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Hello, everybody, and welcome to the first full-length episode of Journeys With Elliott. It's great to have you here. Thanks for hanging out with me today to talk about all things travel, culture, food, lifestyle, and just all of that beautiful good stuff.

And thank you to those of you who gave me such great feedback for the introduction episode the other day. It's great to know that those of you who are listening are really, really excited about what's to come on this podcast and about all of the amazing adventures and journeys through travel and life that we're going to share with each other. Now today we have a really packed episode.

We're going to be reading a letter from one of my listeners about a trip to the summit of mt. Fuji.

It's amazing, breathtaking story, really well written. So I'm looking forward to sharing that one with you.

I'll also be sharing with you the reasons why my favorite country in the world is my favorite country in the world, and I'll have some amazing stories to kind of share within that. And finally, someone will be trying to sell me their city or their country. So please stick around until the end.

If you want to find out maybe about a place that you've never heard of before, and perhaps it will inspire you to plan your next trip there. Let's see how convincing they will be. So grab yourself a coffee, a cup of tea, your beverage of choice, sit back, put your feet up, relax, and let's enjoy the journey.

So everybody remembers their first love, right? It might have been that girl you met in the school playground. It might be your husband or wife right now.

My first love is Thailand. That's right. My first love is a country in Southeast Asia, a country with 69.4 million people, a country where the food is so amazing, it makes me want to cry.

I have physical response to the food I eat there. And that's not just because it's spicy. Thailand is also a country where the people are just always happy, always smiling.

They call it the land of smiles for a reason. It's because of the sheer amount of happiness people have simply for life. I used to stand back and kind of just think and question, why are people always so happy here?

You know, in the UK, it's even hard for a child to smile when they've received a video game that they've always wanted, which costs like 50 pounds. And it's because we don't really like to show our happiness much. It's almost like a sign of weakness.

Whereas in Thailand, I think it's almost a sign of weakness to not show your happiness. It's almost like a complete role reversal of Western society. And that's why I really love it there.

And you know, for example, in Thailand, someone might crash their motorbike in front of everyone. And it's really embarrassing, really horrible. They're going to have to pay loads of bills to fix their bike.

But they're still bloody smiling. Good on you guys. And I think people go to Thailand for all kinds of different reasons.

We all have our own reason for going there. Of course, unfortunately, we have the select kind of group of sex tourists, the old men who go there to pay for sex because they can't seem to get it anywhere else. But that's just a sad group of people.

Now, the people who go for real reasons are the people who go for the beaches, the jungles, the treks, the elephants, the monkeys, the boat journeys, the food, the sunshine, the hotels, the rivers. It's such a vast country, and that's only a few things that you can experience in this magical country, a country which has changed my life, a country which I've visited around 12 times, and I really definitely want to make it more than 12. Now lots of you listening right now might be thinking, oh, but this guy's only just, you know, probably been on a holiday to Thailand, maybe spent a bit of time backpacking there, and now he thinks he's an expert.

I'm not an expert on Thailand, but I'm an expert on the experiences I have had there. As I said, I've been there around 12 times. The first kind of seven times were with my family just on holidays.

Now you might not know this, but I used to go on around three holidays every year. And this was around the time when I was in school, and it was because my dad ran a travel company, a company which specialized in travel trips to Australia. And of course, when you go to Australia on a family holiday, it's quite a long trip.

So what would usually be included in the itinerary would be a stopover in Thailand. Now, because my dad was a travel agent, he knew all of the tricks and how to save money and do everything right. So he would include maybe a week long or 10 day trip to Thailand before we arrived in Australia.

And we used to do this around once a year. Imagine that it's like a trip of a lifetime and I never take for granted how lucky I was to receive that when I was a child and to go on amazing holidays three times a year. And although you know, around this time, I was going to many different places, places like Dubai, Australia, the States, various other places in Europe as well.

The place I was always looking forward to going back to was Thailand. Even as a young kind of 10 year old, who didn't really know much about travel, there was just something that kind of drew me to this place. When I was that age, I probably wasn't really eating the food.

It was too spicy for me. I slowly adapted into that. I started off just by having kind of chips on the beach while my parents were eating this what for me seemed like disgusting spicy food.

And then as I started to grow through the ages and come here more often, I started to really appreciate the flavors, the variety of kind of spicy, sweet and sour blends in the food, the curries, the noodles, the rice dishes. And you know, like kind of when somebody mentions a place, I don't know, think about a place where you've been to, what's the first thing that comes into your mind? And for me, if somebody says the word Thailand, then the first thing that actually comes into my head is the smell that you smell when you're walking down the street, that smell of meat cooking, the smell of ginger, garlic and chili sizzling in a pan.

And when you're walking down a busy street in Bangkok, and you can smell that street food rising in the air, if you've been there, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Maybe in your country, wherever it is, you might get that familiar smell of, for example, somewhere like Mexico, something like the scent of paprika and barbecue smells in the air as you walk down the street. And I think this is the big thing about when you travel, I think all of the senses need to be tingled.

You've know you've been to a good place. If you feel like all of your senses have been satisfied, you know, your smell, your hearing, your taste, everything gets a good bit of feeling, even a feeling of fear or danger or adrenaline that sometimes adds to the mix as well. And I feel like Thailand has that perfect blend.

And as I said, I've been on many, many holidays from a young age to Thailand. And I also lived there with my girlfriend for six months and then came home back to England and then lived there again for another six months. So I've kind of spent a total of one year actually living and experiencing the life in Thailand and tried to live as much like a local as I could.

The first time I lived in Bangkok and I was teaching and doing my English teaching job online.

And the second time I was living in Chiang Mai and I was just kind of enjoying life and living off my savings. And both times were amazing.

I like to call Chiang Mai kind of like my home away from home. I have a few of these. What the other one is actually Melbourne in Australia.

Those two places Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand and Melbourne in Australia. Those are my two homes away from home. I'd love you to tell me actually, do you have a home away from home?

Now I don't want to run you through like a whole massive trip that I had in Thailand. I'd rather like this podcast to be little bits of stories from different trips I've been on. So for example, today, I'm going to give you just a little story, one of my kind of go to stories about Thailand, about an experience I had there.

And then maybe the next episode of the podcast will be about an experience I had somewhere else, or even in the UK. And then maybe another day we'll go back to another story where something happened in Thailand. So I don't really want this episode to be really long, all about my love for Thailand.

Instead, I'm just going to share an amazing story with you. And this is funny, but it's also something quite beautiful at the same time. Now, this is the first time I went on my own or with my girlfriend without parental supervision to Thailand.

And my girlfriend and I had planned this massive trip. It was four months. We were traveling first, arriving in Thailand, and then we were going everything by crossing the borders.

So no flights. We did not fly once apart from to arrive in Thailand and to leave from Thailand four months later. So we flew into Bangkok and then the journey was all the way through the north of Thailand.

That's where I first experienced Chiang Mai. I'll talk about that another time. And then we passed through the north into Lao.

Lao, we then went through the north through through all of Lao down into Vietnam from north of Vietnam down to the south of Vietnam. And then we went into Cambodia and then back to Thailand where we finished. And this whole trip took about four or five months.

And one of the most memorable experiences from that trip was achieving a personal goal of mine. So something which inspired me to do this trip was was a movie called The Beach and then also a book. I read the book first and then I watched the movie.

And I don't know if you've seen this yourself, but it's about a guy who's a bit lost in life. He doesn't really know what to do with his life. And then he goes on this trip to Thailand and he explores and finds this island where it's completely unspoiled, okay, no tourists.

It's just like paradise, completely empty. And I thought to myself, this is not going to happen in Thailand. It's such a tourist destination now that I am not going to find a beach which is completely unspoiled and quiet.

And believe it or not, I found a whole bloody island. And I'll get to that in a second. We were in the kind of second half of our trip.

So we'd already been to Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, and we were back in Thailand again, we'd pass through Cambodia and come back into Thailand. And we were in the south, we were staying in a place called Krabi, which is kind of like a place where you go to stay a few nights before you get a boat to one of Thailand's amazing islands. And we were looking online, we had an apartment actually, we managed to find a very cheap apartment and we were on a shoestring budget while we were traveling Thailand.

And we found this apartment which had internet access. And I thought, okay, I haven't had the internet for a while because as I said, we were living in hostels and there wasn't much internet access in these very cheap hostels we were staying in. And when I was on the internet, I was desperately trying to find a spoilt islands, so islands which you don't get a load of drunk backpackers from England, France, Germany, Russia, everywhere, just getting drunk on the beach and causing trouble.

I wanted something quiet, something peaceful, and I wanted to be like Leonardo DiCaprio in that movie, The Beach. And then I somehow came across this place called Ko Jum, and I read some things, and I thought, okay, I need to go here. I didn't know much about it, but it just sounded amazing, and I had no idea how to get there.

I couldn't find any information online about how to get to this place. Now, even some Thai people don't know much about Ko Jum, so then later on in the day, my girlfriend and I, when we went out to get some food, we thought, okay, we need to ask some people, we need to find out how we can get to this secret island, because that's really what it was. Even Thai people didn't know about this island.

And we were asking around, and then we found this guy who was a fisherman, and he spoke like a tiny bit of English. I think he worked maybe a bit in tourism as well. And I just kept saying Ko Jum, Ko Jum, Ko Jum, and eventually he understood me.

He gave me this ticket, which was apparently for a boat the next day, and it helped us somehow get to this island. It was a little bit more complicated than that, and of course because of the language barrier we didn't really know how things worked. But we turned up the next day at the harbour, the port, to get on a boat which was going to take us, or not us, but it was taking a massive group of people to another island called Koh Lanta, which lots of people know about.

This is a party island, a scuba diving island. It's an island where you can do lots of activities, and of course lots of people have parties there, beach parties. Now we knew we weren't going there, but this was apparently the first boat we had to get on.

So it was really busy. We were in the peak of backpacking season, so loads of teenage hippies and different people were on this big ferry. It was a massive ferry.

And eventually, it stopped, and we still weren't really sure how we were getting to this Ko Jum island, this magical paradise island, but our ferry stopped. And then we could see in the distance this tiny long tail boat, so this tiny long wooden boat approaching us, like the ones you see in those pictures, those tourist pictures of Thailand, boats with the kind of string hanging off the front, really beautiful patterns. And suddenly this fisherman guy came up to me again and grabbed me and my girlfriend and told us that we're getting off, we need to get on to that tiny boat.

So we basically got carried, they helped us get off of the big ferry and get on to this tiny boat.

Now I'm quite an anxious person, I'm not very confident, I don't like people looking at me, but believe me, we had the whole boat, all these young drunk backpackers, and we were about the same age as them at the time, only like 19. They were all looking at us thinking, what are they doing?

Aren't they going to this party island with us? And although I am quite an anxious person, I felt amazing with all these people looking at me and they were thinking, where are they going? I felt really special.

And then this boat, it took us to this tiny shoreline, right? We got on the boat, it was wobbly, it was a very hot day, and we arrived at the beach, the beachfront. And all we could see were just a few kind of jungle huts.

So like some hotel huts. And we had to go up to them and hope that we could get a room, a place to stay. So there were a few tourists here, but really not many.

And we came across this place, and it was like a beach bar, but they also had bungalows at the back. So like wooden bungalows that you could sleep in and spend the night in, and we booked five days to begin with. Now this five days actually turned into one week.

And it's because we had such a great time there. And honestly, I've never seen an island where the water is so still. The water is so blue, the sand is so soft, and you can't hear a sound.

Only the sounds of locals occasionally, or the sounds of a pan frying or some bottles pouring some drink. That's about all you can hear. Other than that, it's just the sound of the sea.

And I hadn't experienced this kind of silence in such a long time. And the place we were staying, a man called Matt, he was a Thai man, local man. That's what he called himself for us.

He ran this kind of beach bar and the bungalows. And we spent a few nights, of course, talking to him as he his wife cooked us food. It was a family run place.

And I've never had a greater experience than when he said to me one day, Oh, you know, you two seem like really nice people. You can eat with my family tonight. And he'd caught some fish that day, and some crab.

And he his wife brought it out, she'd cooked it. And we ate with him and his kids all together.

And I really felt like a part of the family.

I've never really experienced that before, being so welcomed into someone else's family, someone from a different country in such a different situation. And it was amazing. However, things got scary that day.

And this is where the kind of the real story begins. There was also a German man in our restaurant. He'd arrived on the island maybe a day or two before, and he'd actually gone into the sea to go for a swim, a late night swim.

And suddenly, a bit later on, while we were drinking our beer and snacking on the crab, the leftover crab, we could hear screaming, some German screaming. And I don't know what he was saying because I don't speak any German, but it sounded bad. And suddenly Matt, the bar guy, the owner, the new kind of family member I felt like I had, he grabbed a bottle of whiskey, started screaming and running into the ocean.

So I was thinking, okay, what's going on here? So I followed him, told my girlfriend to stay in the restaurant and talk just in case it was something horrible that she wouldn't want to see. And I was looking desperately into the sea to see what was happening, but it was quite dark.

And suddenly I saw Matt pulling this German guy out of the sea and he was screaming in pain. It sounded horrible. As soon as he got him out of the sea, he wiped his foot and I was thinking, what's going on here?

And then I saw a hole in his foot. And I found out later that this is actually because it's very common that stingrays, so those flat things, they sit on the seabed. So like in the sand and you can't see them.

And of course at nighttime, you're obviously not gonna see them. And if you stand on them, they will stick their tail, very sharp tail through your foot. And if they're big ones, it can go all the way through.

Now it looks like this might have been what happened to this poor German guy. Now the reason Matt had a bottle of whiskey with him was because before it even happened, before he'd even seen the injury, he knew that this is what it was. Apparently it happens all the time on this island because it's so unspoiled and you don't get many tourists there.

There's a lot more wildlife, which means that you get a lot more of these stingrays, just kind of, they're more confident and they'll sit by the seabed. And he knew. So the bottle of whiskey was actually to pour on the injury while we called an ambulance.

Now the thing with this island is it's very separated. So there isn't much, in fact, there is no electricity, no light when it gets dark. Everything is done by fire.

So he somehow managed to get hold of the hospital. They had to come on a boat to pick him up and then take him to Phuket because this island, it only had a tiny village nearby to where we were staying on the other side of the island. And it was a real trek to get there, trust me.

We did the walk once and it took about 45 minutes and a few angry monkeys to get past just to arrive. And all there was was like a shop that sold bottles of water and cigarettes. That was about it.

So yeah, then this guy got taken off on the boat, disappeared, we never saw him again, and that was it. I don't know if he's alive, I hope so. And hopefully everything was okay.

But this guy Matt just appeared as a hero to me. He knew more than me. He could build bungalows.

He could catch fish. He could save people's lives, hopefully, I think, with a bottle of whiskey just by pouring it on him. He had much more knowledge about survival and life than me.

And the stories he used to tell me of things he'd experienced were much more real than anything I've ever experienced. And I think this is really because this man was living real life and he wasn't experiencing the technology that we experience every day. So I always recommend people to go and find somewhere that's a bit separated from the world, go somewhere that's a bit different, a bit quiet, and go and make some of these stories because these stories are only going to happen if you go somewhere completely random that maybe you never planned to go to.

So yeah, that was my kind of story of seeing someone hopefully survive. I still don't know. If you're that guy, please tell me.

If you're that German guy, if you're listening now, of hearing him, you know, of seeing this happen, all the blood everywhere and everything. And also my experience of being on this kind of island and living that dream. That was my dream to experience that Leonardo DiCaprio, the beach moment.

And that's one of my stories from Thailand. Now I have many more. I have some horror stories.I have some exciting stories, some beautiful stories and some sad stories, not just of Thailand as well, Vietnam, of all of that trip and also other places I've been. So please do stick around with this podcast if you enjoyed this story and you want to hear more. But now it's time to go to the next part of this episode.

Today we have a really interesting story from Chong Jun, who talks about climbing to the top of mt. Fuji and just a little bit about their experience in Japan. So this is something really interesting because it's something I've always wanted to do. I've always wanted to visit Japan.

It's definitely a big place on my list. So if any sponsors want to fly me out there, then please let me know, please. But yeah, anyway, let's just read out this wonderful email I was sent.

And remember, you can do the same. If you want to send me an email about a trip or experience you've had, please feel free. I'll give you the details after this.

So here's the story from Chong hen. I just finished the third year of my university, and I traveled to Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Australia during the past three years, mostly on my own savings. And I want to share my experience in Tokyo, where I stayed for 10 days because I hadn't hiked so much before.

Hiking on Mt. Fuji really blew my mind. I arrived at the foot two days before the closing date of the trails, and the weather was not very good.

I started at noon, and it took me about five hours to get to the hut on the hillside. There are no other buildings along the trail, and camping is somehow not common either, so most people just had to stay in the huts. There was no bed, and everyone stayed in sleeping bags, lying shoulder to shoulder.

I was alone, and slept next to a very nice American couple. We stayed in the hut until lam, since we planned to head to the summit to see the sunrise. It was pouring outside, and the wind was so strong that people might lose balance when walking.

Most people chose to stay in the hut, but I and the American couple were sitting next to the door and waiting, we really didn't want to miss the chance. When a small group of people walked by our hut, we joined them. During the following hours, so these would be the following hours of climbing, I felt so close to nature and to myself.

Surrounded by darkness, I could only hear the sound of the wind and raindrops beating my clothes. The feeling was so natural. We reached the summit around 3:45 a.m.

Woof, that's early. 1.5 hours before the sunrise. Nobody was there.

Ah, so you guys were like the first people there. That's fantastic. Nobody was there.

With only a closed hut standing silently. We stayed close to the hut to keep warm, but our bodies kept reminding us of the danger of standing in the heavy rain for hours. We decided to leave, but just before that, the door of the hut was opened.

The staff told us to get inside. More and more people arrived later, and we all stayed in the hut waiting for the sunrise. Honestly, I felt numb when the sun finally appeared on the horizon, but when I turned around and saw two Chinese girls hugging with each other with tears in their eyes, I got so emotional suddenly.

People couldn't help getting outside to feel all the things that could be felt up there. The wind, the clouds, the purple and orange sky, and our heartbeats. After a hot chocolate, I started to go downhill and got back to the start to the state of being alone.

I kept my mind completely empty to feel the surroundings again, and felt genuinely content when arriving at the starting point. Must have been an amazing feeling. After the bus back to the downtown, I recovered soon and then continued my trip.

And I like this bit that Chongzhen's included at the end. I love wandering on the streets in strange cities, and there are so many new and unique things created in Tokyo apparently. People stick to the virtues of politeness, kindness and hard working, but they're experiencing more with an open attitude towards the culture.

I went to see Liam Gallagher's gig in Tokyo and was shocked about how many Japanese people were influenced by his music. Two men wearing decent suits stood next to me at the gig and seemed to just leave the office, but they were so emotional and crazy when the music started.

This kind of reasonable contradiction was what I felt the most about the country.

And you know what? I couldn't have put it better myself. This is exactly what I imagine about Japan.

I've never been there, so I can't really say much, but I've always pictured it to be this kind of futuristic, ever-changing country with rules and ways of life that are really admirable, politeness and things like that. But everywhere is moving with the times. And it's very similar to when I've been to places, more developing countries like Vietnam, Cambodia.

They're places with a lot of background, a lot of history, but still, they're kind of adapting to this new modern way. And I love that kind of contradiction. I also love the idea that you've gone and traveled to go and see a concert.

I really do recommend that to people. Sometimes it's good just to go and see your favorite band or musician in another place. Honestly, it's a great idea.

And again, thank you very much, Chongjun, for sending that. And as I said, if any of you want to send me your stories or experiences traveling, please do contact me. JourneysWithElliott at gmail.com.

I look forward to hearing your stories, and hopefully I can include you in the next episode of the podcast. And finally today, I always like to finish this podcast with usually a recording from someone talking about why we should go and visit their country or their city. Now I did receive a beautiful recording from someone called Jana from the Czech Republic, who's actually living in the UK, in a small village outside of Oxford at the moment.

Unfortunately, the audio file wasn't the right audio file, so it didn't work in this podcast. I wouldn't be able to put it in. So I'm actually going to just read what she said or say what she said just to let you know maybe why you should go and visit the Czech Republic, particularly this Christmas.

So Jana says, and by the way, she had fantastic pronunciation. She said, of course, the Czech Republic is a place in Eastern Europe, and the best things about the Czech Republic are beer, already I want to go there, ice hockey, and Christmas market, and those things are important for her, and there's something that she recommends to everyone who goes there. And she says that we should think of her if we do decide to go there.

So yeah, it does sound really interesting. Everybody talks about the beer in Czech Republic.

Now, I've never been there, but just before I met my girlfriend, I was planning a trip on my own, and I was going to do a bit of inter railing around Europe, and one of the places, destinations, I really wanted to go to was Czech Republic.

I had this plan to go to Prague and then visit a few places outside of Prague. And of course, I wanted to experience the beer and the Christmas markets. I think Eastern Europe particularly is a brilliant place to go at Christmas time, so any Europeans listening.

Eastern Europe, I think, is the spot to go. Germany, obviously, as well, is a very famous place for Christmas to go to as well. So thank you very much, Jana.

Guys, if you're going to send me voice recordings, please do send me them in mp3 format. I know that might be quite hard for some of you, but I can only play them if they're in mp3 form.

So make sure you send them to me like that.

And you can send them to journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com and maybe your audio file will be played next week. Try to keep it around maximum two minutes and try and sell me your country or your city. And of course, remember, if you have any questions about travel, anything about anything to do with travel or life or advice, please do get in contact with me.

I'm here. And it's all about making this podcast interesting and filled with your stories as well as mine. Now that's it for the podcast this week.

I really hope you enjoyed this episode. I hope you enjoyed the story. Please do give me feedback in my email address as well.

Please tell me if you enjoyed the story, if you think it was too long, too boring. I'm using your feedback as the thing which shapes my podcast. So I need you to tell me if my story was boring or too long or if you need it to change in any way.

So please let me know and tell me if you liked the structure. Now when I say that, generally just people with negative feedback tend to get in contact with me. So if you have any positive feedback, please try and go out of your way if you can just to send me a message and let me know if you liked it.

Because as I said, people tend to go out their way more to send negative feedback than they do about positive feedback. And when that happens, you kind of get a wrong idea about what you're creating. So it's good to have, you know, a mixture from both sides of the argument.

Again, thank you very much, guys. Keep living that journey. Keep enjoying life and I will speak to you soon.

Take care, bye. Bye.

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Hello, everybody, and welcome to episode two of the Journeys Podcast with Elliott. Thanks so much for coming here to hang out with me today. It's a pleasure, as always.

And today we have quite an interesting episode. I'm actually going to be talking about the UK, about my country. I'll also have somebody sharing a travel story with us, and I'll be reading that out.

And finally, at the end of the podcast episode, somebody will be trying to sell their city. Now, this city is in India, and you don't want to miss it. So I hope you're looking forward to the episode as much as I am.

Without further ado, enjoy the journey.

Now, if I told you right now that I want you to write down, let's say, three things that you honestly love about your country, do you think you'd be able to do it quite easily? It's a challenge which I set myself recently, because I knew that I wanted this episode today to be about my country, about England, because so many of you are interested in England, the UK, that I felt like I needed to do this. And I've actually been dreading this episode, because I've never really had that much of a passion for my own country.

But I think this is common with lots of people, so I guess I'm not the only one in this boat. I think we get so lost in daily life that we often forget to kind of take a moment to think, actually, you know what? I'm really lucky to live in this country and to have these things which are available to me and are part of our culture.

And no matter where you are in the world, you'll always find good in your country, something that you love. I think some of the most grateful people I've spoken to online since starting my English teaching job are people who live in places like Syria. They're so grateful to have what they have.

And I think we should all be taking a page out of their book. So for example, me, I live here in the UK, but I tend to just not really think much about the things I have. And I've been practicing gratitude a lot recently, so kind of feeling grateful for the things I have.

Every day, I write down three things, not until I really feel them though. So for example, if there's a moment during my day, let's say I walk outside, and I feel just something simple, like a nice breeze hit my cheek, and I think, oh, you know, that actually felt nice. I'm grateful for that feeling, for that sensation.

Maybe I'm grateful for the feeling of brushing my teeth in the morning. Just simple things. If I feel it during that part of my day, I'll write it down.

And it's made me become a much more open-minded person. And it also, I think, made the job a little bit easier for writing down these things I love about my country to make this episode for you today. So before I get into talking about my country, I don't want you to think this is a sales pitch, and this is me saying, oh, my country is amazing, all these beautiful things in my country.

Because throughout most of my life, I've actually been struggling to see what is good about my country. Because every time I travel, I get a taste for something different. And it makes me think, oh, this is so much better than England.

Oh, the sunshine. Oh, the beautiful beaches, which you don't get in England. You know, I'm always looking for things which aren't available in my country.

And I've never really taken the time to look at the things which are. Anyway, I guess we'll start with point number one. And this was something I wrote down instantly.

I thought, thank God, at least I have one thing I can say that's great about my country. And it was diversity. Now, when I say diversity, don't get me wrong, I still think the UK has a real long way to go.

There are some areas where people still have old-fashioned views, and some people are still racist, and they have strong opinions against, for example, homosexuals. But the UK has come such a long way, and there's something I really love, and it's something you'll notice. It might be a shock to some of you, because maybe this doesn't happen in your country.

But if you go to a nice big city, let's say somewhere busy like London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, my city, when you walk out in the street, you never know what you're going to see. But in a good way, everybody is accepted. Any kind of race, any gender, any religion, sexual orientation, music taste, fashion sense, we accept all of it here, or at least most of us do.

And as I said, when you go outside, it's not plain. It's not what we would say beige, right? You don't just see the same people, the same pale white faces.

You get some bloody variation, and that's what I love. Obviously, I know that, you know, we do have people here in the UK who are very against change. They don't like people who are different.

They want everybody to be white, British, supreme. And that's just a group of people who are actually a minority in this country. So, you know, please don't ever think that when you come here.

All you have to do really is step off the plane and, I don't know, take a journey into London city centre or even Bristol city centre where I'm from. And you'll hear a variety of accents, whether it's British or whether it's foreign. You'll hear people talking in Spanish.

You'll smell Indian food cooking in the street. You might be here on a day where people are protesting for climate change or helping the children in Africa. You might even see a Muslim and a Christian on their journeys to their separate places of worship just having a friendly conversation.

We're an accepting country, and that's one thing that I can definitely say I'm very proud of. And the great thing as well as that is the fact that we still hang on to our heritage. You'll still see British buildings everywhere you go.

You'll still get that keep calm and carry on spirit and community inside British cities and villages. And generally, I guess, Britain has kind of become this place, particularly within the big cities, maybe not everywhere, maybe not in the countryside, but within the big cities, it's become this place where all of the world meets together. And to those of you listening in the future, I don't know, in two years' time, if you're listening to me talking right now, I really hope that things are still similar.

Of course, we're in difficult times at the moment with Brexit, and if the wrong person completes the job, all of these things I'm talking about right now, maybe they'll be gone. But I'll tell you, I'll be gone too. But it's not just how accepting we've been towards other countries and other cultures and religions.

I think it's also something which has been here forever, which is the variety within the UK. For example, the vast countryside which people rarely visit when they come here because everybody just wants to see London. Honestly, if you ever come to the UK, please don't just spend all your time doing the tourist stuff, going to London, going on the London Eye, doing some shopping, maybe visit Manchester.

Yes, those things are great, but please don't just put all your eggs in one basket. There are so many other opportunities. The countryside is full of, again, a diverse array of animals, cows, pigs, chickens, wild birds, dogs, friendly farmers, and beautiful little countryside villages, which perhaps you will only experience if you just take that risk and kind of go off the beaten path and hope that you'll find somewhere.

So in my opinion, you can definitely experience diversity when you come here to the UK, particularly in the big cities where you'll see maybe more of a close to home diversity, you know, an international diversity in terms of food, people, and all of the stuff I previously mentioned.

But if you really want to see the diversity, which is quintessentially British, then you'll need to get out of those cities, go to the small villages, and go to the countryside, where you'll see how diverse the UK is as a traditional country. You can try diverse foods, okay?

We have lots of weird foods, which maybe you've never thought of. I grew up in the countryside, and it's very, very common in the countryside to eat things such as cottage pie or shepherd's pie, to have a roast dinner on a Sunday, maybe go to a pub for some ham, egg, and chips, or perhaps even taste some scones and cream, or scones, however you prefer to say it. I think I actually prefer to say scones, so I don't know why I said scones.

Weird. So if I ever give travel advice to anybody who comes to the UK, please do go to the big, busy cities and experience this kind of land of where north meets south meets east meets west meets everybody together having a fun time and be loving each other and caring. Of course, there are dangers.

There are dangers everywhere you go. But don't just do that. Please make sure you go off the track.

You go out and experience a real British experience. And trust me, you can find those on Google. If you search for things to do in the UK, you will find things that aren't just busy cities and eating international food.

You can do some real British things here. And again, they are diverse. And that's why I do love this country.

But maybe I just never realised. And honestly, I could go on for days talking about all of the diverse things which are here in the UK, but you know, I don't want this podcast to go on forever.

And it's time for me to talk about my second point, which is actually something a little bit more personal.

This is just something which I love, and which I think you would love if you came here and experienced it. And that would be festivals and music. I had to put them together, because they kind of go together.

Now, in episode one of this podcast, you might remember me saying, what's the first thing that comes into your mind when you think about a place? And I said, with Thailand, it's the smell, the smell of the food cooking on the street. Now, this time, in this episode, I want you to think of the first thing that comes into your mind when I say summer in your country.

What comes into your mind? For me, it's two things. Number one, hay fever.

And as horrible as that is, the main big thing I think of is festivals, particularly music festivals, such as Glastonbury, Reading and Leeds, Download Festival. There is a festival for any kind of music taste, but the reason why I said festivals and music are things I love about the UK is because we don't just have festivals surrounding music. For example, I saw an advert the other day posted for a Thai food festival.

A few weeks before, I saw one for a Mediterranean food festival. Which was just happening outside, in a field, local, nearby. And in London and in the big cities, again, you do get this happening, where you just have random pop-up festivals happening, celebrating things from all over the world, but also celebrating some real British things.

You get music festivals, of course, where you get some of the biggest acts, and some of them, I'm proud to say, are British. Don't forget, and this is something we'll always hold on to, The Beatles came from the UK. My favourite band, Arctic Monkeys, came from Sheffield in the UK.

And all of these amazing bands have headlined some of the most amazing festivals in the world, and I think we are the number one music festival destination. So if you ever do come to the UK, I really recommend that you time it for the summertime, where you could go to one of these big music festivals such as Glastonbury or Reading and Leeds, where you can see some of the biggest acts in music, not just from the UK, from America, from all over the world. And again, we're falling back into this land of diversity, because on one stage, you'll be hearing some British pop rock, rock pop, whatever you want to call it, a band like Oasis, who of course have broken up now, let's say Liam Gallagher.

But then, on another stage, somewhere else in the field, you'll hear some drum and bass, or dubstep, or dance music. And then maybe somewhere else, you'll hear someone, some UK rap, or some American rap. And then somewhere else, you'll hear some Australian didgeridoo player.

And then somewhere else, there might be some Brazilian dancers dancing to typical Brazilian music. And that, again, is another celebration of diversity and culture. Another thing which is definitely going to be kind of flowing throughout most of this podcast episode.

So yes, music festivals and food festivals are a massive part of my country. But not only that, we have fashion festivals, we have animal festivals where we just celebrate dogs, or whatever. Just name it, anything you're interested in.

Even if it's something like yoga, there is bound to be, somewhere in the UK, some kind of festival or parade or carnival where people are all getting together and celebrating this one thing which they all love. And lots of my students from all over the world, they kind of see me as a gateway, an entrance to the UK. Not in terms of the fact I'm going to give them a passport and say, here, come and live in my country, but more to the sense that they use me for information, almost as a travel agent.

And I'm quite proud to be able to, you know, recommend things. People say to me, Elliott, how am I going to make friends here when I come to the UK to study? Or Elliott, how can I meet some natives?

Or even Elliott, what can I do when I come to the UK? And I simply say, what are you interested in? Do you like music?

Do you like football? What do you like? Do you like yoga, something really abstract, like I said?

And then I'll just say Google. Use Google or whatever search engine you prefer and search for events involving that thing you're interested in in the UK. And you're bound to find something, unless it's something really, really weird and possibly illegal, then maybe not.

But anyway, I digress. As I said, music and festivals. I've kind of talked about the festival side of things.

I just do want to say about music. I wouldn't be the person I am today without the music I grew up with, all of the British bands I grew up listening to, who my dad introduced me to. And I think music is a real big part of our culture and our country.

In Liverpool, a place I visit very often, people will be really proud of, as I said before, the Beatles who came from Liverpool and many other bands. And, you know, the famous nightclubs and music venues in Liverpool that you can visit. They're still there and they're almost a tourist attraction, but they still do have concerts playing there.

You know, there are different parts where different bands or musicians come from, and they're so proud to have that. And I'm sure it's the same for you. If you have a famous musician who's come from one of your cities or countries, you're very proud of them and you like to tell people, oh, you know, this person, they're from my city.

And I always say to everyone, if you like music, you will like the UK. Walking down the street in the cities, you can hear buskers playing some of your favourite songs ever, and some of them are amazing. I don't know how they're not famous musicians, but there's such a variety and again, this word diversity.

And then when it came to point number three, I was really, really struggling, you know, I really couldn't think of the third and final thing I really love about my country. Of course, there were many things I could have said, but they would have been boring for this podcast. I could have talked about our National Health Service, or for example, our army, our people who protect us, the police, all these kinds of simple little things.

But I needed to think of something interesting, of course, that would make you want to come here, not just what makes me feel valued as a British citizen. And, you know, I'm actually just going to finish with a few things, just a few small things which I really think you would love if you came here. You might think this is a bit of a cop-out.

I'm kind of just saying, oh, I can't think of point number three, so I'm just going to tell you some things you can do when you come here to the UK. But these are all things which I'm really grateful for, and I guess they kind of just fall into attractions. So number one, one of the top things I would recommend is to go down south, go to somewhere called Cornwall.

Now, Cornwall is a coastal county, and there are some amazingly beautiful beaches. There are probably lots of you listening from somewhere like, you know, places like Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Thailand, wherever. Places with nice beaches, right?

All over Europe, there are nice beaches. But then when it comes to thinking about the UK, you kind of think, oh, bad weather, maybe like a week of sun every year. Why would I want to go to a beach?

But honestly, as a child, I used to go down to Cornwall, to a place called Travaux, and I used to go surfing. I used to take surf lessons, and even if it was pissing down with rain, I had the time of my life. The waves were great.

My parents even used to sit on the beach with an umbrella just watching me learn how to surf in the rain, and they couldn't be happier to see me happy, no matter what the weather was. Of course, if you can get to Cornwall on a sunny period of the year, that would be fantastic, because the beaches almost feel like a Spanish beach. But definitely do visit the coasts of the UK, whether it's Cornwall, Devon, you can go to somewhere like Plymouth, Exeter.

There are many, many places which have some great beaches, and I always recommend the south for beaches. Of course, there are beaches in the north, but it always tends to be a little bit more breezy, a bit colder in the north. And you tend to get the warmer summers in the south, right?

That's why everybody says, when you go to Scotland, it's never sunny. Another attraction I've always loved is going to the football. I'm an avid supporter of Liverpool FC.

And going to a football match, there's no real feeling like it to walk out and hear the cheers of all those people, the shouting, the screaming, the people singing the special songs, the chants for their team, and then seeing all your players come out and play. It's just an amazing experience.

And of course, another experience I'd love to have one day is to go to Spain.

I'd love to see New Camp or Camp Nou and see Barcelona, because I really do feel like, although I don't support Barcelona, they always have an expensive player who everybody wants to see.

And also, apparently, it's absolutely huge, the stadium. So going to the football in the UK is a real experience, and it's a real way to soak up culture, British culture.

But just be careful of the drunk men who are shouting and throwing things and sometimes get a little bit leery, a bit angry. As well as football and, of course, going to the beaches or the countryside, as I mentioned earlier, there are a lot of attractions and places to go to have fun.

For example, amusement parks.

One of my favourite places in the whole world is a place called Alton Towers, which is a theme park, right, for roller coasters and thrill rides and all that kind of stuff. And as I was growing up, I used to always beg my dad in the school holidays to take me there, to Staffordshire, to go to Alton Towers, so I could go on the most recent ride or roller coaster that had been released. And it's just fun.

It doesn't quite compare to the experiences I've had in, let's say, Universal Studios in Florida, but it's in my country, and, you know, the roller coasters, some of them are record breakers.

They're real big ones and real experiences. So if you do come to the UK and you're seeking some adrenaline, then why not go to Alton Towers and have a day of fun?

By the way, they didn't sponsor me to talk about this. I really wish they did, but because maybe I could get like a year of free passes. Anyone from Alton Towers listening, by the way, do take note.

But I'll just finish by saying that, as I said earlier, whatever you are interested in, even if it's fashion, you've got London Fashion Week, for example, whatever it is you're interested in, you'll find something here. And while it might not be as good as what is available in other countries, you know, America always do everything better than everyone, you 'll still have a memorable great time here. You know, we're not the best country in the world, but it's a nice place to visit and a nice place to be.

And of course, I can't tell you anything about Ireland or Scotland, really, because I've never been there. So I've kind of only really spoken about England today, and I don't want to offend any Irish people or Scottish or Welsh people that might be listening, but I'm just talking about what I know and what I would recommend. I'd welcome any people who want to recommend places like Scotland or Ireland onto the podcast if they do have an opinion.

And there we go. There are my three reasons why I love my country and also why I think you should come and visit the UK. Even if you've been here before, maybe it's just a reason for you to come back and try some things which you maybe haven't experienced yet

And now we have a story from Chase who is from China. A couple of days before we went to Thailand, we rented an apartment on Airbnb. The landlord told us that the access card of the building was in the room, so we'd have to wait for someone to enter that building so that we could get let in to the building.

So on the first day when we arrived to Thailand, after we got off the plane, we went straight to the apartment. And when we got there, there was a woman who was stood in front of the gate of the building. I guess she was the manager of the building.

She saw that we came, and she thought we were long-term tenants, so she guided us to our building. Then she found out that we didn't have our access card, so we had to wait longer.

During the time we were waiting for someone to come and open the door, the manager came to us and asked us about things like, for example, how long we were staying, and who rented the apartment out for us.

We told her we were staying for just three days, and I was confused why she asked, but then suddenly I saw the warning. The warning said that according to the law, the apartment was not allowed to give short-term rent to tourists. The landlord who did this is against the law, and it was a very serious situation.

The landlord may have to go to jail. I was freaked out. I was so afraid that the manager would find out that we were technically staying illegally, I guess.

I don't want the landlord to go to jail, and I don't want myself to get arrested. But it looked like none of my friends saw the warning. They just sat and waited while I was panicking.

So I kept telling the manager that the landlord and I were friends. We knew each other online, became friends, and when we came to Thailand, she invited us to let us stay at her place. But the manager didn't seem to believe what I said.

She asked me about the landlord's name and asked me if I could show her the landlord's passport. Of course I didn't have it. The only thing I could do was call the landlord and ask her if she would come or perhaps even just send a picture of her passport to me.

I was too nervous when I was on the phone. I could hear my voice shaking and I didn't know how to pronounce her name. Even on the phone, I was pretending and I said things like, Hey, my friend!

Oh, this is so similar to a story that I have for you one day. The landlord told me that she would come here in 15 minutes. But even 20 minutes later, she still didn't come.

I was so embarrassed. But the only thing I could do was just sit and wait. Luckily, she finally showed up.

She told the manager that we were friends, and finally we could check in. When the manager left, we both laughed. This could be considered an accident on the trip.

Except this thing, everything actually went very well in the end. Nobody went to prison, I guess.

The people were so nice and friendly, except of course the taxi drivers.

They always want to get more money from tourists. Yes, I have another story about this, a few experiences I've had, which I'll share with you in the future. And Chase finishes by saying, the food was delicious, the scenery was very beautiful.

So thank you very much, Chase, for sharing that story with us. It's very similar to some stories I have myself in Thailand and also other areas around, in fact, mostly Southeast Asia, where things and laws perhaps are a little bit more complicated than the laws maybe in the countries we're more familiar with. So I'll definitely be sharing some stories similar to Chase's story.

And again, thank you, Chase. If you have a story and maybe you want to share it with listeners, please do send your story to journeyswithelliotte at gmail.com. And maybe you'll be in the next episode of the podcast.

And the person trying to sell their country to us today, or actually it's their city, is somebody from India. Now their name is, please tell me if I pronounced this wrong, Srinath Kathodju, I hope is the right pronunciation. I'm sorry if I offended you.

Not very good with the Indian pronunciation. And this is a place called Goa. Now this is somewhere where lots of people from the UK like to go and visit, mainly because of the beaches.

