



Kev's English Podcast: Episode 16: The Importance of Discipline!

Hello, sorry it's been such a long time since my last episode..I explain why in the episode. However, I wanted to share my thoughts on discipline and why it really is everything!...

If you want lessons, click here <https://www.italki.com/en/teacher/1078268>

If you want to see my videos, click here <https://www.youtube.com/@TheEnglishNative>

Hello and welcome to Kevin's English Podcast. Real English every week. Hello, it's Kevin here.

Well, it's been quite a while since my last podcast episode. I've been kind of busy for sure but also I haven't had a topic. I've been talking about different things for exams, IELTS and OET and TOEFL etc.

I haven't really had anything else to talk about so I'm going to have to rethink what I do for my podcast in the future but for today I want to talk about the subject of discipline. D-I-S-C-I-P-L-I-N-E. I don't know why that is important.

So the definition of discipline is to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control. Now, how does this apply to you maybe listening as English language learners? I'll talk about that in a moment but I'm going to apply some personal insights to this first. So I was reading a book a week or two back called Disciplines of a Godly Man by a guy called Kent Hughes.

So I've been reading a lot recently which is one of the reasons why I haven't been making podcasts. I'm very interested in history, religion, philosophy etc and there's quite a lot of things I wanted to learn. So what I'm doing now, I'm reading every day.

So one of the things that people often say you know they don't have time whether it's an exercise or for study for IELTS or OET or English. I say well if you really want it you'll make time and that's a fact as I've spoken about this before in regards to the IELTS test. So you need direction, focus and discipline.

So I was very interested in reading about theology but I didn't have any idea of what books to read and I found a guy on the internet who'd recently taken a three or four years bachelor's course in divinity and he put his entire reading list on his blog. Every book, every term that he read for his three or four years course of study. I thought that's pretty good, that's pretty interesting.

So I copied it out and I've been obtaining as many of those books as I could. It's quite a lengthy list. I didn't count but there must be 40-50 books there maybe maybe more.

There's five pages and I've read what's this three four five six seven eight nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fifteen seventeen. I've read over 20 books so far in the last few months. Like I say that's one reason why I haven't been making episodes.

I've been too busy in reading and often I've been finding myself reading other books not on the reading list but things that were interesting. Anyway so the discipline thing for me I get up every day now half past six, six and a half past six which is easy in summertime and what do I do? I get my coffee and I sit and read half six usually seven thirty maybe eight. I do at least an hour maybe an hour and a half of reading every morning, every day, Saturday and Sunday as well and my focus I've got a reading list.

I've got a list of books that I've got to work my way through as many of those I can find and yeah it's paying off. You know I've read over 20 books in the last few months. I think it's maybe six months maybe since the start of the year.

Yeah I think it was my new year resolution so I've read over 20 books and I've got a lot more to read. I started this morning with a couple of new books. I found another new book that I downloaded that's not on my reading list so you know this reading list looks like it's going to go on and on.

So you know the discipline it gives you direction, it gives you a channel, it gives you respect for time. I mean I try and read during the day as well in between my lessons on italki but the main thing is every morning regardless I have at least an hour worth of reading. That's a good time of the day for me.

I don't scroll mindlessly on the internet looking at crap. I get up have a read for an hour or so first then I come to italki, check my email, check my lesson plans and get ready for the day in the classroom. If I've got time in between I'll read and yeah that seems to be working quite well and not only that I've made a commitment to go to the gym.

I've been talking about this before for IELTS when I mentioned about being consistent etc. So the summertime where I am now there's lots of the outdoor gyms and I go three times a week Monday, Wednesday and Friday or sometimes Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday depends on whether it's raining if the sun's out but still three times a week. I do back and biceps, legs, chest and shoulders that's it I've got my split and the discipline sometimes it's not always there but I try and force myself you know so having a goal, direction and discipline very important.

In the book I was reading he's talking about how important it is and how all these famous people such as Churchill. Churchill apparently all his speeches were practised. He would spend hours every day rehearsing his speeches, every pause, every inflexion.

He was never impromptu. He choreographed every single speech. He wrote it out, he put the pauses, he put it all down and practised, practised and practised.

Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo they did hundreds if not thousands of sketches. Da Vinci drew 1,000 hands, 1,000 different sketches of hands to get it right. A famous author Ernest Hemingway he was an alcoholic yeah yeah but every day half past six until noon every day he would be writing.

