



All Ears English Episode 235:

When Opportunity Knocks, What Do You Do?

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 235: “When Opportunity Knocks, What Do You Do?”

[Instrumental]

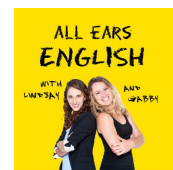
Lindsay: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, downloaded more than 5 million times. We believe in connection, not perfection. You’ll finally get real Native English conversation with your American hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Michelle Kaplan, the ‘New York Radio Girl’ coming to you from Boston and New York City, USA.

[Instrumental]

Michelle: Today’s episode is a ‘Deep Thoughts Thursday’ so you’ll learn a famous English saying that will help you talk about the biggest decisions in your life and how to make them.

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[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, Michelle, what's happening?

Michelle: Hey, Lindsay. Not too much. How are you?

Lindsay: I'm great. I'm great. We're in mid-December here. So, I can't believe it. (I mean), the holidays are coming up soon.

Michelle: I know. I love the holidays, but I hate the cold.

Lindsay: Really? You hate the cold. I don't mind cold. The only thing I don't like is March and February. Those are tough months in Boston.

Michelle: Oh, well, (ugh), gosh. I don't know how you do it up there. I'm having a hard enough time down here, but (um), that's great. (I mean), I'm glad you like the cold.

Lindsay: Well, (you know), I think that the cold weather is an opportunity to work on other things like, (you know), I like to (like) do spiritual practice and meditation and that's a good opportunity to be inside...

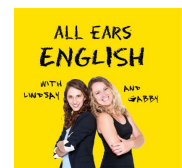
Michelle: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...meditating, or outside snowboarding or doing other things in the snow, getting active.

Michelle: Yeah, there's definitely a lot of cool things that you can do. A lot of opportunities you should take. A lot of things to do. Even though maybe you can't go outside and take long walks like you did in the summer, you should take it as an opportunity to do other things.

Lindsay: Yeah, exactly. And today it seems like we're talking about opportunity a lot. So that's what we wanna (want to) jump in to today, guys – this concept of opportunity. What a cool topic, right Michelle?

Michelle: Oh, yeah. Definitely. I love this.



Lindsay: Yeah. So let's start off today's episode with a quote. Do you wanna (want to) read the quote today?

Michelle: Sure. Sure. Okay. This is a quote that I really, really love. (Um), okay. So here it is. It's: "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door." And the person who said that is Milton Berle.

Lindsay: Ooh. I like it. I like it. So what are we... wha-what does this mean? Well, (I mean), how can opportunity knock? (Like) what, what does that actually mean?

Michelle: Yeah, it's kinda (kind of) funny because the thought of something knocking that isn't a person, it's a little confusing. But here what, what it means if opportunity doesn't knock. It means (like), if the thing that, that you're looking for don't come right to you – for example, maybe (um), you're looking for a job or you're looking to audition for something, anything like that. So if (op-), opportunity doesn't find you, if it's not that easy...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Michelle: ...build a door.

Lindsay: (Uhn).

Michelle: So it means, if it's not that easy, you should find your own way, (right). (Like)...

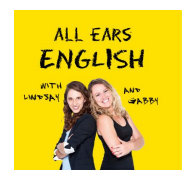
Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...you should find a way to make things work for you, to make your own opportunities, your own...

Lindsay: (Abs-)...

Michelle: ...possibilities.

Lindsay: Yeah. And so that's a really common phrase, (right). When, when opportunity knocks. Now, I know you guys – a lot of our listeners here, they wanna (want to) learn real, natural American English and this is it,



(right), this phrase: “When opportunity knocks...” or “If opportunity doesn’t knock...” Those are very common phrases and idioms that we use here in, here in the US (United States), right?

Michelle: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Lindsay: But the thing that I struggle with is knowing when an opportunity is something that I should pursue or when I should just let it go.

Michelle: (Um), I think we all struggle with that definitely.

Lindsay: Yeah. And how do we know. (I mean), Michelle, do you have any personal stories about a time that you took advantage of an opportunity or you didn’t and, and something happened?

Michelle: Oh, yeah. Sure. (Um), I have (to-) – I think about this stuff a lot. It’s all very interesting to me, actually. (Um), actually when I was in college, I... I had always imagined that I would study abroad and I always thought I would study abroad in London because that’s what my, my older brother did, and he loved it so much. So...

Lindsay: (Uhn).

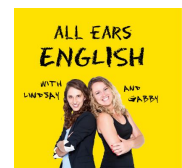
Michelle: ...I knew I was gonna (going to) do this and then as college was happening, I (s-), I was in a band, as I think I’ve talked about before. And I...

Lindsay: You were a rock star?

Michelle: Yeah. So-something like that. And, (uh) – maybe not quite. But, (um), I was really, really serious about it and, (um), it was really important to me and I felt that if I left that I would miss out and maybe the band would be no more. So I was really worried about that and I didn’t want that to happen. So I thought to myself, ‘You know what? I don’t think I’m gonna (going to) go. I don’t think I’m gonna (going to) study abroad.’ And...

Lindsay: Ohh. Wow.

Michelle: Yeah. So I made the decision I’m not going and then first semester of my senior year of college, (uh), the summer before I started, I started thinking



about it and I found myself, (uh), hearing this voice in my head that was saying, 'You know what, you really should think about that again. Maybe that's an opportunity you don't wanna (want to) miss out on.'