Let's see what Srinath has to say. Hello Elliott, just now I listened to your podcast. It's very nice.

My hometown is Goa in India. I love the place. It has serene beaches, great beach parties, and many beach games.

They're all classes of people who will enjoy according to their budgets. So it's a place for everyone. Anyway, thank you a lot.

And one thing you'll know is that you won't find any stingrays here in Goa. Well, that is good. If you don't know why he said that, it's because of my previous episode where the German man was attacked by a stingray.

If you haven't seen that, you can listen to the most recent episode. And here we have full privacy for life. And of course, that amazing food.

Now, thank you very much, Srinath, for sharing that. Goa is a very, very, very important place on my list. It's a dream place for me to visit.

Not just Goa, but all of India. India is definitely somewhere I need to go and document and hopefully create some amazing content for you while I'm there. I don't have any trips planned long haul at the moment, but hopefully India will be coming up very soon.

Again, if you want to sell me your city or your country, just like Srinath just did, you can send again an email to journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com or you can even send me a direct message on Instagram, but it might be quite difficult for me to see that, because as you imagine, I get lots.

But thank you very much for sending that, and thank you very much to those of you who send me more. Hopefully, you'll be on the next episode of the podcast.

So I really hope you enjoyed this episode today. I hope I've given you some inspiration for life, for travel. Please don't hesitate to get in contact.

Please give me some feedback on this episode. Let's keep the conversation flowing. Thank you very much for listening, guys.

Take care. Enjoy the journey. Goodbye.

3

Hello everybody, and welcome to episode 3 of Journeys With Elliott. It's so great to be back, and it's so great to receive all of the amazing positive feedback I've had from you guys. Thank you so much.

I really almost didn't believe that I'd be making episode 3. I thought after episode 1 or 2, maybe people would get bored, but it seems like things are only getting more and more exciting for you guys, and you guys really are jumping on this journey with me, and really enjoying the experience. So thank you so much to those of you who have given me 5 stars on Apple.

Please feel free to do that if you are enjoying the podcast. You know, getting ratings and all of the positive kind of reviews and feedback I get from you guys, it does motivate me to keep making these episodes, so thank you so much. So yeah, I do have to quickly shout out and say thank you to those of you who did send me emails.

I can't reply to all of you, because believe it or not, I'm receiving hundreds and hundreds of emails from both YouTube and from podcast listeners. But I do read all of them, every single email you send me. And if your story or your file isn't played or read out in this episode, it will probably be read out in the future.

Don't worry, when you send me stuff to talk about in the podcast, I save it and keep it for the future. So please don't think I'm ignoring you or that anything you've sent me is rubbish. I'm always going to read it and possibly use it in this podcast.

It might just take some time. Anyway, what are we talking about today on the podcast? Well, my story for you today is kind of a variation of stories, actually.

I'm going to be talking a little bit about my experience on a working holiday visa in Australia, and also a few other ways I've made money or tried to make money while I've been traveling.

Maybe it will inspire those of you who are interested in traveling to just go and do it and attempt to make some money on the way, take some risks, and just see what happens. I'll also talk about kind of the preparations.

Lots of my listeners, they want to come to the UK to work or to study, and I kind of give you a bit of advice on how you can do that from my perspective, how I moved to Australia temporarily for one year and a half, how I prepared for that, and how things kind of worked out. We'll also have somebody sharing a story from their childhood in Egypt, be a very interesting story, and also somebody is going to sell us their country or their city. Please do hang around to the end of the episode if you want to hear that.

So without further ado, let's begin the journey.

So, those of you who know my life story, you know me, you know who I am. Maybe you've listened to a few episodes of this podcast. You'll know that I, as a family, as a child, had a close relationship with Australia.

The reason being because my dad owned a travel business, and the travel business he owned specialized in holidays to Australia. So, we used to go there a lot. And I did really experience kind of the more luxurious, the family holiday side of Australia.

But part of me, as I started to grow up, really, really wanted to experience, I guess, the living, the life, the actual lifestyle, I guess is the word, that Aussies have, people in Australia. And not just like the beachy life. Yes, of course, that's amazing.

But my plan and my idea was that I wanted to go to a place my family had never been before, a place called Melbourne in Australia. It's probably one of the most popular places for young people to visit when they're kind of independent. A lot of foreign students go there, and it's basically, you know, if you're an Australian and you say, yeah, I live in Melbourne, then you're probably quite a cool person, right?

I don't know why it just seems to be that kind of place where artistic, musical, kind of adventurous people live. I've been to Sydney, I've been to Brisbane, I've been to many places in Australia. But something about Melbourne once I arrived there as a worker, as a working holiday citizen, it really kind of touched my heart.

And I guess you'll find out why as we continue on. But first, I just want to give you a little bit of background about kind of how it began, how I decided, right, I'm going to go and just live in Australia for two years. I was with my girlfriend, who I'm still with now, and we were both working in boring retail jobs.

We just finished our studies, or I'd finished my studies. And, you know, I was working in retail to kind of fund my life as I was a student. I was working, actually, for Hugo Boss as a suit specialist, so I was tailoring men and women into suits and fitting them perfectly and trying to make loads of money by selling as much stuff as I could to them.

The richer they were, the better. And I was working quite heavily on commission, so essentially, the more I sold, the better it was for me, as well as the wage. But I thought to myself, I've always wanted to go to Australia.

You know, one night, I was just lying in bed. I wasn't living with my girlfriend at the time. I was living with my parents.

She was living with her dad. I was lying in bed one time, and I just thought to myself, why don't I just, why don't I organize us to go on a working holiday in Australia? You know, maybe it will be an experience.

Maybe we'll become more independent. We can actually live together. My girlfriend and I, you know, we'd never lived together, and we really wanted to, but it's so difficult at the age we were to do that in England because it's so expensive.

And I thought, why don't we just use the little bit of savings we've both got and just go, just go to Australia and see what happens. Try and get some jobs, go on a working holiday, and hope for the best. So the next day I called her.

I said, I want to meet you. Let's go to the pub. So we went to the pub.

We sat down. We spoke to each other. And she was worried that I was going to break up with her or something.

But I actually said to her, look, I think we should go to Australia, and I think we should go on a working holiday visa and just enjoy the next kind of two years of our lives and not kind of get too serious about working in England and finding proper jobs and stuff. We don't need to do that yet. We're still young.

And I actually thought she was going to say no. I thought she was going to say, I'll piss off, Elliott, go and do it on your own. We're done.

But she actually said yes. She said, let's do it. Why not?

She was sick of her job. I was sick of my job. And the rest was history, really.

The next day, we decided to go into our jobs, hand in our notice. For me, it was four weeks. So essentially, after that day, I had four weeks to organize everything, and then I could leave the job, be done, and go, and just go to Australia.

So after handing in our notices, then the real planning begun. And this is the stuff which might be useful for you. When you're planning a working holiday, no matter where it is, these are the way I did it.

I'm not saying I'm perfect, but it seemed like everything just worked out perfectly for me. Now, it was the first time I was living independently somewhere, so I was very nervous about that in general. My first experience living independently wasn't going to be in the UK, it was going to be in Australia.

And moreover, I was living with my girlfriend. So there were lots of things to organize. So when you move to a new country, temporarily on a working holiday or student visa, a few things that you need come to mind.

A place to live, a roof over your head. We don't really want to be homeless. What city are you going to?

Work, you know. Where are you going to work? What job are you going to have?

Of course, we need to get the working holiday visa. We actually need to organize that. We need to book the flights.

What are the safe neighborhoods to live in where we're not going to walk out the front door and get stabbed? You know, like lots and lots of things. So we spent ages researching.

I remember staying up all night just researching things. And I discovered kind of the best places to live in Melbourne. I discovered many, many shops which I wanted to work in.

Remember, I wasn't quite ready to go and begin my pronunciation teaching journey then. At the time, I was just planning on enjoying myself before I got serious and tied down with my proper job, which turned out to be this business. Anyway, first things first, we sorted out our visas, which actually, if you're planning a working holiday to Australia, it's actually very, very simple and very easy to do.

As long as you have an in-date passport and you have some money to pay, obviously it does cost money, you sort it all out, you send your stuff off by post, and then hopefully they'll come back with your visa confirmation saying that you have one year in Australia starting from this date.

And then once we'd done that, it was time to book the flights. Flights bloody expensive from the UK to Australia, as you can imagine, because Australia is literally on the other side of the planet.

So that was quite annoying that we had to spend so much of our savings, which we needed over there, really. We had to spend so much on flights and visas, but that's all part of the experience.

We didn't have that much money in general in the beginning, but we were willing to take this risk, and I really don't want to be a bad influence on any of you, but if you do want to do something like this, you do have to take risks, particularly when it comes to money.

So we booked the flights, we got the visas. The next step was jobs. We need jobs, okay?

We can stay in a hotel when we first get there, and we can sort out accommodation, you know, our flat or apartment that we're going to live in. We can sort that out once we get there, but the first thing we need to do is make sure we have jobs, because that's what keeps us breathing, right? It's what keeps us bloody going.

So we needed jobs. And this advice, well, not advice, this story I'm going to tell you, this is the best possible advice I can give anyone who wants to go on a working holiday visa. Apply for jobs before you get there.

Please don't think, oh, I'll just write up a CV, and I'll hand my CV resume into every shop that I see when I get there. Trust me, you will feel so much better if you have a few interviews lined up, like once you get there. So I went on the websites of every kind of tailoring suit specialist shop in Melbourne, every single one, and I emailed all of them a letter saying, hello, my name is Elliott, I'm soon to be arriving in Melbourne in a few weeks, and I'll be on a working holiday visa, and I'd really love it if you take a look at my CV to see if you could employ me, you know, that kind of thing.

And hey ho, I got three interviews, three interviews which I decided stupidly to do the day we arrived. We arrived really early in the morning, and I thought, who cares, I'm hard as nails, I'll just do these interviews on the day I get there. And we'll get to that in a second.

And my girlfriend did the same thing, okay, so she applied for jobs. Eventually she found a job in her field, which is pharmacy, and then we were set. We knew we had some interviews when we got there.

We didn't have the jobs, but at least we had some interviews to get our confidence going once we got there. As I said, we'd sorted out hotels, so that was all organized. Everything was pretty much ready to rock and roll.

So then time passed, and I'd say the most heartbreaking and difficult part, I'm sure you know what I'm going to say, of leaving, particularly when you know you're leaving your country for over a year, is leaving family. And my dad, he never cries, and that was one of the first times in ages at the airport that I'd seen him cry. I think I couldn't even remember the last time I'd seen him cry, and it was horrible saying goodbye to him, seeing my dad crying, knowing that I'm not going to see him for a year.

It makes me feel emotional now, saying goodbye to my dog, my family dog, bye to my mum, of course, and my sister, everyone. It was really, really emotional, and I had to say goodbye to my friends, who I'd recently become very, very close with. But there's a kind of another story to that.

A lot of my friends I lost because they decided to go down more of a different path in their lives, which perhaps I'll talk about in the future. But yeah, saying goodbye was probably the most difficult part. And then, of course, the excitement kicks in when you get on the flight and you think, wow, this is the beginning, just you and me, me and my girlfriend.

Now remember, if this is you on your own, if you're imagining doing this, if it's you on your own, that feeling of excitement will be exactly the same. Maybe you'll be a bit scared because you won't have someone there with you, doing it with you. But trust me, once you get there, you will not be able to count the amount of friends you have on your hand.

It will be, you know, anywhere you go, people love foreigners. It's true. So to cut the long story short, blah blah blah, we arrived in Melbourne.

We were knackered, absolutely shattered from the flight. It's a really long flight. That's another real extreme thing about traveling long distances.

You know, when you go to Australia from the UK, it is not fun, the flying. Especially when you're in economy and you've got monkey legs like me. My mum has always called me Monkey Boy because I have just these crazy limbs, these arms and legs which fly around and wriggle everywhere because they're so long.

I'm like an octopus, basically. And in economy class in an aeroplane, not fun. So yeah, cutting the long story short, we arrived.

It was the day of my interview, the day we arrived. Remember that. My three interviews.

And I went to my first one, and it was actually my favourite one, the job that I wanted the most.

It was kind of like a... I won't say the name of the shop because they've actually closed now.

Funnily enough, ironically, after I left, they very shortly went out of business. So I must have been doing something right there to keep the business going. But, yeah, I went for an interview there, and as you know now, that was the job I took.

They immediately offered me the job on the spot, on the day of the interview. Even though I was jet lagged, I had bags under my eyes, I had spots all over my face, I looked like a heroin addict because I'd just been flying for like... travelling for like two days straight.

But they gave me the job. So I said to them, okay, I'll cancel my next two interviews. And that was it.

I didn't have to do all three interviews. I had the job I wanted immediately. And things were looking up, you know.

My girlfriend had her interview in a few days, which she eventually, she got the job as well. So we were ready to go. Now, maybe luck was just in our hands.

Maybe things just went right. But I think unless you take these risks, you don't know, maybe this could happen to you too. Maybe you'll get a streak of good luck.

And things will just pan out really, really nicely. So remember that checklist? We have the visa, we have the flights, we have the city, we have the job.

All we need now is to find a place, because remember, we were staying in a hotel. We were staying in quite a nice hotel. It was in North Melbourne.

It was a hotel which was kind of just outside of the city, the CBD. So it was probably about a 20-minute walk. Yes, I decided to walk.

I didn't have a tram pass, what they call a Mikey card to kind of give you all the transport, which is an amazing idea, by the way. We have these things called Oyster cards in London, but we don't really have much like that in Bristol. In Melbourne, they have a tram system.

So they're trams which take you everywhere, to all of the suburbs, all of the places. And you just have a card which you top up and you tap on the machine when you get on the tram. And you use your credit.

It's unbelievable. Why are things like this not on my side of the planet? But anyway, we walked because we wanted to save as much money as possible.

Remember, yes, I had a job. I didn't have a paycheck yet, so we were still living off savings for the next month. And yeah, the city, I remember when I first arrived, all I could do was look up, up and around, everything around me, high-rise building, shops everywhere.

Remember in the last episode, I was talking about the UK and this variety of culture. Yes, it's the same here in Melbourne, but it's a completely different variety of culture. I would say it's much more Asian based.

And when I say Asian, I mean like Far East, okay? Everywhere you look, there are Chinese restaurants, Korean restaurants, Japanese restaurants, even writing in all of these languages. It was Taiwanese dessert places, you know, stuff I'd never seen in Bristol.

So it was really, really strange for me, but an amazing experience. In fact, lots of people know that Korean food is one of my favorite foods on the planet. I love Korean food.

And guess where I first tried it? In Melbourne. And we're going to get to that now.

This is an amazing story. Probably the most life-changing part of my journey to Australia. As you know, we needed an apartment.

So my girlfriend and I, we decided, right, let's go get some Vietnamese food, because we saw loads of Vietnamese restaurants around. I'm sorry, any Vietnamese people for my pronunciation. We love pho, you know, the noodle soup dish that Vietnamese people eat, particularly for breakfast, I believe.

When we were in Vietnam, it was always breakfast. And we found a place that did this, this noodle soup, and it had Wi-Fi. So we sat there, we ate, we drank our cafe soda, which is Vietnamese iced coffee, and we looked for a place to stay.

And we came across an advert, okay, on Gumtree, which is very, very commonly used in Australia. And it was by a gentleman named Jed. He was, you know, there were pictures of the flat.

It looked lovely. It was in South Bank, which is kind of, I guess, a little bit more of the kind of businessy area of Melbourne, just past the river outside of the CBD. It was walking distance from my job.

It was perfect, right? It had a balcony, everything. So we called him, and immediately when he answered the phone, I had no idea what language he was speaking.

I could only speak English, so it turned out he was speaking Korean. Now, I thought he was Chinese. I know that sounds really bad, but I'd never experienced anything Korean in my life at this age of kind of like 19 or something.

So, yeah, I spoke to this guy. I had to really kind of try and describe that I wanted to see the flat, the apartment he was advertising. I had to speak very, very clearly because his English, unfortunately, wasn't very clear.

And he couldn't understand me very well. But we somehow, I can't really remember how, but we managed to organize meeting him. And, you know, it was quite difficult because he didn't really speak any English, so we couldn't get to know him or understand.

We thought that it was a place that just my girlfriend and I would move into, not sharing with anybody, which was a bit of a silly mistake because basically we looked around, and then we said that he showed us the bedroom and stuff. And I was thinking, why is it so cheap? Surely it's not just us in here.

And then he said, I live too with you. So then he introduced us to his girlfriend, and we realized that he was living with his Thai girlfriend in the other bedroom. And there was also who turned out to be one of the best friends I've ever met in my life.

He's tattooed me and everything. Another Korean man called Terry. Love you, Terry, if you're listening.

And Jed, the guy who owns the flat, he said, also, somebody is living behind the curtain. And I said, what? Huh?

The curtain? He said, yes, yes, open, open curtain. So I opened the curtain, and yeah, there was a very large but smiley Korean man sat on his bed eating noodles.

And that was his room, just a little curtain in the living room with a bed behind it. And that was one of the weirdest things I'd ever experienced. And my girlfriend and I, we nicknamed it Curtain Man, because he lived behind the curtain.

Funnily enough, he actually had a haircut, which in the UK we would call curtains as well. So he kind of just had the whole kind of curtain theme going on. Random.

Anyway, yeah, so we had Curtain Man, we had Terry, who was one of my really good friends by the end of the trip, we had Jed, and we had his girlfriend Jean, who was from Thailand. And that was the beginning of my experience with a bunch of Korean people. And I tell you what, I was introduced to my favourite food in the world.

I was introduced to a new way of cooking. I was introduced to culture. I was tattooed on the kitchen floor by Terry.

I was introduced to karaoke. We went to a karaoke bar. I was introduced to just about everything during my time living there.

Alcohol. I managed to learn my limits of how much alcohol I could drink. By the way, if you're any Koreans are listening, you guys really know how to drink and how to party and have fun.

It's unbelievable. I also learned how to play poker. And also, I unfortunately gained a really bad habit of smoking

The problem with living with these people was that they just smoked like chimneys. They loved to smoke. And we had a balcony.

And it was such a beautiful balcony. And I used to just go and sit out there, and they'd always be smoking next to me. And then they'd start giving me them when I was drunk, when we were drinking.

And one thing turns to another, and then you'll end up being addicted to smoking. And so I ended up spending most of my time in Australia as a smoker, believe it or not. That's the only downside I'd say I have, because I've always been a very healthy, fit person.

I really love exercise, building muscle. And I did lose a lot of weight over there, I think, because number one, I was trying to save lots of money. But number two, smoking, it suppresses your appetite and things like that.

Blame it on the Koreans. But people say to me, you know, what's the most memorable experience of living in Australia, living in Melbourne? And for me, it was just the fact that everything was so normal, right?

I had a job, I had friends, I had better friends than I've ever had in England. I had a lovely city which I could just go into whenever I wanted. There were always events going on, things to watch, bands were playing, local bands, there were cool coffee shops.

In fact, my favourite coffee shop in the whole world is in Melbourne. If you ever visit, there's a place called Brother Baba Budan. I love them so much that I actually got their symbol tattooed on me.

That's how much I love them. And yeah, it was just normal, right? It was just normal living there, and that's what the highlight was for me.

I felt like a citizen in another country. And my girlfriend loved it too. I don't think she loved it quite as much as me.

She gets very homesick very easily. But for me, I think I feel homesick when I'm not travelling.

But I love to come home, and I love to see my family, and I love to be back in the UK.

But that's more like the thing I prefer as a holiday. I'd rather be out travelling most of my life and coming home. But unfortunately, life doesn't work out that way for everyone.

Some people are lucky enough to travel all of their lives because they're very rich and they have lots of money, or they have a good job to do that, a job that allows them to travel. But you know, the majority of us, we just kind of look forward to our next trip, which I can appreciate, and I'm happy with that. But as I said, I think it was just like having a separate life.

I just lived a life for kind of a year over there where things were just very normal, but different at the same time because I wasn't in England, and life is quite different in Australia. I would say that the Australians were very approachable, very friendly. In fact, they felt more approachable than people in the UK, less kind of reserved.

They definitely know how to have fun. I did make some Australian friends over there. Like I said, my closest friends were actually my flatmates, the Koreans I were living with, but I did meet some friends in my job, had a friend from Germany, I had a few Australian friends, a friend from Pakistan, I also had a friend from Sweden.

So kind of very multicultural there, and that's the great thing. Lots of people go on working holiday visas. Now, I don't really have any crazy stories or any kind of unbelievable things that happened while I was living in Melbourne, and I think that's the beauty of this episode of the podcast.

The fact that we can just go and live somewhere else and experience a different life temporarily.

I think that's one of the beauties of travel. Whether you're just going somewhere on a working holiday to work and live a different life for a bit, or whether you're just going to simply, I don't know, lie on a beach for a few months and maybe learn to scuba dive or whatever, I think it's that kind of separate identity or that kind of second life that you live while you're away that really does appeal to me when I'm travelling, whether I'm going away for one year or whether I'm just going for a week in Spain, you know?

It's still almost like a kind of a break from normal life, and it almost becomes like you can be whatever you want or have this kind of separate life. And that's the great thing also. I've travelled solo.

I'm not going to talk about that in this episode, but in the future I will about my trips when I've travelled on my own. And really, you can just be whoever you want. The last thing I'll finish with about kind of going on a working holiday in Australia, another benefit that I just want to mention is as well as the fact you can meet people, you can work, you can enjoy a different culture, different food, you know, all these kind of weird, scary, but an unusual but new experiences, but as well as those kind of things you would expect, you also can go on holidays in the country.

So for example, you know, just like in any job, I would occasionally get a week off, and I would spend that week off going to another place in Australia. We flew down to, or up, should I say, to Brisbane, and we went to a, we drove from Brisbane to a place called Noosa, and my parents met us there, and it's this beautiful kind of surfer, seaside, beachy town where nearby there are loads of hippies, and it was just a really cool experience to get away from the busy city and go into this other part of Australia. It's a bit like the equivalent of the countryside in the UK.

It was the beachside, the beach area of Australia, and again, just an amazing little holiday you can have off. I'm very jealous that Australians can just fly domestically for quite a cheap price and be almost like how it would be for us if we flew to somewhere like the south of France from the UK, where the weather is hotter and the beaches are nicer and the food is different. You can do that in Australia domestically.

So definitely worth it if you want to kind of travel around and work at the same time. And of course, you don't just have to stay in Melbourne or just stay in Sydney. You could work for half the year in one place and then maybe work half the year in another place and kind of move to a different city halfway through your trip.

There are lots of opportunities in a working visa, whether you do it in the UK, in Canada, New Zealand, all of these places that offer it. It will be an amazing experience, and it's definitely worth doing. And there are many, many different ways of actually just travelling the world and making money as you go.

You don't have to get a working holiday visa. I'm actually going to save this for another episode of the podcast, where I'm going to talk about the different ways I've made money and also friends I've known or met during my travels and how they've made money and basically funded.

Some of them have funded a whole life of travel.

So I have lots of knowledge on this kind of area, essentially my job, my English teaching job online. It was all set up around the idea of being able to travel and work at the same time. So I do have all of these ideas and also things I know and that I've experienced myself, which I'll definitely be sharing in another episode, but please let me know if you want me to share this.

So send me an email and say, yeah, Elliott, that sounds like a great idea. And if you have any other things you want me to talk about, any other places or anything else, just let me know. You can send an email to journeyswithelliott.gmail.com, which is where you can also send me your travel stories.

And this week's travel story is from Karen, who is from Egypt. Karen's story is quite short, but it's actually, it's interesting, and it really does remind us of kind of that innocence we have as children when we are travelling. And here's the story.

Hello, Elliott. My name is Karen, and I live in Egypt, actually in Cairo, the capital. It's a very crowded city, and I'm used to travelling with my family every year to the north of Egypt, where there are a lot of beautiful beaches.

When I was six years old, one day on the beach, I was playing. Then I walked across the sea looking for some seashells, and I found an empty beach. I loved it.

Tlater found out that it was a private beach for the governor only. No one was allowed to enter it, and I stayed there playing. I forgot everything else until it became about six o'clock.

In the summer, the sun in Egypt goes down at about seven o'clock. And I found my father in front of me. He looked panicked and asked me, Where have you been?

I've been looking all over for you. And when I went back with him, I found my sister and my mother crying. They'd all thought that I'd gotten lost, and they'd never find me again.

I said, What is wrong? I was just playing. Until this day, they remind me about this, and we all laugh.

So such a simple yet interesting story, because it reminds us of when we're kids, and about how even when we're that young, we have that kind of wonderlust, that kind of need to go and explore, whether it's on our own or with somebody else. And it just reminds you that I think with some people, you are born with that need to explore inside of you. And I think, Karen, you definitely have that.

And I sure hope that you get to go and get lost on a few more beaches as you continue on in your life. So thank you very much for sharing your journey with us.

Thank you.

Now just to finish things off, we have a voice message today from Natalia, who is from Moscow, or she's working as an English teacher in Moscow, and she wants to talk to us about her country and to try and sell it to us. So let's see what Natalia has to say.

Despite some opinions in the political world about Russia being an aggressor, I think it is a great place to visit and should definitely be on your bucket list. Of course, it depends on a budget you have, how many cities or towns to go to. But I would strongly recommend to start your journey with St. Petersburg, because it is one of the places where the history revive, where every house has its own story to tell.

For instance, the Hermitage or the Winter Palace is home of the last Russian Tsar Nikolai Romanov and his family, who were tragically killed. Barinsky Theatre is one of the leading theatres in the world, which was founded in 1783. Peterhof is a beautiful place with a lot of gardens and fountains, which were seriously damaged during the Second World War and now are still being restored.

Undoubtedly, Moscow Cousins, Sochi, Nizhny Novgorod or Kaliningrad, or any other places that might be chosen to visit, will definitely please you with its culture, sights, food, and of course, hospitable people.

Well, Natalia, thank you very much for sharing a little bit of information about Russia. You know, Russia is actually somewhere which I've always thought about visiting. I just never have really got round to it.

It's, when I think about it, I always think cold. And I don't tend to go on holidays where it's cold, but I do know that you do have warm areas of Russia, warm times of the year, but I can't really comment on Russia very much, because as I said, I don't really know anything about it. So thank you for enlightening me on some places where I and the listeners should go and visit, and hopefully I'll be doing an episode of the podcast and filming some content of an experience in Russia in the future.

So thank you very much again. Remember, if any of you want to share your travel stories, if you want me to talk about anything in the podcast, or simply if you want to sell me your city and your country like Natalia just did, feel free to send me an audio file or just write me a message at JourneysWithElliott at gmail.com. For today, that's everything.

I hope you enjoyed my experience, my story, my journey, and everybody else's that we've included today. Thanks, everyone, for getting involved. And I will speak to you next week.

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Hello, everybody, and welcome to an episode of Journeys With Elliott. It's great to have you here. Thanks so much for coming here to hang out and talk about travel and adventure and life with me.

Also, thank you, everyone, for the great feedback you've been giving me recently. Firstly, I guess I have to kind of apologize for being away for one week. I mean, how did you survive without me?

Those of you who do know me, I also have hundreds of students taking my pronunciation course, and I have to talk to them all the time on WhatsApp. So I guess we're here now. We can just forget last week ever happened, and let's get straight to the journey.

Today, we're going to be talking about beaches, kind of versus countryside versus cities. What's the best from my experience? What do I prefer?

And for a moment, I'd actually like you, if you want, you can pause the podcast. You can just think to yourself, are you more of a city person, a countryside person, or a beach person? Or are you something completely different?

Do you like a mixture of them all? If you want, you can email me and let me know, and maybe I'll mention in the next episode of the podcast your reasons for this. As well as this discussion today, I'm also going to be sharing someone's travel story, and we'll have somebody trying to sell us their city or their country.

So, let's begin the journey. The journey.

So the way I'm going to approach this is I'm going to talk about my favorite experience on a beach, my favorite kind of beach place, my favorite experience in the countryside, and also my favorite experience in a city. I'm going to compare them, and I'm going to kind of give you what I think are the benefits of each part, and perhaps the negatives as well. And maybe it will help me realize what kind of a person I am.

Do I prefer beaches? Do I prefer what? Do I not like any of them?

Would I rather just live in a box? But I think it will be a good way for you to maybe plan your next trip, or think about where you live. Do you really want to live where you live for the rest of your life?

Would you rather relocate perhaps to somewhere more coastal or more metropolitan? So we're going to kind of explore this today with some experiences of mine, and hopefully you guys will enjoy the experiences I've had. And I've decided that what I'm going to do is I'm actually going to talk about the countryside first, because immediately when I was thinking about these things, I thought, oh, I haven't really spoken much on this podcast about my experiences in the countryside yet.

You know, I've talked about my time in Thailand on beaches, and I've talked about my time in cities, but I haven't really talked that much about the countryside. So I thought this was also a great opportunity for me to talk about another one of my favorite countries, another one of the countries I've spent most of my time in, which is Vietnam. I've spent a total of 160, 180 days in Vietnam, and every single day was an absolute pleasure.

But the most memorable days were not the days I spent in cities like Hanoi, Saigon, Nha Trang, Hoi An, you know, the kind of tourist path places. In fact, the most memorable experiences I had in Vietnam were in the highlands, the central highlands of Vietnam. Now, if you don't know about my trip, which you probably don't, I traveled all the way from the south of Vietnam to the north, the very bottom to the very, very top.

I did it on the back of a motorbike. So I was being driven by a tour guide, and he eventually became such a close friend that I would call him my brother. He calls me his brother.

His nephew was driving my girlfriend. We were both on the back of their motorbikes. They were tour guides, but as I said, they kind of became friends.

And they took us on a massive kind of, let's say, probably about 30-day journey from the south all the way to the north of Vietnam. And we saw absolutely everything. And it cost a lot, okay?

It cost a lot of money, but I would not change a single thing. And it was money well spent. And they took us exactly where we needed to go, which was off the path, away from all the touristy places and into the countryside, which is where I think Vietnam really shines.

So we're here to talk about countryside, beaches, and cities. And in my opinion, Vietnam has all of those. But I'm actually just going to talk about my favorite thing in Vietnam, which is the countryside.

And there's a particular moment in my life which I really, really remember. It's probably a moment where I've been the most present. I've kind of felt like I was in the moment, and I was feeling the energy from everything around me.

I haven't really had a feeling like that before. Apart from when I was at the top of a mountain in the middle of nowhere in Vietnam. And really, this is how it started.

We were on the motorbike tour. We'd been on it for a few days. We'd driven to many, many places.

I just started to get used to kind of the fear of being on the back of a motorbike that's going like 80 miles an hour around a bend where there is no barrier on the mountain, right? If you, if he takes a wrong turning or if he slides, you know, he skids in the rain on the road, then we are dead meat, literally dead flat. So it was quite terrifying, but we survived.

And, you know, I just kind of got gotten used to that, started to feel comfortable with the whole kind of driving on the back of a motorbike thing. And we took this massive, massive journey up, possibly the biggest mountain I've ever been up in my life. And it felt like a never ending journey, right?

We were just going round and round and up and down. And you just didn't really know where you were. And as you started to get higher, or as we started to get higher, we were getting into this black cloud.

And we had to travel through this black cloud as we were going up. It was almost like when you're on an aeroplane and you fly through a cloud, right? You suddenly get hit by rain and then it's gone because you've gone through it.

We did that, but as we were going up a mountain on motorbikes. And as you can imagine, I was wearing shorts on this motorbike. I had a helmet on, of course, no padding or anything, just a vest and shorts.

And the rain hit you. The speed we were driving and the heaviness of the rain at the top of this mountain, it hit us like razor blades. Honestly, I felt like I was being cut open every time I was being hit by...

You know, I've had tattoos before, and it felt like getting a permanent tattoo across my legs and arms and everything. But I felt safe with Eddie, my driver. I felt really safe.

And the amazing thing and amazing experience was when we got through this black cloud, we'd got even higher into the mountain. We still weren't there yet, but we'd gotten even higher. And suddenly we were out of the cloud, and it was like we were in a completely different country.

It was suddenly blistering heat. The sun was shining on us. There was no breeze.

We were just up at the top of this mountain on the motorbikes, and I instantly dried off. My clothes were just suddenly dry. It was that hot.

And the rest of the journey up the mountain was just with pure sunlight on our backs, on our knees, on our arms, on our necks. And honestly, that evening, when we later got back to, when we arrived at the place we were staying for the night, my body looked like a shrimp. I was pink all over because of this sunlight.

Probably the combination of being struck by such strong rain and the sunlight didn't help my skin very much that day. I think my skin might have aged by about 20 years just from that journey. But yeah, that was such an amazing experience.

But the main most memorable thing was after this kind of what felt like, honestly, a near-death experience. We were so close to the edge of this mountain throughout the journey. I was on the back of a bike with a random Vietnamese man I'd only known for a few days.

Of course, it felt like a near-death experience in that weather. I didn't even know it was safe to drive in that weather. It's probably not, especially on a mountain.

But when we got to the top, after that kind of peacefulness of thinking, oh, I survived, the next thing was pure bliss. We were staying at what our tour guide called an ethnic minority village.

So it was basically people who live in the countryside at the top of this mountain.

They farm, they eat what they farm, they sell what they farm, they eat the animals they have, they wear the same clothes every day, it's dirty, it's dusty, they live in little mud huts or bamboo huts. There are snakes slithering around, scorpions hidden in the bushes. One of those kind of proper tribal places right at the top of a mountain.

They've never seen white people before. So when I arrived with my girlfriend, we're both blonde. It was like they'd seen an alien.

They had no idea what we were. They were shocked. The kids were screaming and terrified.

But it was just it was crazy. It was crazy. But then as we settled in, people got used to us.

And I remember being offered some shots like drinks of rice wine, and they threw a party for us because it was like just seeing these strange people. They wanted to welcome us as their guests.

So they killed a whole cow for us, and they tried to make us eat all of it.

And when I say all of it, I mean every single part of the cow, organs and everything. They even chew on the bones. It's crazy.

But these are the things about culture which I really, really love. And this is the sort of thing you see in the countryside, particularly in countries like this. So I do have other stories, by the way, about strange food I've eaten.

I'm saving that for another episode. So yeah, some really weird things in that list. But I remember as the sun started to go down, I'd had a few shots of this rice wine.

Apparently, that's what it was. And I remember walking with my girlfriend and just one of the locals who couldn't speak a word of English, and Eddie, who was our tour guide, he was translating for us so we could all kind of talk to each other. And I remember walking to the edge of their village, which was essentially the edge of the mountain, and I remember just stopping.

Everything went still for a moment. Everything just stopped. And I remember just looking down over, and you see the rice paddies, right?

They are some of the most beautiful things in the world, and all it is is people growing rice. If you've ever seen them before, they're so beautiful. You don't see them in England I remember seeing animals kind of as tiny little dots down below walking around, hills, things growing, like coffee plants growing, corn growing, everything growing. It's such an agricultural land, and the land is so beautiful in Vietnam. And when the sun is going down, it's like the sun setting on this beautiful world

It is like another planet when you're in the countryside of Vietnam. And it was just one of those moments where everything went silent. You forget everything.

You don't really think about anything. Everything just becomes nothing. And that's when you become very, very present.

And this doesn't really happen to me much, but it really happened to me then. And these kind of moments are those moments where you remember them forever. And it's something so simple.

It was just, you know, a moment where I stood on the edge of a mountain, I looked at the countryside, and I felt lucky to be alive. That kind of feeling. And that's a very simple story.

I guess the whole journey was the more exciting part, but it was all leading up to just this one beautiful, picture-perfect moment on the edge of a mountain. And that's why I like the countryside, because I like to see things and also see the people and talk to the people. People who are very, very different, because some of them have never seen cities before, particularly, as I said, in a country like this.

So Vietnam has blessed me with one of the best experiences in the world. It's such a simple experience, but such a pleasurable experience at the same time. And I do recommend that any of you who, if you go to Vietnam, you do a motorbike tour and you go up into the Central Highlands and you go and see real life on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Absolutely worth every penny. And they haven't sponsored me. The company were called Easy Riders, if you ever want to look them up.

And that's my experience in the countryside. I think lots of you maybe didn't think I would mention somewhere like USA, America, when I talked about travel. Mainly because lots of people just associate me with British English, because I'm a British English teacher, and that's all that I focus on.

But I've spent quite a lot of time over in the States, and I absolutely love Americans. They're very, very different to us, believe it or not. And it was a great time, or many great times that I've spent there.

My favorite would always be, I mean, I loved the time I spent in New York, and that would be certainly a city that I would mention. But I'm here actually to talk about a beach experience I had in the USA. It was actually kind of like a small village, small town, in a place called Anna Maria Island.

Now, just to give you some backstory about how we found this place, it was a place we visited maybe three or four times on family holidays, my mum, my dad, my sister, and I. And what we would do is we'd go on a trip to Disneyland or Universal Studios. Remember, my dad is a travel agent, so he used to get lots of very cheap tickets to the parks and flights to the USA So we used to go to my favourite place, which was Universal Studios in Florida, Orlando. So you'd spend kind of, you know, five days to a week staying at the parks, going on the rides, the roller coasters. You might know by now that I love theme parks, amusement parks, roller coasters.

So, yes, it used to be amazing spending time riding all of the crazy rides they have over there, and they're all movie themed. But the second half of the holiday, we'd usually go for about two weeks. The second half, we would go to this place, which we travel maybe about two hours in the car to, away from Orlando, and it was a place called Anna Maria Island

And now it's quite near Tampa in Florida. And I remember going there the first time. I was quite young, probably a young teenager.

And it's one of those places you don't really think about visiting. It's just a normal kind of fishing village in America, where it's just very normal Americans living there. They all wear fisherman clothes or like surfy, beachy clothes.

There's a beach. There are some houses. There are some fishing shops, a couple restaurants on the beach.

And that's about it. And I think I love the whole kind of small town vibes I got from this place.

The sunsets, again, I'm a big fan of sunsets, and the sunsets were amazing.

You could see them go, the sun go down behind the sea on the horizon. And, you know, you might be enjoying a beautiful seafood meal on the beach in a place. I remember there was a restaurant called The Sand Bar, which I absolutely loved.

And we used to sit there and eat fish, local fish, which was caught that day, and watch the sun go down over the beach. And the reason I also love this beach was because I'm a big fan of sports, particularly things like skateboarding. I used to love when I was a teenager.

I don't do it anymore. I also love surfing. I still do that.

And there's something I actually picked up in Anamaria, which was something called skimboarding. Now, I don't know if you've heard of it before. It's like you carry a mini surfboard, but it's a little bit different to surfing

So with surfing, you go into the ocean, and you kind of paddle around lying on the board, and you wait for the wave, right? I've done that many, many times in my life, and I love it. But skimboarding, you carry the board on the shoreline, actually, and you kind of wait for a thin layer of water to come out kind of towards the sand, towards you.

And then you run. You run really, really fast with the board. You throw the board onto the floor, and you jump on it, and you go quite fast if you run fast.

And then the great thing about it is you can then turn towards the next wave that's coming, and you can ride it, or you can jump it, or you can do some tricks. So I found it was a lot more fun, and just something really, really different. And I remember these evenings where we'd finish our kind of day, whether it was at the beach or fishing with my dad, and then we'd just kind of grab a cool box, you know, a cool box and fill it with...

my parents would drink beer. I was too young, so I would have maybe a Monster Energy drink or something. My parents would have a bottle of wine on the deckchairs, and they would watch me do the skinboarding as the sun went down.

And then we'd go home, get ready, and go out for a nice meal again on the beach. And this lazy beach lifestyle where you're covered in sand all the time, your hair's always kind of rough from the sea, and you have that feeling in your skin that you've had some good sunlight, everything feels fresh. I just love that feeling of spending life on the beach.

Now, whether I could do that forever, I don't know. I don't know if I could live kind of on the beach in one of these secluded lives, but I definitely think I could spend a very, very prolonged period of time living as a beachy person. I think I've always been brought up as a child as a beachy person, as I like to call it.

And it's always where I would choose to go on a holiday, to live near or stay near a beach for a week or two. After a while, you kind of start to miss, I guess, the creature comforts of city life or maybe even countryside life. But there are so many beaches I've been to, and that's just to name one.

And that's probably the most memorable, Anna Maria Island. I recommend you go on Google and look it up. And if you ever do go and visit the States, if you're in the Florida area, I really would recommend going there.

It's a lovely little place. And little is a great word because you feel like you're a part of a tiny little community. Absolutely lovely.

And now we come to cities. Tough one, this. I'm going to list a few, a few cities which I've been to that I really, really love.

We have Hong Kong. We have Singapore. New York.

All amazing, amazing places. Hanoi in the north of Vietnam. Bangkok.

