

Feel Good English

**"Fluent
Forever"
by Gabriel
Wyner**

Episode #94

Full Transcript

Hello there, Kevin here with another episode of the Feel Good English podcast, teaching you how to become a better English speaker and teaching you life skills as well.

Today I am going to be giving you some ideas based on a book on how to learn a foreign language. Hey, that sounds pretty interesting, huh?

If you are listening to this, it's very likely you have learned a foreign language which is English; good for you, great job by the way.

And maybe you have tried or you are considering learning another foreign language. This book has some very valuable advice and strategies on how to do that. And don't forget, and I talk about this a lot, I believe everyone learns a foreign language differently and at least they have their own preference on how to learn, you have to make the process fun and interesting.

So even though this book has great tips, it's not like it has the answer for everybody. We have to experiment, try out different things, see what works for us, see what we enjoy doing and keep applying those methods.

However, there are universal methods of learning a foreign language, methods that I believe most people can benefit from. And through research and experimentation, we can learn these methods and apply them and see quicker results in our language learning journey, our language learning process. And the book *Fluent Forever* has great tips.

So I am going to talk about a few of the different strategies in the book that I find very useful, you might know some of them, you might not know some of them. One of them is even going to help you remember people's names.

One cool bonus of learning how to learn a foreign language effectively is you will also learn in general how to memorize information and learn information because that is what you're doing when you're learning a new language, you are memorizing and discovering ways to retain information and this name remembering hack is awesome and it works; so listen in to learn that technique.

.If you want a transcript to this episode, go to my website, feelgoodenglish.com, you will find it there. You can get transcripts to this and all of the Feel Good English podcast episodes; those are quite helpful so go check that out after the episode.

Now let's get into the episode on the book *Fluent Forever* by Gabrielle Wyner.

The first idea here is that when it comes to memory, recalling is better than reviewing; recalling is better than reviewing. So what is the difference? Well, let me try to explain it in simple terms.

So, if you are *reviewing* information, literally think of view, your eyes, you are seeing something, you are viewing something; you are just looking at something many many times. So you have notes you write down notes in class and you view, you look at those notes over and over and over.

Whereas *recall*, think of calling somebody or actually using your language and talking to somebody; if you recall information you're taking it out of your brain, or you're finding those words and those phrases that you've learned and you are using them to communicate, are using them to figure something out; so you are

actually pulling that information out of your head as opposed to just seeing it.

Something we often do is **cram** for an exam, cramming for an exam, this is what cramming is: you have a test next Friday, it's a big test, it's a final exam, and when do you study? Well, probably Thursday night, right? Six hours of intense studying Thursday night for your exam which happens on a Friday; that's called **cramming**. We go over the material many times, we review it many many times, trying to retain as much information as possible the night before.

But one big issue with this is if you cram for a test you might have that information the next day, you might do well on the test, great, however you are not going to remember this information, it will disappear very quickly. And if you've ever tried that before, you crammed for a test, you might do well enough, you've studied hard enough the night before; however, the next week you basically don't remember a thing that you learned.

What we are talking about here is a **long term memory** and if we're going to speak a language well, if we're going to learn a language to fluency, we need to utilize our long term memory. Not just so that we can use those vocab words for the next day, we need to be able to use the language we learnt forever and this is done by recalling.

The word recall, recall or retrieving information from the past tells your brain something is important to remember, you're actually pulling that out of your brain, telling your brain "Okay, I guess I am going to have to remember this." And this is why using language in real situations, in natural situations is so valuable. If you go to school and you're learning English and you're taking a test and you're just reviewing your notes and going over these notes, and some people are good at that, then they do well on tests, but in real conversations that information is not there because they have never actually had to pull it out of their brains to use it in a real life

situation. When you have to recall the information, let's say you're talking to somebody and you actually have to think of a word that you learned, when you are able to use that in a conversation correctly, it sticks.

I don't know how many times when I was learning Portuguese I would study a word on a piece of paper many many times and then thirty minutes later I would forget it and I felt like a complete, freaking idiot. Because I would see it, I would see it and then thirty minutes later I would forget it, so I go "God, I am dumb as hell."

But it happens to a lot of us; my memory, my **short term memory** maybe isn't great. But if I was able to use these words in a conversation, even if it's on paper and I am talking to somebody and I see it and I use it, and then maybe the next day I pull it out of my head, I recall this word, I use it in conversation, that is when you start really memorizing vocabulary forever.

And that's why it's effective if you focus on a specific topic and you use the same vocabulary words and you focus on that for let's say a week and you keep recalling the same words, you keep reusing these words in conversation, writing them down, even hearing them, reading them, you don't have to produce the language, you could recall it just by seeing it on a piece of paper and knowing what it means; this is how we expand our vocabulary very quickly.