Every day even though he was drinking all night every day 6 30 standing in front of his desk writing every day. Discipline so Hemingway, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Matisse, Winston Churchill, Thomas Edison, the light bulb, a thousand failures before he made the light bulb. So discipline is everything.

So if you think about how we can apply this for IELTS or TOEFL or OET you can I hope see the connection. You need to I mean I've spoken about this in other episodes having a plan. In the morning listen to Radio 4, when you're commuting listen to some podcasts etc but the discipline doing it consistently that's the important thing.

Another interesting thing in this book Disciplines of a Godly Man what he talks about is first getting rid of what gets in the way and Kent Hughes was talking about how in ancient Greece the athletes would compete completely nude. They'd take off all their clothes. The idea was to be totally unencumbered, totally free to move which is why if you look at any of the ancient Greek or indeed Roman artworks of athletes invariably they're naked or pretty much.

So the idea is to be unencumbered with what might interfere. Now for us it could be social media, it could be mobile phones you know that gets in the way. You're distracted watching crap on television.

Usually these days it's the internet that's what gets in the way, that's the encumbrance. It's fine in its place, in its time but if you want to progress in anything and you know in your English or IELTS TOEFL OET you need to get rid of all the things that get in between you and what you want to do. In the sense of me for exercise it was time.

So what I've done now I've scheduled my time on italki so I've got a block in the Monday, Wednesday and Friday that's when I go to the gym because I know in the evening once I've finished teaching students all day I'm not going to be too bothered about going to the gym and lifting a load of weights you know. I know perfectly well I won't do it so I've created the circumstance you know. I've put the time issue that's an encumbrance out of the way, I've got fixed times.

So for me now my day is every day up at six, half past six in summer time that's easy with a daylight. We'll see how that works out in winter time. I get up, tidy up, clean my computer, desk, give everything a good old clean, get my tablet out, go to the kitchen, get the kettle on and then I sit down in my armchair and I read for usually about an hour, hour and a half every morning.

And then in the daytime, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Now I sometimes do stuff on Tuesday and Thursday, maybe go out for a ride on my bike but now I'm trying my focus is at the gym. So Monday it's pull, back and biceps, Wednesday legs, usually squats, Friday chest, push, bench and shoulders and that's it.

Then at weekends I'm out on my bike, Saturday, Sunday or I'm hiking in the forest, that's it. So you need a discipline, a schedule, a routine, a plan. As I say, I've mentioned this many times in my previous episodes and when I talk to my students on italki, I tell them this all the time.

I show them a sample plan and that, you know, they keep saying, oh Kev, you know, I haven't been so effective in learning English and it doesn't work and blah blah blah. And when I question them I

find out that's why. They have encumbrances.

So for example, some of the people, they live with people that speak the same language as themselves, you know, so their husband, girlfriend, wife, whoever, boyfriend, that's not my business, speaks the same language. You know, all their friends are the same, you know, it's like you've got to get rid of what's in the way, what's interfering. So I tell them, you know, don't have any friends the same, well, you know, don't spend all your time with the same people because you only speak your own language.

I tell them this. You know, to get out, talk to different people, use the internet, find different people to speak to, remove the encumbrances, be disciplined. I tell them this.

Now a lot of them, they can't do the same as I kind of do, you know, but still I say, right, you know, set some time, right, get your schedule out, weekly calendar, what time can I find on what day, etc., you know. So the more I was reading about in this particular book, as I mentioned the disciplines of a godly man, yeah, you know, it did, I mean, it wasn't saying anything new. Intuitively, I knew this.

But sometimes, even though

you know something to be true, you need somebody else to point it out. Yeah, I instinctively, intuitively knew I shouldn't be doing this, I should be doing that, I should be doing this, I should be doing that. But sometimes you need someone to tell you this, you know.

So this book taught me quite a lot and I'm trying to live in some way with what it says, the precepts. Anyway, so I'll wrap that up for now. It's a bit of a ramble, I didn't have a script for today.

I was just thinking, you know, what have I learnt recently that may be useful for you. So key is discipline in anything, in all your endeavours if you want to be successful. In the language, in study, in learning, in exercise, playing an instrument, you must have the discipline.

If you have that, nothing can stop you. Anyway, so it's a bit of a ramble for today. I hope it helps.

Okay, I'll see you next time.