Even Phnom Penh in Cambodia. All of these places are all amazing, and they all do have kind of similarities, you know, these big cities. I lived in Melbourne, as you know, for a while, and that was also amazing.

I think cities, you don't have to, I mean, each individual city does have its own identity. For example, when I think of Singapore, I think of cleanliness. I think of modern, modern concepts and modern buildings.

When I think of New York, I think dirty, but I also think of one of the best 18th birthday trips I've ever had. Going to the top of the Empire State Building, going to see the New York Knicks play basketball. You know, lots of little things that you do in cities, which you couldn't do in maybe another city.

Hong Kong, I had my spiciest meal ever, which, by the way, I think it permanently changed my taste buds. It changed the way I eat, the types of food I now eat. I love spicy food, and I have Hong Kong to thank for that.

But there are lots of cities I still want to visit. I want to go to Seoul in South Korea. I want to go to Tokyo.

There are many places in Europe which I haven't visited, kind of major cities, which people say, but you're from Europe. How have you not visited these places? It's because I've spent a lot of my life, I guess, going to places more further afield.

So it will be nice perhaps in the future to go to some places a bit closer to home. I've never been to Berlin. I've never been to Budapest.

I've never been to Prague. And I think that's the best thing about cities is it's a bit like a movie.

You have to see all the parts to be able to kind of talk to your friends, like you have to see the main parts of the movie so that you can talk about it.

So it's a bit like, for example, I could say to someone, oh, I've seen this Star Wars movie. But then they might say to me, well, have you seen this one, though, because this happens in this and it was crazy. If I haven't seen it, then it's missing.

And it's the same thing with cities, you know. Yes, maybe I've been to Hong Kong. And what you can do there is fantastic, but you couldn't do some of the things you do in Hong Kong, for example, as what you could do in Dubai, which is another place I've been to, which was absolutely amazing and so different from other places.

So with cities, I can't really single out one city. There were just lots of different little things that happen in cities, which you couldn't do in other cities or you couldn't do on the beach. Even shopping, you know, the shops are different.

The food in particular is the main reason I go to cities. The wide array of restaurants in different countries, different cuisines, different cultures, different people, so many people to talk to. And food is just so important to me when I travel.

And as I said, there will be an episode about food, all dedicated to food in the future on this podcast. So I guess when I was telling you those three stories, I couldn't really tell you which one I felt the most warm about, the one that gave me the strongest feelings. I think it's good to have a balance.

And I think if you ever do plan a big trip somewhere, a big trip away, you should always try and include a bit of city, usually at the beginning when you arrive, I guess. Then go off into the countryside, do a bit of a drive. If you can ride a motorbike, do it yourself.

If you can drive, do it yourself. Or get a tour guide to take you. Or even get a bus that just drops you in the countryside and stay somewhere.

But then also, you know, you'd want to spend some time at the beach, so make sure you do get some time to do that. It's getting that variety that really makes a trip special. And next up, we have a story from Juan Pablo, who is a Colombian EFL teacher.

He says he's also quite fond of traveling, and he loves the podcast. Well, thank you very much, my friend. And he's here to tell us about his experience in Cuba.

So here's what he said. I went there on a one-week holiday last year. It's a magical place filled with music and dancing

I went to La Havana Vieja, and here is why everyone should visit this city. In La Havana Vieja, by the way, again, I'm sorry if I pronounced that wrong. I loved walking around the old buildings and houses.

There was salsa music everywhere. People, locals, and tourists would not stop dancing. I loved going into every cafe or restaurant I passed just to listen to the salsa bands playing their music.

I ordered a mojito, which is a delicious cocktail, in each place because I was trying to enter all of them. I imagine you were quite drunk by the end of that, Juan Pablo. The rhythm that was around the streets there, which you really felt, was absolutely contagious.

No one leaves Cuba without learning how to dance. Thanks so much for that story. Short and sweet, as I like to say.

It's amazing how much you can sell a place or talk about a place and make it sound really interesting with just a few simple words, just a little brief description. I have an image in my head already of what Cuba looks like, and I can picture the music, I can picture the people, and I tell you what, man, I want to go there. So thank you very much for adding another place to my list.

This list is getting way too long now, particularly because of all of you guys. Thanks again, Juan Pablo, for that, and I wish you the best of luck with your future travels and EFL teaching journey.

And now, this week's guest speaker is going to be talking about Pakistan.

Now, without further ado, let's get straight into it and we can hear my comments after. Take it away.

Hello, Elliott. My name is Haris, and I'm from Pakistan. Today, I'd like to talk about the northern parts of my country, the part which is famous all around the world, because of the sky-high mountains, lush green valleys, mighty rivers, beautiful lakes, and amazing wildlife.

Now, due to time constraints, I've only recommended two places for you. If you really want to experience paradise in this world, a bit of an exaggeration, you should visit Naltar Valley. What's so great about this place is its very tall pine trees and colorful lakes, which will definitely make

you fall in love with it instantly.

It even hosts one of the tastiest potatoes on the globe, which just adds to its beauty. Moving on to the second recommendation, Deosai National Park. At about 4,000 meters above sea level,

Deosai National Park is the second highest plateau in the world.

It hosts a wide range of beautiful flowers, full hues and colors, with rich meadow pastures spanning miles. You might even find a rare species of brown bear, which is a sight to behold.

Deosai Lake is also part of this.

This lake is one of the highest lakes in the world. The deep blue water with snow-capped mountains and backdrop and greenery with wild flowers and foregrounds offer such a view in summers that one is left enchanted for the whole time that you're there. The best time to visit

these places is between June and October.

Thank you.

No, thank you. Thank you very much for sharing that with us. Very, very interesting to find out about your country.

I don't really know much about Pakistan, so it was really nice to hear what you had to say. I have a lot of friends here that live in the UK who are from Pakistan, and they always say it's such a beautiful country. Some areas, of course, apparently can be quite dangerous to travel, but it's so worth it.

That's what everybody says. The natural beauty and the places you described sound absolutely fantastic. So thank you very, very much for sharing that.

I wish you the best of luck in the future. Again, any of you who want to send me recordings, all you have to do is email journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com, and you can be a part of the next episode of the podcast. If you have any stories for me, anything, you don't have to send audio, although audio is better.

I think it's nice to hear your voices here. So thank you very much, everyone, for being a part of this journey today. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

Until next time, enjoy the journey.

The journey.

5

Hello, everybody, and welcome to Journeys With Elliott. This is me, Elliott, and today we have a lovely episode, which firstly, we're going to begin with myself kind of just rambling, actually. I'm not here today with a massive travel story, but of course, I'm always going to link to travel.

I feel like everything in my life kind of links to travel in some way. But I'm actually going to be discussing aspects of life, such as nostalgia, some things I've been doing recently, and also some plans for the future. Also, somebody will be talking about their experience traveling in Mexico.

And finally, to finish off the episode today, somebody will be selling us their place, as they like to call it, in Slovakia. And that's the schedule, should I say. Really hope you enjoy this episode.

Please do sit back and relax, or if you're in the gym, keep on running, or whatever you're doing today. And let's begin the journey.

So firstly, I'm going to start by talking about, I guess, what's been going on recently. I recently had a trip to Alton Towers. I don't know if you remember in one of my previous episodes about the UK, I said one of my favorite places in the world is actually right here in the UK.

It's about three hours drive from me, and it's a place called Alton Towers. It's a theme park. So we went there.

We actually thought it was going to be really, really quiet, but it didn't turn out to be very quiet.

As we arrived into the car park, we noticed that there were just loads of school coaches. And then I realized, damn, it was the last week of school term.

So during this last week of school term, I don't know if it's the same in your country if you're from a different country, but in the UK, not much really happens on that last week. It's kind of like a week just to dosse about and do nothing and kind of watch DVDs in class. And it's usually the same bloody DVD every year.

So that's kind of what happens. Actually, I seem to remember watching Bruce Almighty maybe about seven times throughout the end of every school term we just watched Bruce Almighty.

That was what the teacher had.

He must have never decided to buy any new DVDs. Anyway, the other thing that happens during this kind of last week of school is school trips. And of course, lots of school trips go to theme parks.

And I guess we thought it was going to be quiet because people were still at school, but we didn't think that actually all the people that are at school are probably going to be on school trips right now. So believe it or not, we were there for around five hours and we only went on two roller coasters, two. Now, to put that into perspective, we were there for five hours, right?

A roller coaster ride lasts about 30 seconds, 40 seconds. And we only did that twice. So we spent a total of, let's say just over one minute riding on roller coasters.

And the rest of the five hours was spent queuing or eating. And it took three hours to drive there and to drive home. So overall, yeah, maybe not the best experience.

And I definitely won't be going back at that time of year again. Next year, when the season begins again, when I get my annual pass, I'll make sure I go at the right time. So that was that.

You mean that was a bit of a disappointment, but we did manage to find some positives in this situation. It actually encouraged us to do some things there which we wouldn't usually do. So instead of thinking about the roller coasters, we actually decided to go on some of the fairgrounds kind of theming themed things.

You know, like those games where you have to throw the ball at the tins and knock all of the tins down or land the coin on the plate. And we were doing this for most of the day and it was actually lots of fun. And I didn't win anything, but my girlfriend managed to win a massive bean

bag.

It was like a donut bean bag that we brought home. And that's a good kind of memoir to have, I guess, from the dreadful day of queuing for roller coasters. So yeah, that was that.

Aside from that, I want to take you on a quick journey through nostalgia. Why am I doing this today? Well, you know that this podcast, it's not just about travel.

It's mostly about travel, but I do want to talk about life as well. And something I've recently been rediscovering in my life is the amazing feeling of nostalgia. Now, some might say it's something we can't really escape, but it's definitely something we can find.

And I guess I've just been trying to find it recently. I think if I'm ever feeling down, nostalgia is one of those things which can bring me back up. Perhaps it's because I had such, and I'm very lucky for this, I had such a great childhood.

Or maybe it's just because I did lots of great things at certain times of my life, and now maybe things are just a bit more normal. But I've noticed that it really is something that companies and businesses are buying into right now. Nostalgia.

For example, take the remake of The Lion King. I don't know if you've seen it yet. It's so good.

But it still wasn't what it was. I have to say that. It wasn't the original, but that's because I was brought up watching the original.

But this is the thing. It gave, it gives us that feeling of nostalgia. It's the same story.

It's the same thing. They've just made it look modern, look more 21st century, right? And the songs are there, but they make little changes.

But it's not just movies where this has been happening. This has been happening in games. And those of you who know me well, you might know that I'm very much into gaming.

When I get free time, I'm usually playing games. And when I was young, this is where it all started. I was with my sister playing Crash Bandicoot on the PlayStation 1 or PlayStation 2.

And that was my school holidays, you know? I was playing that all the time. And although it was very frustrating, losing all the time and dying and having to restart, and it's not an easy game for a young child, but those memories are created.

And then when we become adults, I think we find comfort in going back. But what's happening now is these companies are making us go back to the past, reliving those beautiful memories, but they're giving them a modern twist. And I really love this nostalgia movement that seems to be happening at the moment.

As well as Crash Bandicoot, when I started to grow up, I started discovering my own style, my own type of games that I really love to play. And that particular series I loved was the Resident Evil series. I don't know if you know what that is.

It's... Some people might call it a zombie game, but the true fans, we have our own things to say about it. But I grew up playing all of those games.

And I have every time they came out, I would get the new Resident Evil game. And they've started to remake those. And they've remade Resident Evil 2.

And I've spent this week actually playing it intensively for maybe the fifth time. And again, this trip through nostalgia, it brings me back to when I was younger, the feelings I had, that feeling of, I guess, not worrying about anything in the world apart from completing this game. And it kind of lets you escape in the present day and go back to when you were that little kid, whether it's watching a movie, whether it's playing a game.

And now let me talk about one of the most important aspects of nostalgia, which is travel or places. I don't know if you ever get that feeling where you arrive at a place and you just suddenly are filled with memories, maybe not even memories, just a warm feeling of kind of the feeling you had when you were there before. This is the reason why my girlfriend and I did a second trip to Southeast Asia.

You know, we had all of these amazing experiences in Thailand, in Vietnam, in Laos, in Cambodia, and we felt like it wasn't enough. But not only that, a year or two later, we didn't just think, oh, we have more to do. We thought, actually, we want to just go back and do the things we did already.

And I guess the reason why is simply just to feel those feelings again. And that nostalgic kind of warm feeling is something which I think I chase. I think it's a bit like a drug for me, and I think it is for many people.

And, you know, so we did. We went back, obviously, for a second time round, this time for a little bit longer. And we did some of the things we did before.

And some people might think, why would you go all that way back to somewhere you've been already just to do something you've done before? And I answer, well, just simply for the memories, to relive the memories and maybe create even more. And I know that might sound boring because lots of people say, why do you always go back to the same places all the time?

You know, I've been going back to the same place in Spain for about six years now. And people say, why don't you go somewhere new? And the reason why is because I know what's there and I like it, you know?

I like being able to go, arrive in the village, and I know where I want to go, where I want to eat.

But also I'd like, I always challenge myself to find something new in that place. Furthermore, it's also when you're walking along one of the streets and then suddenly you get this click and you think, oh, and you turn to your girlfriend or you turn to your mom or your dad and you say, do you remember last year when we were walking down that street and you fell over because you were so drunk?

You know, little things like that. That's what nostalgia is to me and that's why I love to go return to places. But as I said, I don't just always go back to the same places all the time.

I do like to travel to new places and I try to do that once a year. Go on one trip somewhere new.

And next year, there will be somewhere new.

I can't tell you yet, but there will be somewhere new. Actually, there's one more thing I want to talk about in terms of nostalgia. Now that we're on the topic, I just can't stop talking about it, which I guess is a good thing in a way.

Music, right? So I want to take you back to the first episode of this podcast where I told you I found this hidden island, this amazing empty island with only a few local Thai people living on it. I felt like I was in real paradise, right?

This was just amazing. And Matt, this guy who ran the bar, this guy who was almost like a father figure to me while we were there, he always had the same CD playing over and over and over.

And I didn't know all the songs, but I knew the lyrics to them and I knew the tone, how to sing them after the amount of time I spent in that bar chatting to him.

You just begin to pick up every song and you start to know which song will come next, things like that. And I really, really was happy at that time, where I was on the beach in paradise. I felt like I was living the dream.

And my girlfriend and I, we were on a mission when we got home from Thailand to discover all of those songs. So we were typing in the lyrics online, trying to find them. And then eventually we kept finding each song and we started making a playlist.

And eventually we managed to get the playlist and it was full of random Thai musicians. There was a song by a man called Job To Do. Job, number two, and then do.

And the song was called Do Do Do. And it's like a Thai reggae song. And I tell you what, it was absolutely so catchy.

And this song and also the whole playlist we made, which is exactly the same in the same order as what was on in that bar over and over, it fills me with nostalgia. It fills me of those feelings I had on that beach. Now, sometimes my nostalgia can turn to negativity because I can think, why am I not there now?

I'm so annoyed that I'm not there right now, enjoying myself, drinking a singer beer on the beach and just soaking up the sun and talking about nothing and relaxing. And then you have to realize, but I'm grateful that I had that experience and I can feel this nostalgia whenever I want, just by simply putting a song on. Someone who doesn't know that song or hasn't had that experience, they won't be feeling what I'm feeling right now.

And I want you to think the same thing because I know that nostalgia can sometimes give us negativity. It can make us think, I wish I was still doing that. And then you start to feel sad that you're not back in that past moment.

Don't let that affect you. Enjoy the feeling and know that you can always go back one day, hopefully. But other than that, you know, the things which I've been doing recently, there isn't much else.

And the reason why is because I've had to kind of keep some money back. Yes, I'm saving for a mortgage. I'm saving to buy a house.

But also I've had to keep some money back to be able to spend in Spain because I'm going to Spain this month, at the end of this month. And also I need clothes. So I've had to buy lots of new clothes to wear.

The reason why it's such a big fiasco for British people to buy holiday clothes is because most of the year round in the UK, it's cold, right? It's raining. So most of our clothes are jumpers, long sleeves, trousers, jeans, things which kind of keep us warm in the colder weather.

Because we only really get maybe a few weeks of sunshine of summer, and then it goes back to rain again. So we don't really have extensive wardrobes with very warm, with very summery clothes. So when it comes to us going on holiday, we do have to kind of rush and grab loads of new clothes and get loads of shorts and t-shirts, vests and things like that.

So that's what I've been doing a lot of the time recently. I've had to do lots of online shopping.

And it's also led me into a new habit, which I think everybody should start picking up now.

I hate to, you know, I don't want to make the podcast all about this kind of thing, but it is something I want people in some of the more remote countries to be aware of, and that is the environment. And I'm not going to talk about this for ages, don't worry. But essentially I've stopped buying clothes from some of the major retail outlets.

The reason why is because of the way they produce the clothes. It's so bad for the environment.

It's a massive waste of water.

The cotton is not produced ethically, and there are kids sweating and crying over the clothes that are being made, right? That's the most graphic I'm going to get, don't worry. And I've seen it firsthand, by the way.

I've seen it in Vietnam. I've been to factories where this kind of thing is going on, and it's horrible. It puts a big lump in my throat, in fact.

And so now, I mean, I'm doing something which is really, really simple. I'm buying less clothes, but I'm unfortunately have to spend more to buy less clothes, which are ethical, right? So I've been buying organic cotton t-shirts from brands which support the environment.

And if you do need help finding some of these brands, please tell me, and I'm not sponsored by them. That's why I'm not going to talk about them in this video. But send me any questions if you need to know about how to find or if there are any websites you want for kind of organic clothing, clothing which is not destroying the environment when it's being made, because I do have a few which I go to usually.

And that's just something I've been doing. That's my part. I'm trying to reduce my plastic waste and trying to do what I can, but I think there's a limit.

And just doing little things, it helps. I'm not a massive activist for climate change and saving the planet, but I do my bit. And I think we all should cut down on single use plastic and buy clothing from a more ethical company.

That's all I'm going to say on that topic. So yeah, I mean, it's quite exciting. I buy most of my clothes online, and I really love the anticipation, the wait for it to arrive and then to try it on.

And then you kind of get hit by this slight depression when you realize, oh, but I bought these for holiday, so I can't really wear them now. So I'm just going to have to fold them up and put them away in a cupboard and look at them and cry. Because yeah, that's kind of how it is now.

I have this big pile of clothes which are brand new and I can't wear them. And now we have a story from Martina, who's from the Czech Republic. And Martina is going to share with us some experiences she had on her trip to Mexico with her friend Monica.

And it is going to lead to me talking about a few of my experiences as well. So here we go, Monica. Thank you for sending this in.

So she says, It's about travel, but not precisely. I've traveled a lot with choirs, and I still do. But the most powerful trip, where I went to Mexico with my friend Monica, and to England on my own.

The main thing was that we stayed at friends' houses, so we weren't only in the big cities. We were with families and friends of the families. The experiences were really rich.

When we were in Mexico, we went to, oh no, I have to pronounce this now, Teotihuacan?

Teotihuacan? I'm sorry if I pronounce that wrong.

T-E-O-T-1-H-U-A-C-A-N. We asked about the best way to get there, and we went on our own. Our friends pointed out that we have to be careful about our stuff and about ourselves.

Keep up with the other tourists when we see them. Apparently that's normal, and our ministry has plenty of advice about this on their website. The funniest one is not to travel there at all.

Oh dear. Our friends also said that people might stare at us in a metro, especially at my friend, because she's 170cm tall with blonde hair and blue eyes. It was like, okay, thank you for your advice.

We are not scared enough. And they said we should not be such obvious tourists. The staring spoiled everything.

We couldn't hide, but it wasn't too horrible. The trip to the destination was amazing. We got on the bus with another load of tourists, enjoyed the place, and set off to catch the bus back.

I didn't mention that my friend is fluent in Spanish. She asked someone about the bus, which was waiting at the station. They told her that we can go to the city with it.

The first alarming thing was that it was an ordinary bus with a lot of ordinary Mexican people.

The second was that some guy got on the bus and started taking photos of us. We were very confused.

Why did he do that? Other people said that if someone kidnapped us, that they'd have photos of us and the last place we were. We shrugged and continued our best trip ever.

So firstly, I'm just gonna stop there because I actually can relate to this. And my girlfriend and 1, as you know, we've traveled a lot. And there were two, maybe three particular places.

Okay, no, maybe about six particular places where I've been stared at a lot. Now I'm blonde. My girlfriend is blonde.

I have blue eyes. Again, that's a bit weird in some countries. And my girlfriend has green eyes.

Again, that can still be a bit weird in some countries. So we stand out. We really, really do stand out.

And the worst was in Vietnam, okay, in the countryside where they've never seen people like me before. They've never seen blonde hair. So we looked like aliens to them.

Our tour guide actually said to us that we looked like to them, like we'd come from the moon.

And it was true. The way they stared at us, it was like some of them were terrified, you know, kids would run away crying because they'd just never seen anything like us before.

Because they have no technology, no internet, nothing. And then there were other situations.

It's happened to me in Hong Kong, right?

I've been on a bus in Hong Kong. People started taking photos of me. And I know that Hong Kong is very connected to the world and you have the internet, but I guess I can understand.

This was with my family. It was me, my mom, my dad, and my sister. All four of us are blonde with blue eyes.

So very, very different to the people you would see normally in Hong Kong. And we were kind of a bit on the outskirts of the main city. And I just remember people taking photos of us constantly.

And it was, I started to get a bit annoyed after a while, but I had to just understand that they'd never seen us before. They have different manners there. Perhaps to the manners we have, you know, in the UK, if you see someone who looks a bit different, we don't take photos of them.

We just ignore them, you know? So it's different everywhere. And it did make me understand a lot about culture.

So yeah, it does ruin trips a bit, but once you get past that, I think it becomes okay. If you just kind of realize, you know, they're not going to hurt you. They're just taking photos, hopefully not to go home and look at and, you know, I won't mention what I'm thinking

But you know, I can't remember where I was once. I think it was somewhere in Asia. I remember being in a village and there were people that just made it so obvious that they were staring.

Now, you know, I understand if you want to stare at me, but maybe just make it a little less obvious. Try and be subtle, you know, I don't know, find a newspaper and cut some eye holes into it. Or pretend you're asleep and like slightly close your eyes so I don't know you're looking at me.

It's when people make it really obvious that makes me feel uncomfortable. And when they start taking photos, obviously. And I remember, yeah, it was somewhere in Asia.

And every time you walked past people, they'd be staring at your face. And then as they go past, even when they're to the side of you, they're still staring at you. And then you turn around just to check if they're still looking.

And they're still walking forwards, but their head has rotated in like a complete angle, a bit like in a horror movie, like in The Exorcist, when she turns her head all the way around. It's like that.

And they're still walking forwards, but looking back at you.

And it's like, come on, come on, really? Do you have to make it so obvious? Anyway, we're gonna wrap this up now, and someone's going to sell us their city or their country, because I've got some Resident Evil to play for nostalgia's sake.

And I want to wrap this up. So let's take a look at somebody trying to sell their city or their country. Now, I haven't received any voice messages this week, so it's going to be one which I read out.

So it's entirely up to you guys. If you do try and sell me your city or your country, you can send me a recording in MP3 form of you speaking to me, and I can play it in the podcast. But today we have a message from Richard, who is from Slovakia, okay?

So let's go. Let's see what he has to say, and I'm going to read it out myself in my best words.

Dear Elliott, I didn't used to be fond of my village, which is called Oravsky Vesele, I think, in Slovakia.

But recently I have found out why I am, and I should be so deeply in love with this place. It's nature. Writing to you, I'm sitting in the meadow above my homeland, and just listening to the sounds it produces.

Cars going away and coming back, each with its own destination and story. Dogs barking, trying to protect their territory, crickets ushering in the summertime, children playing and screaming, people smiling and talking, wind cooling the hottest nights of the year, which aren't really that hot. Sun going down, wishing us the best night, wild animals roaring to be known that they exist, owls hooting in the dark and scary, nevertheless fascinating forest, and me listening to the story of us and writing it down in fear of it, disappearing once, but also a happy memory of me being young and surrounded with nature, which despite the fact that we think so, we don't own and we never will.

So that is why I'd like everybody to visit my place, because of the emotions it makes you think about and feel, and it will make you open your eyes and heart. I want to thank you for making the videos and helping people all around the world learn English, also your podcast is just perfect, and I really enjoy listening to it, because it's British English. In addition, you are funny and your laughter is so honest and natural, of course.

I love traveling. All the best, Richard. Well, Richard, thank you very much firstly for the kind words that you've given me about my lessons and also about my podcast.

Really, really honestly, a pleasure to teach all of you, and also to share my life and my stories with you and your stories. Very poetic, Richard, what you wrote there. And it really does kind of display what you were feeling at that exact time in your place, in your country, and everything felt very, very real, the way that you described it.

I could almost transport myself there. And I think all of us now have our own image in our heads of what it's like there. And hopefully this will inspire more people to go out and travel and experience Slovakia, perhaps.

It's definitely a place I've never had on my list, but maybe one day it will be. And there we go, guys. Thank you very much for listening today.

It's been a pleasure as always. I'm very, very excited to share more journeys with you in the upcoming episodes. Please let me know if you did like this style, where I didn't just talk about travel.

I also talked about a few kind of normal everyday life things. And please don't forget to send your travel stories and an audio of why we should go and visit your city or your country to journeyswithelliott.gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing more of those, and I will see or speak to you all soon.

Take care, bye. Bye.

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Hello, everybody, and welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott with me, Elliot. And thanks a lot for your patience. I know I've been away for a while.

Well, a week, to be exact. The reason why is just simply because I took what flike to call a mental health break. And I'll talk more about that in a second.

Firstly, let me just introduce what's happening in this episode. So firstly, I'm going to just give you a bit of an update on me, what's been going on in my life, maybe some travel things which are going to happen soon. And also, I'm going to be sharing some kind of funny, clumsy stories with you, things which have happened, which are just stupid and hilarious.

I'm a very, very clumsy person, as many of you know. And there are some really interesting stories which I think you'll enjoy today. As well as that, somebody will be sharing a bit of information with us about Mexican food, which is something I adore.

Fully packed episode today. Strap yourself in, and let's begin the journey. Enjoy.

So again, thank you so much for your patience. As I said, I was taking what I like to call a mental health week. And it's basically just where I occasionally, I do occasionally do this, by the way.

I just take a week away from social media. Now, I know that sounds crazy because it's my job, but I also feel like it's my job to keep myself sane and to keep myself happy. And sometimes when you're constantly working on social media, you know, worrying about what someone's going to comment, if people are going to like your new YouTube video, if people are going to care about what you have to say, you know, there's lots of things that go through your head when you're working as a person online in the public eye.

In my case, it's not public eye, it's the international eye. Everybody's watching me kind of in different parts of the world. So I like to sometimes just take a bit of time to kind of think about myself and just, I still work with my students on WhatsApp and WeChat, the people who take my course, I still talk with them.

But anything outside of that, you know, the YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, I just take a kind of seat that's far away, lie down and forget about it, you know, just for a week, just to get some space, some head space. And to relax. And it does me the world of good, you know, I've come back to work this week feeling very fresh, very motivated and full of new ideas, you know, new course ideas and things like that.

So I think it really helps. And I think everybody should do this, particularly if any of you listening are people who are thinking about or who do work online, really, really important to think about yourself. And sometimes it's okay to put yourself first.

But during this time, I didn't completely put myself first because I went to visit my grandparents in Devon. So they live about two and a half hours away in a place called Exeter, which is in Devon. And it was the first time I actually drove by myself and went on my own to visit them.

I know I'm a fully grown adult in his twenties, and this is the first time I've been to see my grandparents without my parents. How strange. But I finally got some time to do it, and it felt really good, not just to see them, but to see their faces and the reaction they had to me coming independently without relying on my parents to go and see them.

And I took them out with my girlfriend for a Sunday roast dinner, which those of you who don't know should go on Google and search roast dinner. It's a very common UK tradition on a Sunday to have what we call a roast dinner. Delicious, it was lovely, and they really appreciated it.

So had a great time, and I will definitely be going back more often. I feel like you should always make the effort with your grandparents. Aside from that, I've just been preparing for my holiday in Spain, which is on the 31st of August when I leave.

And yeah, that's about it. That's what's been going on with me. So I'm back, I'm here.

And I guess now it's time to talk about the next part, which is some of the strange experiences, clumsy experiences I've had while I've been traveling. I have some really good stories, and I've kind of written them as notes in my notepad. And for example, like one of them's called, The Time My Toenail Kept Falling Off.

The time I was chased by a dog and thought I had rabies, you know? So there were a lot of like really random vague titles in here, but all of them are very, very relevant and interesting stories.

So I'm going to share as many of these as I can and in as much detail as I can.

I'm sorry if I go off on a tangent and start talking about something else. It's just kind of the way I am. But I wanted to begin with the time where I honestly thought somebody was going to kill me in Thailand.

I was crossing the border by foot, by land from Cambodia into Thailand. And I'm sure lots of you who have traveled before will know that border towns, borders in general, are not exactly the safest place on the planet. I have a lot of Mexicans that watch my videos and talk to me and listen to my podcast.

And they obviously tell me about the Mexican border, not exactly being the safest or nicest place, let's say. And that, of course, is the same in many, many countries. But the border crossing from Cambodia into Thailand isn't the nicest.

Please let me know if any of you have been through one of those crossings. And we'd booked a bus ticket, and the bus ticket included the bus which took us from Siem Reap in Cambodia all the way to the border. We then had to cross the border on our own, and included in our ticket was the second bus which would take us from the border to our destination in Thailand.

So we got to the border. We did all of the immigration stuff, the passport stuff, all that boring rubbish, which is one of the boring parts of traveling, I must say. And we arrived.

The other side, we were officially traveling again in Thailand, we'd returned. And all of a sudden, I felt this very vicious grip on my arm. Somebody had grabbed my arm and pulled me backwards.

I was just looking for the bus, the next bus I had to get on. But this person had grabbed me, stuck his fingernails into my arm, and pulled me back to turn around and face him. I had my backpack on with all of my valuables.

My girlfriend was with me. I had no idea what was going on. And he wouldn't let go of my arm, and he started pointing and shouting.

And obviously, my instant reaction, being somebody who had to look out for himself in a dangerous area like this, I pushed him away from me. I pushed him off and said, what are you doing? Why are you doing that?

And then he couldn't speak any English, so he was just shouting at me in Thai, getting really angry. Then two of his friends came over. Luckily, I had made friends with some rather large Brazilian guys earlier on in the day on the bus before.

And they came over and wanted to check that I was okay and that I was safe. And then some guy from the Netherlands and his girlfriend came over and some German people. And that was when I really felt the power of traveling, backpacking.

People do love to unite and stick up for each other. Europeans love to support each other as well, but the Brazilians, just everybody who's traveling likes to kind of consider us as a family, which I love. And yeah, this guy was still shouting at me, and eventually a local Thai tour guide who was with some British tourists had stopped and noticed what had been happening.

This guy was shouting at me and getting aggressive, and who knows he could have had a weapon. The tour guide had translated for us, and basically it turns out that this guy who had grabbed me very violently, remember, and aggressively, not like a normal person, was supposed to be taking us on a tuk-tuk to the bus. A tuk-tuk is like a motorbike taxi.

So it turns out that I had aggressively pushed away the man who was supposed to take me to my next very important bus journey to get me to the place I needed to go to. As you can imagine, that didn't go too well because we weren't getting on now. We're not friends anymore.

I don't think we were friends in the beginning because he started attacking me. Why would you grab someone like that? I'm sure he was worried that I was going to walk off, but still, you don't need to grab someone that violently.

I mean, I was pointing to him my arm to show him the scratches he had made in my arm. He obviously doesn't know how to gently grab someone. But luckily, he calmed down.

I offered him more money, which seems to be the language for tuk-tuk drivers. Money, money, money. So I gave him extra money, and he finally decided to take us to the bus.

All of the tourists were on the bus waiting for us, so we'd held everyone up. And then the journey began on the way back. But that was one moment.

You know, I was 19 years old, and I honestly thought I could have died. I was that scared. You know, you're vulnerable.

You're a tourist. You have all your valuables on your back in a backpack, and somebody starts acting like that. Who knows?

I mean, there's been many stories of people dying whilst backpacking. And that's the only negative experience I had with people or a person in Thailand. The rest of it was absolutely fine.

So just be cautious when you're at borders. Someone who violently grabs you might be someone who's actually supposed to be taking you somewhere, so don't maybe push them immediately. Just see what they're trying to say.

Unfortunately, my guy didn't know how to speak English, so he could only speak with his fingernails. And that's that story. Now moving swiftly on, we have a story about my father now.

So my dad, just like me, is very, very clumsy. I think he's who I get it from. If you go for a meal with me and my dad, at least one of us, if not both of us, will knock a glass of red wine all over the tablecloth, maybe smash a plate, smash a glass by accident, or fall over.

Something bad is going to happen if you have both the father and son out together. And if you get my sister involved too, the whole place is a wreck. But my dad's the worst.

And this was very, very evident when we took a family trip to Jamaica. So as I've told you before, he was a travel agent at the time, and he had lots of offers to go to some of the best hotels in the world. So he took us to this amazing six-star hotel in Jamaica.

It was a resort. So to get from the place we were sleeping, like our kind of own house almost, we had to get in a golf cart to get to the restaurants, which we would go to in the evening. My grandparents had come with us on this holiday.

So it was my mom, my dad, my sister, myself, and my grandparents. And my granddad was driving the golf cart to take us to the restaurant that evening. My dad was in the passenger seat.

I was on my mom's lap, and my sister was sat next to us, because she was older than me. She is older than me. And I saw a few amazing things in Jamaica.

Firstly, I saw turtles hatch out of their eggs and find their way to the ocean. I saw Rastafarians just smoking weed in the street and being very friendly to us. I saw wild animals that I had never seen before, and actually one amazing thing we did was bareback horse riding.

I was very young. I was about six years old. So I had a Jamaican man riding my horse for me, and I was holding on to him.

And we literally rode the horses into the ocean. It was unbelievable. But there was one funny thing we used to see a lot, which was crabs, big, big groups of crabs.

I don't know what the collective word for a group of crabs is, but they were crossing the road where we would be driving the golf carts. And I remember we didn't notice this time the crabs crossing. My granddad was driving quite fast, actually, for my granddad.

I mean, nowadays, he drives at about five miles per hour everywhere he goes because he's nervous. But back then, he was a bit more wild, right? Yeah, he was driving quite fast, and suddenly we came across some very violent bumps in the road.

And it turns out my granddad didn't see the crabs that were crossing the road, and he just drove straight over them. And this kind of sent the golf cart into a bit of a crazy bumpy ride. Suddenly, we heard a big shout.

We turned around, and my dad was rolling away in the road. He'd fallen out of the golf cart because we drove over a load of crabs. And I tell you now, he was covered in cuts and bruises, and his back has never been the same.

He's had a bad back ever since. I used to love sitting on my dad's shoulders, and unfortunately now, well, actually now, I'm a full grown 25 year old, so I'm definitely not going to sit on my dad's shoulders now. After it happened, I was unable to go on his shoulders anymore, which was a real shame, because that was one of my favourite things to do.

So yeah, that was another kind of clumsy holiday experience this time when I was about six years old. Another great story I want to tell you is about my toenail. So I have very big feet.

That's the first thing to mention to you. I have size 11 feet, so I have very large monkey feet. We were in Laos, L-A-O-S.

Some people know it as Laos, but I believe local people call it Laos, so that's what I'm going to call it. A place called Luang Prabang, which is one of my favorite small villages in the world that I visited. It was beautiful.

Surprisingly, actually, when we went there, just by luck, there was a festival going on. I believe it's a festival which also happens in Thailand, so any Thai listeners or Laos people, I know there are not many of you, but if any of you are listening, please correct me if I'm wrong, but it's sometime between September, October, or November, and it's a boat racing festival. It's to celebrate the boats and the water and things like that.

And in the streets of Luang Prabang, they're very small streets, there were lots of local people carrying model boats, boats they'd created. There were monks praying in the temples around.

There were lanterns everywhere.

People were lighting those sky lanterns that fly into the sky. It was one of the most beautiful, unimaginable experiences, and I filmed it all, and it was just unbelievable. It makes me cry when I watch the video, because it was one of those really spiritual nights, something you could never rewrite, well, I guess unless you go again, which I really need to do.

It's on my list to go back to Luang Prabang when that festival is on. But anyway, we're talking about clumsy stories, and it happened this night. It was the beginning of many clumsy stories.

So I was walking in my sandals where my toes were exposed, and I was so distracted by everything that was going on around me, the drums, the lanterns, the lights, the dancing, the people carrying bows, that suddenly, bang! I walked foot or let's say toenail first into a very thick brick of rock. It was so thick and sharp.

Now, if you're squeamish and you don't like blood or nails or fingernails or toenails or anything like that, please skip maybe about 10 minutes of this podcast. I'm sorry, but I need to explain this. So I walked into it and I looked down, and half of my toenail was pointing at me.

So yeah, I basically removed half of my toenail, but it was still attached to half of my toenail, so it was pointing up at me. It makes me feel sick just thinking about it, and I'm sorry if you're in the gym right now and you've just had your breakfast and you want to throw up. I don't mean to cause you any discomfort.

Luckily, my girlfriend used to work in a pharmacy, so before we left, she stocked up on loads and loads of first aid gear. So she took me back and nursed me in the hostel we were staying in. And we went back out and we enjoyed the rest of the night, but that was just the beginning.

So after a while, I was worried about the plasters and the bandages running out. We'd started to have to redress my toe every day and look after it every day. Eventually, we were getting a bit worried, and me being typical Elliott, I was saying, oh, I'm fine now.

My toenail will be fine now. The half that had bent had fallen off by now, and it was just a big cut. So a few weeks later, we're in a place called Vang Vieng in Laos still, and we meet some people from Finland, and they say, oh, let's rent some motorbikes, right?

And I was thinking, yeah, sure, let's do that. I have no idea how to ride a motorbike, but I'm just going to pretend I do. And we tried it, and immediately when I got on the motorbike, I twisted the handle, and I just couldn't stop.

And I nearly drove into a shop. Now, to stop myself from driving into that shop window, I jumped off the bike. And surprise, surprise, the first thing that hit the floor was the toe.

It was the toe, yeah, it was the toe. And yeah, the injury had reintroduced itself to my body. So we're back to square one.

Lots of blood, lots of pain, lots of discomfort. And we were running out of plasters, so I had to make sure that this didn't happen again. We had to pay a big fine for the injuries to the bike.

Nobody cared about my toenail and how much it was bleeding. It was just the bike that was the problem, apparently. So we paid them, and our friends from Finland drove off into the distance and enjoyed the rest of their day.

And I had to go back and lie down and be bandaged up again by my girlfriend. But then I won't mention the other stories because it's getting a bit disgusting now, but let's say the toenail incident repeated itself about three or four times over the next few months, and I came back to England definitely with still half of my toenail missing. The end.

Let's finish that story about toenails and blood and stuff. It's not fun, and I'm sorry, but I had to tell that story. Now, I'm just going to share one more with you today, and this is another one about when I was very young.

So some of you might know this about me. I grew up as a child with a real phobia, a real fear of face paints. Not just face paints, though.

Also, people dressed up as characters, like people just dressed in strange outfits. I know it's weird, but I was a weird child. I'm still weird now that I don't have this fear anymore, only with clowns at the moment.

But yeah, I was amazed because I'd finally arrived in Disneyland in Florida with my family, my mom, dad, sister, grandma, granddad, and half-brother. We'd arrived in Disneyland, and already my brother had gone missing once. He was about 14, and we were walking around the park.

It was a very busy, hot day, and my dad turns around, and my brother is gone. We had no idea where he'd gone until he just turned up later, and it's because he just wanted to go on Splash Mountain, one of the rides there. He didn't tell anyone.

He just decided to walk off and go on it by himself as a 14-year-old, and then come back and find us, which was kind of weird. But then this, what happened with me, is even weirder. So I was very young as well.

I was younger, okay? I was probably like, I don't know, maybe about seven. So young enough to remember what happened.

So I told you I had this fear of people dressing up, and obviously I was over the moon. I was so excited to be in Disneyland. You know, I was a big fan of Goofy.

So anything Goofy or Pluto, the dog, I loved. I did like Mickey and Minnie Mouse, but I didn't want to be the same as everyone else. So Goofy was my favorite.

Suddenly, wow, I saw him walking around. And then my fear kicked in of people dressed up as characters, people dressed in strange things, and I realized, oh, God, it's Goofy. And I ran.

I just ran, ran, ran away from my parents, away from my family just to escape Goofy. And on the way, I saw a Mickey Mouse walking towards me, and it just got worse and worse. And of course, when the people are dressed as the characters, they think it's going to excite children.

