

Feel Good English

# How to Live an Awesome life - Ted Talk Tuesdays



The transcript to episode 013

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Hey, team. This is Kevin, your English teacher and the host of the *Feel Good English Podcast*. Today, we have another TedTalk Tuesday lesson. Maybe it is Tuesday for you today, maybe it is Wednesday, maybe it's Saturday. However, every Tuesday, I release an episode on an inspiring, fun and informative TedTalk from the website Ted.com, a wonderful resource for English learners where you can watch videos and get transcripts and all of that stuff free. It's a great resource.

And today's episode is on a TedTalk called *The 3 A's of Awesome*—*awesome* being “better than great.” Awesome is greater than great. It's awesome, wonderful, super, fantastic! This is an awesome talk, kind of an inspiring and emotional talk. And he's going to talk about the three A's of awesome, three ways of living using words that all start with A that can help you live a richer, happier, more fulfilling life.

And when I say *richer*, I don't mean specifically with money to be rich, but we also use the word *richer* to live a *fuller* life. So if you're rich with money, that's one thing. But you can also be rich—you can live a rich life, meaning a life full of good things, of good people in your life and good activities and good thoughts and positivity.

So, in the episode, I'm going to tell you a little bit about Neil and his story. If you want to know more, go to Ted.com and watch the full video. I will talk about the three A's of awesome, and I will apply these A's, these three A's, to English and how you can use these to help you become a better, more confident, English speaker.

I will also talk about some of the difficult, tricky vocab that Neil uses in his

TedTalk, some expressions and words and phrases that are not that easy to understand. So I will explain those to you towards the end of the episode. And don't forget at the end to wait for the awesome joke that I always leave at the end of the episode.

If you want transcripts to this episode of *Feel Good English Podcast*, go to my website, [FeelGoodEnglish.com](http://FeelGoodEnglish.com). There, you will be find information on how to become a Feel Good member. If you become a member, you can get all of the transcripts to all of the episodes for free, forever! That's awesome. So, let's get going.

So, the TedTalk starts with Neil talking about when his life was going very well. He got married, he was working, he had a good job. Everything was going well in his life. But then, things started to change—wife left him, and his friend (a good friend of his) took his own life. And not only that, the economy was in a horrible place in the U.S.—and in the world. So a lot of bad things happened to him all at once.

So, to get himself out of this low part in his life, he created a blog. He talks about that there are 50,000 blogs created a day—which I find is crazy—but eventually, his blog became the number one blog in the world. And what did he do on his blog? He simply would go there daily and write about something that he thought was awesome, he thought was great, something that was a positive thing that would bring his spirits up.

His blog, [1000AwesomeThings.com](http://1000AwesomeThings.com) became extremely popular. And it was not only good for other people, but for him, he realized it brought his own spirits up. It made him happier. It got him through difficult times.

We all have difficult times. We go through good times and bad times. It's always changing. One thing that I do in my own life is I always remind myself that not only bad times will pass, but also, the really good times will pass too. We usually want good times to last forever, and we really want to get through bad times. But if we connect with either of these, we won't be happy when we're not experiencing bad.

If we're feeling great, everything is going well, and we don't realize that *that* too will pass, and in the future, some bad things will come, then we get trapped into this thinking that if everything is not going good, something is wrong.

So, I always remind myself, "Wow! Things are going great. But Kevin, don't get too attached to this. Don't get too connected to this because, someday, things will go bad again. And you'll have to also not connect to the bad things knowing that those too will pass.

The first A of awesome from Neil is *attitude*. He talked about you have two choices. You can either swirl and twirl in gloom and doom. Swirl and twirl, *swirl* means going in circles, just being stuck, staying in the same place. And *gloom and doom*, those are negative, dark. Gloom is when everything is gloomy and dark and sad like a gloomy day is raining. And *doom* is like evil or bad things happening.

