

Feel Good English

Don't Wait for Others to Choose You – Choose Yourself



The transcript to episode #040

Don't Wait for Others to Choose You – Choose YOURSELF

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Hello there. Kevin here, with another episode of the Feel Good English Podcast.

Today's lesson is about choosing yourself, and not letting other people choose you. If that sounds confusing, it won't at the end of the episode. I'm going to talk about a book called "Choose Yourself" by James Altucher. James is a writer, podcaster, and successful businessman, and he gives great ideas on life and business, and he does it in a very balanced way. I really like his style, his ideas, and the book is awesome.

Today, some of the points I'm going to talk about are; the decline of the American dream, and why *Keeping up with the Jones'* is becoming more and more difficult. Don't know what *Keeping up with the Jones'* means? I'll tell you in this episode.

He also talks about why this American dream system is broken in the first place.

Another big idea from this book is why we have a strong fear of rejection. For you English learners, fearing rejection is a big problem, especially if you

lack confidence, and in the book, he'll tell you some ways that you can get over your fear of rejection.

He also says that we have become very submissive, and he even gives an example of a study that was done, proving how submissive we are as a society, and he gives some tips on how you can reverse this submissive behavior.

I'm going to talk about how we can train our idea muscle and become more creative. This could help you if you want to start a business, an online business. This can also help you be more effective at work, you can become an idea machine.

Another big idea, how we constantly live our lives time traveling, and what we can do to live for the "now," live for the moment. Do you find yourself constantly living in the past or living in the future, worrying about the future and regretting what you did in the past? That's not good. I'll give you an idea in this podcast episode of how you can become more present in the moment.

And lastly, James talks about a term called *pseudocide*, and not how to commit *pseudocide*. I'll tell you about what *pseudocide* is, and how not to commit it.

"Choose Yourself" by James Altucher is the focus of this episode, and if you want a transcript to this and other Feel Good English podcast episodes, go to feelgoodenglish.com/member and you will find out how you too can become a Feel Good member and join us over at Feel Good English which gives you access to the transcripts so you can supercharge your English learning.

So let's get into the episode, and let's choose ourselves.

So, the first lesson I'm going to talk about this book is how the American

dream of a strong middle-class job and keeping up with the Jones' is over. It's almost the death of the middle-class. I know it sounds strong, but the author proposes that at the end of World War II until the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, the population of the United States was living the American dream. Maybe you've heard this expression before the American dream. The American dream is having a nice house, a couple of cars, a dog, a family. You've seen images of that.

After the war of Europe, a lot of women started working as well. So there be the father and the woman working as hard as they could. Why? So they could make more money and spend it on nicer things, bigger cars, bigger houses, but behind the shiny façade of the American dream was something sinister. There was a marketing strategy designed to get people to spend money, and it has lasted for decades and decades, and Americans were increasingly encouraged to express themselves with their cash, with their money, showing off their success by owning more stuff, and I can completely vouch from this as an American.

Here, we buy a lot. We are a very consumer-based economy. It's surprising how often we spend money on things. You drive on another street, you stop at a store or quick at a gas station or a convenience store to buy something to drink. By the way, there's a lot of sugary drinks here in the U. S., which I think is one of the main reasons Americans are large people, but we don't really need anything to drink at the moment, but we just stop and we buy something. Americans love spending money on things.

However, since the Financial Crisis in 2008, the American dream has come to an end, and this is from the book, again. So there's differing opinions on this, but it is interesting to think about, and I have seen a change in this. It's not so possible for everybody these days to have a good job, even in the U. S., if you have a college degree doesn't automatically give you a good job. When my father was younger in his 20's and 30's, he said: "You go to college, you get a job." That's it. You go to college, and you get a nice job and

you make good money. This is changing not only in the U. S., but I think the world.

Some countries are getting benefits from this, which is great. Americans are outsourcing a lot of jobs to other countries, and that's a good thing, I think. On the other hand, here in U. S., people are losing jobs. So they're going to have to rethink, work. They're going to have to rethink what they do to make a living.

So, the American dream is over, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Now, we're moving onto this era of personal freedom. According to the author, in the past, we're dependent on other people controlling our life. Your boss: You have a great job, but you have a boss. He controls your life. To succeed in the American dream, you needed someone else to choose you, and that's where the author came up with the title of the book, is "Choose Yourself," Before the boss would have to choose you. But now with this revolution, you could say, or this transition into the way economy is functioning, we now have the ability to choose ourselves.