But for me, it was the opposite. It scared me because I had this phobia. Luckily, an employee of Disneyland, who's probably around my age now at the time, she stopped me, she calmed me down in her American accent, and she was like, Hey, what's your name?

Where's your mom? You know, that kind of thing. You okay?

And she calmed me down. She was so lovely. And I told her, Oh, I don't like Goofy.

And I think she had no idea what I was talking about. But I think she kind of realized that I ran away from Goofy, and I'd lost my parents. Luckily, she managed to get me back to my parents.

And my mom was crying. My dad was just so confused because he'd lost two sons in one day. It was a nightmare, honestly, but that's what my family holidays are like.

That fear also happened, kind of went into power when we were in a place called Mallorca, which is an island and very popular with British people. And we were sat having a meal in Palma. It was in a cafe.

And over there, it's quite common for people dressed up as mimes. So with the white face and the black lips, you know, and they pretend they're climbing out of a box, those people, to come along to your table and perform for you to get money, like busking. Well, again, obviously, I'm terrified of face paints, but this mime walked straight up to me because he wanted to entertain me.

He thought it would be funny. And he didn't know I was terrified of face paints, so it made me scream. And this time, I didn't run away.

I just got under the table, held my mum's leg, and cried for about an hour, probably the whole meal. So the mime didn't, unfortunately, get any money that day from us. But I hope he has a good life.

I hope he's okay now. And you're welcome to perform for me now if you want, Mr. Mime. I'm not scared anymore.

And those are my weird travel stories. I mean, I just kind of went through my mind and thought about some of the strange, clumsy inconveniences that might have happened while I've been traveling. I have so many more injuries and accidents that have happened to me, my dad, all of my family members.

So if you did enjoy this, please email me and let me know, and I'll make another episode similar to this next time of my strange, funny stories. Email at journeyswithelliot at gmail.com. And yeah, I'd love to hear from you to know if you enjoyed this kind of episode.

But now we must begin with your stories. And boy, am I excited for you all to hear this. We have someone called Jaime.

Now in English, that would be Jamie, pretty much. And he's from Mexico, and he's going to talk a little bit about possibly some of my favorite food in the world. And if none of you have ever tried Mexican food, please do listen to him, write down a couple of the things he mentions, and go and try some Mexican food.

It will change your life. Trust me, it changed mine. And I'm going to talk about that in a short second after we've heard Jaime speak.

So take it away, mate.

Hello, Elliott. Thank you for the opportunity of sharing some advice about Mexican food on your podcast. I'm Jaime, an English teacher as a second language.

I currently live in Cancun, but I'm from Mexico City, one of the cities with more museums in the world. And also full of tasty food. Most of this delicious food is found on the streets.

We have tacos, quesadillas, pan vasos, tlacoyos, sopes, among other great options. As a matter of fact, tacos al pastor have recently been recognized as the best meal of the world. These tacos are made of spiced pork, cooked to the fire on a metal stick, which the taquero, the man who prepares them, spins from time to time for a good cook.

They are usually served with two tortillas, the pork, chopped onion and cilantro, a small piece of pineapple, some lemon juice, and hot red sauce. If you come to Mexico City, I strongly recommend trying these tacos at a stall on the street. Or if you prefer restaurants or established markets, you can try pozole, which is a traditional dish from the east and south of Mexico and is made of big grains of corn served with meat, like in a soup.

With sliced radishes, chopped onion, some oregano, lemon juice, and lettuce. Some people add avocado. As it can be a bit strong for the stomach, especially when eating two bowls of it, some people have a shot of tequila before eating it.

What a feast! I'm sure you'll enjoy Mexican food. Thank you.

Oh, Jaime, you've made my mouth water. Why did you do this to me? I'm so hungry now, and it's too early in the morning for me to be eating a big meal.

But you've made me want Mexican food. I actually tried to have Mexican food once a week. My girlfriend and I tried to cook something Mexican.

Now, I know it would never be as good as the kinds of Mexican food you'd get in Mexico, in Mexico City, for example. But thank you so much for sharing some new ones I've never heard of.

That's great.

I will try some of those. In the winter, my girlfriend and I frequently, maybe once a week, cook something. I think it's Mexican, but please correct me if I'm wrong, guys.

It's called carnitas, or carnitas, I believe, in a British accent, carnitas. And it's slow-cooked pork with lime, juice, orange juice, cumin, smoked paprika, and lots of flavours. And you just slow cook it in...

Thave a slow cooker, so I do that in the winter a lot to have a nice warm hearty meal. And I think you put it in a wrap after, like a tortilla wrap or something, or a taco. And yeah, we do that once a week in the winter, and it is just one of the most beautiful things to eat.

I love the taste of smoked paprika, which is very, very common in Mexican food, Spanish food as well. And so it's really a special type of food for me. And I do try to go to Mexican restaurants, but the ones in the UK are just not that great.

We have lots of what we call chain restaurants, which are, you know, big companies like Nando's is Portuguese food, but big chains similar to Nando's or McDonald's, you know, there are lots of those Mexican style restaurants. It's very hard to come across an authentic Mexican restaurant in the UK. So hopefully I will find one soon where I can have some real home style street food style Mexican food.

By the way, one thing you didn't mention there, which is something I adore, is something sweet from Mexico. And that would be churros. I don't know if you say churros or something like that.

Churros, it's almost like a sweet doughnut with custard or some kind of cream. Absolutely divine. So thank you again for bringing back some beautiful memories I have with Mexican food.

Never been to Mexico, but it is, you know, I keep telling people I have places on the list. Mexico is right there at the top, and it is a place I feel like I have to go to. Again, lots of people know I travel for food.

So why would I not go to Mexico? So thank you again, Jaime, for sending that and really, really beautiful sharing you've given us. So thank you.

And now we have something nice. The Philippines, a place I know very little about, apart from the beautiful pictures I've seen of amazing oceans and the people I've met who have usually very good American style accents. And sometimes I've actually mistaken Filipinos for Native American speakers because of the way not I don't mean Native Americans as in Native Americans.

I mean actual US American speakers because they have such a good pronunciation of American English. But I do have a lovely, lovely message which was sent to me from Genevieve, and she's from the Philippines. She wasn't able to send a voice recording, but that's absolutely fine.

I read this and I thought I needed to share this with you because lots of you I'm sure are debating whether you should possibly go and visit the Philippines. Well, don't worry, Genevieve is here to sell us her country. So, let me first introduce myself to you, she says.

My name is Genevieve, and I am from the Philippines. It was nice listening to your podcast, especially whenever you talk about different places which I look forward to visit in the future.

It's like you have already taken me there.

That's exactly what my goal is with this podcast, so thank you. And she says, thank you, and in return, I would like to share our beautiful country, the Philippines. We are known for beautiful beaches and natural tourist attractions, such as the Boracay Island, Siargao Palawan, La Union, and many more.

We also have beautiful mountains, such as Cordillera, Mount Pulag, Mount Apo, and a lot more.

Our country actually has a very interesting shape, if you look at it on the map. And spending your time here for just a week won't be enough, because Filipinos are very rich in islands and culture, which you may find very interesting.

So let me just stop there. This was one thing which actually... So I had the Philippines included in my itinerary when I was traveling around Southeast Asia, because it's close to places like Vietnam, Thailand, you know.

So I was actually thinking of flying there just before coming home, but I only had two weeks, and everybody was saying two weeks is not enough for the Philippines. There are so many islands. It's quite expensive actually for a tourist to get around, because there are so many things to see, and so many islands you have to jump to and stuff.

So yeah, I'm really sad that, but perhaps I'll go there for a real holiday at some point. And she continues on saying, we also have different food delicacies each place you go. You should try adobo.

I've tried that. It's beautiful. Sinigang, Tinolang Manok, Kare Kare or Kare Kare, I'm not sure, and other local dishes such as Balut and Halo Halo, or Halo Halo, not sure how to pronounce that one.

And of course, when it comes to beverages, you can find the cheapest beer in our country. You can even treat the whole village if you want. Don't worry, it won't be hard to communicate with the locals here, because most Filipinos can actually understand and speak English.

Plus, we are known for being very hospitable to our visitors. Our country has a lot to offer, and of course, I cannot write them all down here. These are just some of the things you must know from us, and I hope you experience them too.

Thank you, and hopefully we'll see you here soon. That was one of the loveliest emails I've read, where somebody describes their country, mainly because I just really liked the way that you kind of mentioned all the most important things. You listed some names.

Very, very good job there, Genevieve. And as I said, I will definitely be making my way to the Philippines, as well as Mexico, as well as Croatia, as well as all of these other places, India, everywhere I keep mentioning. Hopefully I will have time in my life to go to all of these places.

Again, if anyone wants to sponsor this podcast with a around-the-world trip, feel free. I'm here.

And that's it, okay?

So if you want to be featured on the next episode of this podcast, please send me an email, journeyswithelliott.gmail.com. I know some of you have already sent me some voice recordings and some written emails. I'm sorry if you haven't been included yet.

I'm trying my best to get as many of you as I can into the podcast. And hopefully, next week, it will be you. Thank you so much for listening.

I hope you enjoyed our journeys today. We did have a few different kind of countries and places that we visited, and I hope I really made you feel like you were with me there in the moment.

Thanks for all the support.

Thanks for your patience, again, for waiting a week for me. I'm looking forward to the next episode already. I already know what I'm going to talk about, so really, really excited for that.

But we'll leave it here. I'm terrible at goodbyes, guys. It's so difficult for me, but take care.

Enjoy the journey. I'll speak to you soon. Bye.

7

Hello, everybody, this is Elliott, and welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. Kind of felt weird then, I felt like I was saying, hello, everybody, this is Elliott from ETJ English. I'm still not used to that, and we're what, episode 7?

And I still think that I'm doing an ETJ English episode. It's crazy. Anyway, thank you so much for coming here today to hang out with me.

Thave a few interesting, weird things to talk about. We're going to be talking a little bit about tattoos, because I have recently added to my collection of tattoos. We're also going to be talking about traveling solo.

I had someone recently reach out to me and ask about experiences I've had traveling on my own, what it's like, how you're able to enjoy yourself, even if you don't have somebody with you, and, of course, how to make the most of it, I guess. As well as that, somebody will be sharing a travel story with us, and we should have someone selling their city or their country to us. All of that is to come, so sit back and enjoy the journey with me.

Let's go.

So, a lot of you probably were quite shocked when I said the word tattoos. Maybe some of you don't even think I have any. But you do get a little glimpse of them sometimes in my ETJ English YouTube videos.

I have one on the inside of my arm, and it's some Thai writing. What a surprise! The guy who talks constantly about Thailand on his podcast has a Thai tattoo.

I didn't get it in Thailand. I got it when I was 17 years old, immediately, on my 17th birthday, in a small tattoo shop which I would never go back to because I don't really like it. But there, I felt quite uncomfortable when I was in there.

And it's Thai writing, and I believe the word, the pronunciation, is Don Tri, which is, I'm sorry if that was really bad pronunciation, Thai people listening, which should mean music, I hope. And I got that because I love music. Music is one of the biggest, most important parts of my life.

But the other most important part is travel, and particularly traveling around Thailand, one of the closest countries to my heart. So that was the first tattoo I got. Following that, I then proceeded to get a tattoo on my ankle when I was around 18 years old, so a year later.

And that's a paw print, so a dog's foot paw print on the side of my ankle. And this is to represent my dog, who his name was Barney, and he passed away when I was around 18, 19 years old. And he died of cancer, and it was really, really sad for me.

Real, real emotional moment. It still makes me feel really sad now thinking about it. My parents have a different dog now.

I have my own cat. But, you know, it really was an important moment to me. The first real death I experienced.

So the tattoo on my ankle, it reminds me of that feeling I had from death, experiencing death, although it was an animal for the first time. I'm really, really feeling emotion. So it kind of does connect me to my emotions, that tattoo.

And it also reminds me of the amazing childhood I had growing up with a dog in my house. You know, there are little things I remember about Barney that really warm my heart. And I think I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't have grown up with a dog in the house.

I now love animals. Animals are so important to me too. So it's also a representation of that.

And then we move on to the other tattoo I have, which some of you know about, which is the Arctic Monkeys tattoo. It's across the front of my other ankle, my left ankle. And it's, so those of you who know the band Arctic Monkeys, you'll know that they had an album called AM.

And on the front of that album is some sound waves in white, and they go AM. Like as though it's playing in sound waves. If you don't know what I'm talking about, just search Arctic Monkeys AM album cover, and you will see it.

And that's what it is. I have that going around and across the front of my ankle, and I wear that with pride. Again, it reminds me of music.

It reminds me of my passion for my favourite band. I believe if you are a real fan of a band, then the furthest step you can really take is a tattoo. Well, actually, probably the furthest step you could take is getting a massive face tattoo of like Arctic Monkeys across your forehead.

I'm not that crazy, so I just decided to get a very important album tattooed on my ankle. But the other important thing about that was it was done by a friend who I met in Australia. I told you in one of my previous podcast episodes that I lived with a group of Koreans in a flat in Melbourne.

And I became really close to this guy, and he was experimenting as a tattoo artist, particularly in Australia, because I think it's... I'm not sure if it's illegal or frowned upon in South Korea, tattooing. So although he had them all over his legs, he used to hide them when he lived in Korea.

And then in Australia, he really wanted to experiment and expand his skills in tattooing. So I thought it would be quite an easy one for him to do, the AM logo on my ankle. So he did that for me.

And what that does is it reminds me of, yes, my favourite band, but it reminds me of being in Australia. It reminds me of being spontaneous, because one day we were just sat outside. We were talking, and I said, hey, Terry, that was his English name, do you want to tattoo me?

And he was like, what? And then he was like, yeah, sure. And then we cleaned up the area, we made it as sterile as possible, and then went inside, and he tattooed my ankle, and that was it.

And now I have that on me forever. So it reminds me of him, it reminds me of being young, being spontaneous, and just not really caring, just living in the moment, which I think we should be doing a lot more in our lives, and not worrying about things so much. We then lead on to my final, or not final, my most recent tattoo, which is the one I got last week.

So my best friend, his name is Jordan, he's a tattoo artist, and he has been doing it for around five years now. And if I'm being honest, I had been too scared to get it done by him, to get anything done by him, because he was still new to the game. And I knew if I got something done by him, I wanted it to be relatively big.

So I waited for him to build experience, to get better, and he really has, you know, made a name for himself now. He's an amazing tattoo artist, and now he's covered in them. He has them all over his arms, his body, his legs.

And it really does look fantastic. And finally, I reached out to him, and I said, I'm ready to get tattooed by you, because I know what I wanted. I wanted and I have it now, so I'll tell you what this new tattoo is.

It's quite big. It wraps around the back of my arm. Okay, so imagine my elbow.

Above my elbow, it wraps around the back of my tricep, and to the inside of my arm. And it's a boomerang. So those of you who don't know what a boomerang is, it's related to Australia.

It's that wooden bent thing, which traditionally from Aboriginal people, you could throw and it will fly back to you. So this has many different meanings firstly. I'll talk more about the design in a second, but it has many different meanings behind it.

Many people get the boomerang tattooed on them because it represents karma. So karma, the concept of treat people this way, you will receive the same treatment back. Give to charity and one day life will give back to you.

It's about how karma comes back around. If you treat someone badly, it will come back and treat you bad. And that's because when you throw the boomerang, it will fly back to your hand if you know how to throw it correctly.

So I partly got it for this reason. But the other reason is, of course, because I lived in Australia and I didn't really have a tattoo to represent that really monumental part of my life, a part where I became independent. Things changed for me.

I learned how to be a real man, I believe, and I just had one of the best experiences of my life. So every time I can turn around and look at my arm now and I think of my life in Australia, my second home, the place I love. But there's more to it.

So this tattoo also has a Gemini symbol in the middle of it. Now, I'm not very big on the whole zodiac thing, you know, Gemini, Leo, Cancer, all of that stuff. But my mom, since I've been growing up, has always been telling me that I am such a Gemini.

I was born in June. June the 15th is my birthday, which is the Gemini. I fall into the Gemini category.

Now, if you don't know what I'm talking about, just search on Google for the zodiac symbols, you know, and you can find out what you are. In some countries, I know that they don't do them, so it's good to be aware of. So I'm a Gemini.

And Gemini represents a lot of different things. It represents, in particular, the symbol for it is either the number two in Roman numerals or two heads, so like two faces. And it's not a bad thing.

It can be a hindrance to some people, and it is to me sometimes, because I really do believe I am a true Gemini, as my mum has always told me. It's kind of the fact that your moods can easily be influenced. You know, maybe one second you're really, really happy.

Life is amazing. Things are going great. But then one tiny thing could happen, and then you have this second side of you, a second personality that appears, and suddenly the one you just had, the feeling you just had, completely gone.

You're now affected by something that's happened. Now, you could just say that's manic depression or personality disorder. But I really do believe that I do have this kind of Gemini attitude where I can easily be affected by particular things.

And yeah, so I got the two heads, two heads facing away from each other, and in between them is two. No Roman numerals for number two. So I have both the Gemini symbols imprinted into this patterned boomerang.

And of course, I don't know if many of you know much about tattoos, but I'm very into the traditional style of tattooing. So not realism. I like surrealism and traditional, neotraditional, old school American traditional tattoos.

And I have the kind of old school roses tattooed one behind and one in front, so it kind of makes the boomerang pop. So maybe you'll see it in one of my future videos, but this one really means a lot because it's quite big. And it is, I'm sorry to those of you who hate tattoos, it's the beginning of an arm which will hopefully be full of tattoos over the next few years.

I do plan on getting a lot more. And as I said, some people might hate this, but in my opinion and in the modern day of Western society, I believe our opinion on tattoos is changing. Many, many, many years ago, it used to be a symbol of gangs, criminals, bad people, dangerous people.

But now, tattoos are a way of self-expression. They're a way to show your story on your body. I think they're a thing of beauty.

And I'm very attracted to people with tattoos. If I see people with tattoos, I talk to them about their tattoos. I think they're amazing.

And I think it takes a lot of bravery as well to get one. It also represents pain. The process of getting a tattoo, I think you have to be strong to be able to sit through.

I mean, mine took three hours. Three hours of someone digging a needle into my skin, you know? So, yes, it is something to represent yourself as well.

And I know some of you listening in some countries, your countries will be very anti-tattoos, will really not like tattoos because of the fact that your society might be different to mine. But just so you know, over here in the UK, it's a very normal thing to get tattoos, and in many parts of Europe and other parts of the world. America, very common.

Australia, they love their tattoos. And it's also personal taste. So I'm sorry if my tattoos or any tattoo, the idea of a tattoo in general doesn't suit your tastes.

To me, I love them. And they make me happy. So I'll wrap up the whole tattoo thing now, because that's not really what we're here to talk about.

But just so you know, I do have a few ideas of what I'll be getting next, and I'll be interested to talk to you about those in the future. Do you have any tattoos? If you want, you can share them with me.

Send me a picture to journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com if you really want to share your tattoo with me and talk about it, the story behind it. Maybe I'll share a little bit about that in the next episode of the podcast. But now we move on to the travel section of this podcast.

The part why, you know, many of you come here, and I just wanted to touch lightly on the topic of traveling alone. It's something I've done a few times, not much, just a few times. Me personally, I always need a wingman or my partner, my girlfriend with me.

One of the main reasons for this is that, because lots of you might not know this about me, I'm actually a very, very shy person. I get very nervous in social situations. I'm very awkward and I have quite a lot of anxiety.

So it's very, very, very, very difficult for me to approach people. I'm very good at continuing a conversation. So as long as somebody starts the conversation with me, I don't have to go up to them and talk to them first.

As long as they do that, then I'm able to keep that conversation going all night if I have to. It's just the beginning of the conversation, and sometimes the goodbye, that's the most difficult part. Now, I don't know why it's just the way I was born.

Maybe I've had a bad experience in my previous early stages of my life, which might have caused me to be like this. So I always feel a lot more comfortable approaching people and doing things when I have someone with me. But what if you prefer to travel alone, or what if you don't have anyone to travel with?

Well then, unfortunately, you do have this big weight on your shoulders. You either enjoy your long backpacking trip, or a few months away or one month away without talking to anyone, or you could try and actively find people to spend your time with. It's really up to you how you go about it.

One thing which I probably shouldn't say, but I will anyway, is that alcohol helps. Now, I know some of you may have religions which prohibit this, or you might have just life decisions or life things that have happened that won't allow you to drink. But if you are a person who does indulge in alcohol occasionally, it does help with social situations.

Now, I'm not saying go out and get absolutely smashed and then try and talk to people, because you might end up getting arrested for doing something stupid. So I just mean like a glass of wine or two glasses of wine or a shot of vodka or something, before you have to kind of push your confidence out there and do it. Now, some people who travel solo are just really, really confident.

And if you're one of those people, please don't be an idiot and don't use it. Use your confidence.

If you are a confident person, we're all jealous of you.

So just go and use that confidence. Talk to people, meet as many people as you can. If you're not a confident person like myself, then you have to take different approaches.

As I said, I don't recommend it, but alcohol can help. Other things you can do is look for other people who might be on their own. I know that sounds weird and kind of sounds a bit stalkerish if you're preying on people who are on their own.

But remember, they're probably in the same boat as you. So don't be afraid to just take the leap.

There's one particular thing which somebody told me once, which was imagine there's this one person that you want to talk to.

You've seen them in a bar or outside somewhere looking at a temple. Let's say you're traveling in Asia and you've seen a beautiful temple and you're just looking at it. And then you turn around and you see someone else looking at it.

They look like a tourist too. Maybe they're on their own or maybe it's two people, like a couple or something. Think to yourself, what are the chances that you will see them again?

Probably very, very unlikely. There are so many people in this world. How is it likely that you will bump into them again?

And it is a common mindset that a lot of people have, which is, oh well, I'll never see them again, so I'll just go up and talk to them. If you can kind of get yourself in that mindset, it really does work. You could just approach them and think that way, think that you will never see them again.

And then you might not be so afraid to talk to them. But this is the beautiful thing about travel and talking to people, particularly when you combine the two things together. If you think that way, then there are two results.

There's either the result where you think, I'll never see them again, so I'm going to speak to them now. This may then lead to an amazing friendship, which then leads you on to meeting more people, and then meeting more people, all of you together. You might end up traveling further to more places with those people.

You might join them on their trip. You might end up coming home and then flying to their country and meeting them or their city. Maybe you'll invite them to your wedding in the future.

Maybe you'll marry that person. You see what I mean? Anything could happen when you start that conversation.

And don't think about it too much before you do. Don't think, this is my future wife or husband.

But do think that anything could happen when you just approach people like that.

And this isn't for dating. This is just for meeting people and friends and not being so lonely when you're traveling. And then we have the second result, which is the result where you think, I'm too embarrassed, I don't want to talk to them.

If that happens, then yeah, you'll never see them again. And all of those stories which could be written with that person that you see right there may not happen. I mean, you might speak to them, and they might say, oh, sorry, I'm busy, goodbye.

But at least you tried, and you'll never see them again. So you either create the chance of possibly seeing someone again and possibly creating an amazing life with or time or short temporary period of time with these people, or you don't do anything and you never create anything with them. Maybe that will lead on to something else happening.

Who knows? It just really depends on life and how life feels like treating you that day. But if you think about it that way, it really can help you on your travels, and you might then, as I said, create some amazing experiences on that trip with these new people that you've met.

Now, if you are traveling alone and you just want to be alone, then I completely understand. I'm an introvert. I don't really...

You know, there's only a certain amount of time I can spend with people, unless it's like my girlfriend. But if it's friends, you know, there's a limit to how long I can spend with them before I start getting annoyed or bored or just want to kind of be on my own and relax. So I understand if some of you want to travel alone, and if you want to still keep your mental health, stay sane and stay happy on your own while you're traveling, then don't...

This is the big thing I want you to imagine as well. Don't allow the fact that someone is not there stop you from doing things. You know, sometimes when we're with people, they encourage us to maybe do things that we might be too scared to do, like bungee jump, or jump out of an aeroplane, or go on a jungle trek, or ride an elephant, do something crazy.

Maybe on your own, you think, I haven't got anyone with me, so what's the point? But I want you to imagine that there is someone with you, someone there in spirit, kind of telling you to do these things that maybe you wouldn't normally do on your own. Because you don't have that person there pushing you to do those things.

So allow yourself to be spontaneous, and imagine someone else is there telling you to do stuff.

Because it's very easy when you're travelling on your own to get into a routine, to get lazy, to just sit in your flat or your hostel and eat, and not much really happens. So make sure you do get yourself out of your comfort zone, and imagine, as I said, there's an imaginary friend pushing you.

Don't start becoming, you know, crazy and thinking there are people in your room with you, but imagine there is someone that's telling you to do these things that you maybe wouldn't do if you were stuck in your introverted mind. If you're an extrovert, as I said, go out there, do as much as you can, make the most of it, travel, travel, travel, enjoy, talk to people, you can do everything.

But not everybody is the same.

Go to events, do things, then you'll meet people as well. So for example, if you see advertised some kind of, like in places like Chiang Mai in Thailand, there's always like kind of stuff advertised for backpackers, like yoga classes, meditation classes, sports and things like that, which other Western or foreigners, as they call them in Thailand, pharangs, will be doing and attending. So that's another way, definitely.

Also, I'd like you to definitely take part in tours, you know, with a tour guide. So for example, I did the motorbike tour. I did that with my girlfriend.

But my tour guide said that he had many people who did it alone. And my tour guide, who was a local Vietnamese man, got really close to this guy who was traveling alone with him, and they became friends, and they still stay in touch now. So sometimes traveling alone with a tour guide is a great way for you to bond with someone, because they have no choice, you have no choice, you have to talk to each other.

And if you're spending like a week traveling together on a motorbike or doing something, then you're going to have to kind of bond. But the final thing I'll tell you is that you don't know what life is going to throw at you. Maybe one day you'll just be sat in a restaurant eating on your own, which I'll admit is quite embarrassing sometimes, but you get over that.

And maybe one day a group of people or one person will just walk up to you and start talking to you. People who are traveling just like you are usually very, very friendly people, very kind-hearted, and just want to make friends too. Hostels are always a great way to meet people, so you have the opportunity to maybe stay in a private room or you could stay in a dorm.

Dorms are where you have bunk beds, lots of people sleeping in the same room. Of course, that's a great way to meet people. So that's another easy way, but you might not always meet the best people doing that.

Private rooms, that's when you kind of have to take life by chance. Do the things I mentioned, but also allow life to throw things at you. As I said, you could just be sat down one day on a park bench looking at a lake, and somebody just comes down and sits next to you and starts talking.

Now, that would be my ideal beautiful situation, because I'm so nervous when it comes to talking to people or starting a conversation with people. But sometimes I think if it's meant to be, if it's meant to happen, then it will. So think about it that way as well, and maybe that will put your mind at ease.

But all in all, remember that you are experiencing this for yourself. There's a reason why you booked that ticket to travel solo on your own. You did this because you want to experience these things.

Do you want to do that on your own, or do you want to do that with people? Up to you. You create what happens.

So if you want to do it all on your own, make sure you do, and don't let other things sidetrack you. If you want to do it with other people, make it your goal to still do those things, but meet people along the way. But remember why you went.

You went for you, right? So don't forget to travel for you. And go to those places you want to go, see those things you want to see.

Okay, I need to calm down now. I'm getting way too deep. I'm not a therapist, but I'm starting to sound like one.

I tell you what, I think I chose the wrong career. I think with all this empathy and all of this kind of emotion I'm creating in the podcast, I'm starting to feel like a psychiatrist or something. I need to kind of just take a step back now and before everything gets a bit out of control.

So, let's get on to a listener's contribution today. And this is Hans Lin from Bangkok, Thailand, who has a Thai name, but thinks it might be too difficult for me to pronounce, which I understand, because Thai names are, yeah, really, really difficult to pronounce sometimes. And Hans is someone who has, you know, been kind of following me on YouTube, as well as listening to my podcast every single episode.

So I really, really appreciate that. Thank you so much, Hans Lin, for the support. And Hans is happy to know that I am a big fan of Thailand, of course.

Yeah, it's big, and it does offer a lot of things, which some countries just doesn't offer to me. But Hans is here to talk about Taiwan, an experience in Taiwan where Hans has been staying for a year. So, here's what Hans had to say.

When people talk about Taiwan, they might have heard of cities like Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung. Those are big cities in the island, but actually, I live in a small Pacific Ocean East Coast city called Hualian. I hope I pronounced that right.

It's a city where you can see a very high mountain range which separates Taiwan into West and East, wherever in the city. And from the city, it only takes about 20 to 30 minutes to the nearest rocky beach. The city offers no nightlife, but a lot of nature.

About the food, Taiwanese love night markets. There are several night markets in Taiwan and in every single city. Taiwan night markets offer a lot of local delicacies, but the most famous ones are stinky tofu, which is so smelly, and bubble tea.

If you come to Taiwan, don't miss it. Now, I have tried bubble tea before. I've heard a lot about this stinky tofu, but I've never tried it myself.

I think it is something I need to try. But yeah, bubble tea, I first experienced that in Melbourne.

There were loads of Taiwanese people living in Melbourne, lots of students studying there from Taiwan.

And because of that, of course, lots of Taiwanese bubble tea places and dessert houses opened up. And yeah, that was my first experience of Taiwanese cuisine, I guess you could say. So let me continue.

Thailand and Taiwan have so many things in common, especially the people. Thai and Taiwanese people are very kind and friendly. Tourists are always warm and welcoming in both countries.

Lastly, I want to say thank you that you have made these podcasts. I really enjoy listening to your stories, and I also use it for practising my British English listening and pronunciation. But I do hope your podcast could be a little bit longer.

Yeah, I know. I mean, this episode is actually going to be a little bit longer than the usual ones.

But yeah, it's sometimes difficult.

And I worry myself that I'm going to bore you guys by talking for too long. You know, if I'm talking for an hour about my travels and my experiences, I don't want you guys to get bored. So sometimes I feel like kind of half an hour, 40 minutes is quite good because I can keep things short and sweet, but not too short and sweet.

You still have a nice deep story in there. But we'll see. We'll see how it goes, and we'll see what happens.

Just to quickly respond to what you said about Taiwanese people. Yeah, as many of you know, I work online, and I talk directly on WhatsApp with people who join my course. And I have people from all over the world, but honestly, some of the people who have really, really stood out to me as really kind, genuine, caring, gentle people are Taiwanese people.

And they're people I'd never really met before, maybe a few when I was living in Melbourne.

Yeah, it's amazing how certain countries do produce personalities of people, and I find that lots of Taiwanese people are always very gentle and kind and well-mannered. I've found that with many countries, but because we're talking about Taiwan right now, that's where I'm talking about.

There are other places. And of course, every individual in every country is different, so it sometimes depends on the person. But touch wood, as we say, I've never had a bad experience with a Taiwanese person, and I've always felt a lot of kindness from them.

So there we go. There's the story about Taiwan. And in my opinion, that was not only a kind of travel experience, it was also a selling of a city and a country.

So there we go. But now we have something really special, which I wanted to include today. This is a story from Madoka, who is from Japan, who visited Tanzania in 2007.

So this should be really, really interesting, and I'm very much looking forward to reading this to you. It's quite long, so please hold on, and please listen, because it is quite warming and moving.

So here's what Madoka had to say.

I visited Tanzania in 2007. My friend was working in a refugee camp, and she gave me a chance to visit. We met in Dar es Salaam in May 2007.

Then we started the journey from the east of Tanzania to the west. It was a very exciting time of two weeks. We visited some national parks by four-wheel drive car.

It was huge grassland, many animals and the big sun, the movement of losing a language, and feeling the miracle of living on earth. A completely different time flowed there. Then we arrived at Kigoma five days later.

I did not expect to visit a refugee camp in Tanzania, because I thought it was a difficult thing to do. However, one early morning she brought me to the camp where the Congolese refugees live.

There was their life that I couldn't imagine.

Schools and hospitals, houses made of bricks that they made. Having escaped from the Congolese Civil War, they lived in this camp for ten years over. The children born here showed an innocent smile to me.

It was a short time, but I had a lot to learn from them. I felt like they have not lost hope in any situation. At that time, there was a plan of UNHCR, so they will return to the settled Congo.

Two or three days later, I got a chance to see them off in the harbor lake, Tanganyika in Kigoma.

They carried goats, animals, and handmade furniture to the ship. I saw their smile that was a mixture of anxiety about going ahead and joy of returning to hometown.

Can I take your picture? When I asked, everyone turned to me and showed a big smile. There were old men, children, and young mothers holding babies.

It is the first time for children to go to Congo. I prayed for them to live peacefully in their home country. Twelve years have passed since then.

In the meantime, I heard the news of the dispute in the northern province of Congo. Recently, many people have died of the Ebola outbreak in the area. Those who have endured a decade of life in the refugee camp without losing hope.

Those who I met are safe? I don't know. All I can do is pray for them.

The journey gave me a very strong impression and gave me a new view of the world. Thank you for reading and thank you for listening, Madoka. So, yeah, very, very heartwarming, that, because I think firstly, that's such a beautiful thing to do, to go and visit a refugee camp.

And even if you just show your face, you don't even have to do much sometimes. You know, a small donation is great, but going to a refugee camp is a real fantastic way of showing your support. And it just brightens their lives, seeing someone different from a different country.

And I'm sure they thought you were like a celebrity. You know, they were probably so shocked to see you, Madoka, that it must have just been an amazing, memorable moment for them. And I'm sure they will never forget that moment, the time they saw someone who looked a bit different from a different country.

It's almost like seeing a celebrity, as I said, or an alien from another planet. That's how it's like for me when I was in places like Vietnam. And I really do admire your, you know, not bravery, because you don't need to be brave to do something like that.

Your respect and your ability to go and do something different and visit somewhere like that. So well done, and thank you for sharing that with so many people. Hopefully, this inspires other people to go and create stories in some perhaps more dangerous, unsafe, and less fortunate countries and to brighten their worlds, because you might meet people who you spend the rest of your life praying for.

But I think also experiences like that remind you of how delicate life can be, and you realize how lucky you are compared to some people. Some of these people, the highlight of their day, is having a little bit of clean water to drink, or a little bit of bread to eat, you know? So these trips are important, and I've experienced a few.

I've been to refugee camps in Vietnam, survivors of the Vietnam War with America, and some of the things I saw I can never forget. I've also paid my respects in Cambodia. I'll talk about that in the future, after the horrible genocide and horrible things that were happening in Cambodia.

So perhaps, I mean, it will be quite a dark episode, but I will talk about that in the future, as well as some of the beautiful things in Cambodia. But before, I mean, this has been quite a deep episode, hasn't it? I hope I haven't made you all feel quite depressed today, but remember, life is beautiful, and these travel stories can only happen if you go out there and travel and experience them.

So go out and experience them. Enjoy life, and I'm going to stop this here. Take care.

Thank you, everyone, for sharing your stories with me today. Please keep sending your stories, and sell me your city or country. JourneysWithElliottes at gmail.com.

Love you all, guys. Speak to you soon. Bye.

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Hi, hello, hey, everybody, it's me, Elliott, from Journeys With Elliott or ET] English, or whatever you want to know me for. It's great to be back. I've been gone for around two weeks.

It's, there is a good reason, you know, this podcast is called Journeys Podcast, and although I already have a lot of journeys and stories to tell you, I still need to go on journeys to be able to create more stories for you. And that's what I've been doing. I've been in Spain, a lovely sleepy town called Mijas in the hills of Andalusia.

And also I spent kind of a weekend before I flew home in Malaga, which was absolutely wondrous. And I'm going to talk about that a little bit today. I have a few interesting stories for you.

And I'm gonna, in fact, try and sell you the places I've been to recently because I feel like they are places which need to be visited. Furthermore, as well as that, I will also be reading out someone's story about Malaysia, trying to sell us Malaysia, and just a few other things which you guys have sent me, which I think will be interesting to talk about. So yes, I'm back.

Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere. I will tell you if this podcast is ever going to end or if it's going to take a break, and it's not gonna happen anytime soon. I still have many, many things to tell you.

And I also have some very exciting news today. We'll talk about that in a second. So let's begin the journey.

The journey.

The problem with Spain is that, unfortunately, well, it's not a problem with Spain, it's actually a problem with British people. We have a funny relationship with Spain because there are many different types of tourists from the UK that go there. There are people like me who like to just go on quiet family holidays and enjoy the culture, the life, the food, the people, try and practice some Spanish, things like that.

But we also do have, unfortunately, the very famous British tourists in Spain who go there to get absolutely wasted, to drink loads, to get in fights, to get in trouble. And it's really sad that this is something which has kind of been created around kind of the British people in Spain. But you need to ignore those people.

If you're Spanish and you live in a place like Benidorm or Magaluf or somewhere like that, then you'll know because it's just full of drunk British people. And I'm so sorry that some of us are like that. And I've never been to those places for the main reason that I don't want to be associated with that type of British tourist.

And yes, I know we do it in other places. We do it in Greece. We do it in Thailand.

We travel all over the world and just spread our vomit and violence and blood. And a lot happens when British people get drunk. But it is true.

I mean, I've experienced it with German people, with Russian people, with people from all kinds of countries. It's just unfortunately, it tends to be more British people than it is anyone that caused these problems. Anyway, I, as I said, am one of those tourists who travels for culture, for life.

Yes, I do like to have a drink, but I don't generally go to nightclubs and start fights and get drunk or too drunk when I'm traveling. And I went last week to a lovely, quiet, very traditional Spanish-style village called Mijas, which is up in the mountains in the hills of Andalusia in Spain. It's about a 45-minute drive from Malaga, which is kind of the closest busy city, but you do also have some beautiful kind of beach areas nearby.

So Mijas, where I stayed, is up in the mountains, in the hills, and you're kind of overlooking the coastal cities, such as Fuengrola and La Calla, and a few other places which are settled along the coast, which are probably around as well a 30-minute, 15-minute drive. So you're not far from the beach, but when you're staying in your villa or in your hotel, you're overlooking the sea. You can see over the mountains, you can see the towns, the cities which are settled across the coast.

And it's a beautiful sight if you're staying in a place like Mijas. For Spanish people, I'm sure it's very, very normal to see beautiful mountains, beautiful sunshine, the sea, and things like that.

But from a British person's eyes, it's very rare that we see blue skies with coastal views and things like that.

So for me, it's always a pleasure to have this kind of view. And we stayed in a villa. It was a villa with myself, my girlfriend, my mum, my dad, my sister, and my nephew, my sister's son, who's about five months old now.

So it was a real experience. It was the first time we'd been on a holiday with a very, very young child. The last time for my family would have been when I was a young child.

So it was almost like they were going back into the old days when they used to have to take care of me. But of course, I managed to get some practice, you know. One day, I would like to have kids.

So it was great for me to have a bit of practice looking after my nephew for kind of seven, eight days while my sister was there with him. And the highlight for me of Meehas, I've been there maybe three or four times, is the village. So in the villa, we usually stay like a five minute drive away from the main village.

And it's very, very small. You could walk from one end to the other of kind of the main village in about 10 minutes. It's really, really easy to walk around, but you have everything you need.

You've got shops, kind of convenience stores. You've got souvenir shops. It is very attracted to tourists.

And I've seen it change over the years. It has become slightly gentrified, more attracted to tourists, but you can get lost down side streets. And remember, the beautiful thing about this Spanish village is it's very traditional with the very white buildings.

Again, something you don't really see in the UK. White buildings sat in the hills, very hilly, mountainy area. And you can get lost down these little side streets where you forget that you're in a kind of tourist village, and you can see and smell real Spanish things, like the smell of chorizo cooking in people's houses.

An old lady may be watering her plants outside her little townhouse and singing a Spanish song.

And, you know, I love Spanish culture, and I think it's a great place to go for that if you can kind of escape the really touristy bits of the village. But the great thing about it is I think it's reached its limit, this village, in terms of gentrification, being pushed towards tourism, and things like that.

And the main reason why I say that is because there's not much else they can do. But the great thing is they haven't done too much. You know, yes, there are souvenir shops everywhere, but it's still got that local, native feel to it, unlike places like Benidorm, which have just been smothered with basically England.

It's just pubs and things like that everywhere. So it's nice to have that mixture of Spanish and tourism together. And I really, really like that.

So instead of there being British pubs in a Spanish village, you've got tapas bars where, yes, you will find British people, Germans, a lot of French and Scandinavian people in Mijas visiting as well. Very popular at the moment with them. And you know, you'll find a mixture of people, but you'll also find local Spanish villagers sitting in those tapas bars next to you.

And some of them are friendly enough to talk to you, which did happen to us a few times. And this leads me on to really the highlight. It was having tapas in the village.

OK, so Mijas village alone is beautiful. A lot of the restaurants are rooftop, because remember, this is a village which is set in the hills. Even when you're just walking around the village, you can still see the mountains, right?