So you can just stay stuck and keep going in circles in that or you can grieve and face the future with newly sober eyes. To *grieve* is to be sad. When something happens, you can grieve and accept that and go through the emotional pain, go through those, not try to avoid those feelings but to accept them. And then, once you go through that, you can face the future. You can take on the future with newly sober eyes. Usually, we use *sober* for not being drunk or on drugs. You're sober, you're clean. And this is what we're talking about here, kind of with clean, fresh eyes. You go through a grieving process, and then you're ready to face the future with sober, clean and fresh eyes.

He also says you take baby steps into the future. You don't have to change everything right now. Taking baby steps, taking small steps towards better days, keep moving forward. Like his *1000 Awesome Things*, just little things during the day that would cheer him up.

The next word he uses is *awareness*. If you listen to this podcast, you hear me talk about self-awareness a lot. Awareness is paying attention, being aware of things, seeing them, paying attention, stopping and noticing them—so being aware of life, paying attention to life.

He talks about embrace your inner three-year old. *Embracing* means literally like hugging and "connecting with," "embrace your three-year old." So become a three-year old again and just be really interested in everything that happens. All the little things that happen during your day, embracing those, and not just becoming jaded and becoming immune to everything and saying, "I don't care about this anymore. I've seen it so much," and just being kind of a robot.

Being aware is the opposite of a robot. It's noticing and paying attention to

things and letting the emotions that come up when you see things and notice things, letting those, being aware of those emotions and paying attention to those emotions and feeling things throughout your day. This is being aware.

And you can imagine, being aware just makes days more interesting, right? When you're on vacation, you're going somewhere new, you're in a foreign country or new city, you're a lot more aware of what's going on because you haven't been there before. And when you are in that state, it's really fun. So, we can do this in our day if we just stop and look around. Maybe you need to get off the phone a little bit, and just stop looking at your phone. Put your head up, and look around you. Be aware of the people around you and what's going on.

Notice the trees and the birds. That's always something that I find useful for me. If I'm a little stressed out and I'm anxious and I'm rushed, I just look up and I look around and I notice the trees and the houses and the birds and the things around me. It relaxes me to put things into perspective and realize that the whole world is not about me and my little problems.

The last A from awesome is *authenticity*. The more we are ourselves, the better we feel about the choices we make. At the end of the day, the better we feel about what we've done that day, where we are, we can go to bed at night, knowing that we were true to ourselves and we stayed true to our values in the way that we want to live.

Sometimes, this can be hard. People don't want you to be authentic. They want you to be like everybody else. They want you to dress like them, talk like them, get jobs that are recognized as the best jobs. You don't have a different opinion. Make sure your opinions match other people's. These things are the opposite of being authentic.

I truly try to live an authentic life myself. It's not always easy. Sometimes, you feel embarrassed or you feel like an outcast, you feel like somebody who's not part of the group. But in the end, I think people respect authenticity. People respect authentic people because it takes courage. It takes courage to be authentic.

At the end of the talk, he talks about how we need to take advantage of each day because in a hundred years from now, everybody you see around you will be dead. Now, you could look at this and it gets sad. I heard this, I actually did

get a little sad. I'm like, "Wow! That's true." But I don't think it's to make you sad. It's to make you appreciate what you have and to appreciate every day even if you're going through bad times or your country is in a bad place, your wife left you, your husband left you, cheats on you or whatever. Just know that all of that will pass. We have to really know that in a hundred years from now, nothing will exist any way that we know, so just take it day by day. Appreciate our days.

And then the last thing I'm going to do here, just quickly maybe help you connect these ideas to your English learning. Maybe you're trying to become more confident. You're trying to become the awesome English speaker that you know you can become.

Attitude, we will have challenges when we're learning a foreign language. And these challenges continue to come for many years. It depends on your level. If you're just starting out, it's really challenging. It's very difficult to become even conversational in a foreign language. And you have to take the attitude of "I am getting better every day. I just have to keep pushing through."

And if you're an excellent speaker now, you want to become an English teacher, well, that will also be challenging. You might have to pass a test or you might feel uncomfortable around native speakers that are teachers because you think your English isn't as good as them.

But it's the attitude you take. Your attitude is "I can do this. I can bring value to people. I can take control of the situation." That's the attitude. It's a choice. Or you can choose to avoid the situation.

