraid, it's not... it doesn't mean that you're on the wrong track...

Kristy: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...it might mean that you're on the right track. I like that. That's the perfect point of advice to end on. So guys, I wanna (want to) know, we wanna (want to) know at All Ears English, what your zone of genius is. So I want you to come over to AllEarsEnglish.com/Genius. That's g-... that's g-e-n-i-u-s. And let us know. Let's have a conversation.

Kristy: (Uhn).

Lindsay: I'll see you guys over on the blog. And thanks for joining us again today Kristy. This has been super fun.

Kristy: Thanks Lindsay. See you on the blog. Bye.

Lindsay: Take care.



[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.