It's just amazing. So of course, when you go to the nice restaurants, the nice tapas bars, you will be sat probably on a kind of balcony on the roof of the building, overlooking the mountains. And we did this for about five, six nights straight.

And the highlight for me was actually not one of those nights. Yes, I did have some amazing meals in these kind of mountainous viewpoint, balcony restaurants, rooftop restaurants.

Actually, my favorite meal was a place called the Aroma Cafe or Secret Garden, which is settled in the middle of Mijas Village.

But it's actually an Argentinian barbecue. So this was amazing. I've had it before, but this time was really special.

And you'll find out why in a second. So it was actually just myself and my girlfriend. We had our own night together, where we went for this Argentinian barbecue, and we ordered the barbecue for two.

Now, when I say barbecue for two, it's probably, I would say, for about five people. It's absolutely huge. You have piles of steak, chorizo sausage, pork, lamb, every single piece of meat that you can imagine.

It's just piled up on a barbecue, sizzling right in front of you. We had beautiful red wine to drink, some Argentinian red wine. And it's in this garden with fairy lights hanging everywhere.

It's almost like you're in some kind of magical Narnia dreamland eating one of the most delicious meals you've ever had, hence why it's called the Secret Garden. You wouldn't even believe it exists because we're in this, as I said, this village, which is very small, and everything's very tightly compact. But you walk through this building and suddenly you're just, there's this open garden, which is full of magical, you could imagine fairies living in this garden, right?

But as the night progressed, of course, lots of amazing food, great to spend some time just myself and my girlfriend. And after that, we decided to go for a walk. So we were very, very full.

We went for a walk, and we walked to the viewpoint, the Mihas viewpoint, where you can overlook everything. Imagine being on top of the world. That's what it's like.

You can see absolutely everything at this viewpoint. Mountains, but it was dark, but you can still see in the distance the city of Fingarola, or Fengarola, I can't pronounce it, all lit up as life goes on, you know, around 10 p.m. 11 p.m.

And the sea, you can just about see in the distance. It was then, at this viewpoint, we were on our own, that I decided to propose to my girlfriend. And she said no.

No, I'm joking, she said yes. We're getting married. And that's it, that's the big news I have for you today.

I am officially off the market. I am officially getting married, signing my life away. But I'm signing my life away to my best friend.

And I can't wait to begin the next part of our lives together. So we're actually planning on getting married next year. Again, we both love travel so much.

We've traveled so far together. We've traveled to so many places that we're planning on doing it abroad. So it's either going to be in Florence, in Italy, or somewhere like that.

Or it's going to be in Greece. We're not sure yet. We're still looking at kind of the legal things and seeing how much it would cost for our guests.

The good thing is I don't really have that many friends because I've traveled so much. I kind of have friends all over the world, so it's quite difficult. But here in Bristol, I don't particularly have many close friends.

Some people might say that I'm boring because of that. It's just me. I prefer to do things myself.

So it's going to be a very close relationship, family wedding. My family, her family, close members. And then we're going to do a bigger thing back here in Bristol.

But the actual ceremony is going to be in a foreign country, and that's where we're going to officially get married. So I will keep you updated on things like that. Obviously, we need to buy a house as well and things like that.

So that's another thing that's going on in our lives. Everything involves money, doesn't it? So I was watching something on TV the other day where they were saying that, you know, you can save and save and save your money, but are you enjoying your life?

When you've saved enough money to buy what you want, you know, how useful was it? How much did you enjoy those five years that you were saving? Were you doing anything good with your life?

So the key is when you're saving money, and this is from my experience and from what I've learned over the years from other people, is that, yes, save money. Find ways to save money, but don't suffer because of it. And that's what we're doing, you know.

We're saving for a house, but we've decided, why do we have to wait to buy this house when we want to get married? We should get married first. That's what we want to do.

We want to have a nice family holiday, get everyone together, have a beautiful wedding in a beautiful country, and we shouldn't stop that from happening just because we want to buy a house. You know, the house can come later, which leads me on to even more news. Dependent on Brexit, it could be that I am moving to Spain.

We decided that if it's still possible, we would love to relocate to Spain and live in Spain. So we'll see what happens there. Lots of things going on at the moment, lots of things happening in my life, but that's kind of a quick rundown of the most important things right now.

Just to quickly go back to Spain, one of my friends asked me, so what was the best meal you had in Spain? And I told you, you know, that Secret Garden was definitely the highlight, the Argentinian barbecue, the wine, all of that was fantastic. But the best real Spanish meal I had was in a tapas bar.

And we ordered about eight plates between one, two, three, four, five of us. We had chorizo, patatas bravas, fish, everything you can possibly imagine. And this is the thing I love.

My favorite type of food is, some might call it tapas, some might call it small plates. In Vietnam, I remember they used to call it family food. That's what my tour guide used to call it.

And it's just when you order loads of small little plates of food and you all share them between you. It's the best way to eat. It's the best way to have a relationship with...

It kind of combines the relationship between food and the people you're eating with and you.

Cause is like this nice link, because you can all talk about the food you're eating. You're all tasting it together, and you're all sharing your love for food, kind of all for one.

And that's why it's my favorite type of food. And I think that's why I want to move to Spain. I want that lifestyle.

You know, I just love the way things are there. There isn't much kind of intimacy when you're eating in the UK. It's just you get your plate, you have your veg, you have your food, and that's it.

You don't really share. You don't, unless you're having a curry on a Friday night, you know, like an Indian takeaway, that's the only time you get that kind of, that closeness, that kind of relationship between the people and the food all linking together. But I couldn't just single out that tapas meal.

There was a night we went to that place I mentioned called La Cala, which is near the beach. We actually ate on the beach. It was a restaurant which was located on the beach.

And we watched the sun set as we ate. This was all of my family together. And they had this guy who was barbecuing, and I decided to order the sea bass.

And again, what happened was he just, I watched him cook it. He was doing it kind of to the side of where we were eating. And he just gets this whole fish, slaps it on a stick, slaps that stick on the barbecue, and he cooks it.

And it was just unbelievable. It was the most tender, flakiest, delicious fish. It was like that.

When you eat fish, and you know it's good quality, particularly if it's something like sea bass or some kind of white fish, when you eat it, and you almost don't have to chew it because it melts in your mouth, it was that amazing. So that was another highlight. But there were so many meals I had.

I had one of the best steaks I've had while I was away. And as you can tell, meat and fish are kind of like the big things for me. I'm sorry, vegans, people who don't eat meat, and things like that.

It's a big part of my life. It's a big part of my family. We love meat and fish.

So I can tell you now that I was well fed. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a gym to go to while I was there. So hopefully I retained quite a bit of muscle, but I didn't actually put on or lose any weight.

I stayed exactly the same. So I probably lost a bit of muscle and replaced that with some fat. For those of you who know I'm really into my fitness, I'm straight back in the gym now, and I'm still trying to get a little bit heavier, a little bit stronger, and put on a bit more weight.

So things are back to normal now. I also now have a tan. For those of you interested, I do tan very easily, and I love to lie in the sun.

I know it's really bad for your skin, but that is a part of my holidays. I like to lie in the sun for a few hours, get a bit of a tan, put some lemon juice in my hair, you know, get some blonde streaks in my hair, and I have come back blonder, browner, healthier, happier, and engaged. So lots of things have happened over the past kind of two weeks, and I'm very, very happy, and it's what holidays do.

It's why all of you right now need to think about your next holiday. If you haven't booked it, book it now. You need a holiday.

It's good for you. Now, there are a few funny stories, but I'm actually going to save those for a funny stories episode of this podcast. There was, just to put it short, there was a point where we went out for a meal, and my mum, bless her, she doesn't know how to control her drink.

She just drinks and doesn't know. And obviously my dad looks after her and likes her to be happy, so if she wants another drink, he will get her a drink, but he knows when she needs to stop. This isn't daily, by the way.

This is when we're out for a meal or something like that, you know. My mum likes to have a bit of wine when she's having a meal. And there was one night where she went a little bit too far, and I'll explain things in more detail in another story, but by the time we got home, she was straight in the swimming pool, in her really expensive dress, singing Disney songs, and there's...

Another time, guys, another time. So we'll kind of leave the Spain stories there, but by the way, I did have a great time in Malaga as well. It's a great city, absolutely full of people on stag parties and things like that, but it was a bit of fun.

I had a great Greek meal there, actually. I don't usually eat or I don't eat much Greek food. I had a great Greek meal there, some amazing Greek wine, actually, or Macedonian wine, which was lovely.

And also I had a Peruvian meal there. So I had Peruvian tapas. They kind of made a fusion of Spanish and Peruvian food.

And I tell you what, that was one of the best meals. I actually said to my girlfriend straight after, that was one of the best meals I've ever had. And we need to go to Peru.

So any people from Peru listening, I'm on my way, eventually, maybe at some point when I can afford flights. Unless anyone wants to fly me out there for free. Sure, I'll be there tomorrow.

Anyway, so yes, Malaga was great. Not much to say, it's just a city, but it is a beautiful city, and I will be back again probably in January, actually. So any Malagonians, people from Malaga, whatever you want to call yourself, I'll be back in January if any of you want to meet up.

But now... So there are some people who have been giving me some really positive feedback, sending me emails. One person I'd like to mention is Fatima, who is from Yemen and has sent me three emails for three different episodes of my podcast and told me kind of a review of each of them and told me how great all of them are.

So thank you so much. I've also had a great short message from someone called Claudia. And Claudia said, I hope you're enjoying your vacation.

Well, thank you. I'm glad you knew I was away at the time. I did have a great time, as you know now.

And Claudia was just mentioning about how she's only traveled once. She's 21, and she was five years old when she went to Dominican Republic with her mum. And she's saying that she can clearly remember the airport.

And she was excited, looking at all the places around me, all the machines, the lights, the sounds of people talking. But the most important thing, and I agree with this, is when you're in the airport, no matter what vacation, as she said, I would say holiday, trip, backpacking adventure, whatever you're doing, when you're in the airport, and she says this, everything starts there. And that's where you get that feeling, and it's like, oh my goodness, I'm going to travel.

And I think airports people can get quite miserable in them, because they're boring, there's a lot of waiting. But if you can take a moment just to be present in the airport, and think to yourself, I'm about to go on an amazing trip, no matter where it is, you're going somewhere new, even if it doesn't feel that good, it might be somewhere a bit boring. But you're still doing something new, you're going somewhere different, and an airport is where it all begins.

So thank you very much, Claudia, for sending me that. I really, really appreciate that. I've also had some great messages from many, many people who've given me some great feedback.

Just because I haven't shouted you out doesn't mean I haven't read your email. Just because I haven't replied doesn't mean I haven't read your email. I get a lot of emails, and I don't have time to reply to all of them, unfortunately.

But I want all of you to know that I really, really appreciate your emails, and thank you so, so much. One thing I'd like to do is read something out which someone sent me about Malaysia.

And this is a message from Aslam.

Aslam says to me, I'm from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and I wonder if you've ever heard about my country before. Of course I have. Yes, I've been very, very close by.

I nearly went there. I nearly, nearly, nearly went to Kuala Lumpur, but I ran out of money while I was traveling, so I had to fly home. It was going to be kind of the last part of my trip.

I was going to do Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, maybe Indonesia and Bali, but it just didn't happen in the end, unfortunately. But Aslam says, most Western people aren't really familiar of the exact whereabouts. Yeah, it is in a strange location, but yeah, lovely, lovely place in between Singapore and Thailand.

And what Aslam has to say is, Malaysia is a friendly, culturally rich nation, which is modern and comfortable, yet has managed to retain its ecological beauty. The country is a mix of Malay, Indian, Chinese, Arabic, European, Perankean and other cultures, and its landscape is dotted with temples that rub shoulders with mosques and churches. You can eat and drink your way through Malaysia, and its choice of gastronomic offerings is legendary.

Hawkers move around on foot, bicycles, tricycles, motorcycles and vans to vend their food. Stalls line five-foot walkways and side lanes. Some even operate from booths within shops.

Kopitiams, markets, air-conditioned restaurants and large-scale food courts within shopping malls. Most importantly, Malaysia has world-renowned attractions that make a trip here immeasurably rewarding. When you're in the neighborhood, be sure to catch some of this Southeast Asian, startless, best-known tourist sites.

I recommend you, Elliott, to visit the tallest twin towers in the world, KLCC, dive into the pristine waters of the East Coast, Pualao Redang, make a beeline for the summit of Mount Kinabalu Sabah, and visit one of the nation's cool hill stations, the Cameron Highlands, and many more. Please Google our country, and you'll be extremely amazed. Well, thank you very much, Aslam, and yeah, I do know, because as I told you, I planned to visit, but I never did, which is one of the biggest regrets in my life.

So I had all this trip planned out, and pretty much everything you've mentioned, I planned to do.

Again, as all of you know, I travel for culture and food, and Malaysia has this massive mixture of both culture and food. The cultures mix into the food.

You know, I read about how there were these amazing kind of Indian food markets, but then around the corner, you'd have like a Chinese market, or you might have somewhere that does a fusion of both. And it's where, as they like to say, East meets West, or you could just say, all the world comes together. And I really do love the idea of that, and I will go.

I know I will go. It wasn't to be on my last trip. There were reasons why I ran out of money.

I was just setting up ETJ English as a business, and I wasn't earning enough at the time. Perhaps after our wedding and things like that, maybe I'll consider a trip there. I have this idea in the future where I want to do a trip where I do all the places I never got to do in Asia.

So I'd like to go to China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, and India as well, and places like that. The places where I love the food, and I've tasted a lot of the food, but I haven't had a chance to really soak up the culture and to eat the food in the exact locations where they're made, you know? So I will achieve this trip before I die.

I know that, and I will share it with you. So definitely I will be coming to visit those places, but there are a lot of other things. And remember, I do have a honeymoon to plan as well after we've had our wedding.

Who knows where we'll go? There are talks on the table of maybe going back to Southeast Asia, but there are also some talks of South America. There are also some talks of Central America.

We don't know what to do. We don't know. So we'll see.

If you have any honeymoon ideas, please do send me maybe some ideas of honeymoons you've been on or a place that you know that might be perfect for a honeymoon, because that is also something we need to plan. So a short one today, guys, but I just wanted you to know that I'm still here. I'm still alive.

Lots has happened. And I just wanted to share that with you this week. Next week, we'll be back to normal with normal kind of organized stories.

We'll be having someone sell us their city or country again. And also, I'll be sharing one of your travel stories. Remember, if you want your story or anything you want to be shared on this podcast, please do send me an email.

JourneysWithElliott at gmail.com, and even if you just want to give me some feedback, I really, really appreciate it. I have lots of emails from some of you already, which I'm going to use in future episodes. So if you've sent me something like a story or something about your city or country or whatever, don't worry, I'm not ignoring you.

I will include it when I get the chance. I have loads of episodes planned of this podcast. I know you guys love it, and I'm going to keep it going for as long as I can.

Remember, I don't make any money from this. I don't ask you for any money, any donations for this. I do this because I love talking to you, and I enjoy this podcast.

So you just have to understand that I do it when I can. So thank you very much, guys. Big love to all of you.

Thanks for listening today. Enjoy the journey. I will speak to you soon.

Goodbye.

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Well, hello, everybody, and welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott with me, Elliott.

So thank you very much for coming here to chill out with me today. And today we're just going to kind of have a nice casual chat about travel.

We're actually going to talk about my first day ever traveling alone. The first day I arrived in Bangkok with my girlfriend, first time I'd ever been abroad without parents, without family. And believe it or not, lots of dangerous, bad, and good things happened on that one day in Bangkok when I arrived.

So lots to share. I'll also be keeping you updated on, as you know, I've decided recently to get married. So there are a few things going on with that.

And it is, you know, we're approaching one of my favorite times of the year, Halloween. So just a few things to say about that too. Without further ado, let's begin that journey.

Journey.

So, what's been going on in the life of Elliott? Well, I bought an iPad, if anybody's interested, and I'm actually reading my notes for this episode from this iPad. It's actually a revelation for me, and basically my accountant told me that I need to spend more because I'm too tight with my money, essentially.

And he said, you know, you're just going to pay tax returns and nothing will be purchased for your business. I don't really need to buy much for my business, you see, because I just need my brain and my time to teach English and my course. So I don't really need to buy much other than the things that which run my website, my internet connection, things like that.

So I thought what kind of technology could be useful for my job and iPad, 1 guess, came up. As you know, I'm also planning a wedding. We've decided on the location.

We're going to Sorrento in Italy, which is very, very exciting. I've never been there, but I will be flying out there soon to check out the venue, see what things will be like, and hopefully get a nice taste of the food we'll be eating. And then of course, the big day is going to be at some point in September.

I really can't wait. I can't wait to marry my best friend, but also obviously I can't wait to have this great experience abroad with lots of family members and friends, and just enjoy a beautiful time which I can associate with getting married. So I'm really, really excited to go to Italy.

Never been there before. So lots of people might think I'm a bit crazy for getting married there, but I know it's beautiful. I've always wanted to go there.

I haven't had a reason to really. It's quite expensive, you know, going to Italy on a holiday from the UK. Prices aren't cheap.

So I thought if we're going to do it, we need to do it for a good reason, and we're going to do it for this wedding. Other than that, everything's been pretty boring, really. Just teaching English, helping people with their pronunciation.

You know, you just get on with life as it comes. But I'm very, very excited for Halloween. Lots of you know me quite well, people who listen to this podcast, and people who've been following me for a long time, or who have had the chance to join my course and talk to me directly on WhatsApp.

The people I'm closest with know that I love Halloween. I'm a really big fan of all things spooky, creepy, dark. I just love all of that kind of stuff.

So I've already decorated my flat. I'm actually looking right now above my computer screen at a dead girl, like a dead witch, which I've hung from the wall. I have a dead skeleton, well, skeletons obviously are dead in the first place, but a skeleton hanging from the mantelpiece with lots of little orange lights around him.

I have a plastic pumpkin, and also I plan on carving two pumpkins with my girlfriend, or fiancée, should I say, on the weekend, so we're ready for Halloween. I really, really love Halloween. I know it's an American occasion, and I know in your countries, some of you listening right now, you don't even celebrate it, or maybe hardly even know what it is.

But it's always just, I feel like it's Elliott Day in a way. You know, Christmas is amazing. It's all about family and friends and love and enjoying each other's company.

And Halloween is almost like a day for me to celebrate all things the opposite, spooky, dark, death. I think they're all things which we do need to embrace. And look at in a light-hearted way.

And that's what I do with Halloween. I have a fascination with these kinds of things. Horror movies.

I love horror movies. And Halloween is another great reason to stay up late in the dark with the lights off, watching scary movies, and screaming the night away, you know? So it's great.

And again, I'm very lucky to have a partner, my fiance, to spend time doing stuff like this with, because she also loves similar things to me. We're quite a spooky dark couple, so I guess we kind of complement each other in that way. So yeah, I'm in a decked out apartment full of spooky Halloween stuff, which is amazing.

It could get a lot spookier because we had a boiler check. How exciting is this? I'm telling you about my boiler check.

You know, the boiler, which controls the hot water in my flat and the heating. Apparently, the wall it's on is crumbling, and it could fall off any second, and there could be a gas leak. So it's slightly scary.

Hopefully, the wall doesn't cave in, and I don't start choking on gas in the night. I'm more worried, actually, about my cat. Hopefully, everything will be fine.

But now let's get to the story today. So I wanted to talk to you about the first time I traveled solo, and this was this first big trip, which I always talk about. I think the trip which changed my life.

It was the trip when my girlfriend and I, we decided, you know, we were 19 years old, and we decided, okay, let's go traveling. Let's do it. It's something we've always wanted to do, and, you know, as you know from me, I've always been traveling with my family to lots of extravagant places.

I'd been to Thailand before, so I knew that this was a safe place to go, a place I knew my way around. When I arrive there, it's a slightly different story, so I'm going to skip all of the flying and stuff like that. We had a pretty smooth flight, a smooth arrival.

The only one thing I'd say is I don't have a problem with this. I'm very open to religion and culture, but we didn't actually know from the booking website for our hostel that we were staying in that it was a Muslim hotel. Now, I don't have a problem with this.

I have no problems with Muslims at all. But it was a Muslim hotel, which at 4 o'clock in the morning, you would hear the prayer call, and it was right next to where we were sleeping. So wherever the speaker, the noise was coming from with the prayer call at about 4 o'clock in the morning, it was loud, really loud.

And obviously, I myself, I don't have to get up to pray or anything like that because I don't follow a religion. So it was quite scary waking up in the morning to suddenly hearing this blasting noise because we arrived at nighttime. So our first morning, we were woken up at 4 in the morning by this very, very, very, very loud voice right through the window, kind of singing the call to prayer, which I'm very familiar with, in fact, because I've been to Dubai, spent quite a lot of time in Dubai, and remember as a child kind of hearing this prayer call come from the mosques and the speakers.

So yeah, that was the first experience in Bangkok, but it was the day which followed this sleep.

So we woke up in the morning at 4 o'clock because of the prayer call. And then we went, you know, we kind of just slowly got ready, waited until, you know, kind of 6, 7 o'clock, and then we went out.

We got some breakfast, and everything was going very smoothly. You know, we went to Khao San Road. If any of you know Khao San Road, it's kind of the main backpacker tourist street in Bangkok.

There are... It's basically just completely catered to Westerners. I thought it would be a good place to ease my girlfriend into Thai culture, because obviously I'd been to Thailand before.

I'd been to remote areas and, you know, farms where I've stayed with local Thais who live and work on farms. I'd been to various different places, but this was my girlfriend's first ever time in Asia, in anywhere other than Europe. So I wanted to ease her in.

We went to Khao San Road. So as I said, this is basically a street which you walk down. It's extremely, extremely busy, and everyone is international.

Not many Thai people around at all, actually. And everybody is shouting at you, talking to you, trying to sell you things, whether it's tattoos, suits, tailored suits, t-shirts with strange writing on them, fake clothes, fake Nike, fake Adidas, all this kind of stuff. And as you're walking down, it's just a big, big uproar of things going on.

So the first thing I actually bought when we got to Bangkok was a coconut. I know it's really random, but I was really, really craving a coconut, just a coconut to drink from. So we both got coconuts, and I still have the picture of us on our first day, our first photo we took on our big six-month trip around Southeast Asia, and it's of us with a coconut.

I had acne all over my face because of the plane. It makes me get spotty. We both look completely different, actually.

It's quite amazing. As the day progressed, we decided, I'll tell you what, let's go to the floating market. There's a floating market in Bangkok, which is basically where you get in a boat with someone, and they row you down the river.

Along the river, you have people sat selling fruit, vegetables, sometimes clothes, different items, and there's lots of different things you can see and buy. I thought it might be just a good, again, another good introduction for my girlfriend to some of the things you can do in Bangkok. I remember doing this with my parents, and I really enjoyed it.

I thought it was a great way to see the beautiful scenery, the lifestyle, and also real Thai people who were selling things to make a living. So this is what we did. We decided, okay, let's hail a taxi.

But over in Bangkok and in Thailand in general, I'm sorry for Thai people who are listening, because obviously you know all of this already. But instead of taxis, there is an option to get something called a tuk tuk. Now this is a motorbike with a trailer attached to the back, which you sit in, and the motorbike driver drives it.

So it's called a tuk tuk. Remember this word, because I will be saying it a few times. So we were in this, let's say, motorbike taxi, tuk tuk, and we said to him, we got it from Khao San Road, this road, as I said, which is very, very attracted to tourists.

And we said, please, can we go to the floating market? And he said, the where? I said, floating market.

And he kept saying, where, where, where? Floating market. Then I started trying to say it in Thai.

I can't remember what the words are now. And I think he kind of started to understand, and he showed us on the map here. Okay, and I was like, okay, okay, yeah, we'll go there.

It turns out that wasn't where he was pointing to at all. He was actually pointing somewhere else, which is where he drove us. He drove us to a travel agency where we were then put inside.

And I remember saying to him before we went in, I said, why are we here? Why travel agency?

Why here?

Floating market, not here. And he kept saying, you must go. You must go here first.

He couldn't really speak much English. So then we had to go into this travel agency, and we sat there for an hour listening to someone trying to sell us flights, holidays. And I was thinking, I've only just, you know, they didn't give us the chance to talk in this travel agency.

I was trying to say, you know, I've just got to Thailand. I don't need to be booking any flights or going anywhere else. I just want to go to the floating market.

And, you know, that's all I wanted to say. But he talked, the travel agent in this travel agency, talked so, so fast, and he wouldn't let me talk. I kept trying to interrupt him.

It took me an hour to be able to say, I'm not, I don't want to be here. I didn't ask to come here. I want to go to the floating market.

My tuk tuk driver has taken me here. Why? And he said, oh, okay, don't worry.

He was quite rude to me, actually. And there we go. Our tuk tuk driver was waiting for us.

And we got back into the tuk tuk and we said, please, now can we go to the floating market? And he said, okay, okay, floating market, floating market, okay. And then he took us somewhere else.

He took us somewhere I'd never seen in my life before in Thailand, and it was a gem factory. I know, very, very strange. So this was a place where people were, you know, we had to go inside.

He said, I can't take you here or there until you go in to this factory. So we went into the factory and it was a bit like a tour. We were walking and around us was people using blades, knives and, you know, tools to shave and carve gems, like gemstones.

And they were fitting them into rings and necklaces. And I was thinking, why am I here? Why am I here now?

I'd just been to a travel agency. Now I'm in a factory and then at the end I thought, okay, now I know why I'm here. Bear in mind, I have a 19-year-old brain.

I'm not really very familiar with scams and things like that. We don't have scams really in England. Because finally, after the kind of tour that we did through the factory, it finished in a gift shop where we could buy very, very, very expensive gemstone, necklaces, rings, and things like that.

I completely ignored everything, walked straight out, got back in the tuk-tuk, and I said, I don't want to go to the floating market. Take me back to Khao San Road. I'll find someone else.

So he took us back. Finally, we actually went back to where we needed to be, and it turns out this is a very, very common scam. The tuk-tuk drivers, they're on a commission.

So my best advice is if you want to be extra safe, get a taxi and get it on a meter if you come to Bangkok and you're a tourist, okay? Because they will not... This isn't what Thai people are like.

Thai people, genuine Thai people are the most beautiful, kind, friendly people on the planet, and I adore them. I love them. But the ones who have been trained to scam tourists, of course, are bad people, just like there are bad people in England.

There are bad people all over the world who want to exploit people. And this is what these people do on Khao San Road. So my best advice is if you're going to get a tuk-tuk, don't get it from Khao San Road.

Get it from a more normal street, or ask your hostel or your hotel to call one for you, to get someone to come for you, okay? Because they can tell them in Thai where they want you to go, and say, we don't want any scams, please. But this is a very, very common thing.

They're on a commission, and what they do is they will... They probably will eventually take you to your destination that you want to go to, but first they might stop by a travel agency, and then they'll hope that you'll buy loads of flights to Ho Chi Minh City or to Philippines or something.

And then what happens is the tuk tuk driver gets a commission.

They get a cut of the money from the money you give to the travel agency. And obviously with the gemstone factory, if we decided, oh, actually, I want to buy a necklace with a ruby in it, in your dreams, then they will get a cut from it. So there are other places which I've heard of people being taken to.

And believe me, this is extremely common. Almost every tourist I've spoken to who's traveled to Thailand has had this experience. So it is something just to be aware of.

And you know, I always have positive, nothing but positivity when I talk about Thailand. This is the only real kind of negative thing apart from the time I was bitten by a dog and thought I had rabies, and a few other little occasions, like when I was sick on a bus and stuff like that. Yeah, first world problems.

So this was the beginning. So now we'd reached, let's say, one, two o'clock in the afternoon.

We'd already been to a travel agency, a gemstone factory, and we never got to go to the floating market.

And on that trip, we never went there because we were too scared to ask any other tuk-tuk driver to go there. So next we decided that we would go to a place called the MBK Center. So the MBK Center is where it's kind of like a mixture of a market and a shopping mall, and there's a cinema there, lots of things.

I actually really love it here. The reason why I love it is because it's a bit like East meets West.

You'll have lots of native Thai people shopping here, normal Thai people from Bangkok.

Who are just living their lives. They're out with their friends, going out for lunch, shopping, things like this. And you'll also have tourists like myself or expats who live in Bangkok.

So you get a wide mixture of people. It reminds me a lot of the UK, because particularly in Bristol, my city, you walk out into the streets, and you have such a variety of faces, variety of skin colors, variety of people, religions. It's great, and that's what I love about visiting Bangkok in particular.

So we took a tuk-tuk here, and it was fine. We actually got taken there. We were charged the right amount of money.

Everything was absolutely fine. And we actually had a great time. We were looking at the market stalls and all of this stuff, and we had some really nice dinner.

But everything started to go wrong on the journey home. And believe me, this is where this story kind of turns into a James Bond movie. We were in a tuk-tuk again, so we had to get the tuk-tuk back to where we were staying, this Muslim hotel, which I told you about.

And we were very, very tired, and I had my bag on my back. Now, my bag had my camera, my passport, because at this point in time, we were very na?ve. We were very scared to leave our bags in the hostel, in the hotel, just in case the security wasn't very good or maybe the people in there would steal from us.

We'd read online a lot about hostels taking things out of people's bags, not just in Thailand, everywhere in the world. So we just wanted to be very careful. So we took our bags with most of our valuable belongings out with us.

So we were in the back of this tuk-tuk, and remember, it's a trailer attached to a bike. So, you know, it's open, and we stopped at a red light. And I don't know if you can guess what happened, but we stopped at a red light.

And while we were waiting at this red light, obviously I had my bag on my lap, and I was rifling through my bag. I was looking for something. Maybe I was looking for like something to eat or something to drink, which I had in my bag.

And suddenly a motorbike sped past at full speed, grabbed my bag handle, and tried to pull it with them on the bike. So they tried to basically drive past as fast as they could and snatch my bag off of me. Now, luckily, they were unsuccessful.

I had a very tight grip on this bag, and they didn't take it. But this made our driver very, very angry. Now, this guy was cool, right?

These tuk-tuk drivers, they're usually quite cool. They usually have punk rock haircuts, tattoos.

They wear vests, and they're a bit like me, a bit more alternative.

They look like they like a bit of rock and roll, you know? So he started revving up his engine, and shot us through the red light, and we were chasing this guy. It was like a car chase.

We were chasing this guy who tried to steal from us. I don't know what he wanted to do, whether he wanted to beat him up or steal from him, or if this was some kind of rivalry or something, but it was scary. We were going really fast through the back streets of Bangkok, chasing this motorbike.

And bear in mind, this is my first day travelling abroad without my parents. And I was terrified, but I was also very, very excited at the same time. I'd had a few beers, so I was a little bit drunk as well.

So it did kind of ease the nerves, which I probably would be feeling if this was happening when I was sober. Bear in mind, it's late at night as well, so it adds to the effect. But we never caught him.

He actually managed to get away somehow. Luckily, he didn't steal anything. My tuk-tuk driver pulled over, and he turned to us and he said, I'm so sorry, just be careful.

He was like, be careful. He couldn't speak very good English, but I knew he was giving me advice. He was trying to tell me, you know, in Thai and English, like Thai English, if that's a language, to just be careful and hold on to my belongings while I'm here.

And, you know, he then drove us home. I shook his hand. I gave him the extra money because I think he really deserved it, and he was a really, really kind man.

And, you know, it shows that wherever we go in the world, there are dangerous people, but when there's dangerous people, even if you're in a completely non-native place to you, a completely different place, when there's bad people, there will always be nice people to support you, to back you up if you deserve it, if you need it. And I really, really appreciated this guy doing that. And it made me feel, although this was a very scary experience, I was, you know, I'd had two scam attempts on me in the day, and then I had a theft attempt in the evening.

You know, it wasn't the best first day. I had a coconut, you know, that was good. I had a pad thai, that was even better.

I did some shopping, but also some bad things happened. And I think it kind of summarized and foreshadowed some of the things which would happen later on in this trip. You know, we had some more theft attempts on the trip.

We had plenty of scams in places like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos. We had scam attempts everywhere we went, even in other parts of Thailand. And ever since that day, I started leaving my bag in the hotel rooms, in the hostel rooms, and throughout the whole trip.

And bear in mind, I've done backpacking trips, probably a total of about two years' worth of backpacking trips. And ever since then, I've always left my bag in the hotel room. Never been stolen, touch wood.

So, you know, take a positive with a negative. I learnt things on that first day. And I recommend to you, you learn from this.

But also learn from this episode that let bad things happen to you, and let them be a learning curve. Particularly if you're young. I know lots of young people follow this podcast because you have so many travel plans.

Don't be afraid to let bad things happen. Don't let the bad things be bad. Let them be a positive.

Always take a positive out of a negative. I mean, if you get your passport stolen or something like that, then that's a bit more depressing and a big ordeal to fix. And if it's something like this, I got a lucky escape.

I could have lost all of my stuff if that bag was stolen. So it depends how bad the situation is, but try your best all the time to get positive out of a negative situation, particularly when you're traveling. There was a time, actually there were two times, there was a time in Vietnam and there was a time in Thailand when I was very, very, very sick.

Extreme travellers bug. In Thailand, it was a sausage. I ate a sausage, and we believe that that sausage was undercooked.

I bought it from a night market stall in a place called Pai. I was violently sick for about four days, as well as being on the toilet, and I felt like I was dying. I've never felt so bad from eating something, like food poisoning, until the next time it happened, which was in Vietnam, in Hanoi.

We were staying and we got some street food. It made me sick again, and the same thing happened. You know, things happen, but they're all learning experiences.

You learn how you cope with illness. You learn how you cope with theft. You cope with scams.

And I think you become a more temperamental person, and you start to realize, okay, this is what some people do in this country, or this is what some people do in general. This is something that humans do. Sometimes they can be bad people, but I'm not a bad person.

And, you know, I'll take a positive with a negative. So as I said, that's just my first trip in Thailand. That was my first trip and my first day.

Lots of other things happened, and I will talk about some other scams and some other kind of dangerous, scary experiences. I didn't have any other motorbike or car chases, but, you know, there were a few other strange things that happened, which I will talk about in the future on this podcast. But I think we'll wrap things up there today.

I know lots of you have been asking for a longer episode of the podcast, but I honestly can't talk for that long, and I think you would get bored of me if I was talking for too long. I think it's good to just have these little mini stories, just kind of sharing experiences. It's like us having a short conversation in a coffee shop, and it's not going too far to the point where you start falling asleep, because all I'm doing is just talking about me.

Or maybe I just need to come to terms with the fact that people actually do like listening, to me, talking about me. I'm not one of those people who loves to talk about themselves all the time. I have lots of stories which I love to tell, and I always feel like each story deserves its own episode.

You know, this story, if I added another story to this, I'd feel like it would play down the story I've just given you, which is such a powerful, interesting story, and also, as I said, a learning experience for many of you. So we'll leave it there for today. Please do send me your journeys, if you do have any journeys you want to share with me, preferably in audio form, so I can share it on the podcast.

And also, if you want to sell me your city or your country in the next episode, and you want me to read a bit that you write or to play your voice talking about your country or your city, then please send it to journeyswithelliott.gmail.com. Thanks very much, guys. Take care, peace, and enjoy the journey.

Вуе.

10

Hello, everybody, and welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. Great to have you here. Thanks for coming along to talk with me today.

This episode is going to be a little bit different, I guess. I don't really have a particular story to talk to you about. I haven't really scripted anything.

Kind of same thing again, as I told you, this isn't my job, this is just a hobby of mine. It's something I do to connect with my YouTube followers, my students who join my course, to give people some listening practice, but also to let people know a bit more about me and what goes on with ET] English, aside from the pronunciation teaching thing. So, you know, we go through different journeys, journey through life, travel, all kinds of different things.

And I guess today is going to be a... We are including a bit of travel in it, actually, but it might be a bit more of a life one. So if you're not too interested in life, maybe don't listen to this episode, just general kind of life things, but we'll see where it goes.

I'll get into why it's been a while later, you know, why I haven't made an episode here for a while, but generally it's because, as I said, this isn't my job. So I can only really do this when I have the time to sit in front of a computer and talk to a microphone for a while. But there have been various other things going on with me, which I'll speak about later.

But what's been happening? I just got back from a weekend in Newcastle. So Newcastle is, to put it into perspective, I live in the southwest of England, a place called Bristol, and Newcastle is in the northeast of England, right at the top of England, okay?

Way, way, way up at the top, next to Scotland. So it was about a five and a half hour drive to get there, and of course I had to drive back as well. Now people are probably thinking, why on earth did you drive?

Well, typical, actually, typical. This is what we would call an Elliott story, something which always happens to me. My fiance's dad, he got married.

That was the reason why. He lives up in Newcastle. Long story short, he lives in Newcastle.

He's getting married to a woman he has rekindled his relationship with after many, many years, when they used to live in Newcastle as teenagers. And they've met again, and a beautiful love story. They're married now.

So we had to go up to Newcastle, but typically they chose the most expensive time to fly, the most expensive time to get a train, the most expensive time for anything. So of course I could afford to fly, I could afford to pay for it, but I didn't particularly want to spend that much money.

You know that feeling you get when you think, you know, oh, I could pay for this, but why would I pay this much money when it's not usually this expensive?

You kind of feel like you're being ripped off. That's how I felt about those flights, and that's why we decided that I would drive. Which, of course, I was very, very stressed about.

It was a stressful week lead up to it because I was dreading it. I was really, really terrified of the drive because I've never driven for five hours before. So actually, on the way, we did split the journey up.

We didn't do a straight five-hour drive on the way to Newcastle, but we did a five-hour straight journey home from, on the way back. So on the way, we actually stopped overnight. And this is the weekend of the World Cup final, the Rugby World Cup.

So we drove for about three quarters of the journey, let's say, about four hours, all the way up to a place called Harrogate. Harrogate, Harrogate. Don't know if you've ever had the tea before.

They do a tea called Tailors of Harrogate. So it's a very kind of old-fashioned, villagey town place in Yorkshire, somewhere I've always wanted to say, you know, I've always wanted to tell people I've been to Yorkshire, because I've never been to Yorkshire. So it was nice to experience that, experience a different accent, where they all talk a bit like this in Yorkshire.

I can't really do it. That's the best Yorkshire accent I can do. So yeah, we spent one night there, but we woke up really, really early from our night in the hotel.

The reason why was because the Rugby World Cup Final was on. Now, not many of my students know this, but I'm a big lover of rugby. I don't really express it that much, because I don't think many of my students know what rugby is.

It's a sport which is very, very separated or, let's say, individual to particular countries. So, for example, it's very, very popular in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand. It's growing in popularity in Japan now.

Argentina, they have a good team. France, Italy. But, for example, you never really hear much about a German rugby team or, let's say, a Croatian rugby team.

You know, it's not like football where you have, you know, you know a star player from almost every team. Like, for example, even Sweden, right? Not a very famous football team, but I could name one or two players.

If there was a Swedish rugby team, I would have absolutely no clue if they even existed. So you see what I mean. I'm sorry if there are any Swedish rugby fans out there.

So yeah, I'm a lover of rugby. I grew up, I went to a rugby school, a school in Bristol, which was very, very heavily based on rugby. So from the age of 11, I was learning to play this violent contact sport.

And in the beginning, I was really, really scared of rugby. It's a very violent, very aggressive sport.

I've seen people have their noses broken, their teeth knocked out, someone was concussed, and he was like a, you know, I remember, someone tackled him.

Bear in mind, I was only probably 14 when this happened. Someone tackled him, and he was just, he smashed his head on the floor, and he looked like a ragdoll, right? Like just limp, and his body couldn't move.

That kind of scared me a bit at the age of 14, until a few weeks later, I jumped out of a tree and broke both of my wrists, which is a different story, you know, probably from my YouTube channel. So yeah, I've seen, I grew up playing rugby, basically. I was quite good, and that's why I've always enjoyed watching it.

I love the England rugby team, and yeah, we were in the World Cup final, for those of you who don't know. It was us versus South Africa. Now, we won't go into details of the match and things like that, but long story short, England lost.

It was a dreadful game, really bad game to watch. But I enjoyed it with a nice, big, full English breakfast on my lap, which was complimentary with our hotel, so it was lovely. And then we went out in Harrogate for a bit before we braved the final part of the drive, the last kind of one hour and a half, into Newcastle.

So yeah, we did that. We walked around Harrogate. Not really much to say about Harrogate.

It's, I mean, look at it on Google. See if you can find some nice photos of it. It's a pretty place, but there's not much to do there.

It's very much about the heritage, the history of the place, much like the area of Bristol I live in.

So very, very similar to me, to what I've always seen before. But it was definitely a nice place to stop off.

So then after that, we moved on to Newcastle. We arrived, we stayed in a hotel. We had a lovely hotel, which had a view over the river, and we could see the famous Newcastle Bridge.