The author talks about dealing things online to make money. If you have a smartphone or a laptop with an internet connection, you can do so many different things, and you've seen this and people building businesses and building brands and building personal brands online. So if you're choosing yourself, you're voiding and falling into the trap of just chasing money. The basis of the American dream was the need to earn more and buy more. As long as you did, what paid for your lifestyle, it didn't really matter what you did. If you are unhappy, it didn't matter. As long as you're working to pay for the things that you wanted, that's what counted, and I think that is quite depressing, and a lot of people still live this way, but it can't last forever. Just working and working and working just to pay the things that you have doesn't bring true fulfillment, but according to the author, the new error is different. We have the freedom to do what we want, and if we want to make money doing it, great.

Another very interesting point is that our fear of rejection means we are forever waiting on someone else to decide our fate.

You ever been in a coffee shop, and you saw somebody who you thought might be the love of your life? You probably did nothing about it. You would rather let that person get up and talk to you. Why? Because you don't want to be rejected and feel embarrassed. So you sit there, and nothing happens, and the love of your life is gone forever.

This fear of rejection is the feeling that we have to let others choose us. Most of us simply don't believe we're good enough. We don't believe that we are powerful enough or handsome enough, pretty enough for this woman to actually come up to us and to like us. So, we let others decide for us: our teachers, our bosses, our publishers.

A very interesting study he refers to in the book was by a Yale Psychology Professor called Stanley Milgram, and in the study, Milgram instructed a few students to use the subway and ask passengers that were sitting down to give up their seats for them. And as results, 70% of the passengers gave up their seats simply by somebody asking for their seat. So you're sitting there, and somebody who's similar to you, your age, a young person, comes up and says "Hey! Can I sit there?" 70% of the people got up, which was pretty amazing. If you think about it, it's kind of link, "why did you sit here". Of course, if there are elderly persons or somebody with difficulties, you'd get up for them, but somebody just like you says "Can I sit there?" 70% of people got up, meaning people are very submissive. People are prepared to let others determine their choices, but according to the author, we have to stop this. We have to stop letting others determine our choices. Instead of fearing rejection and letting others choose for us, we should make our own decisions, empower ourselves to choose for ourselves.

One of the ways the author says that we can do this is to take care of our physical and mental bodies. One thing I like about this book is he says that

it's important to take care of your mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual selves. If you remember, this is also part of "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey. I did seven episodes on that book, and one of the episodes is about this. It's taking care of our four bodies:

Physical would be exercising, eating right, being healthy so we can be energized and have the energy to take care of our day; and mentally, too. It could be through meditation or calming our mind so that we're not stressed out all the time, but James also gives another idea, and he refers to it as training our "idea muscle." Training our minds to be more creative. In one tactic, he says "Let's try to read a variety of different things every day; could be a non – fiction books or fiction books or blogs about famous people, whatever it is." Just read a variety of four things quickly, and then write down ten ideas you got from that. The content is not that important.

Generating ideas from these things that you read and putting them down trains our brain to come up with ideas, and this can help us at work and business and also if we wanna do something online. You can help us be more creative, and to come up with more creative, original ideas. It's almost like going to the gym for your mind, then just coming up with new things. So reading different things and then after, just writing down some random thoughts and random ideas can be a very powerful thing. In doing this, you're training your mind to work in a way that is coming up with new ideas as supposed to worrying about pointless things. You'll even be too tired to worry about things, If you're using your brain so much for positive things.

Another cool point in this book is, the author says "We constantly live our lives time – traveling." We're either regretting the past or worrying about the future, events we can't do anything about it. You can't change the past. You'd have no idea what the future is going to be like, but time – traveling and not living in the present moment leads to burnout and inhibits us from realizing our full potential. To combat this, make an effort to be in the moment, continuously focusing on the now. You might have heard this

before, “focusing on the now,” and sometimes it’s hard, but it’s a tactic that I use that works pretty well.

If you find yourself time – traveling, and you’re worried about the future or regretting the past or whatever’s happening you’re not focused on the present moment. Look up and look around you. If you are in your office, look around you. What do you see? What’s going on? Or if you’re outside, look at the buildings. Look at the trees. Look at the birds. Look at all the details. Look at all of the little things that are going on around you, and focus your attention on those things. This will bring your attention from the past or the future, where it shouldn’t be, and it should bring you to the present moment, give you a more healthy mindset, a more healthy attitude, and doing this will keep your mind rooted in the present and stop you from drifting toward the past or future.