So, attitude throughout your English learning is important—just to step back, take it day by day, and choose to do something that day, choose to keep moving forward, taking baby steps.

Awareness, if we really pay attention to language, if we notice the words, if we notice how people are, if we notice how they move, how they act, if we look around in the streets when we're walking and we try to say things that we see in English, "How do you say that in English? How do you say this?" it can really bring a lot of attention, a lot of awareness to what you need to be learning.

So, there's paying attention to people when they speak and help you notice words that you don't know walking down the street. And if you pass a bakery

and you don't know how to say things in a bakery, paying attention to that, say, "I need to study some vocab on a bakery... I need to go in to bakeries more often and speak English." So, just noticing things and not waiting for the day you have to use that vocab, but just always looking around and saying, "How do I say that?"

And lastly, authenticity, being an authentic English speaker, finding your voice, not being afraid to make mistakes, not being afraid to speak the way that you want to speak, being an authentic English speaker, saying words you want, not worrying about sounding perfect, not worrying about sounding like a boss at work who lived in the U.S. for five years, but being you and not being afraid to be you as an English speaker.

Most people that you will come across don't care if you speak perfectly. They just care about your message. Native speakers, they don't really care if you make mistakes in English. They care about your message.

So, bring an authentic message. Bring a valuable message to these people. Don't be afraid to be authentic.

Some of the vocab you'll hear in the TedTalk, he uses a phrasal verb, *settle in*. *To settle in* is to become comfortable. You move to a country, and you have to try to settle in. You have to become comfortable there. You have to become used to the surroundings. So, you're *settling in*.

Maybe you have a new job. It's very uncomfortable in the beginning, but you say, "Okay, now I'm starting to *settle into this*. I'm starting to become more comfortable."

Another one, *brink of collapse*. *On the brink of collapse* means almost collapsing. *On the brink* means it's just about to happen. "I'm *on the brink* of going crazy. I'm almost going crazy."

*To grow apart*, another phrasal verb, *to grow apart*, to get more distance from each other. "Her and I are growing apart. We're literally growing in the opposite direction. We're *growing apart*. We're becoming disconnected. We're not the same. We're not in love as much as we used to be. We're not the same type of people."

That's why I don't think you should ever get married to young because when

you get older, you might grow apart, people change. So, you get married when you're 16 or 18, whatever, you can, but in 10 years, you probably will be different people, so you might start *growing apart*.

Sometimes, you'll have couples that have gotten married when they were really young and they live their whole lives together, that is magic. That is wonderful. But it's hard.

He also talks about *lumps and bumps*. So, a lump or a bump, it's basically the same thing. He's referring to when you get injured, when you get hit, if somebody punches you on the face, you're going to grow a lump there, a bump. So, maybe if you have cancer, you may have a lump.

But *lumps and bumps* just means problems, injuries—maybe metaphorically or literally injuries. But problems happen to you, you're going to have lumps and bumps.

*Fleeting moments*, a *fleeting moment* is a moment that passes quickly, *fleeting*. F-L-E-E-T-I-N-G, *fleeting moments*, moments that pass quickly, *fleeting moments*.

I, in this episode, used a phrasal verb, *come across*. *To come across* is to encounter something without looking for it. Or maybe you are looking for it, but it appears. You *came across* something that was interesting, you saw something that was interesting. Something appeared into your vision.

I was looking online the other day, and I *came across* a wonderful deal on vacations to Ethiopia. That's pretty random. But you *came across* something. You found something. You found something that you might not have been looking for.

So, there you go, the three A's of awesome attitude—awareness, authenticity, have a positive attitude. Become a three-year old again and notice things around you. Pay attention to your surroundings. Don't become a robot. Take on those surroundings. And authenticity, do not be afraid to be yourself.

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And your joke for the day... a woman gets in on a bus with her baby. The bus driver says, "Damn! That's the ugliest baby I've ever seen." The woman walks to the rear of the bus and sits down very upset. She says to a man next to her, "That driver just insulted me." The man says, "You go up there and you tell him off. Go on! I'll hold your monkey for you."

Be awesome! I'll see you next time.

# Bam, you're done!

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