I don't know the name of the bridge, but it was a real bittersweet experience going back to Newcastle. The reason why is because the last time I was there and the only other time I've been there, only my true followers will know this, was when I went to see Arctic Monkeys. And it was near enough a year ago from then.

It was the 27th and 26th of September I saw Arctic Monkeys. So it was very kind of close to when I saw them, but a year later. So yeah, it was quite sad because when we drove in over the bridge, we could see the arena where we saw Arctic Monkeys.

The feelings came back, and I nearly shed a tear, because obviously, as some of you know, they're my love. I love Arctic Monkeys so much, and it was the first time I ever got to see them.

So yeah, anyway, that's another story.

But I want to talk about this meal I had, because you know guys here that I love talking about food. And I know a lot of you who listen to this podcast, you love food too from around the world. Now, as you know, I've had a lot of Korean friends.

I lived with Koreans for a while, but one thing I've never done is, number one, go to Korea, South Korea, and number two, have a real Korean barbecue. And when I say a real one, I mean in a restaurant with the table, you know. Koreans, you'll know what I'm talking about.

I've had a barbecue cooked for me by a Korean friend on an Australian barbecue, but a Korean barbecue is a little bit different, right? So we walked into this restaurant. It was a new restaurant.

And I will shout them out. They don't know I'm doing this. They don't know who 1 am.

But I will let you know who they are. They were called Soju and Goji, or Golgi Korean barbecue house. And they were on Dean Street in Newcastle.

Now, why am I telling you? The reason I'm telling you is because I received some of the best service, the best food. I just had a real fantastic time there.

And I'm not one of those sorts of people who thinks after I've had a meal, I need to review this place, I need to write on TripAdvisor and tell people about them. But I felt inclined to with this restaurant because I was just really pleased with the service I had. So it was, I believe, Korean people who were working there.

And essentially, let me tell you, it's relatively new, and it's in this kind of modern restaurant, dark, romantic, actually. My girlfriend did say it was quite romantic. And when you sit at the table, if you've never had a Korean barbecue before, in the middle of the table is a metal kind of piece of equipment.

And then you'll later on realize that this metal equipment in the middle of the table is actually a barbecue which is built in to the table. I don't know if any other countries do this kind of thing, but this isn't something that happens really in British cuisine. Our cuisine is very boring.

So, you know, we ordered the mixed barbecue, so it included, I think, pork cheek, pork belly, beef, bulgogi beef, which is my favorite seasoning, favorite flavor ever. I love marinated beef, especially with bulgogi. And we had various bits of chicken, chicken thighs, chicken breast, and it was all marinated.

They were all in different flavors, different types of Korean flavoring. And you cook it yourself at the table. So I've never experienced this before, where you sit at your table and you cook.

But yeah, it was fantastic. And to some Korean people now, you probably think I'm crazy, because it's very normal for you guys to do this in a restaurant. It just doesn't really happen.

And I love to play with my food. You know, I love to cook my food. I love barbecues, because my family, it's a very big thing, barbecuing in the garden in the summer.

So yeah, it was amazing. But the one issue was my fiance. She kept, oh, she kept handling the raw meat with her chopsticks and then eating with them.

So like she was cooking with her chopsticks, but they bloody give you spatulas, and they give you things, tongs, to use to flip the meat. But she decides to use her chopsticks to turn the meat on the barbecue, and then she ate with them. And I noticed her do it, and I said, oh, Sam, do you realize what you're doing?

And she was like, no, no. What am I doing wrong? Am I using my chopsticks wrong?

I said, no, you're using your chopsticks, your chopsticks absolutely fine. You're handling raw meat, and then you are eating your cooked meat with the same chopsticks, which obviously could spread germs. Chicken is famous for spreading salmonella.

And then she nearly threw up at the table when she realized. So it was quite funny. And then, believe it or not, she was sick the next day.

So this does prove that raw meat can cause sickness. Just warning you guys out there. I was fine.

Why? Because I followed the correct standards to cook my meat. Just saying.

We can't all be perfect. I'm sorry, but I am. Anyway, as I said, it was an amazing meal, but most importantly, the service was fantastic.

We were always asked if we were OK, if we needed our barbecue changed, to get the germs off and cook something new. We had some lovely kimchi and other various things we ordered with it. And it was just generally a really, really good experience.

And I'd recommend anyone who's ever in Newcastle, if you like Korean food or you want to try Korean food, do visit their restaurant. Soju, I believe, is the main name of it. So that was a great night.

And then the next day, we went to the wedding. It was a wedding, you know. It was a very, very small, intimate wedding.

It was lovely to see Sam's father. Sorry, Sam is my girlfriend, obviously, or my fiance. It was lovely to see her father finally get married.

He's never been married before, and I think he's 56. He's in his 50s. And, you know, she's a lovely lady as well, the lady he married.

So we are very, very happy for him, and we wish them the best of luck. And, you know, they put on a wonderful wedding for us. So the food was good, the wedding was good.

I managed to meet all of my partner's family, close family on that side. So, yeah, it was absolutely brilliant. And those of you who don't know or haven't realised by now, my partner's dad was not marrying my partner's mum.

Okay, this is someone different. So, yeah, amazing. Really good time up there.

And then we had the dreaded drive home, which was, of course, exhausting. We decided no stops, just drive straight home. And I turned into, like, robot Elliott, robot driver.

I just plowed through it, drove five hours straight, got home. And then all I wanted to do was curl up in a ball and sleep for about six weeks. But obviously, I had to return to work.

So, yeah, you know, back to work. Everything's normal now, except a few changes. Wedding, we're still planning a wedding, by the way, just in case those of you might have thought the wedding was off.

I haven't really spoken about it recently. Yes, we are planning the wedding. As I told you, it's going to be in Sorrento.

Don't really need to share all the news with you. However, I do have one question. If anybody listening right now is near the Sorrento area, lives near the Sorrento area or in Sorrento, and you are a photographer, okay, and you want to strike up some kind of deal with me, then I'd love to have you as a photographer for my wedding, and you can join us for the meal after.

And of course, we'll pay. Just saying, just putting it out there. I don't know if there are any Italian photographers watching this, or if you know any Italian wedding photographers, that would be

great.

Anyway, I'm now vegan.

Oh, that sounds really funny. No, I'm not. I mean, I am, but I'm not.

I'm trying something new. Now, if any of you have also been infected by this bloody Netflix show called Game Changers, maybe you've experienced the same thing as me and decided to attempt a plant-based diet. Now, I am in no place to be telling people the reasons for eating a plant-based diet and changing your diet and stop eating meat and dairy, but there were things which were in that documentary which really changed my views on food.

I've always suffered from a dodgy stomach, let's say a dodgy tummy. Maybe a little bit of the old IBS comes through every now and then. When I eat particular foods, i.e.

dairy, eggs, and some forms of meat. Now, you know I love meat, right? I talk about meat a lot.

I've even said in one of my live lessons that I would never give up meat, and I'm sorry vegans.

And now I'm attempting a plant-based diet. So you can imagine how convincing this documentary was.

But the reason why it was so convincing was because it was not biased, or at least not too biased. So they weren't biased towards being plant-based. They weren't biased towards eating meat or stopping eating meat.

They were just telling you that there are these athletes, people like Lewis Hamilton, you know, successful sportsmen and athletes who have achieved amazing things, and they believe that they couldn't have achieved those things without relying completely on natural plant-based food. So no meat and no dairy. Nothing that comes from an animal.

Essentially a vegan diet. I don't like to say the word vegan, because I think it's a stereotype, and you know, lots of us consider vegans to be the sorts of people who go around in the street shouting at you, telling you why you need to stop eating meat and all of this stuff. Now, yes, of course, there are benefits, such as the environment, you know, you are saving the environment significantly by stopping eating meat.

Even if it's just for a month, you know, you're saving animals, you're saving climate in some way.

But you know, that's not really the main reason why I'm doing it. It's a bonus.

The main reason I'm doing it is because of what they tell you in this documentary. I want to see if it works for me. So those of you who haven't watched it, you know, there are significant benefits to not eating meat and dairy, which I'm interested to see if they work for me.

So I'm not saying to you all, oh, I'm a vegan now. I'm just saying I'm trying something new. If I like it, if I feel like it works for me, then sure, maybe I'll carry on.

One thing's for sure, I know I will definitely have a steak again in my life. I know I will definitely have chicken again in my life. I'll have eggs, but just not as much.

I'll try and generally base my diet around plant-based food. Because as you know, I'm very, very into fitness. I'm very into health.

I go to the gym six days a week, and I have to make sure my nutrition is good. And the things I've heard in this documentary and from other people, other YouTubers, is that it could potentially benefit my strength in the gym, make me stronger, give me more energy. So we'll see what happens.

I'm doing a little kind of experiment on myself. As I said, I'm not vegan. I'm just attempting a bit of a plant-based diet at least for 30 days.

But I'm never going to say no to a delicious, juicy piece of meat if it's there, right? So we'll see what happens. And I will update you on this, let you know how this very significant change goes.

I'm into day two now. So this is my second day without any meat, any milk, any eggs. And it's weird, you know?

I do feel very full. I feel like I've eaten more than I have. One thing I have noticed is it's very hard to get enough protein, but I'm trying my best because I need protein, as you know, for the gym, it's very important.

Anyway, that's kind of it, kind of where I'm up to now. Main thing we're focusing on now is planning the wedding and trying to make everyone happy, things like that. But, you know, I guess I kind of have to explain why I've been away for three weeks.

And yes, you know, the wedding comes into it. You know, that wedding was very distracting. It took me away from work for a weekend.

And, you know, there has been something quite significant, which is that I've not been feeling too good. I'm not going to use this. I mean, I mean, I don't think we're close enough for me to be telling you about my personal life, but I'll just let you know that, you know, not everybody can always be the happy person that they are on the camera.

Some people suffer from various different illnesses, anxiety, depression, any kind of illness that you might not even know about. And, you know, since I was a kid, I've always, always, always suffered with anxiety. And that's why I'm always very open to talk to people who direct message me on Instagram or people who message me on Facebook talking about, you know, how they're suffering with anxiety towards using English, because I can always empathize with people who suffer with anxiety, the feeling of being judged, feeling uncomfortable.

You know, sometimes I even, and I won't lie, I find it difficult to talk to a stranger in a shop, somebody who's working in a shop, to ask them if they have an item in the stock room, for example. Why? I don't know.

Anxiety, I get anxious, get nervous. And, you know, I'm not afraid to admit it. I'm not afraid to tell you, hundreds of thousands of people, I'm born this way and that's who I am.

So yeah, I've been suffering from, you know, I think it comes and goes. You know, so like maybe one day, I'll feel really confident and I'll go out and I'll talk to anyone and I'll feel amazing. But then maybe another day, you'll feel like you don't want any contact with the outside world.

You don't feel comfortable. You feel nervous doing things. Maybe you just feel a bit sad for no reason.

You just wake up and feel sad. And that's the part, you know, some people are born with minds like that. Some people were born with minds.

It's a chemical imbalance which we're born with. That's why some people have depression.

Some people don't.

Some people have anxiety. Some people don't. You know, we're born with brains that are very, very complicated.

And some people are more prone to getting like this than others. So yeah, you know, some days I'll wake up and feel great. But maybe some days I'll wake up and feel like I just want to hide under the bed covers and not get out.

So yeah, I guess recently, because of stress, I've had a lot of stress, you know, with all the driving.

Also, I've had a massive amount of students who send me, you know, lots of voice recordings, and I have to give them feedback and advice all the time. And you know, sometimes things just pile on top of you, and you just get stressed.

And I think that brings out my anxiety sometimes. So I'm not going to make this all about feeling sorry for me or anything, but just to let you know, you know, if I've been away for a while, if I haven't made a video, I haven't made a podcast, I'm always talking to my students on WhatsApp, people who join my course. I've never stopped talking to them because they pay for me.

It's my job, right? Just like you wouldn't stop going to work. You need the money, and also you need to keep your customers happy.

But, you know, I do get some very ignorant messages sometimes from people who, they message me on Facebook if I haven't made a video for two weeks. And they say, Elliott, where's your video? Where have you been?

What's going on? What's happened? And the one thing I'll say is, if you're thinking about saying this to me or any other Youluber who's maybe not made a video for a week or they've been away for a while, just remember that we are human too.

The face that you see on the screen, on the YouTube channel, is not exactly or it might not be exactly who we are in real life. Yes, it's how I teach, it's who I am, for example, but I'll also cry about a dog dying, just like you. I have emotions, I have feelings, and that's life.

So just remember that anyway. Most of you are really, really nice, but there are some people who, of course, like to just push me a little too far, let's say. But anyway, we won't go into detail about any of this, but I just want all of you to know that if you're going through any difficulties, any problems with your mental health, don't be afraid to talk to me.

I've been in and out of various stages of life since my teenage years, ups and downs, battled with anxiety since I was really, really young. So I have some coping mechanisms, I have ways of dealing with things, so I'm not afraid to talk to you guys about it. And as I said, feel free to contact me, journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com.

If you feel like you just need that helping hand, a bit of support from someone, I always have time for people who are suffering in that way, in their head. There's nothing worse than suffering in your own brain. It's like being in a prison.

So make sure you escape that. And this is kind of what makes this podcast beautiful. You know, I named it Journeys in the beginning because I thought, oh, it will be great for me to talk about travel.

And then I kind of spread into this other journey, my journeys through life, my journeys through, you know, how I'm getting married, how I've had to travel to go to other people's weddings, how, you know, in the future, perhaps, my partner and I will hopefully, if everything goes well, have children, and I want to share these journeys with you. But just remember that we also have journeys which can be quite dark. We have journeys which we've been on throughout our whole lives.

You're going through a journey right now, whether it's an English learning journey, or maybe it's just the journey you're joining me on right now. We're on a journey together through life. And I think it's great to talk about these things.

I want this podcast to almost be a form of meditation for some of you, a way to just escape the world and join me on a journey, but also to think about your lives. Think about how you can relate to me and understand that maybe you might be a person listening on the other side of the world, but you might suffer from the same problems as me. You might be also at the stage of your life where you're getting married soon, or you might want to relate back to a time when you got married.

You know, so all of these things which are happening in my life, I want you to relate to as well and share with me. I love hearing your stories. So remember to contact me, journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com.

So really this episode today was to tell you about where I've been, about what's been going on, about the beautiful concept of marriage, how I've experienced a wonderful wedding for someone who's even in his 50s, and now he's the happiest he's probably ever been since he had my fiancé as a child. So, you know, life has its ups and downs, but there's so much beauty in it.

And whatever it is, whether it's travel, whether it's talking to people, or whether it's just spending time by yourself, listening to podcasts, find those things that make you happy.

And, you know, I had a student who joined my course recently, and he said he works too much.

He said, you know, he doesn't have time to do the things he loves, like taking my course and learning pronunciation, sending me WhatsApp messages. And I said, if that's something you love doing, you need to find the time to do it, you know?

And, you know, sometimes I do take this kind of counselor, therapist role when people join my course, because they also want to talk to me about their lives, right? A part of the course, I'm not trying to sell you my course, but part of my course is for people to send me short conversational messages so I can judge their pronunciation. And, you know, as well as judging their pronunciation, giving them feedback, I also listen.

I listen to what they have to say, and I always have answers for them, you know? I always have way, you know, I always give people really good advice. I've always been told that.

But, and I know so many people who are the same. They give amazing advice, but when it comes to their own problems, they can't solve them. I can't solve my own problems.

But I think that's an amazing thing. It's so funny how so many people have this experience as well, and I've had many people tell me this. Anyway, we're going to finish today with just a few amazing pieces of news.

Firstly, I don't know if any of you, you know, were in the golden age of emo music when you were a teenager, or whether you were big fans of My Chemical Romance. And if you don't know, they are back together, and I am so excited. Some of you might wonder what the hell I'm talking about right now.

But when I was growing up, I was a massive, massive fan of My Chemical Romance. Real rock emo band. I always thought they were the next best thing since Queen when I was a teenager.

I'm so happy that they're back, and I've seen them four times live, and I'm really hoping that they're going to come to the UK and perform. I know they've released some shows in Japan, Australia, and one show in LA. So congratulations to you guys, if any of you are listening, and you're fans of My Chemical Romance.

Amazing news. Yeah, really, really positive stuff. It's nice to see that people can come back and have such a big fan base.

You know, and it shows that whoever you are, if you have fans, if you have followers, if you have friends, no matter what, they will come back if you come back. And you know, it's amazing. Now, just another thing.

I've had a message from someone called Mireya. I'm sorry if I pronounced your name wrong.

And Mireya said, congratulations on your engagement.

That's something really, really exciting. Well, thank you very much. And Mireya has also said, I got recently engaged too, and I'm so happy.

I'm getting married in January 2021. It's a lot of time to plan the wedding. It has to be in the summer instead of this horrible winter we have here in Chile.

I hope you can upload a new podcast soon. Well, here you go. Here's the new podcast.

And you're my company on my way to work. Well, thank you very, very much, Mireya.

Congratulations on your soon-to-be marriage in 2021.

I hope you have a wonderful wedding. Please do let me know how it goes, and I wish you and your partner the best of luck. And as I said, marriage is a beautiful thing.

I've also had a message from Nikita who said, hello, Ellie. That's what my mum calls me. My name is Nikita, and I'm from Russia.

I like to watch your video lessons on YouTube and listen to your podcasts. I must say that you teach well and always make great work. Anyway, I wish you luck to do your best.

PS. I'm waiting for your new podcast. So these emails, you know, these ones telling me you're waiting for me, that you want me, these are lovely emails.

You know, you're not forcing me to make episodes. You're not telling me I need to do this, I need to do that. You guys are just giving me that motivation.

You're telling me that you enjoy what I do and you like what I do. And, you know, I really appreciate that. Sometimes people go out their way to give you bad comments.

But these good ones, they're the ones that stay with me. So thank you very much, Nikita, for that one. And to all of you who sent me lovely, lovely messages.

One more today, another one from Russia from Sophia, or Sophia, I don't know how you say your name. So Sophia said, I'd like to thank you for the lessons on YouTube and for the podcasts. I learned a lot from them and a lot of new and interesting things.

In every lesson, I find new vocabulary and improve my pronunciation skills. I'm very glad that I found your channel and will continue watching it. As for me, I'm Russian from a small town, Noginsk, near Moscow.

I'm in the tenth form in high school. You know, my favorite subject is English and always try to brush it up. I often go to Moscow at weekends with my kin and friends.

It's very beautiful there, especially in the evenings. By the way, have you ever been to Moscow? If not, I would be pleased to meet you there and show you all the sights in person.

I believe it would be a great chance to practice my English. Good luck with your lessons. Look forward to hearing from you somehow.

Well, you're hearing from me now, Sophia. I've never been to Moscow, but I was very fascinated by Moscow when I watched the Football World Cup. I know the England fans and the Russian fans don't really get on too well, but, you know, it was a great Football World Cup, and it really did showcase Russia in a different light.

You know, we are often shown the bad side of Russia in our news. Obviously, there's controversy with every country, but Russia has always been a place that has interested me. It just seems a little bit too cold for me.

When I go on holiday, and I pay for an expensive flight to fly somewhere quite far away, I always want to go somewhere warm, somewhere where the climate is slightly different. I know there are times and parts of Russia where it's quite warm, but I would love to go to Moscow. I want to go to St. Petersburg as well, and a few other places where I have students on my course.

They've told me about parts of Russia which sound lovely. And also the food sounds great. I've never ever had Russian food before.

So yeah, Russia is somewhere I'd like to go. I say this to everyone who sends me messages on my podcast that I want to go to this place. I want to go to that place.

I really do. I want to go everywhere. And I've always said, I'll die a happy man if I've been to all the places I want to go to.

So yeah, I think looking forward to a new holiday, a new place is always something that keeps me excited and happy and to have a lust for life. You know, if I have somewhere where I'm going in the next few months or in next year or something like that, then it gives me that motivation to work hard. And I haven't had that for a while until we've organized this wedding, we've had it set.

I'm going to Italy next year for it. And you know, now that's kind of given me a new lease of life.

So I think it really is true that my antidote, my help is travel.

And everybody has their own thing. So remember that as well. What is it that makes you look forward to things, be excited for things in life?

Maybe if you have something to look forward to, it will keep you going, keep you happy. Anyway, guys, that's it for today. I just want to thank every one of you for sending your emails, for watching my YouTube channel, for listening to this podcast, for sending me amazing messages.

You're all lovely, and I appreciate every single one of you, even the ones who send me bad comments. Thank you very much. I wish you a lovely day, evening, afternoon, whatever time it is for you.

Take care, and remember, always enjoy the journey. Speak to you soon.

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Hello, everybody, and welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. Absolutely lovely to have you here. Thank you for coming along for the journey today.

What a beautiful show we have. We have a, actually, I want to mention this first. We have an amazing story from possibly the best email I've ever been sent, actually, from someone in Taiwan, someone from Taiwan.

Her name is Alice, and it's a really lovely, emotional story of one of her travel experiences. Now, that will be at the end of this episode, so please do stick around until the end to have a listen to that lovely story. It actually brings a tear to my eye.

As well as that, I'll be talking a little bit about my recent transition into a plant-based diet. Am I still doing it? Am I still surviving?

I'll talk a bit about Christmas and Black Friday and how we're celebrating here in the UK as we are approaching the festive season and Black Friday's this weekend. And I'm also going to be answering a very, very common question I receive, which is about how to, how traveling and working at the same time works, how it felt for me and why I decided to stop traveling and continue my online job at home when I could have kept traveling forever. So yes, we will begin just by talking about a bit of an update on my life.

So in the last episode, remember I mentioned that I watched this Netflix documentary called Game Changers. Now, probably now more of you have watched it since then. It's on Netflix.

And it did kind of make me think a lot about the food I was eating. As you know, I'm very, very heavily into fitness, bodybuilding in particular. And I am actually thinking about maybe next year, trying to train up for some kind of natural bodybuilding competition.

We'll see what happens there, but I am talking with trainers at the moment to see whether it would be possible next year. I like to set myself a new challenge every year, and that might be one of them. And this documentary made me think because they kind of talk about how eating different foods, removing meat from your life can make you stronger, give you more energy, and I didn't quite believe all of it, but I wanted to try it myself to see if it would work.

Now, it's been about three weeks, and I haven't touched meat, I haven't eaten any dairy products, nothing from animals, no eggs, nothing, right? And it's been really, really tough. It's becoming normal now, and I've made some amazing meals.

We've made veggie burgers, so like burgers made out of chickpeas and things like that, lots and lots of chickpeas, lentils. I made a beautiful dal curry, an Indian vegetable curry made of lentils and chickpeas, and veggie sausages, basically kind of making, we've been trying to make everything ourselves, vegetable-based pasta, things like that. So yeah, it's been a challenge, but very fun to kind of try new recipes and things.

And I'll tell you what I've noticed within this three weeks. My head is clearer. I suffer from a lot of brain fog.

This is basically when my brain just goes blank. I can't think, I can't concentrate. And since I've been eating just plants, no meat, no other things, my mind feels clearer.

Now again, I don't know if this is a placebo. I don't know if I believe that this is because I've changed my diet. Maybe I'm just feeling good at the moment.

Who knows, maybe I'm just happy at the moment. As you know, I do suffer a bit from depression and anxiety, and it comes and goes. So it could just be that I'm having a happy period of my life that could all come crashing down in two minutes, you know?

But I'm feeling clear in my head. I've had more energy in the gym, right? So I used to do 40 to 50 minute sessions when I was eating meat or on an omnivore diet, let's say.

But now, for example, today, I've just finished an 80 minute gym session, 80 minutes, and I ran to the gym and ran home. So that's a lot of exercise, okay? In total, you know, nearly two hours of exercise, if you include the running and kind of walking around and things like that.

So it's been, I've definitely had more energy, and they say that plants give you more energy, but I think it's maybe just because implants are more carbs, right? And carbs are energy. Carbs give you energy.

Carbs give you more energy than fat, for example, which can make you feel slightly lethargic. So who knows? It's been a struggle to get enough protein, but so I just have to eat a lot more, but yeah, we'll see, we'll see how it goes.

But I think I'm pretty sure, especially if I'm planning on doing a bodybuilding competition next year, I think I'm probably going to go back to meat at some point. I think the main goal and the main thing I've understood is that the meat and dairy industry is very, very bad for the environment. Okay, it's destroying our planet.

So I think myself, and I'm not trying to motivate any of you, but me, I'm cutting down on how much meat I eat. So of course, I'm going to go back to a meat diet. I'm going to Italy for God's sake for a wedding.

I'm not going to stop eating meat in Italy, right? Some of the best meat-based foods are in Italy.

So I know I'm never going to stop meat completely, but I can reduce the amount I eat, and that does at least some kind of good for my body and for the environment, okay?

And I am starting to become more conscious of the environment. Next up, I wanted to talk to you a bit about Black Friday. Not about my products, although yes, there is a 15% discount on my course if you do want to join, etjenglish.com if you want to improve your pronunciation for a cheaper price.

I promise, no more plugging my course. I do that enough in my YouTube videos. So in terms of Black Friday, I love Black Friday.

I think it's amazing. It makes me feel Christmassy, right? It makes me feel like Christmas is coming because I like to get my Christmas presents around Black Friday because then when it comes to Christmas, you're giving people these gifts, which look really expensive, but you actually kind of got them for a cheaper price, right?

But you can tell them that you didn't. And so it looks like you've got them something and paid a lot more for it than you actually did. So there's a good tip for you.

Buy your Christmas presents on Black Friday, and then you'll have a much more relaxed December on the lead up to Christmas. That's if you do celebrate Christmas, of course. I know we do have a mixture of religions and faiths and things on this channel, and podcast, and you are all welcome here.

I'm not a Christian, I'm an atheist, but I, of course, am going to talk a little bit about Christmas, because it's something I celebrate with my family. It's a time for family for me. That's my view on it.

So Black Friday, I have a list of things I want to get myself as well. Now I'm going to get one of these things. Now, it's either going to be AirPods, right?

Because as you know, I go to the gym, and I also work by sending lots of voice recordings and things. So AirPods would be cool. I've always wanted them.

They look kind of cool as well. But I'm weighing up between those or to get some beets, which are more expensive for the gym. Because essentially, I have some headphones, but they're on their last leg now.

They're getting a bit tired. I got them wet in the rain on the way back from the gym the other day, so they're kind of on their last legs. So I'm planning on maybe moving into either Apple or Beats.

But they're expensive, you know? Costs a lot for headphones these days. If anyone has any advice for me on the best kind of gym headphones, headphones I could use in the gym, please let me know.

And if you see any good Black Friday deals, please let me know as well. I am looking. And also, you know, I would quite like to get an Apple watch.

I know I sound very, very, I don't know, materialistic when I say this, but I've just started seeing loads of people with Apple watches recently. And I just keep thinking, I want one of those, you know? So I don't know, maybe I will.

They look kind of cool. And they look quite sophisticated as well, you know? Because you can change the straps.

So I'm just thinking about maybe getting an Apple watch and putting some nice leather, I don't know, crocodile strap on, just looking kind of like a businessman, you know? I don't know, maybe, we'll see. And I do usually do a clothes shop, like a yearly clothes shop on Black Friday, where I just get all the necessary clothes I need, like jeans, things which cost quite a lot usually.

But I do want you all to know to be careful around Black Friday, because there are some dodgy little websites who will say that it's their biggest sale ever, biggest Black Friday sale ever, 40% off all of our products. But the thing is, what they do, and I've noticed this with a nutrition company, where I get my protein and my peanut butter and all of my kind of muscle gaining foods from online, they have said it's their biggest sale yet, right? And it's a UK based company, some of you might know who they are.

And what they've actually done is just raised their prices. So they've made all of their products more expensive, and then they've put a big discount on them, a big percentage off. Now, what that does is it makes it look like you're saving lots of money, right?

40% off, wow. But the thing is, they've actually raised the price. So the amount of money coming off, yes, it's more, but you're still paying possibly the same amount that you would have been anyway two weeks ago.

So please be careful. There are some websites you can use to compare prices of things and stuff like that. So if you are trying to look for some cheap prices, especially on Amazon, there's a website called Camel, Camel, Camel, which is very convenient because I love camels.

I don't know if you know that. I have a cuddly teddy bear on my bed who I sleep with every night. He sleeps in between my girlfriend and I.

His name is Jamal the camel. So if any of you listening are called Jamal, congratulations, I sleep with someone or something that's a camel, the same name as you, when I go to sleep every night. And I love him.

I've had him since I was very, very young on a trip to Dubai, okay? And trust me, he has helped me pull loads of girls. I'm telling you now.

I have a camel at home. His name's Jamal. You can come and meet him if you want.

It works, believe it or not.

Anyway, in terms of, I'm a taken man now. I don't behave like this anymore. This was many years ago.

Anyway, what was I talking about? Camels. Camel, camel, camel.

That was it, a website. It shows you the trends, the changes of prices of products on Amazon. So if you shop on Amazon, if you have it in your country, whatever, use camel, camel, camel, the website, and you can see what time of the year the prices for this particular product changes the most and see if you're getting a good deal.

You can do this for kind of all kinds of websites as well. It's useful, but, you know, just trying to give you guys some help there if you're getting some Christmas presents or some gifts for yourself. I treat Black Friday as, as I said, time to do my Christmas shopping for other people, but also a time to give myself an early Christmas present.

We should always reward ourselves with things. And if you have a little bit of money, it doesn't have to be much, but buy yourself something on Black Friday. There's something you want.

Maybe it's my course, etjenglish.com. I'll stop now. I promise, I promise.

So, that's that. Now, one more thing I wanted to talk about before we get into the highlight of this show, which is the lovely story I was sent by email. I want to briefly talk about my experience traveling and working because one of the most common emails, messages, Facebook messages, everything 1 get sent is Elliott.

How can you create a job where you can work and travel at the same time? Now, lots of you will know from my YouTube videos, I filmed a lot of YouTube videos, English lessons, in various countries. Vietnam, Thailand, you know, I filmed them.

Now, the reason why is because at the time, I was living in those countries for like six months, once, and then l'd moved to the next country. And this was at the very early stages of my business. Now, those of you who...

Let me just give you a quick background on my business, okay? It's ET] English. I'm a pronunciation teacher and accent coach, and I also help people with like British English expressions, the things you don't learn in school, right?

And I started this business because I was sick of working for people. I was qualified, I was good at my job, I'm a good teacher, but I didn't like being told what to do. And I wanted to travel the world.

So I thought, why don't I start my own business and travel the world at the same time? I can meet new students, I can do some amazing things, and I can travel and go to all these places I want to go to. So that was my goal.

So I started a YouTube channel. And if you look at the very first videos on my YouTube channel.

Oh my god, they are shit. I'm British, we're allowed to swear. It's what we do when we talk, when we're relaxed.

If you're offended, then please turn off this podcast. I don't want you to be offended by my language. They were shit, right?

My YouTube videos were absolutely dreadful. I was filming them on my MacBook, right? Now, to put this into perspective, I use a professional DSLR camera now, a real photography camera, to film my YouTube videos.

But then, yes, I was filming them with headphones plugged in to my Apple MacBook Air from like 2009 or something. And, you know, I was learning. I wasn't copying other YouTubers, but I was looking at YouTubers that I enjoyed watching, English teachers, Spanish teachers, whoever they were.

And I wasn't copying their lessons, but I was copying the way they made their videos, the way they filmed them, the way they edited them. And I started to learn, I started to copy, and I started to improve how I edited videos. And as you can see, over time, up to now, my YouTube videos have gained so much more quality, and that's just from making mistakes, embarrassing myself, and improving.

So if you ever want to start a YouTube channel, there are so many people doing it now, don't be afraid to make really crap videos in the beginning. You will get better, right? I did.

If I can do it, anyone can. And the reason I made this YouTube channel was because I wanted students on Skype. I wanted to have Skype students.

So what I did was I advertised at the end of every lesson, just like I do now with my course, I advertise, if you want to book a Skype lesson with me, blah, blah, blah, blah, go to my website.

And, you know, it took a few months before I got my first student. And I remember him, his name was Waleed.

If you're listening now, Waleed, thank you very much. He was from Kuwait, and he was a lovely, lovely man. And it was great to have such a positive, kind student as my first student.

And then after one student, more come, more come, more come, more come. And then suddenly you have a full schedule. It just happens.

For some people, it might not be the same. But the reason why, when things started to build, I'll tell you how it happened. So during my time, when I first got this first student, Waleed, I got really excited, and I thought, okay, now's the time.

I'm going to do what I want. I'm making a tiny bit of money from YouTube, tiny, tiny, tiny bit of money from YouTube. I'm making a very small amount of money for, you know, a one-hour lesson with one or two students, you know, on Skype.

So I was making a little bit of money, and I thought at the time, that was lots and lots of money.

And I was really excited, and I thought, okay, I know I can do this. I can go to a cheap country for the pound, like for the English money.

So I went to Thailand. I stayed in Chiang Mai for six months, and I just work, work, worked. And I was enjoying myself, you know, as well.

I could go out for lunch and have some amazing food. Thai food. Come back, do some Skype lessons, make a YouTube video, go out, go to a beach for the day, and work on my laptop from the beach, you know.

I could do all of these amazing things. And it sounds amazing when I say this now, but please understand it's not. After a while, the novelty wears off, and I'll talk about that later.

But in short, yes, it is possible to work and travel at the same time. But how I did it, how I made this happen, I took a risk. I had a thousand pounds saved in my bank account.

I quit my job as a teacher in a school. I quit my job, okay? And I decided, I'm making this little bit of money now.

I'm going to go with this one thousand pound of savings, and I'm just going to try. Now, I want you to know that a thousand pounds in the UK, that won't last you a month. You will run out of money after about three weeks if you have a thousand pounds.

So I knew I couldn't start this business unless I was in another country. So that's why I traveled to Thailand, where the pound can go a lot further. We can buy more things and eat cheap.

And that was my goal. Now, you know, I know that sounds bad, but trust me, if it wasn't for Thailand, if it wasn't for Vietnam, the two countries I stayed and worked in, I would not be here making this podcast today. I would not be making YouTube videos every week, and I would not have hundreds of students learning accents from me.

So thank you. I'm so thankful to these countries for giving me that chance to work online and travel. So as I said, I took the risk, which is completely impossible to do in England.

You can't live off those savings. You can't just quit your job like that in England. You have to just save some money, take a risk, go to a cheaper country, and start building your business.

So yes, I was trying to balance, you know, having fun. And you can see, you know, there is a timeline on my YouTube videos. If you go back to the older ones, you'll see when I was in Vietnam, I was skinny, I had long hair.

And in Vietnam was where everything changed. I was staying in an apartment for about six months in Hanoi. Sorry, six months, about 90 days in Hanoi.

I loved Hanoi. You know, we'd go out and have some amazing food. I started to know some of the locals, also some other expats who are working online.

We lived near, in a place called I think Tai Ho, which means West Lake, Tai Ho, Tai Ho, which is the, I guess what you would call the expat area of Vietnam. And I used to go to the same lady for lunch every day in between my Skype lessons and things like that. And I just really started to feel comfortable.

And then one day, I made this video, Common British English Expressions. I filmed it, I put it on YouTube, went to sleep, woke up the next day, and it had thousands of views. Now this hadn't happened yet.

I only had about a thousand subscribers, and I was so excited about that. But overnight, I had thousands of people watching this video. I don't know what happened, but this video is still today the most viewed lesson on my YouTube channel, and it's what made me get loads of subscribers.

To put this into perspective, I have 460,000 subscribers now. Back then, I had about a thousand, and I was just a little skinny guy who didn't work out with long hair, sweaty in a sweaty room without air conditioning, working my ass off. And, you know, I did a lot of work, and then after I made that, and I started getting more and more work, you know, more people were watching my YouTube videos, so then more people were wanting to book Skype lessons with me.

And the more that happened, I realized, wow, I can't really work and travel at the same time and be that happy. The reason why is because I was working all the time. Of course, I got to go out and have lunch, have dinner, and it was food which I couldn't have back home in England.

But once your visa runs out, once you've had 90 days in Vietnam, you have to go and move to another country. And then once your visa runs out there, you have to then move to another country. But my students always come first for me, so it was difficult.

I was thinking, oh, but I want to keep traveling, but I want to help more students, I want to meet more students, and I want to have a business which changes the world. And I realized that at that time, I said to my girlfriend, Sam, I think we need to go home. And she was really relieved.

She'd started to have enough, because she saw how much I was working, how hard I was working, and realized, oh, Elliott, you know, I can tell you're losing weight, you're not eating as much. You came here because you love food, and you're not eating much anymore. You're getting stressed.

You're not going, you know, we're not going to beaches as much anymore. We're not doing anything. You're just sat at home working for like six or seven hours a day.

And we realized, well, that's just a normal working day. So I should just be doing that in England where I can have a faster internet connection, where I can start working on new things, buy more equipment to improve my business. So that's what happened.

We came home, we went back to England. I then created my course. Now, just a quick reason.

Lots of people don't understand why I don't do Skype lessons anymore. So please take this from me, an accent professional, a professional in this field. If you have a one-hour Skype lesson or even a 90-minute Skype lesson every week, you're not going to improve very fast.

The reason why is because you'll have all these questions. You need to do all of this repetition.

You need all of this time to improve.

Just one sound in English. So you'll end up spending thousands and thousands of pounds on Skype lessons because you have to keep practicing the same thing with the teacher. Now, this is why I thought, oh, I need to make a course where everything is in one place.

You can watch any lesson you want whenever you want. You can download files. You can listen to me talking everywhere you go.

And also, you can talk to me at the same time. And I came up with this crazy idea when I got home to create a course which has everything you need and me on WhatsApp or WeChat included. And since then, you know, my videos have become really popular.

My course has changed so many people's lives, and I'm so thankful. And the main thing I'm thankful for was that trip I took to Thailand and Vietnam to work. Because I would not have set up my business.

I would not have made that video in Vietnam that is now has over a million views. I wouldn't have made that if I didn't go there. Because on that day, I woke up and I thought, I'm going to make this lesson about common English expressions.

And then somehow, poof, crazy how the world works. But as I said, I would not be here talking to you now if I didn't make that decision to go away and work. So that's why I say to you right now, if you want to make a business, if you want to make a YouTube channel, if you want to do something that is not possible in your country, save a little bit of money.

Okay, save up some money, a thousand, two thousand pounds, dollars, whatever, if you can, only if you can. Think about your business. What do you want to do?

Is it real? Is it actually possible? Right?

And then, just go somewhere. Go somewhere where everything is a challenge, everything is different. There's a language barrier, because you're challenging yourself every day, but you're also, you want to stay there, right?

The thing that was keeping me in Thailand, keeping my business going was because I wanted to stay there. So I was working so hard to make just a little bit of money to be able to stay in Thailand, to be able to stay there and enjoy my life and work until I decided I'd had enough. And that's what you need.

You need that motivation. Maybe you have kids at home. That might be your motivation.

In that case, you work at home and you work hard for those kids. But if you don't have kids and you want to travel, you don't have commitments, then that should be your reason to want to keep working hard. So remember that, you know.

It's not all fun and games. You see these pictures of these influencers who work online, and they take pictures of themselves with a laptop and a beautiful beach view and amazing sunrise and sunset. But I'll guarantee you anything, that when they actually post that picture, they probably were not doing any work, right?

When they were in that picture, and they probably had terrible internet connection. They probably had no internet connection, to be honest. If they did, it would have taken them ages to upload that.

You know, all of these amazing pictures that people take of themselves working abroad, it's not all fun and games, and it's not as pretty as it looks. So don't give in to these influencers who are trying to sell you there, become a millionaire entrepreneur that travels the world at the same time. It's not as easy as you think, right?

It's not. And now I'd like to share with you a really, really beautiful story from someone called Alice, who is from Taiwan. She said all the congratulations and all of that.

Thank you very much, Alice. But I'm going to share this story that she sent me about a little bit of a romance she had whilst traveling. So let's begin.

What I want to share today is my travel experience in March 2017. I made a huge decision at that time. I quit my job that I've worked for four years and decided to travel alone to some places special and spend all of my savings to do something amazing.

Then I made a plan to travel to a few European countries that I'm interested in. And one of my stops during this trip was Abisko. It's a small village in northern Sweden.

I saw my very first Northern Lights experience there. I was so lucky to see that because it was at the end of the Northern Lights season. The possibility of seeing it was small, but I did.

It was also that time that I met a boy. He's Latvian, and he was temporarily working there as a helper of the tour. Perhaps because I was the only one who didn't have any partner in the group, he was really friendly with me and talked with me for the whole night while we were waiting for the lights.

I was a single girl who had never been with boys before, so I kind of had a crush on him, but both of us were not making anything deeper, and we said goodbye that night. After that, so when they parted ways, we were only Facebook friends and just followed and liked each other's posts. However, everything changed when he came to me and started talking and getting closer with me in 2018.