And the last idea from this book is that searching for your life’s purpose is pointless and stressful, and can lead us to *pseudocide*.

So, be honest. Are you afraid sometimes that you haven’t found your true purpose? I definitely have thought that way. So now, I’m in my mid – 30’s, and I still don’t know exactly what I want to do with my life, and it can become scary. You know, sometimes I wish when I was 20, I knew exactly what I wanted to be, and for the next 30 to 40 years, I could just focus on that one thing.

According to the author, there’s no reason to worry. Some of the world’s most successful people didn’t find their true purpose, until much later in life. One of the examples he gives is Colonel Sanders. Maybe you’ve heard of Kentucky Fried Chicken, “KFC.” it’s also called. He didn’t make a cent from his special recipe, and told he started franchising when he was already in his mid – 60’s. So Colonel Sanders, who left this legacy of, unhealthy fast food but anyway, he didn’t even start ‘til he was in his late 60’s. So the author suggests that stressing over your purpose is quite pointless. Some people

will never find their purpose. And he says that reason is far more important to enjoy yourself and your life and do work that makes you happy. Maybe you can do something on a side that makes you happy. We all need to work, we all need to make money, but maybe you can spend an hour or two a day outside of that, doing work that makes you happy, doing something online, starting a blog, or making music, learning the guitar, not worrying about our big purpose.

The search for purpose, striving for success, and the pressure gets to be too much, and the desire to leave it all behind, disappear and start a new life is called *pseudocide*. People want to just leave everything and start all over again, but pseudocide won't make you any happier. The same stresses and pressures will still exist because they are inside of you.

A tactic the author suggests, "Imagine that you're homeless, with no goals for the future and carrying zero baggage from your past. You're there on the street. And that's it. Try to imagine this situation in as much detail. This exercise can help you forget about any of the stress you might feel, and momentarily experience what's like to be reborn," he says. With fewer troubles and anxieties.

So leaving you with some last thoughts from this book. So if you noticed this episode was a little different because this book is pretty different. I really enjoyed this book. I did a course several months ago, and the students just signed up. I sent this book to them through the mail around the world because I like this book so much. And if you notice, there is kind of different ideas that aren't quite connected. The book talks about different things, I think he might have even taken a lot of his blog posts and things that he's written in the past and condensed them into a book.

And summarizing the main ideas from this book is the idea of working as hard as you can to buy cars and houses might not be the best route. In the U. S., we're so connected with buying things, yet these days, it's becoming

harder and harder, and especially if somebody else is controlling your life, and you are so dependent on the things that you buy, as soon as that person doesn't choose you, you're not going to be able to buy these things. So, reclaiming control of your dreams and taking full responsibility for your success and happiness is vital.

To do this, you need to maintain a healthy emotional and physical foundation, and establish habits, and routines to help you stick to your plans.

So start doing things that would make you happier. If you're learning English, don't do things that somebody else chooses for you; choose things that you want to study from; choose things that you have fun with; choose content that makes you happy; don't worry about the results so much, worry about how you feel, why you're doing it. Does this stress you out? Stop doing it. Choose your own content.

Believe in yourself. Nothing is more important than feeling that you are self-empowered. We've learned to society that we aren't worth much, that we need to buy things and do things that are outside of us to be better. We need to look prettier, we need to have plastic surgery on our faces so we look like the person on TV, we need to buy the car that the person down the street has, so we can look as good as them. But tell yourself every day how much you love yourself. That's pretty deep, but you know what, it's important. Nobody has to hear you say this, but just say "I love myself. I'm a great person," and see how that makes you feel. Soon, you'll begin to notice that your happiness and confidence are increasing.

So in the beginning of the episode, I talked about keeping up with the Jones'. What does this mean? Well, first, Jones. Jones is a last name. John Jones or Bill Jones or Samantha Jones. It's just a very generic American name. It's actually not a real person. "Keeping up with the Jones'" means having as much as them. "Keeping up with" is a phrasal verb that to "keep up with." "To keep up with" is to be equal. So if you're equal to the Jones',

that means you have what they have. Referring to your neighbor might have a nicer car or a bigger house. So if you have what they have, it means you want what your neighbor has. So, “keeping up with the Jones” is an expression we use in American English quite often. And in the book, it says “You don’t need to keep up with the Jones’. You don’t have to compare your lives to your neighbors. That’s not going to find your true happiness.”