This next one's quite interesting and I remember learning this way back when I was taking some linguistic courses at university, something that is huge, something that I talk about a lot, something that is very important is a concept called "Comprehensible input."

Comprehensible input is input, English, for example, that you can understand; often you can understand it through visual cues. If

you are in Brazil for example and you don't speak any Portuguese and somebody walks up to you at a bar and says [he says something in Portuguese 07:47]. You would look at that person and say "What are you doing? Get out of here, you are crazy. I don't understand you."

But if he looks at you and he slowly says [he says something in Portuguese at this point 8:00] and he holds a beer in his hand and he points to the beer, you say "Oh, this guy wants to know if I want a beer." That's comprehensible input. You might have learned the word [Portuguese word 8:15], or you might have learned the word [Portuguese word 8:19] which means beer in Portuguese and you will learn very slowly like that.

So in a practical sense, how do you apply this to language learning? Find simplified language, simple sentences, simple grammar, a lot of videos, a lot of pictures, a lot of images and start from there and slowly progress the natural way.

So literally learn from children's material, children's books, children's audio, children's videos. Don't let your ego get in the way of thinking that it's not cool to learn from children's material. Learn a language like a child and learn it the way that it is supposed to be learned.

Kind of connected with the last one, going further with how to remember new words like beer; images and personal connections make remembering easier for the brain, and this is how you're going to remember someone's name when you meet them. And you'll be the guy or gal, that remembers people's names, this system works.

Like I said, if you don't connect a word to a feeling, an emotion, an image, a situation, it disappears, it doesn't stick. We need to make connections with words, connecting words to a personal experience; it could be an emotion, something like that.

But here we go, this is how you are never going to forget somebody's name when you meet them. When you meet somebody, let's say you meet somebody named Angelica and you meet this girl her name is Angelica, say, "Hi, Angelica. How are you?"

What you need to do is think of another Angelica that you know; it could be a friend or it could even be a famous person, but somebody with the name Angelica that you can visualize when you see this new Angelica.

And while you're talking to Angelica, the new Angelica, you're going to visualize in your head the other Angelica, you're going to connect that person with the situation, you're going to think of that person and you're going to look at the new Angelica and you're going to make that connection with an Angelica that you already know.

This gets a little harder if you don't know another Angelica, then you're going to have to be a little more creative and think of an image that reminds you of the word Angelica; this one is pretty easy, "angel", Angelica. But think of a person with the same name when you meet somebody famous or not and this is how you will remember.

So when I am **travelling abroad** to countries where there are no Kevins and people don't know a Kevin, I have to say, "Oh, think of Kevin Costner, think of Kevin Bacon, think of Kevin James, think of Kevin Hart, depending on their age, who might be the most relevant to them. So they have to think of that person and then they look at me, bam! The connection is made.

One fantastic way to not only memorize new people's names, but also to learn new words.

Now if you learned a new word you can't connect it with a person's name, but you can connect the sound of that word with other words that you know, or other images. There is more to that

and I could go deeper into this idea of connecting images with words, but it's a similar idea.

A quick example, in the Japanese language the word for octopus, the octopus in the ocean is “tako”, “tako”. So, if you're learning the word for octopus in Japanese and you know what tacos are, tacos like the Mexican food taco, you think of a taco in the ocean with tentacles or maybe an octopus eating a taco and that's how you remember the new word. Simple example, however, you get the point.

Some action steps for you so you can apply this; next time you meet somebody and it's important for you to remember this person's name and you're bad at remembering names, when you meet them, instantly think of another person important to you. It could be a friend, somebody you know or it could be a famous person, and visualize this other person, connect that image with the person that you are missing and watch how easily you remember their name.

Now if you don't know somebody else with that name, if they have a crazy name, then think of an image or come up with something creative to connect that name to.

The other day I met somebody named Anar, Anar. I don't know somebody else named Anar, so what did I visualize? Well, what do you think? I visualized the letter R with a little article before, “an” “An R”. “Hey look, it's an R, it's a big R.” And I didn't forget Anar's name.

Other action point here, don't try to just memorize words by reviewing them and looking at them many many times. If you're taking a test and you need to get a good grade on a test but you don't need to use that information again, sure, fine cram for that test but don't expect to memorize that information.

If you want to memorize the information you have to use that information in a real situation, you need to recall those words, pull

them from your brain and use them. That's, how we are able to take new language and keep it in our brain forever.

That will do it for today's episode, thank you so much for listening; I hope you learned something new. I imagined you did; if not, well at least you got to hear me talking for fifteen minutes and that's fun, right?

Again if you want a transcript to this, go to feelgoodenglish.com and get a transcript there.

And until the next episode I hope you go out and memorize a few people's names.

Ending with a memory joke;

So a doctor says to his patient,

“Hey, did you take those pills I gave you to improve your memory?”

And the patient says,

“What pills?”

Have a wonderful day. See you next time.