We kept this relationship for around six months. For me, it was like a real relationship, but it was not all real because we were far away from each other. To make each other be flexible in this long distance relationship, we made an agreement.

Both of us are still in an open relationship, and whoever gets a new relationship has to talk to the other person. It was my first love story. But it didn't have a happy ending.

Oh my, please, you're going to make me cry. But it didn't have a happy ending. At the end, in this February, he finally talked to me and said that he'd started meeting someone new.

I have to say that it literally broke my heart. Oh, it took me several months to stop crying every time. Oh, please don't do this to me.

It took me several months to stop crying every time when I think of him, but I never blame it on him. Even we are now back to being strangers again. I still believe that he was doing all the effort to prevent hurting me.

This heartbreaking experience is like a journey to me. And you know what? This is what Journeys With Elliott is all about.

This is a journey, thank you. It started from my most memorable travel, and it's now become an unforgettable memory in my life. How's the possibility to get two people to meet in this big world?

Perhaps I won't have the chance to see him again in my life, but I don't want to forget him. This might be painful, but it also gives me power to move forward. Go on, girl.

Move on, move forward. Well, that was a roller coaster of emotions. One second, I thought that you were happy days and you were going to get married, and now I feel like I want nothing but the best for you.

And I feel very sad about that. But thank you very much for sharing it with me. I hope you do find the man of your dreams one day.

Remember, life is a journey. We meet some amazing people on these journeys. But if it doesn't work out, it's just because they are not the right person for you.

And life goes on. Okay? But you have that memory to look back on, and don't look back on it with negativity.

As you said, you use it as a reason to give you power to move on, and that's the main thing. I'm not the psychologist, I'm not the expert, but I know how relationships work. I've had a few, right?

And I've had my heart broken. I've broken people's hearts before. And that's just the way it is, right?

So I wish you the best of luck. And if any of you have any stories similar to this, and you want to pour your heart out on this podcast, please share them with me, because I love these kinds of stories. I'm a sucker for a love story.

You can call me soft, you can call me an emotional boy, but I'm in touch with my soft side, and I love to hear stories like this, and they really do touch my heart. So thank you so much, Alice, for sharing that. Thank you to all of you for listening today.

I'll leave you on this very ominous, dark feeling. And thank you very, very much for listening today. Take care, have a wonderful week, and I'll hopefully be here with some more journeys, more stories for you soon.

And just before we finish, we're going to add one addition to this podcast, right at the end, every time. And this is the song I'm mostly listening to right now, and that I want you to give a try.

There's a South African artist called Jeremy Loops.

I don't know if you've heard of him. He's kind of like a folk singer. Not usually my style of music.

I'm more into kind of like rock music, alternative rock. But this guy is special. He has a song called Vultures, V-U-L-T-U-R-E-S

Now, that song is my aesthetic right now. It's a very emotional, wintery, autumnal kind of style song. Very nice to listen to on a cozy night next to a fire in the winter.

So please have a listen. Vultures by Jeremy Loops. You can find it on Spotify.

You can find it on YouTube probably. Have a listen and enjoy. Take care.

I'll speak to you soon. See you soon.

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Hello, hi everybody. Welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. With me, Elliott, lovely to have you here.

Thanks for coming along for the ride, to talk about life, travel, adventure, anything really, anything that's a journey that's happening in any of our lives right now. So yes, thank you. And thanks for all of the emails you've been sending me.

I'm still getting congratulations for my my not-so-recent-now engagement. You know, it's been a few months now, but I know lots of you are still finding the podcast, still becoming new members of this lovely journey we're all on together. So again, yeah, just really appreciate the kind messages.

Lots of you are already asking when we're planning on having children. Well, let's just say we haven't got married yet and we don't own a house yet. We're still renting.

So I'm not prepared to really, really kind of approach that. Let's just say we'll cross that bridge when it comes to it. Very good expression.

Which leads me on to actually the topic of, or one of the topics of today's episode, which is a proverb, a proverbial expression, you may say, which has been said on TV recently, but there's been a little bit of controversy about it. Now, let's get straight into it, actually. So firstly, let me give you some context.

In the news today and this morning on TV, they were talking about whether it's politically correct to say the expression, it's not over until the fat lady sings. So as far as I know, since I've been born, this expression has been around. It's an expression, okay?

It's not over until the fat lady sings. It simply means it's not over until something happens, which defines the fact that it's over, right? So for example, the movie's not over until the credits start appearing, right?

The movie's finished. Well, unless you're watching something like The Avengers, where you have to wait through half of the credits to actually see the bloody next kind of teaser for the next series. So maybe not in that case.

That might have been quite a bad analogy. Let's say it's not over until it's over. That's basically what it means, right?

So it's not over until the fat lady sings. Those of you who have your politically correct minds switched on, I'm sure you're very aware of why I'm bringing this up today. But what happened was on this TV show, one of the judges, it was a talent show, one of the judges said this.

And he actually asked if he could re-film that section because he was worried it would offend a lot of people, which I'm sure it probably would have in this modern world we live in, sadly. But the thing I want to point out is that this is an expression. It has no malice.

It has no aggression towards fat people. It's an expression which has been around for years. It's an expression we use, right?

Just like when we say you have the devil on your shoulder, it doesn't mean that we're worshipping the devil or that we condone the devil in any way. It's just an expression. And it's ridiculous.

And the other thing I don't understand is if we were saying, it's not over until the skinny, you know, skinny, underweight person sings, I know that would never happen, but if it were that expression, I wonder if it would be the same thing, you know, because in my opinion, being underweight is just as bad as being overweight. It's unhealthy. It's not good for you.

And, you know, obviously, overweight, there are things we could say. We could say that being overweight is actually quite healthy until you become obese, right, clinically obese. And the same with being skinny or underweight.

There's a point where it becomes dangerous, but there's a point where it's okay, right? So, yeah, it's funny how backward society is, and I feel like, you know, we're in a world where, and many people say this, political correctness has gone crazy. Everybody has to be careful of what they say.

You know, if I said something in this podcast which might have maybe 10 years ago not been deemed offensive in any way, now somebody could pick apart something I say in this episode, and they could go and tell everybody and put a bad, shine a bad light on me, right? And I'm sure many people won't agree with what I'm saying, but I believe that these are... This is a proverb, it's an expression.

It's not in any way offensive towards fat people, and it's in fact the overweight people who are offended by this. And I think that's down to insecurities, in my opinion. It's a funny thing, you know, but I suffered with weight a lot when I was a child, but on the opposite end, I was very, very skinny.

No matter how much I ate, I just could not put on weight. You'll see that in some of my early YouTube videos. And I used to get bullied for it in school.

People used to laugh at me. People used to tease me, to make me feel really crap about myself.

But that wouldn't get noticed, whereas if you were bullying a fat person about how fat they were, that was deemed to be a problem.

So I just don't understand, and as I said, I think it's strange. But I wouldn't be offended if somebody said, for example, it's not over till the skinny lady sings or whatever. So I think it's not fat shaming, this expression, this proverb.

It's a proverb which we use, which doesn't make any sense, really. It's again, it's a bit like saying, like saying, you know, one of those expressions about when the cows come home, or when pigs fly, right? These are things which don't happen.

They're just expressions we use. We use to create effect. So I think, as I said, we do have to be very careful of what we say nowadays.

And it's a shame. I don't know if it's the same in some of your countries, the people who are listening now, but in the UK and especially in the USA, we have to be very careful of everything we say. You know, songs have had to blank out a lot more lyrics now on the radio.

You'll hear, you'll only hear half of a song sometimes now, because maybe it says something about a woman or something about, I don't know, you know, it could be anything. But yes, it's very strange. It's sad that we're living in a filtered society now where people can't say as much as they want.

I agree with political correctness. I agree with activists who want to change the world for the better, but I think we're removing freedom of speech. And there's a difference between freedom of speech and racism or sexism or fat shaming.

There is a difference, okay? And, you know, if I point at someone and say, you are fat and ugly, right? If I say that, then that is abuse, that's horrible.

But if I'm saying an expression, it's not over until the fat lady sings, an expression which we've been using for decades, that is not offensive, okay? So that's Elliott's rant for the day over. If you have an opinion on this, please write to me on Twitter, or send me an email, journeyswithelliotte at gmail.com or ETJ English on Twitter.

I'd love to see what you have to say. Maybe we can continue the conversation there. Now, a few other things that have been going on.

Well, the weekend was good, Saturday night. I really enjoyed watching the boxing. I'm a big fan of boxing, and we have two particularly very good heavyweight boxers in the UK.

Anthony Joshua and we have Tyson Fury. Now, I am a big, big supporter of Anthony Joshua. I love him.

I think he's got so much talent and so much heart and soul inside of him, and he's disciplined.

And he's my favourite boxer, probably of all time. And I won't go into the boring details, because I know there are lots of people listening right now who don't care.

Unfortunately, my girlfriend had to suffer watching the boxing with me on the weekend. I tried to get her into it to get her to enjoy it, and she did for the first ten minutes. And then when it got to about round six, she fell asleep, to put that into perspective.

For those who don't know, there are 12 rounds in boxing. So, yeah, she did well. She tried.

But, yeah, it definitely wasn't for her. Anyway, Joshua won. He reclaimed his titles, which I was really happy about.

I won't talk about it much more, but just wanted to put a shout out there to Anthony Joshua.

Really pleased for the results. And can't wait to see who he fights next.

I'm hoping he's going to fight Tyson Fury. That would be, I think, an amazing fight, or Deontay Wilder. But we'll see.

So that's that. The other thing I wanted to talk about, about my life today is I've already received my Christmas present, my main Christmas present from my girlfriend, my fiance, whatever you want to call her, Samantha.

And the reason why is because it's tickets. Tickets. Yes, tickets.

It's tickets to a festival. Now, because I'm from the UK, I'm sure many of you think that that means I'm going to Glastonbury. No.

Not interested in Glastonbury, actually. I think it's become very pretentious, and it's not what it used to be. It used to be full of, like, rock music, rock bands like The Who, The Clash, The Sex Pistols, you know, bands who defined rock music.

And now it's become a rap and dance festival, which I don't really appreciate. Yes, you do get some rock bands there, but it has had the charm taken away from it. But this festival I'm going to is called Slam Dunk Festival.

So now it sounds a bit like a basketball festival, right? Well, it's not, again. It's what we would call an alternative rock festival, pop punk festival, emo festival, whatever you want to call it.

It's basically my whole discography of music, everything I love at one festival. And I think it's given me the opportunity to talk a little bit about music today. Because this podcast is called Journeys, and it's about journeys through life, the journeys that made us who we are and the journeys which we're on right now, whether it's travel, whether it's music, whether it's political correctness, whatever we're talking about.

And today, I just wanted to briefly talk about music and how it defined me, and I'd love to know how it defined you also. So for me, I grew up, all those bands I just listed, The Who, The Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Jam, I grew up listening to those from the age of zero, right? My dad was playing those bands on his record player while I was a tiny little baby, and I just grew up with guitars in my ears and drums and bass.

And then as I started to get older, I started to adapt, you know? I started to find new bands and things like that once I was given a computer, you know, to kind of discover music. But the big thing, and this is a moment I will never forget, it was a pivotal moment in my life.

And this is where my journey, I guess even a journey I'm still on now, began. And it was one day when my sister was clearing out her bedroom because she was, I'm not sure, I don't know whether she was going to university or something like that. I think she was.

And she had this old CD which she'd never listened to. It had cracks in it. It was broken to pieces.

And, you know, at the time, she was really into dance music, you know, like electronic 90s kind of club music. And she passed me this CD, and I'll never forget how it looked. It was a picture of loads of people, and it was the members of the band pulling funny faces, like with their hat fingers in their mouth, spreading their cheeks and like sticking their tongues out and making funny faces in little squares across the whole album.

It had big writing saying SUM 41, S-U-M 41, this was in 2001, 2002. And it was their album, which was called All Killer, No Filler. Now, if you don't know who SUM 41 are, hopefully this will paint a good picture for you.

She said to me, so my sister said to me, Elliott, I don't really like this kind of music anymore. I'm clearing out my closet. So have a listen.

Maybe you'll like it. I know that you like the music the dad listens to. This is a bit different, but maybe you'll like it.

And so I put the CD into my Hi-Fi, one of those really old fashioned CD players. Long before the days of Spotify and things like that, where you could just search for your band and listen to them. And I put it in my record player.

And I remember the beginning. It's called Introduction to Destruction. And it was just church bells, you know, creepy, creepy, like from a horror movie, church bells playing.

And it created this feeling inside of me. I can't explain how I felt when I was really young, probably like eight or nine years old. I was really feeling this shiver inside of me.

And it was amazing. These church bells kind of creeping me out, getting me scared. I turned the radio up because I just wanted to hear it.

And then there was this deep voice introducing the band, I guess. That's kind of what it was, you know. It was like this just introduction to the album.

And then it goes straight in to one of the best songs on the album, the first time you hear the guitars, and it's called Nothing on My Back. And I won't forget that melody, the guitars. Dun-a-dun-un, dun-a-dun-un-un.

I remember hearing those guitars and thinking, I'm gonna like this. It sounded, you know, like the melodies you'd hear in kind of stuff like the Sex Pistols. It was this kind of punky sort of sound, right?

And then it goes straight in to the verse. And I remember, you know, again, I'm always gonna remember these first lines of the verse. Was happiness a fad or was it in the lost and found?

And I didn't really understand that when I was that age, but the more I listened to this album and played through it over and over again, I started to realize, well, this song is quite deep. It's quite meaningful. So anyway, this album, you know, from the first song, it had me at hello, I guess you could say.

And as I progressed through the album, I then started to realize, you know, to find these songs which ended up being released, played on the radio a lot in the UK, songs like In Too Deep, Fat Lip. I don't know if any of you know those songs, but they are decade defining songs for the early 2000s. And I was really happy to know that at such a young age, I was a big supporter of this band.

And then this band led me on to other bands, right? Other kind of pop, punk, punk, rock, alternative bands, you know? I then moved on to bands like Linkin Park, Limp Bizkit, Papa Roach, Slipknot, Metallica.

You know, I was finding all of these bands now. I was going to HMV at the time, you know, the record store. And I was going, I was just going to the rock section, and I would just find any band that I liked the cover, the music, the cover of their album.

And I was just like, okay, I'm going to buy this with my parents' money or my pocket money, and I'd buy kind of like one album a month. And then it started to build. As I started to get older, I started to relate more to the lyrics, you know, I still go back to that Sum 41 album, the first kind of real album I listened to in its full entirety and felt something.

And I get meaning from that album, and I can relate to it even more now that I'm older, and probably the age that they were when they made the album. So it's amazing going back to old albums. I think that's a really special thing to do.

And that's my challenge for you today. Go back to albums you listened to when you were young.

Maybe you haven't listened to them for years, but maybe you'll feel something that you didn't feel back then, right?

You'll understand it. Really listen to the lyrics this time. Because when we're young, it's more about the melody, about how it sounds and the intonation.

It's a bit like, you know, speaking English. But we don't really think enough about the lyrics, and then as we start to get older, we start to listen more to what the singer has to say. Now, you don't have to listen to rock music.

Listen to Bloody Adele, whoever you want to listen to. But go and find the meaning in those lyrics. So, you know, that album was released in, like, 2001.

I probably listened to it in 2001, 2002. And my music collection grew. I started to find more bands.

As I said, I really got into Linkin Park. I loved them. And then I kind of listened to them for ages.

And then we reached 2004, 2005, when a very, very special album was released, which was called Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge. Do you know who the band is? Some of you will, and those who do, I take my hat off to you.

It was a band called My Chemical Romance. This was a band who really, really changed my views on music. I then started to discover what you would call, I guess, emo rock.

So I already had this love for kind of alternative punk rock. I also had the love for Brit rock, like The Who from my dad, Oasis, all of these bands, moved into this punk, punk pop, punk rock era of some 41 and stuff like that. And then slowly I started moving into this more alternative style of rock.

My chemical romance changed a lot of things for me. They made me start to listen to lyrics.

They are the band that made me start listening to the feeling and the emotion in the singer's voice, like we said just then.

I would say they are the Adele of rock music, definitely. They make you feel something. They sing about breakups.

They sing about suffering. They sing about death in their family, about cancer. They sing about everything.

And they're a very, very talented group of people who have just reunited after hiatus. They've been away from each other since 2015. So I've seen them live four times.

I was a really big fan of them when I was a teenager, especially when the Black Parade album came out, which was in 2006. But 2006 was another very special time because it was around 2005, 2006 that I was discovering Arctic Monkeys. Now, everybody knows this is my favorite band.

They will always be my favorite band. Alex Turner, the lead singer, will always be my hero. He is my icon.

He's everything. I have pictures of him in my flat. I have Arctic Monkeys memorabilia everywhere.

I have T-shirts. I love Arctic Monkeys. The reason why is because they, again, not only do they make you feel something, but they experiment with music.

They try different things, and they don't sing about, again, this kind of sex, cars, money that all the rappers rap about. They sing about real things, real life. The first album, Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not, they, Alex Turner is singing about life as a teenager, right?

What it's like to be going out in Sheffield in the UK on a Friday or Saturday night as a teenager, getting the taxi home, meeting girls in the club, getting drunk, people taking drugs and fighting, you know, real life things that happen in the working class UK. And that album was amazing. It's a real insight into young British culture.

And as they get older, their music gets more human, more adult. You know, they've then started to change their music from being drunk as a teenage kid and causing trouble to now having their hearts broken or finding the girl of their dreams and singing about how beautiful they are.

But again, everything they did was in that sexy rock style.

That's what I like to call Arctic Monkeys as they started to evolve into their now very modern sound. It's what I call sexy rock because they sound, you know, they do these kind of sexy R&B melodies, but with guitars and drums, which I think is amazing. But they've evolved a lot.

Every album is different. One album is Grunge, more like Nirvana, who was another band I used to love when I was young. One album is more like Rock and Roll, AM, with songs like Do I Wanna Know, Are You Mine?

And then the most recent album, which was released not long ago, Tranquility Base Hotel and Casino, that was more of a concept album. It was more about, it was more jazzy. And even that I loved.

Why? Because it was a band experimenting, trying new things, keeping some rock and guitars and drums in there, but also experimenting with different sounds, which is something very, very brave to do. And now, where are we?

Well, Arctic Monkeys is still my favorite band. I have another favorite band called Don Broko, D-O-N-B-R-O-C-O. Their album Technology is unbelievable.

And of course, I just have a general love for pop punk rock, alternative rock bands, any band, any new bands you throw at me, I'm sure I would enjoy them. At the moment, I'm listening to a few American bands such as State Champs, The Story So Far, and a particular band I'm really enjoying at the moment or a band that not many people know about. They're called Movements and another band called Grayscale.

So if you are looking for new kind of alternative rock, those bands would be a great place to start. If you like the 1975, I don't personally like them. I think they're sellouts.

But if you do like them, then you might be able to find more of an edgy version of them in a band called Grayscale. So that's entirely up to you. They do sound like them, but they have more raw emotion to them, I would say.

But someone asked me in an email the other day, what are your top three albums of the past, let's say, 10 years? So if we're talking about the past 10 years, then I have to go from 2009, which is really, really tough. So I'm going to have to say Technology by Don Brokaw.

I'm going to have to say one of the more recent Arctic Monkeys albums because I can't go all the way back to 2005-ish when Whatever People Say I Am was released. So it would probably have to be their most recent album, which was Tranquility Base Hotel and Casino. Such a long album name.

Or it could be Humbug, which was released in 2009. Really good desert rock album by Arctic Monkeys. And my third is a tricky one, but I think it's going to have to be Welcome to the Black Parade by My Chemical Romance.

I think that was a decade-defining album. I think it's one of the best albums ever released. So there we go.

And I really hope I get to see them when they come back. I've seen them live four times. I did everything I could as a teenager to go and see them.

I dragged my dad to gigs. And that's the other thing I just want to say. The other great thing about music, particularly rock music, is the amount of gigs you get to go to, you know?

I want my kids, when I have kids, to be into something like that. I'm not going to force them to love rock music, but of course I'm going to do the same as my dad did and bring them up around rock music. Because I want them to get that feeling I get when I put an album on, and it makes me shiver, it gives me goose bumps, it makes me feel something inside.

I also want them to get that feeling where they cherish, they adore, they worship a band like me with Arctic Monkeys or when I was a teenager with My Chemical Romance. They get that feeling, and then they finally get tickets to go and watch them play live. And words cannot describe the feelings that were going through my body when I saw Arctic Monkeys, the whole band walk on stage for the first time ever, and that was only a year or two ago.

My whole body, I nearly collapsed, I was so emotional, and I cried when I saw them, and I saw them twice that weekend, both nights I cried, because I loved their music so much, and because of... This is the thing with music, right? I haven't really spoken about this today, but we relate it to different periods in our life.

I can relate the AM, Arctic Monkeys album, to a period where I was going through a really difficult time breaking up with someone, and then I met my girlfriend, and we decided to travel, and I was listening to that album while we were traveling through Asia. I can think about the Don Brokow Technology album, and think about just an amazing summer I had, and going to parties and just having fun and enjoying life. I can relate the Black Parade, My Chemical Romance album, to when I was in school as a teenager getting bullied, because I used to dress in black and wear studded belts, and I had a long fringe.

Why did I have that? Because I wanted to express myself and dress like the people in My Chemical Romance. They were my heroes, and I wanted to look like them.

So I grew my hair, I wore black all the time.

Every album, even every song, you can relate back to a feeling, an emotion, or a situation you were going through. That's why music is so powerful, and why I relate it so much to travel as well. There's even R&B or rap music that I can relate to.

I don't particularly like the genre. But for example, let's say another one of the best albums I've ever heard in my life was The Weeknd, House of Balloons. That album, he's an R&B singer, but it reminds me again of being on overnight sleeper trains in Thailand, traveling from Bangkok to Chiang Mai overnight on a train.

And I just had that album playing in my ears the whole journey, because I couldn't sleep, because it was such an uncomfortable place to sleep on a train that was moving and juttering and jolting every time I could breathe. And the whole way through that journey, I can just remember listening to a song called Glass Table Girls by The Weeknd, and I love that song. And that album also reminds me of another relationship I had with another girl.

So it's crazy how different things do different things. And you know, I have been through phases where I was really into hip hop music. I went to see Jay-Z and Kanye West perform, and I really enjoyed that.

That was when they did their collaboration album together, Watch the Throne. I remember that being a great period of my life where I was, you know, starting to realize what I wanted to do with my life. And I had one of the best friends ever who I don't see anymore, but we both had a love for hip hop music at the time.

It was a very short period of my life where I was into that style of music, but again, another kind of life-defining moment. And I'm sure you can relate to all of these things with your own moments you've been through, whether it's been your passions for music or your different passions you've had at different ages, which have now led you to the one passion you have right now, which might change in 10 years. You might have a different passion then.

But you know what I mean. So I guess we'll kind of finish the music talk there, but anyone who does have an interest or a love for the same kind of music as me, whether it's the current kind of pop punk alternative rock that I'm listening to now, whether it's Arctic Monkeys, Don Broko, or even if it's the older music, which I still listen to, such as Sum 41, The Who, The Clash, Oasis, I still listen to all of those. Why?

Because I like to go back to that place that I was, you know, kind of take my body and my mind back to how I was feeling when I was that age listening to that music, you know, and it reminds me of sitting with my dad and listening to, as I said, like The Who, or The Who was his favorite band. I think it still is. And, you know, stuff like that.

It's nice to transport yourself back. So if any of you have any musical feelings you want to share with me, or any bands or singers or anything you want to share with me, please do, and I'd love to talk about it on an episode of this podcast. And lots of questions going around asking me, what did I purchase in the end on Black Friday?

I purchased an Apple watch. I couldn't help myself. I needed a watch, and I thought, yes, I could go and buy like a rotary watch, you know, like a leather watch.

I do love skeleton watches, you know, that show the mechanical movements going on inside.

But I decided I think it was time to move to the future, and it would benefit me and my business as well with an Apple watch. So I did that.

And I'm really, really happy with it. I've had it for what, like two weeks now, and I'm really comfortable with it. I'm enjoying it.

I've already bought a few different straps for it as well, which is quite nice to be able to kind of change the straps. And yeah, yeah, really cool. So if anyone is thinking about getting one, I highly recommend.

My headphones are still on their last legs. Unfortunately, there's not much I can do about that.

It's Christmas, so I need to buy presents for everyone else.

I don't have any time to spend money on myself now or enough money, because Christmas is a very expensive time of the year. So I'm spending a lot of money on presents for my family and also a few of my students who also give me gifts every year. So yeah, it's a busy time.

And I will get some headphones at some point. Maybe someone will give me some for Christmas. I don't know.

But yeah, we'll see. I found out recently as well that a lot of people have been listening to me in the gym, which is interesting because I don't know how much of what I talk about is very motivational. But you know, if you're in the gym right now, then keep pushing.

Go, go, go, go, go. And that's my bit of motivational for you for the day. But you know, yeah, it's interesting to know that people listen to me in the gym.

And I really hope it doesn't send you to sleep while you're running or lifting weights. It's probably quite dangerous listening to me in the gym because you'll either finish this podcast episode wanting to cry or maybe you'll finish it questioning things in your life. But that's what we're about.

I think that in life, we don't have enough time to sit down and contemplate life, contemplate things which happen in life, think about the past, think about things we've been through, things which have made us who we are, like the music that I've talked about today. And I always want my episodes to be a reason for you to then sit down. You don't have to sit down.

You can stand up if you want or keep running on that cross trainer. And just think, how are you similar to what I've talked about today? How has music defined your life, for example, or, you know, other episodes we have?

How can you relate to what I've talked about? Because in life, as I said, we don't have enough time just to sit down and think about ourselves. And I think it's very good.

I think this podcast has actually helped me a lot with my mental health, because I can just sit here and talk, talk about anything. You're like my therapist, right? And I wanted to have that effect on you.

I want you to get in touch with your sensitive side, get in touch with yourself and understand you better. Because I think in the world we live in today, we don't have a chance to do that. We're more worried about how somebody's dressed on Instagram, how somebody is looking, you know?

And everything we see now is through a screen. So if I can just take you for 45 minutes to listen to my voice and not to look at the screen, not to look at some fake model who's airbrushed the whole of their body to look completely fake and apparently perfect, if I can get you away from that for a little bit of time and just to chill and relax with me, that's all I want. So I hope you've enjoyed it, and it's been a journey, this podcast.

Excuse the pun, I actually didn't mean to say that. But we've evolved. We started off just talking about travel, and we haven't really talked about it at all today.

And everything we see now is through a screen. So if I can just take you for 45 minutes to listen to my voice and not to look at the screen, not to look at some fake model who's airbrushed the whole of their body to look completely fake and apparently perfect, if I can get you away from that for a little bit of time and just to chill and relax with me, that's all I want. So I hope you've enjoyed it, and it's been a journey, this podcast.

Excuse the pun, I actually didn't mean to say that. But we've evolved. We started off just talking about travel, and we haven't really talked about it at all today.

And I don't know about you, but I like the direction that this podcast is going. The best feedback I've received is from people saying, I feel like I'm sat talking to a friend. And he said to me, one of my students, he said to me, I know you're not there, but it is like you're there talking to me, sat down in the pub, and we're having a drink, and we're chatting about life, and actually getting quite deep, like best friends would.

And if that's the kind of feedback I'm receiving, then I'm very proud of myself, and I'm very proud of what I've done. So thank you very much. Remember, I don't do this for money.

I don't ask for donations, and I don't have any sponsors on this. Maybe one day I will, and I'm sure you'll know why. It will hopefully be because people want to support this and advertise through my podcast, and you'll understand why if I do have to advertise in the future.

It's simply because I want to keep the podcast going. I'd love to be more consistent with this podcast once a week, but unfortunately, as I said, because I don't get paid to do it, it's quite difficult. So if you do ever hear sponsors on this podcast, you'll know why.

It's just to keep it going so I can keep sharing things with you. It's not because I'm chasing money or anything like that. But as I said, there are no sponsors in sight anyway.

And because of that, because I'm not getting paid to do this and because I'm not doing this or that, that's why I wanted to spend half an hour today just talking about music, because it's something I enjoy, it's something I like, and that's what this podcast is. It's me talking about whatever the hell I want to talk about. And I'm sorry if you don't like it.

If music's not your thing or whatever. But as I said, I'm doing this for free. I can talk about whatever I want.

I don't care. But anyway, I hope you enjoyed this episode today, and really, really appreciate you listening, sticking with me till the end. And we'll talk about some other things next time.

But remember that music and travel will always be probably a very important part of this podcast. Thanks very much for listening, and I will chat to you all soon. Remember you can contact me, journeyswithelliotte at gmail.com, Twitter, ETJ English.

I'm not going to make a separate Twitter account. There's just no need. But thanks very much, guys.

I'll speak to you soon. Love you all. Take care.

Enjoy the journey. Goodbye.

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Hello, everybody. Welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. Happy 2020.

This is the first episode of 2020, and let's hope it's a good one. So firstly, I just want to say thanks for joining me today, for coming to hang out with me, and to talk about things like travel and life and all those things in between. And yeah, how was your 2019?

Did you have a good year? I really hope it was a productive one for you and that you achieved all of the goals that you wanted to achieve. For me, it was a really good year.

It was like a recovery year for me, the year before and the year before, so kind of 2017, 2018. They were quite tough years. I struggled a bit with mental health throughout those years.

I was stressed. It was kind of in the early stages of my business. So as you can imagine, it would be quite stressful.

Not the early stages, but a transitional phase where I was making lots of changes. I was creating the course and then releasing the course, and I had lots of pressure. And 2019 last year was like my year of recovering and finding a good balance between work and life, finding ways to cope with stress, and also improving my body.

As you know, I've told you before, I've struggled a lot with my weight, not with being fat, but the opposite, with being not fat enough. Too skinny, I guess you could say. So 2019, I was working on eating more and going to the gym and trying to turn as much of that into muscle as I could.

And I really did make some massive achievements. I look in the mirror now, and I like the shape of my body. I like the muscle.

I feel good, you know, so it's really, really nice to know that I managed to achieve that. That was my main goal last year. And 2020 brings a new year, and I managed to conquer many things.

I managed to feel better in my mind, better in my body, and just really successful with my business. But now it's a new year. We can forget about last year, and we just need to move on, stay in the moment, continue going, don't look back too much.

And that's why today we're going to focus on goals. And now's my chance just to quickly mention my Twitter. So I tend to use Twitter more than I use Instagram or Facebook, and you can follow me at ET) English.

Very easy. The reason why is because I like interaction. You know, when you post a picture on Instagram, you get comments, you get direct messages.

When you post on your story, yeah, people see it, blah, blah, blah. But I find it quite intrusive, you know? I have to be taking pictures of myself all the time.

I have to be showing people what I'm doing, where I am. And that kind of annoys me a bit. And those of you who do really follow me closely, you probably know that I only post on Instagram like once or twice a week, maybe add something short to my story if I'm doing something exciting.

But it's mainly because my life is my life, and I don't really want to be sharing everything I'm doing. I don't want to be a Kardashian. I don't want to be a reality TV star like lots of people are.

At the end of the day, when I post something, I want it to be to show you that I've made a new YouTube video or to show you that it's Christmas and I wish you a happy Christmas or to do something that is actually useful rather than show you the food I'm eating or my walk through a park, which nobody really cares about, which is why I've been using Twitter a lot more. It's less intrusive and it opens up conversation. It gives me the opportunity to talk to you guys.

You know, I've been tweeting about things I've been watching on Netflix. I've been tweeting about sport, Liverpool doing really well at the moment, tweeting about boxing, music. I love music and I'm following loads of people and I'm always tweeting about that.

And the great thing is when I tweet something, you guys reply. So thank you to those of you who do continue the conversation with me on Twitter. If any of you do want to continue our conversations from the podcast or if you want to talk to me or ask any questions on Twitter, please feel free to go there.

But just try not to make the questions about English. As I said, I get loads of DMs on Instagram.

And I love them.

I really appreciate that you guys want me to help. But sometimes it's like asking me to teach them for free, asking me to do all of these things for free. And I would love to, but I don't have the time.

And also people asking me to marry them, people asking me to do all of these strange things.

I've been sent some weird pictures of body parts, which I won't talk about now on Instagram as well. So it's a weird place.

Let's just say that. So if you want to just enjoy talking about real things, not just about learning English, Twitter is the place to go. That's where I'm more chilled out.

And I posted on Twitter the other day to say that I was doing a new podcast episode. And I wanted to see what your goals are and what challenges you will be facing this year, 2020. And here are some of the things that people have said.

James Lincoln said he will travel to London. Fantastic. I hope you have a great time.

Anthony, who is actually a member of my course as well, but he follows me on Twitter, and he said, I want to stop putting things off this year, also known as procrastination. Now, I am the king of procrastination. I'm sure everybody will tell you that they are the king or queen of procrastination, but I strongly believe that I actually am.

Now, the reason why is because if I have something important and boring that I need to do, I will always know that there's something better I could be doing. And then I'll think, oh, I'll just do this instead, and I'll, like, I don't know, I'll read a book instead just because, you know, I feel like it, or I'll paint a picture or I'll record a podcast episode when I should be doing something, like sending an email. And, you know, it's not particularly a good thing to do.

You need to find the right balance, which is something I've learnt to do now. And you know the answer, and hopefully this helps you, Anthony. Hi, by the way.

Start. Now, what does that mean? If there's something that you know you are supposed to be doing, if you start it, after one minute of starting, you will hopefully want to finish.

I'm one of those people who, once I start doing something, even if it's boring, I have to finish it.

So, as long as you just, let's say that you need to write an important essay for school or something. Start writing the first paragraph, and just say to yourself, okay, if, you know, after five minutes, I don't want to do anymore, okay, I'll do it another time.

But most, there are different types of people, but most people I know, once they just start, they'll just keep going and going and going, and you'll do more than you actually plan to do. So, as long as you just clear your mind and say, okay, I'll just start for a little bit, I don't have to finish, but I'll start, then hopefully you will continue and go the distance. If not, then find a different way, but that's what works with me.

And yeah, it really, really helps. A few people's goals were to become fluent in English, to get Cl certificate, IELTS, you know, all of these things. iCrown is the name on Twitter, said, my biggest goal is to find myself, find my soul, and find the real me.

That's really deep, and I really wish you the best of luck with that. I hope you're not too lost, and I hope you can find yourself and love yourself as well. More people improving their pronunciation skills.

Dan Dunn wants to finish his master's degree. I wish you the best of luck with that. You must be a very intelligent person, and I hope also after that, you can find your dream job, Dan Dunn.

Jose or Jose says, creating my own business. I wish you the best of luck with that as well. I myself obviously have created my own business, and don't give up.

That's the main thing I'll say. But again, don't get too stressed either. Try and find the right balance.

Again, it's one of those things where you just need to start, and then you'll find things just start to happen. As long as you do the first thing, whether it's, let's say, it's an online business you want to start. If you just do the first step, like buy a domain, a www.website, that's one thing you've done, and that's going to start the process, and then you'll do the next thing and the next thing.

Always invest money as well, because once you spend money on something, you will want to complete it. So spend money and buy yourself a website to start making, and that will push you one way or another. Rocker probably sent the best tweet of them all, which was to live my own days with gratitude and love for people around me, which I think is great.

Gratitude is something which I've been trying to practice as well. I got a bit weird with it at one point, where I was like saying thank you to my shower for giving me nice warm water, and I was like thanking my toothbrush for cleaning my teeth. And I started to think it was getting a bit weird.

Now I'm just making sure that I thank people, and also that I thank just... I'm not religious, so I can't really thank a god, because I don't believe in a god, but I can thank just life for giving me a friend or giving me my partner, you know, all of these things. So you can still be thankful and not know who too, as long as you are just generally thankful, right?

So yeah, I think gratitude is something which everybody needs more of. You know, I've never seen... I've only seen a few people in my life who have been extremely grateful for everything they have.

A lot of us take for granted what we have. So yeah, definitely a good one. Thanks for that one.

Litanchuk, again, another person who wants to speak like a native speaker, learning from my videos on YouTube. Fantastic. More university exams from Chris.

Thanks for that. And Mia says, I just want to try to be happy every day. Lovely.

Another good one. And last one, Uni says, I want to come back to London. So there we go.

Lots of different goals from different people. Feel free to tweet me on Twitter, Hashtag Journeys With Elliott, at me, ET) English, and talk to me about your goals. I'd love to know what you guys are trying to achieve this year, what challenges you'll be facing, and what's going on.

Let me talk about my goals for a second. Actually, before that, I want to talk about the best way to approach goals. My answer is little and often.

I always find that if you set yourself a goal, like, you know, the beginning of 2020, everybody thinks, okay, so I have a whole year to give up chocolate. Okay, great. But nine times out of ten, people don't achieve their New Year's resolutions.

I was reading something recently in the newspaper, and it was... I can't remember the statistic, but it was very, very high. It was more than half of people in the UK don't achieve their New Year's resolutions, and it only makes them feel worse or more depressed or annoyed about themselves.

So, in my opinion, the best way to approach a resolution or a change or a goal that you have is to do it in small steps. Break it down into little micro goals. So, for example, your goal is to...

I don't know, let's say improve your accent, become a better speaker of English. Set yourself little goals. So, for example, okay, so for the month of January, I'm going to work on my stress.

And if it's better by February, then I'll move on to working on a vowel sound or intonation. Do little things and see the progress. When I was trying to gain weight and put on muscle, it was a great experience because I didn't really have got mini goals, but my main goal was to see the changes in my body when I looked in the mirror in the evening or when I got back from the gym.

And seeing those little results or in pronunciation, if you hear those little results in your accent, those little changes, it makes you feel good, and it makes you want to keep going. So mini goals, because then what happens is throughout the year, you keep achieving new things. You keep making achievements.

It's better than having one achievement which you want to make after a year. It's not very rewarding, and it doesn't feel that great. Okay, so set yourself small goals.

That's my main recommendation for this year. Try it yourself. So my goals or the things which I'll be doing this year, so far what I have planned, I have lots of concerts and gigs and things to go to.

I want to go and see, well, you know I'm going to a festival, which I told you about in one of the previous episodes, which my partner got me as a Christmas present. So I'm going to see some amazing bands, some bands I really, really love from past and new bands, which I've just found out about. So I'm really excited for that.

I also want to see My Chemical Romance. All of you know that they are the band that shaped me as a teenager. They helped me through things.

They made me love music. They just made me who I am. They are the band that made me love music the most.

And they're back after a seven-year break. So I'm really excited to see what's going to happen.

They have announced like in a very cryptic tweet that possibly they'll be coming to the UK or something's happening in the UK because there was a British flag in their tweet.

So I'm really interested to see what's going to happen with that. I have to see them next year. I also want to see Don Broko, who I'm seeing at that festival.

Those of you know, they are one of my favorite bands, Don Broko. But I want to see them in their own gig. And also they have a new album coming out.

And I can dream, hopefully Arctic Monkeys will have a new album out this year. Who knows? I can only dream.

Last year, I had to wait a very long time for a new album. Not last year, the year before, 2018. And I'm actually just generally trying to go to more concerts.

I want to go and see more bands. Even if I don't really know the bands, I just want to go and see them and enjoy live music and find as many new bands and artists as possible. As long as there's guitars and drums and a good singer, then I'm happy, right?

And something that you can kind of push people around to and jump up and down. I love that at concerts, like mosh pits and a bit of aggression. I love that.

It's just lots of fun and nobody fights. It's more like kids in a playground. You feel young again at gigs, which I think is great.

So that's my music kind of goals and challenges and things I'm trying to do this year. Travel. As you know, I'm going to Italy to get married, and that will be in Sorrento.

Before that, I'm spending a night in Naples or a day in Naples, so I plan to eat some amazing pizza there. Then we're going to Sorrento to get married. Again, amazing food, I hope.

I can't wait to have loads of pasta and pizza and everything. And then we're going to Positano. I know I don't pronounce it like the Italians.

I'm sorry, Italians, if you're listening. And then maybe to some islands, maybe go somewhere like Capri or something like that. So we're still planning that, but it's around just over two weeks, our trip, including the wedding.

So lots of time to spend traveling around the coast of Italy. I really, really can't wait for that because it's a country I really want to go to. I love Italian food.

As you guys know, I travel for food, and that's the main reason I really want to go to Italy. So yeah. Now, before the wedding, we said that we'd go on a small trip somewhere.

And we're thinking like 48 hours, you know, a couple days, a few days in somewhere like Germany, France, Poland, Czech Republic, a city break. So no beaches, just a city break. So if any of you can recommend somewhere in Europe, only in Europe, please, please let me know if it's good for like, I'm not really into museums and like historical things.

I just like to go to pretty cities, pretty places, beautiful places to have some amazing food and maybe a good pub or a bar to have some drinks and just with a nice view and stuff like that.