Next vocabulary word, a shiny “façade.” Façade, F-A-C-A-D-E, is a probably a French word because it has that C with a little squiggly mark underneath that little line “façade,” means you are maintaining this false image, but underneath, it’s not actually what you’re trying to show others. So, “a shiny façade” is shiny. It’s bright, it’s great. So you’re trying to maintain the shiny façade, but underneath, it’s not really who you are. Maybe you’re trying to keep this façade that you’re rich, but you’re not rich underneath.

“To make a living”, another expression here. To make a living is how you make your money to pay for your life. It could be your job or whatever you do how you make a living. How do you pay for all of your expenses? What kind of work do you do? I make a living, helping English learners become better English learners. That’s how I make a living. How do you make a living? How do you earn money? What’s your job?

Another question, “elderly”, an “elderly person.” Elderly, E-L-D-E-R-L-Y, is an old person. If somebody is elderly, means they’re old, maybe 70, 80. I would say “starting with 80 years old,” “maybe 80 years and above” is elderly.

Phrasal verb, “to come up with.” “To come up with” is to create. To come up with big ideas, to come up with new ideas, to work on your idea machine. Your idea muscle is to be able to come up with a lot of innovative ideas. To come up with is to create. \

Another expression is “leads to burnout.” “Leads to burnout” means to

become exhausted. If you do something, if you're working 60 hours a week, 70 hours a week, trying to make as much money as possible, this will lead to burnout. You'll become "burnt out," exhausted, totally tired. If you think of a flame or a fire. When it burns out, there's no more energy to fuel the fire. There's no more fuel. It becomes "blackened out." So you are burnt out.

"Keep your mind rooted in the present" is another expression here that I say "to root your mind in the present." Root, R-O-O-T. In this case, rooted. Roots are what are under the tree that are going to the ground. That's what "maintain the structure," "maintain the tree," and what bring the nutrients into the tree or the plant. So if your mind is rooted in the present, it is stable. It is established. It is connected to the present moment. So, not disconnected, not thinking of the future and the past, but rooted in the moment.

So the word he talks about in the book, which I never heard of before, "pseudocide." Pseudocide, P-S-E-U-D-O-C-I-D-E. Pseudocide is when you just want to quit everything you're doing and start a completely new life. You want to quit your job, move somewhere else, thinking that all of your problems will go away. But often, that's not the case because you still have those internal issues, and those internal problems inside of yourself. No matter where you go or what you're doing, so you have to work on yourself, and maintain peace of mind, and happiness, and fulfillment, and deal with the issues inside of yourself and not just think that if you'll cut all the things going on in your life, all of your problems will go away. Don't commit pseudocide.

Another great expression, "carrying zero baggage." Baggage is like when you're traveling. Your luggage, your baggage, your suitcases. That's baggage. If you carry baggage, in this expression, using it as a metaphor, it means you have a lot of problems, love issues that you carry with you that could interfere with your life, or maybe you're dating a woman and you say "Ah! She's got a lot of baggage." It means when you started dating her, she's

coming with a lot of problems from her life, maybe previous relationships, maybe she has a lot of kids, and an angry, aggressive ex-husband and doesn't have any money. That's a lot of baggage that you have to deal with. Dealing with your problems means getting rid of eliminating your baggage.

And lastly, "self – empowered." Self-empowered, giving yourself power. Being empowered means inside of yourself, you have the power to make things happen. So learning and exercising and living in the moment, and doing all these things he talks about will give you self-empowerment, will help you be more self – empowered to reach more successes in your life.

Choose yourself by James Altucher, a great book, he also has a podcast, the James Altucher show, easy to remember. Really, really cool interviews on that shows, if you want to check out his podcasts, search James Altucher. I'll also put a link on my website, feelgoodenglish.com. Thanks for listening to this episode, you can get transcripts of this at feelgoodenglish.com/member by becoming a member. I want to make you feel good so go there and feel good.

And leaving you with a Fat Mama joke:

Yo mama is so fat, I took a picture of her last Christmas and the picture is still printing.

Ooohh. That's rough.

Choose yourself. Choose to be happy. See you in the next lesson.

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