Lindsay: (Uhn).

Michelle: And I started looking at programs and I thought to myself, 'Wait a second, I think that this is what I do really want and that I should just go for it because you – I don't know when I will have this opportunity again.'

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: (Um), so I decided to just go for it and I went and I – it was probably one of the best decisions I've made. So...

Lindsay: (Uhn).

Michelle: ...I, I think that there's something to be said about, (you know), kind of trusting your gut instinct.

Lindsay: (Uhn), and trusting that voice, right?

Michelle: Right.

Lindsay: Sometimes there's that really, (like) vague and soft voice that something is telling us that maybe this is something we should try.

Michelle: Yeah.

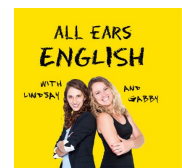
Lindsay: (I mean), to me it's worse to not explore the opportunity and to always wonder in the future. I don't, I don't wanna (want to) have regrets.

Michelle: Right, right. I think that that's something that we all fear is having, having a lot of regrets. And so I knew, (you know) – I think that that's what the voice is telling you, right. Like...

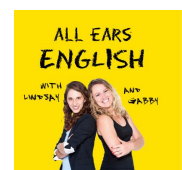
Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Michelle: ...you, you will regret it if you don't take this opportunity. And so...

Lindsay: Yeah.



- Michelle:** ...I think that when deciding, (you know), what opportunities to take, I think that you definitely have to think will you regret it if you don't.
- Lindsay:** Yeah. So for our listeners who maybe – who knows? (I mean), maybe they have the opportunity to come to the US (United States) or go to England to study English or to do an internship.
- Michelle:** (Uh-huh).
- Lindsay:** So, (you know), I always recommend, (you know), spending time in a quiet place.
- Michelle:** (Mm).
- Lindsay:** (You know), to, to try to hear that voice and give that voice a little bit of space to come through. (Um), because it's good to make an informed decision. It's good to make pros and (co-), lists of pros and cons, but at the end of the day, I put more weight on, on that voice.
- Michelle:** (Uhn). I, I completely agree. I think somehow – you have to trust yourself. You have to trust that you really know what's best for yourself. You know it better than anybody else, and better than a pro and con list can tell you, right?
- Lindsay:** That's right and it's hard because sometimes people in our lives are selfish and they will tell you what they want you to do...
- Michelle:** Yeah.
- Lindsay:** ...because of the way it could affect them, right?
- Michelle:** Right. Absolutely. So you have to listen just to what do you want, (you know).
- Lindsay:** Yeah. That's – so, so again, you... I think you... you used the phrase "to pass up an opportunity", right?
- Michelle:** Right.
- Lindsay:** So we don't wanna (want to) pass up – what does that mean 'to pass up'?



Michelle: Basically, 'pass up an opportunity' would be that you don't do something.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: You, you don't, (uh), commit to doing something that is, (uh), a good opportunity for your life. So if I passed up an opportunity, if I didn't go and study abroad, I would've passed up that opportunity.

Lindsay: Right. So you let it go.

Michelle: (Mm-hmm). Exactly. I let it go. Just throw it away.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's a good natural phrase that you guys can use in your everyday language. It's just a natural phrasal verb, so 'pass something up'. Right. 'Passed it up.' I had an opportunity to, to study in France or England and I 'passed it up'. But in your case, you didn't pass it up, right.

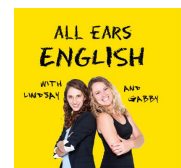
Michelle: Right. Right. And I – it was a great, th-the greatest time and I'm so happy that I didn't and I think usually you are happy with the decisions you make if you make the decision that you really want.

Lindsay: Oh, yeah. Absolutely. Or at least, (you know), maybe you take the opportunity and you realize it's not for you, but what's the worst that could happen, (right). That's always a good question to ask yourself. What is the worst that can happen? (You know), for our listeners, if you take the opportunity to come to the US (United States), and get transferred to the US (United States) for your job or come here to be an intern, what's the worst that could happen. (I mean), maybe you miss your country, maybe you, you get embarrassed learning English. (I mean), there are worse things.

Michelle: Yeah, absolutely. (You know), I think that, (you know), we get too – (uh), sometimes fear leads us to make certain decisions, right?

Lindsay: (Mm-hmm).

Michelle: And so maybe you, maybe you won't go somewhere for fear that something else would happen. Like for me, I wasn't going to study abroad



because I – of my fear that I wouldn't be in this band anymore, (right). So – but I don't think that fear should, should, (you know), take over, (you know), your, your mind.

Lindsay: Yeah, so the recommendation is to just go to a quiet space where you can hear your own inner voice and make that decision for yourself as much as you can.

Michelle: Definitely. I think that's a good tip. I'm gonna (going to) try that one next time.

Lindsay: I can't guarantee it'll work, but that's my, that's my tip. Okay. Great. Thanks for joining us today Michelle, this has been great.

Michelle: Thank you so much.

Lindsay: Yeah. Take care.

Michelle: Thanks. You too.

Lindsay: Bye.

Michelle: Bye.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you believe in connection, not perfection, *and* you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, please subscribe to our podcasts in iTunes, on your computer or on your Smartphone. And hey, if you liked today's show, please let us know with a review in iTunes. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