That's what I would do if I was going on a city break. So let me know anywhere in Europe, which is not too far from the UK.

We've even thought about Barcelona or Madrid or something like that. So I don't know. I don't know yet, but we'll see.

And we have decided where our big trip is going to be in 2021. Drum roll, please.

Japan. Yep, 2021. We plan on going to Japan for around three to four weeks.

We want to travel around, go to different cities, see some amazing things. Now, I know just now when I was talking about Europe, I said I'm not really interested in history, museums and things like that. When it comes to Asia, places like Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam, I'm interested in the history and the museums and things like that there.

It's more my kind of thing. So that will be something we'll also be doing. But any Japanese people listening, please let me know about Japan.

Tell me where I should go, what places I should include in my three to four week trip, what food I should eat. If you know any good restaurants, if you want to meet for a beer or something, please let me know. And then we might possibly be including South Korea in that trip as well, because I have a very good friend called Kwangsoo, who lives in South Korea, and I really want to meet him.

He's always been saying about how I need to come to Seoul. So I think that's... We're either going to include it in this trip, or if it's too expensive, maybe a different time.

But Japan is the next big trip. But that won't be until 2021, so next year. Also, guys, let me know when the best time is to go to Japan.

I don't really know. But I can't wait to do that. I know it's a long way away, but I think it's good to plan a big trip.

The reason why we're doing another big trip is because, at some point, we're going to want to have children, and we want to go to the places that we've always wanted to go to before we have kids. And of course, when I have kids, I want to take them traveling. I want to take them to places I went to with Sam, like Thailand, Vietnam, and, you know, new places.

Like, I want to go to Peru. I want to go to Colombia. There are loads of places, Brazil.

And I'd love to do that, hopefully, with a child in the future. So in terms of travel, those are the things which are happening. So the Japan one isn't really this year.

It's not really a goal for this year, but it is because I want to have it booked by the end of this year for next year. In terms of health as well, I've just listed a few things which I want to do, which is I want to lower my meat intake. I am now what I like to call a flexitarian, meaning generally I'm trying to help the environment by eating less meat.

So I'll have veg. I'll have plant-based meals. The only exception I have is cheese.

I'm sorry. I can never give up cheese. I love cheese too much.

I love it on pasta. I love it on pizza. Oh, my God.

I had a vegan pizza last week. It was absolutely vile. Oh, don't eat vegan cheese, guys.

It's just no. So cheese is one thing I can't give up. But in terms of trying to help the environment, to save animals' lives, to do all of these things, I mean, Australia is on fire, guys.

And Australia is a country which is so close to my heart. I spent a long time there. And I'm heartbroken to see what's happening over there.

And people are saying, you know, it's because of this, it's because of that. But the main key thing, all of the signs are pointing to, we did this. Whether it's with our eating habits, by farming so many cows, which are so bad for the environment and causing global warming, or whether it's driving cars, which are pumping out crap into the environment, there's always something we're doing, which is causing our world, our planet to burn.

So I'm trying to lower my meat intake. I love meat, and I will have a steak occasionally. I might have, I don't know, some lamb, like a lamb sag curry or something like that.

I love Indian food, and I kind of have to have lamb with that. So I'm not going to give up meat, but I'm a flexitarian, meaning predominantly eating vegetables and plant-based food. But when it comes to things like the occasional restaurant meal I have, I will eat some meat.

And I love fish as well. So I'm still eating salmon, but only if it's reliably sourced. So if it has been caught out of safe waters where they're not being farmed and treated dreadfully, then yes, I will eat salmon and fish.

So yeah, I'm just going to try and continue my habits of being a flexitarian, and of course continuing all of the gym things as well this year. Finally, the one last thing that I want to do this year is I want to take up a new sport. Now I have a few ideas.

One thing I was thinking about was boxing. Now when I say boxing, I don't want to be punching people, just the bags, right? I'm not really planning on fighting people, but I think it's a great way to be healthy in both your body and your mind.

If you have a stressful day, I can imagine it must feel really good to go and punch the hell out of a bag, you know? So that's definitely something I'm interested in doing. And also I want to do a non-sport hobby.

And the thing I've been thinking about is painting. And I have actually started a little bit. I've started doing some watercolour painting.

But you know, it's so difficult. It's so hard. I keep doing it wrong.

So I'm trying to find some kind of creative output. I occasionally write songs with my guitar and stuff like that. But I'd like to find something else, maybe more artistic, that I can do.

So I'm on the hunt. I'm looking for some kind of hobby that might involve being creative. My partner has just started doing or crocheting.

So she's made a blanket already. She's made a basket out of crochet, out of yarn. She's doing really well, actually.

And I'm really, really proud of her because it's tough. It's quite hard to make something out of string. I really want her to make something really, really cool, though.

So we'll see. I'll let you know if she makes anything really exciting. I'd love to have a hat that's been made by my partner.

That would just be so cool. It'll probably be really ugly, though. So yeah, that's generally in terms of goals this year.

Those are the main things I have. In terms of work, I want to continue growing ETJ English. It's about to reach 500,000 subscribers, the YouTube channel, and I have students joining my course every day.

And every new student is a new person I meet, a new friend I make, and a new accent I change.

So the more it's growing, the more I can help people and also make new friends. So it's amazing.

It's an amazing job. And I'm really looking forward to seeing what happens with my business this year. And as well as that, the podcast.

I'd love to somehow eventually get this podcast monetized. If any of you know anyone who would like to sponsor on this podcast, please let me know. I mean, I can make episodes more often if there is some kind of monetization here, you know.

As I said, it's a hobby. And I only do it when I can. I'm a very busy guy.

And this is a way of me just talking and relaxing and sharing a piece of me with you and talking about travel or life and whatever. And, you know, I can only do it when I have the time at the moment. So, yeah, hopefully we'll get some sponsors at some point and I'll be able to do this more frequently.

But for now, you'll just have to wait for the episodes. I'm sorry. Everybody keeps asking me.

I've had a lot of comments and messages, people saying, like, has the podcast finished, Elliott?

What's going on with the podcast and all of this stuff? And the truth is, I just, I haven't had the time recently, with Christmas and the New Year and all of that as well, and having my own business is tough.

And now I think we're just going to finish with a nice relaxing story from Nirali, who was actually a member of my course. In fact, she was one of the first members to join my course when it came out about two years ago. And here's what she had to say.

Hello, Elliott. Hope you're doing well. Today, I'm going to share some experiences from my recent trip to Sri Lanka.

I spent the last three weeks backpacking in Sri Lanka along with my friends, and instantly fell in love with the entire country. The food, the culture, and of course, the breathtaking natural beauty. That was one hell of a journey, starting from the bustling capital of Colombo to the hill town of Nuwara Elia, and all around the gorgeous coastline cities.

We mostly prefer to get around by train, and the most scenic train route runs between Kendi and Ella, where the train passes through lush green tea plantations, soothing waterfalls, and misty clouds. One of my absolute favorite spots was the Yala National Park. The way it was teaming with wildlife was incredible.

In just a few hours of safari, I saw tons of amazing animals, including spotted deer, monkeys, buffaloes, crocodiles, and a leopard. That was truly such a special experience. The second safari took place at Minaria National Park near Dambulla.

I initially went in with low expectations, hoping to see perhaps an elephant or two, and what I ended up seeing was at least 100 elephants eating, bathing, and playing in the water. These are memories I'll treasure forever. Well, thank you very much, Nirali.

Great to hear from you again. And that really was breathtaking story, the way you explained it, everything. It was just fantastic.

And wildlife is something I love to see. And I did mention, you know, about Japan earlier, how I want to go to Japan. And yes, there's lots of wildlife and things to see there.

And it's a real toss up. It's a real decision between either going to Japan, which is what we're probably going to do, but there's still a possibility of South Africa. Now, the reason why is because I want to go and see all of these things that Nurali explained that she saw in Sri Lanka, which, by the way, is another place I'd love to go to.

I'd love to see animals doing the real things they do in their natural habitats, seeing all of these real things that animals do and seeing them in the wild, hunting, killing, catching, cuddling as families, rather than seeing it from behind a glass wall in a zoo, I want to see it out in the wild.

So a safari, as I said, is a decision. Japan is probably what we're going to do in 2021, but there is a possibility that we might be going to South Africa.

But anyway, Nurali, you've also now sold Sri Lanka to me, so I have too many places now that I want to go to. So thank you for making my life even more difficult than it already is with deciding on which place to visit and where to go. Sri Lanka, also India, are two places I really want to visit, particularly for the food.

And there are other places which just... There's just too many places now. You guys are making it so difficult for me with these emails you send me.

And by the way, guys, please continue sending in your emails. If you have sent me one already, don't worry, I will read it, and I will try and put it in the podcast at some point. I just get sent so many emails, like so many of you guys sharing your stories with me, that it's gonna take a while for me to get all of them into the podcast.

But just remember, if you do send me an email, even if it's not read on the podcast yet, there's a possibility it will be in the future, but I do listen, and I do read all of them. And if I don't reply, it's just because it's impossible. I've got too many things to do already.

So thank you very much, everyone, for listening. I wish you a very pleasurable journey through 2020, and hopefully I can give you some fun, you can give me some fun, and we can all enjoy our lives together this year and for many more to come. So thank you very much for the support you gave me in 2019.

Everyone who listened to this podcast in 2019, it's so much more popular than I thought it would be, and it's all thanks to you listening right now. So thank you, and I'll see you in the next episode. Enjoy the journey.

Take care, love you all. Bye.

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Hello, my people, how are we? How are you doing today? Thank you for joining me on another journey.

Welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. Today we're covering a few different topics. We're going to be talking briefly about the virus that's been traumatizing the world.

We're going to be talking about a storm which has been battering the UK over the past few days, and other parts of the world, of course. I've got a little travel story about Cambodia. My experience is there, and also some regrets I have when I was there.

And also how to deal with a lack of motivation, which is something I've been really struggling with since Christmas, if I'll be honest with you. And I'll get into that soon. And of course, at the end, I'm going to be sharing an album or a song, which I believe you should listen to if you like the same music as me, something which might help you enjoy your life or enjoy music again, if you've lost that passion.

And maybe I'll share a travel story, which someone has emailed me over the past few weeks. So firstly, let's just take a look at what I said about a lack of motivation. Since Christmas, you know, I stopped going to the gym, pretty much.

I stopped my very strict schedule. And I was doing really, really well all the way up until Christmas. I was putting on weight.

That was my main goal. My body had become the body of a strong man. You know, I had relatively large muscles, and I was feeling amazing.

The best way my partner, Samantha, would describe it is she said, I was quite puffy. Puffy as in, imagine you put a bicycle pump into my chest and started blowing it up a bit. That's kind of what my body looked like.

I was happy. I was filling out t-shirts, you know. A few months before I started, back in 2018, I was a skinny rake.

That's what my sister used to call me, a rake. You know, like a garden rake that you'd use to put all the leaves together. My sister used to call me a rake because I was just a stick, basically.

And then obviously I put on all of this weight, this muscle, I was feeling amazing. My girlfriend was commenting on how much better my body looked, how healthier I looked. And then Christmas came.

And Christmas is a bittersweet thing. It's an amazing time to spend time with family. But also when you're thinking so much about buying people presents, celebrating what your plans are, going to various different meals, party celebrations, getting drunk, eating loads of food, you start to forget about your health.

This happens to me every year. And I'm definitely going to change the way 1 deal with Christmas this year in particular. Because I don't want to lose that motivation.

I've gone through about a month, month and a half now of not going to the gym, consistent, consistent, consistent. What's going on with me today? Consistently, I've just been struggling a bit.

Not with my mental health, just with my motivation. And my body's changed, you know. I've lost that puffiness.

The bicycle tires have deflated, let's say. And it's, yeah, it's a bit weird. And only over the past few days, I realized how much of an effect not going to the gym has taken on me.

So it made me write down. I took some notes and I thought, okay, I need to find this motivation again, this motivation to go back to the gym and the gym to do what makes me not only physically healthy, but happy in my brain. The gym makes me so happy.

Working out releases endorphins in your body, in your brain, it makes you feel, I'm not a scientist, I'm not a psychologist, so I could be wrong about a lot of these things, but I know that it is linked to making you happy. And many people use working out, for example, as an antidote for depression and things like that. And it really helps me with staying grounded.

I'd say that's the main thing, as well as obviously seeing the changes in my body. So I started to write down some notes. Why have I stopped?

I was asking myself these questions. Why did I stop going? Well, I can blame it on Christmas, but is it really Christmas that stopped me?

Is it really all the partying, the drinking, the family, or is it me?

What am I missing by not going to the gym? What am I missing out on? I've explained some of that to you already in this recording.

And what am I achieving by not going to the gym? Am I achieving anything? No, because that time where I would usually be at the gym, say 9 o'clock in the morning until 10, 10.30, it's before I start work.

Before I start responding to voice recordings on WhatsApp for my students, it's that time of the morning, which is Elliott time. It's me time. And for the past year, I was using that time as exercise time, time for me, for my body.

And then when I stopped, I found myself getting distracted. I got addicted to playing games on the PC. So that would be like my free time before I started work.

I would maybe play some games. Maybe I would just do something else. Maybe I'd read news.

Maybe I'd go on Reddit and just scroll through and read stuff about fitness, even though I was not keeping fit, you know? I was just finding distractions. And I touched on this in the last episode about procrastination.

The main thing is just doing. And you have to, you know, you can do various things to help you just begin. But that's what I lost, that motivation to begin again.

And I'm sure many of you can share stories with me. Please feel free to send me emails or send me a message on Twitter where I love to continue the conversation from the podcast. If you've had any kind of blocks of motivation where you struggle to keep doing something you really love doing, even if it's learning English, for example, or learning a language, we get those blocks.

But these are the questions that I asked myself, and these are the reasons why now, as of today, or as of this week, actually, I've started getting back into my dieting, eating correctly, in a surplus, exercising more, and I've started getting back into my routine. And it was these questions that helped me. Number one, what am I trying to achieve when I go to the gym?

Because obviously, if I'm not going, I'm not achieving that thing that I want to achieve. So let's say you're learning a language. Why are you trying to achieve results?

What are the results? What's the end goal that you're not working towards when you're not doing it? And it could be because you want to talk to natives more.

You want to feel confident when you speak English. Or for me, in the gym, it's because you want a nicer body to live longer, to eat well, and to have this kind of happiness that motivates you.

And then it was, you know, remember the benefits, maybe how good it makes you feel after you've had that study session or that gym session.

So for the gym, for example, as I said, it releases endorphins. It makes your brain healthy. It makes your body healthy.

And also, I think on the days I've been to the gym, when I carry on after, throughout my day, I feel amazing. I feel positive. I get on with jobs instead of just kind of putting things off.

And I'm much more productive in my work. So that's definitely a big benefit, as well as the physical aesthetic benefits you get from working out. So with learning a language, for example, if that's something any of you are struggling with, I know many of you listeners are non-natives from my YouTube channel.

You know, if you struggle with kind of keeping your learning plan, maybe you skip days and you don't practice English as much as you should anymore, you know, how does it make you feel after you've had a 45-minute learning session on your own? Maybe you feel tired, maybe you feel stressed, but how does your brain feel? It's improved, it's increased its capacity, it's learned new things, and also you're stimulating yourself.

You might not notice those good feelings, but your brain's feeling it. And again, it might set you up for the day if you do 20 minutes of English practice, pronunciation practice in the morning.

Maybe after that, the rest of your day is really productive.

It's always good to start your day with something productive. And the final question I asked myself is, what are you achieving when you're not doing it? Okay, and as I said, I was playing games in my free time.

I was doing things to procrastinate, and I was achieving nothing. If you're playing a game, what are you actually achieving in life? Yeah, maybe you feel kind of relaxed, you feel happy, maybe a bit grounded.

Maybe you feel more present, but it's not gonna help you really with your life unless you plan on becoming a professional gamer or something like that. These kinds of things we need in moderation, playing games, everything in moderation. They say, for example, red meat is really bad for you, it causes cancer, right?

But then there are scientists that say it's good for you and we need it in our lives. It's the same with red wine, for example. Red wine is alcohol, it's terribly bad for you, but it has some amazing benefits for your heart.

So this is the same with absolutely, and this is my outlook on life. Every single thing in life is good for you or bad for you unless you do it in moderation. Keep it under control.

If you're not doing something, not good. You know, if it's something that's beneficial for you. So just, I think I wanted to motivate you guys.

I think February is that time of the year, especially when people lose their motivation. Lots of people, it's the opposite for me, you know. So in January, most people set their goals.

They feel really motivated. All of these things they want to achieve this year. For me, it's different.

January, February is usually the time where I have no motivation. Christmas is finished. I am completely, I suffer from the blues, the winter blues where you just feel down and you don't know what to do with yourself.

And many other people, they feel motivated throughout the month of January to achieve their goals. And then February, things usually start to dip. Maybe you're not practicing as much.

Maybe you're not training as much. Maybe you're not doing those things you planned on doing as much. So this episode of this podcast, I believe is very crucial for some of you who are losing that motivation.

So hopefully I'm helping some of you right now. The next thing I wanted to talk about is just a few things which have been going on here in the world, I guess. Obviously we have this virus, the coronavirus, I think we call it, which is very, very terrifying.

And if any of my Chinese listeners are listening, obviously that's the place where it's originated from, where it's affected the most. So many people have died, which is so heartbreaking. Just from a virus, it's heartbreaking.

So many people have died, but also you need to think about not just the people who've died, but their families. That person who's died, that could be someone's husband, someone's wife, someone's child, someone's grandfather, grandmother, someone's anything. And one person dying has a knock on effect to everybody else in the world.

And it's so sad to know that these things exist in our planet. You know, how does this virus come about? I know there's science behind it, but why should these things exist in our world?

And it's unfair that some people just catch a cold, you know, catch this virus, and they die, you know? It's very, very sad when you think about it. And my heart goes out to everybody in the world.

It's spread all over the world now, inevitable, of course. There are people in the UK with it now. I believe there are eight or nine cases of people with the coronavirus in the UK.

It's in various parts of the world. And all I can say is keep safe. One thing, you know, I'm not a health advisor, okay?

My partner works in a pharmacy. So I'm quite scared for her because obviously she's dealing with people all the time who come in and out who are feeling ill and things. But one thing I'll say is these face masks, from what I've been told by experts and also on the news, they're not as effective as you might think they are, okay?

Some people believe that this face mask will save your life. They won't. More important, okay, the most important thing, and I'm not a health care professional, as I said, but I know this because I have common sense.

The most important thing is sanitizing. Sanitize your hands. Buy a hand sanitizer, like an alcohol hand sanitizer.

Anytime you come in contact with someone, use it. This illness is very easily spread, and things are most spread through our fingers, touching our mouths, touching our eyes, touching our noses, shaking hands with people, touching surfaces, and then somebody else touches it, and now they've got your germs. Everybody make sure, if it's in your country, if the government are keeping it under control, fantastic.

But if you want to stay safe, I would just say, don't just rely on a bloody face mask, okay? What about when you take that face mask off? All the germs that have collected on it, you touch them, and then you touch your mouth?

Oh no, they've spread to me. So face masks, yes, they're good. Please don't rely on them too heavily, because I just care about people, and a lot of people believe that face masks are the only way forward.

I know you can get fabric face masks now as well. Yes, they're great, but again, just sanitize, guys. Keep yourselves clean.

And we just need to be doing it more frequently, I guess. We've also had a storm, and there's a funny story I read in the news recently. It's actually local news.

So you guys know I live in the Southwest, a place called Bristol, and near us is a bridge called the Seven Bridge. S-E-V-E-R-N, Seven Bridge. Now, this bridge connects England to Wales.

So you drive across this bridge. It takes about 10 minutes. It's a long ass bridge.

I tell you that now. We drive along it, and we're in Wales. And obviously we've had these 70, 80, 90 mile per hour winds, right, and there was a lorry, so like a big truck, driving along this bridge, which is very high up.

It's in a completely open area, so you can imagine the wind, right? It can, there's a video, actually. You can search for it if you search seven bridge storm or something like that.

And the bridge, the bridge, god, that would be scary. The lorry completely tipped over. This guy suffered minor head injuries, but it is terrifying to see the power of nature, you know?

Whoa, this massive lorry just getting completely obliterated, smashed on the side. Luckily, the guy came out alive, but it's amazing. Now, I noticed some of you, I have to be careful because lots of people listening to this podcast are from different places in the world.

And obviously, some of you are from some countries which have been absolutely battered by tsunamis, hurricanes, typhoons, all of these terrible storms. And obviously, that's a horrible thing. And I always think about those things.

But when it happens here, it's a bit weird, right? For us, it's very, very odd when we get a freak storm that's literally smashing people's buildings, breaking windows, knocking trees over, flooding places, and people die. I don't know if anybody's died in this one.

Obviously, it's never as major as the ones that happen in various other parts of the world, you know, and all of those things are much worse, but just saying, you know. When things happen in England, it's like you would think the world is ending, especially when it's the weather, because it's our favorite thing to talk about here. So if there's a freak storm that's a bit unusual compared to others, even if it's not that serious, everybody thinks they're going to die and they're warning you, and it's a strange little island.

Next thing I want to talk about is travel. Of course, this is kind of a travel podcast. It's also a live podcast.

I wanted to talk a little bit about a place I never really talk about. And I know some of my listeners, some of my Youlube subscribers are from this country, and the country is Cambodia.

So you remember I've mentioned that I did this, that this is the first time when I was about 19 or something, I did a backpacking trip where I traveled to Thailand, then through the north of Thailand into Laos, as some people call it, then into Vietnam, north to south, cross the border into Cambodia, and then back into Thailand.

Now, when I was in Cambodia, so the last kind of country I went to before I returned to Thailand, it was a strange experience. And I have lots of regrets from when I was there. And I really, really feel bad about my time there, which is a shame, because it seems like such a beautiful country.

So I intended to spend a very long time traveling and exploring and doing things in Cambodia.

And what happened was I kind of got scared. And it's just from one or two bad experiences that happened on the very first day when I got there.

So we arrived on our bus, and the first thing that happened was we got scammed. So we got off of our bus, which originally came from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. So it was a very, very long journey.

We had to cross the border. It was like an overnight journey. We arrived very, very late at night in...

Now, my pronunciation is bad, but British people would say non pen, so the capital. And when we got off the bus, immediately, there were just like 20 or 30 Cambodian guys just shouting at us. And they wanted us to get in their taxi to take, you know, so that they could take us to wherever we needed to go.

We had a hotel booked. So we went up to one of the taxi guys, and we said, so we have a hotel booked. This is the name of the hotel.

Can you please take us here? He said, no, it doesn't exist anymore. This hotel, no more exists.

So I was thinking, okay, but l've emailed them. I've spoken to them. And obviously, when I was traveling, I didn't have a SIM card in my phone that I could ring people with and get in contact with the hotel.

So I believed him. Obviously, being a 19-year-old thinking that, you know, everybody tells the truth and all of this stuff, I just believed him. So he said, you have to go here.

So he took us in his taxi to some place I've never ever seen in my life. Obviously, I didn't know Cambodia. I didn't know Phnom Penh, so I didn't know where I was.

So we just trusted him. And he took us to a different hostel. It was a backpacker hostel, so we were okay with that.

It was cheap. And actually, the guy on the desk was really, really friendly. But we were quite annoyed that we couldn't just go to the place we'd already booked, which obviously existed.

I don't know. You know, I tried to tell him, but I spoke to them before, but he just didn't believe me. So obviously, we just went to this new hostel.

It was pretty much in the center of Phnom Penh. And the guy on the desk was really friendly. He had like a really strong Australian accent, but he was from Cambodia.

He said he was. He said he picked up his accent from all of the Australian guests that he'd had staying in the hostel. But anyway, we went to our room, and it all seemed fine, until we started going to sleep.

And after about three hours of sleep, I woke up in my sleep. And I was soaking wet, absolutely soaked. And I could still feel, it was like it was raining.

I was thinking that I was outside, and looked up at the ceiling, and the ceiling was leaking. But I mean like a waterfall. It was just, I don't even know what happened.

I have no idea. I don't know if upstairs in the other hostel above us, one of the rooms, if they were, if they'd flooded the bath or the shower, or something was going wrong. But whatever was happening up there, it was all trickling down on my face in my sleep.

And the funny story is, my girlfriend, she was led next to me, and she was completely dry. So this one area of wet ceiling that was dripping was only going on me. Typical, this is what we call Elliott luck, or Elliott bad luck.

I just made that up, so it's not actually what anybody says, but let's make it the thing. Hashtag Elliott luck. Anyway, it's, this was, this was scary.

And then I started to notice that actually our hostel room now was starting to flood also. Okay, so scary. So basically we, I, being a typical lazy backpacker, I just said, whatever, I'll just go to sleep.

So l ended up lying basically on my girlfriend. I used her as a mattress, because that was the only dry part of the bed. And then it was only about two hours, three hours I had to sleep.

Woke up and then we, we, we decided to find a new place. So then we found a new place. Okay.

And this place seemed really nice as well. Again, another Cambodian guy with a really strong Australian accent. I don't know if they were related or something, but it was weird how I was hearing all of these Cambodian people with Australian accents, really good ones as well.

And this place was fine. So we got, it was quite a nice room. It cost more, but it was in a really good location.

And this was our first day in Phnom Penh. So we decided to get some brunch, breakfast, lunch, you know, it was kind of that time of day. We woke up late because of, well, because we decided to have another nap when we got into the new hostel.

And then we went down to basically the cafe area of the hostel we were staying in, the new hostel. And we saw on the menu that they did pizza. And I was thinking, wow, pizza.

I haven't had pizza for months, obviously, because we've been traveling to all of these different places. We've been eating loads of Vietnamese food, pho boh and things like that, you know, and we've been in Thailand, been having pad thai, green curry, pad krap rau, pad krap rau, I think you call it. I'm not sure.

My pronunciation is dreadful. Khao soi and chang mai, you know, all of these amazing dishes.

We didn't really feel the need to go to a western restaurant and have pizza.

But obviously we were in Cambodia, and on the menu was apparently the chef's speciality in our hostel, and it was pizza. And I ordered a pizza. And when he took my order, he said, OK, so you want happy pizza?

Happy pizza. Sure. OK, fine.

Happy pizza. OK, sounds good to me. I had no idea what a happy pizza was until about three hours later.

And I'll tell you in a second. Maybe some of you have guessed already, but I had no idea what this was. Just remember that.

So I ate the pizza. We both did. And, you know, it was nice.

It wasn't as good as one you'd get in an Italian restaurant, but it was nice. It had some good herbs on it. It was pretty good, you know, for something that was made, you know, in a hostel in Cambodia.

So then the day went on. A few hours later, we decided to do a little walk around, go and visit the markets and do some kind of market shopping. We went to see some of the sites.

And then I started to feel a bit weird. Right, I started to get a bit tired. And I started to feel a bit slow, lethargic, lazy.

And then I was just like, oh, maybe it's just the heat. It was a really hot day. Maybe it was from the stress of last night.

So I just said to Sam, maybe we should just go home, go back to the hostel and just have a rest before we go out again later for some dinner. And as we were walking back, I started to kind of keep losing my mind a little bit. So like you'd be really conscious, you know, really thinking about what's going on around you.

You're looking around. And then suddenly you'd be like, whoa, I'm in a dream. I'm in a daydream.

What's going on? And I still had no idea. I thought, oh, God, maybe I'm getting sick.

Maybe something really bad's happening to me. I started to get really paranoid. And then we got back to the room, and then the room started kind of turning into a tunnel.

Like everything was becoming kind of blurry. I felt so just medicated. And that was the word that came to my head.

I feel like I've had some medication. And then Sam suddenly says, happy pizza. But to me, her voice sounded a bit like, happy pizza.

Because everything was kind of in slow motion. I was on another planet. So then we had some Wi-Fi in this hostel, and we looked up Cambodia Happy Pizza.

And it turns out that these happy pizzas are pizzas which are covered with cannabis, marijuana, weed. Now, you know, being a teenager, especially a teenager that grows up in the UK, I've smoked weed before, you know. I had it quite a lot when I was 14, 15, 16, you know, just at parties with friends.

You know, I've used it before. I'm not afraid to say that, because almost everybody nowadays has. And it's not an addictive drug.

It's not a dangerous drug, or it can be in some cases, but generally it's not. So I don't really have a problem with it. But when I realized, obviously because I was high, basically I was high, but because I realized that I was high and I didn't plan on being high, this was because somebody put drugs on my pizza, when I realized that, I started to panic.

And I had a panic attack. My heart was racing. I couldn't breathe.

I was terrified. And I just started to think that everybody was trying to kill me. And this is because of the paranoia.

And this is one of the side effects of smoking or ingesting, eating weed. It can make you very, very paranoid and have anxiety attacks. And that's what happened to me, because obviously, I was convinced that someone drugged me, and he was trying to kill me.

Sam was next to me, trying to calm me down, but it was almost like she didn't exist. And I'd never been, you know, I told you I'd used marijuana in the past, just for fun, at parties with friends, you know, as you do. And I'd never been this high before.

This was like stoned high. So that was pretty terrifying, you know? Eventually, I just passed out and fell asleep, woke up, I was still a bit high, like a bit kind of, you know, on another planet, but we decided to then continue with the rest of our day.

And that was that really. So nothing really came of the story apart from the fact I had a massive panic attack and thought people were trying to kill me, and everybody was speaking like this, as you can imagine. So yeah, that was an experience, and that, if I'm being honest, just created a general sense of paranoia about Cambodia, which is a real shame.

So after that, we went to Siem Reap, which is where the Angkor Wat is. And luckily, that was a good time for me to kind of relax, to explore the Angkor Wat, which is one of the wonders of the world. It's absolutely beautiful, breathtaking, the nature, the buildings.

I honestly, I don't know if I was still high, but it was one of the most magical places. I felt like I was just in another, I don't know, just a realm. It felt like something out of a fairy tale, that place.

And I really wish that we did the overnight excursion there, but we just went for one day. We had a really nice driver, tuk tuk driver. I think it's something different there maybe, who showed us around and guided us.

He was the kindest man. He was so lovely, and he made sure that we saw all of the most important parts of the Angkor Wat, because the whole site is absolutely huge. And yeah, I had an amazing time, and that kind of brought me back and made me feel really positive about Cambodia.

And then we met some friends there, and we decided to go on that evening after spending time at the Angkor Wat. We went out with some friends who we'd just met. They were from Finland.

And we went to a bar in Siem Reap, in the kind of center area. Very backpackery, very touristy.

And we had a good time, actually, until on the way home, I was quite scarred after this, because I saw two very heartbreaking things.

Number one, there was a group of children, and all of them were missing at least one limb, one body part. And it makes me very emotional just thinking of it. You know, there was a kid without a leg, and he was probably only two or three years old.

And they didn't have parents with them, and it was horrible, really, really horrible to see. And this is something I'd read about, is that actually, in fact, some families are so poor,

that they will

remove their children's body parts, like their leg or something, so that people will give them money on the streets when they beg, which is absolutely terrible. And it shows that some countries, no matter how bad you're feeling about your life, some countries actually have to do this to their own children just to put food on the table to feed their children.

They have to make them suffer, you know? And then later on, on the way home to the hotel again, I saw a child walking around with a gun, and this was not a pistol, this was like a machine gun, like an AK-47. And then that was when I realized, what the hell?

I was very confused. I'd had a few beers, I was a bit drunk, but I was very, very confused when I saw that. And apparently, again, this is quite a normal thing, something you will see in Cambodia.

And it's bittersweet, because Cambodia is one of the most beautiful, amazing countries I've been to, the natural beauty, the people, the smiling faces, the people are so friendly, the food is amazing, unless you order a happy pizza without realizing. But, you know, I had an Amok fish curry, which was absolutely amazing. Oh my, it was better than some of the Thai curries I'd had.

Very similar, but a bit more coconutty. Turmeric being used as well, which was lovely. So I had an amazing time, but I also saw probably the most poverty I've ever seen, and extreme amounts of it as well.

So then I realized, okay, I need to help this country. So I actually signed up to do two weeks of teaching in a kind of seaside town, so one of the more coastal areas of Cambodia. The accommodation was dreadful, and it was a horrible experience, but the whole time I was thinking, I'm staying in this really horrible kind of bamboo hut where there's no safety, that a snake could come in and bite my face off anytime, or something like that, you know.

But the people I'm helping, I went to teach in a school which was an orphanage where children had no parents, and I didn't really care about my situation. I didn't care how uncomfortable I was sleeping. Those are just things I need when I'm in England.

When I'm here helping these people, these kids who have no family, for various reasons, teaching them English, that's all I care about. So we did that for two weeks. And then I thought, okay, I'm ready to leave now.

But as soon as I left, and as soon as I arrived back in Thailand, in Bangkok, after crossing the border, I realized I should have spent longer in Cambodia. All I did was spend a quick night or two nights in Phnom Penh. I saw the genocide museum.

I saw all of the horrible things, the killing fields, the places where all of these horrible things happened during this kind of Khmer Rouge era, which was horrible. And I learned a lot about Cambodia's history. Very, very bloody and gory and horrible.

And any of you Cambodians listening, your, if you're young, your parents, your grandparents, your elders have been through a lot. And I admire them, and I admire you as well for being the new generation of a very recently troubled country. And this is why there's poverty.

This is why there's kids on the streets with no legs. Because of what happened, it's the closest thing to what Hitler did to the Jews. Absolutely dreadful that it was a whole country that was affected by this.

So, and it's obviously it was more recent as well. So this is why Cambodia is still a country that's coming out of this. So I've never been to a country and hated it.

Cambodia was a country I loved, but I did feel the most out of my comfort zone there. And I definitely want to go back, and I will go back, and I'll probably want to teach again. I'll want to, I think that needs to be a country that I want to help.

And I did the same thing in Vietnam when I went to visit some mountain people, people who just live in the mountains in Vietnam. They don't have much money. They don't really have anything.

They just have themselves. They survive on the animals they kill and eat. You know, a bit like caveman style.

And I taught in an orphanage near there as well, which was a very rewarding experience. Also, I have some great pictures of me and the kids there. Maybe I'll put some on Twitter.

So, you know, I think it's good to do your bit. And I've mentioned this before. If you go and visit countries, make sure that if it's a country that's perhaps not as developed as yours, make sure you do something where you can leave your mark there.

And that's what I wanted to do in Cambodia. The things that happened, I guess, gave me a realization. So yeah, I recommend visiting Cambodia, especially if you want to see, especially if you're European or from a, you know, a country which is very, very well developed and futuristic.

Go somewhere like Cambodia to see things like what I've mentioned. And don't see it as a negative. See it as a reason to help.

Just by being there and paying for things and buying things, you're helping the economy, okay?

In some way. It might not be massive, but you're still helping in some way.

And that's it really. The main part of that story really was the pizza thing. I thought that was quite funny.

And it's probably one of the most fun, one of the funniest experiences that's happened to me while I've been traveling. I do have more stories, little things like that, which I will share with you. But I hope you enjoyed this episode today.

As I said, I'm just going to add an album, which I've been listening to a lot recently. I only listen to this if you like rock music. Obviously, if rock music is not your thing, you won't like this.

But there's a band I'm listening to at the moment, they're called Movements. They are at the festival that I'm going to in May, and they are probably the least well-known band at that festival. In fact, they might even be opening, you know, one of the first bands to play, so not many people will be watching them.

But I've fallen in love with them, and their album is called Feel Something. Feel Something, okay? And I have to say that it probably is, in a long time, one of the only albums that has made me feel something.

So it's kind of ironic that it's called this, because it actually does make you feel something. Track to track, beginning to end, every song has an emotional depth to it. Whether it's singing about depression, about expectations that people have for him, about his girlfriend and how she struggled with her problems, about grandparents getting dementia, Alzheimer's, and things like that.

You know, it's very deep. It's quite a depressing album, but it does make you feel something. And if you read the lyrics to their songs while you listen to them, I mean, it nearly brought me to tears some of their songs.

They are a very powerful band. They're very small. They're very unknown at the moment.

So it's a good time to be listening to bands like this before they get big. Another band who are very small, but I believe they're going to be absolutely huge. And I'm talking the American 1975.

I think they're going to be the next 1975, but American. They are called Grayscale, but gray spelt in the American way, G-R-A-Y. Very catchy pop rock hits with a bit of kind of 80s influence, very upbeat and happy.

So today I've shared with you a depressing band, movements and a happy band, Grayscale. And they have a newer, newish album called Nellavita. Nellavita.

Amazing album, really beautiful, and good for upbeat happiness. Because their songs are actually, if you, again, if you read the lyrics, Grayscale, their lyrics are quite depressing, but they put all of it, again, irony. They put all of their depressing lyrics to very happy songs.

Happy beats, happy tunes, and it does make you feel good. So they're a great band to listen to also, and they will be at the festival I'm going to as well. By the way, any of you living in the UK, try and get tickets for it if you want to hang out with me at the festival.

It's in May, May Bank holiday weekend. I'm going to the one in Leeds. I didn't want to go to the one in London just because I always find that crowds in London are a bit rougher.

People like to start fights sometimes and get a bit rowdy and drunk at festivals. And I always find it's been worse when I've done it in places like London, which is inevitable because you have a variety of people from different places, different areas of London, all coming together in one place, and it's bound to happen. Leeds, I always find people are very upbeat, up-tempo, happy, take life as it comes.

And that's more my style. I think I have a bit of a northerner personality inside of me, despite being from the south, born and bred. So, looking forward to going there.

And by the way, as I said, if any of you are looking for a festival, if you live in the UK or if you maybe live in France, I know a few people who are flying over from France to go to this festival in Leeds. Slam Dunk Festival is the name, like the basketball thing, Slam Dunk. Yeah, come along and hang out if you do want to.

It would be great to meet some of you at the festival with some great music. Only if you're into the same music as me, if you like that kind of rock music, ranging from metal all the way to emo, pop punk, punk, alternative rock, basically. Lots of great bands there.

Check them out on the list. So yeah, that's it for today in terms of what I have to say. We'll just finish with a lovely story from somebody.

So if you remember recently, I asked for some ideas about some city breaks, and Germany was one of the places on the list. So someone called Olivia has very kindly recommended somewhere in Germany called Hamburg. Don't know if you've heard of it before.

It's somewhere I've always been quite interested in, as well as Berlin, Munich. I don't think, apparently Munich is quite boring. Lots of people have told me.

Please correct me if I'm wrong. And the only place I've been, I have been to Germany once. I went to the Rhineland, and I went to Phantasialand, which I think is near Cologne.

I went on a school trip, so I was very young. I can't remember it. But anyway, Hamburg.

Here's what Olivia has to say. So I'm Olivia, and I am from Hamburg in Germany. My friend recommended me your podcast.

I really like it. It's very interesting. And also, I hope my English will get better.

It will, honestly, if you keep doing this as listening practice, this podcast will really help, particularly with intonation, Olivia. Okay, so lots of listening practice is what will improve intonation the most, because it's a bit like a song. You know, I always compare things to music, but and that's probably why I'm a pronunciation teacher.

When you listen to people, intonation is like a song. And you know, when you hear a song on the radio over and over and over again, it kind of, I don't know, maybe you'll find yourself a few days later singing that song or humming, and it's because you've heard it so many times that you just know it and you don't like it. Maybe you don't like the song, but you just know it.

You know the tone, all right, how to go up and down, how it changes. And that's what intonation is. Maybe it's not as catchy or as enjoyable as a song, but it happens through listening and repetition, mimicking, copying, just like how you'd learn a song.

Intonation is very different to phonetics, like learning phonetic sounds and symbols. So treat them differently, and this is what's going to help you with your intonation, all of you listening.

So Olivia says, Olivia says, I want to recommend the city Hamburg in Germany to go to for a few days.

You have to visit the harbour because it's so beautiful. And there you can also see, oh my God, this is a big word, the Elb, Elbphilharmonie, Elbphilharmonie. I wish I could say that in a German accent, but I would sound bad.

You can also drive with the ferry to the other side of the river Elbe, or Elbe. I don't know how you say that river. Or go to the Elbe strand.

In Blankenese, Blankenese is a cool place with a lot of steps, which in brackets she's put Treppenwirtel, Treppenwirtel. That's so lovely. And you have to go to Michael's church, Michel, Michael, Michael.

There you can go to the top and look at the whole city. It's very stunning. We also have a television tower, but you can't go inside because it has closed since 2001.

Here in Hamburg, it's raining really often and a lot, so just like England then really, but maybe not as much as the UK. Oh, that's good then. I hope you will come to Hamburg one day and enjoy it.

So thank you for sharing that. As I said, I'm trying to get as many recommendations from you guys as I can about places to go. I was thinking about maybe going to Germany this year, just as I said, for maybe a long weekend, or France, maybe somewhere like Barcelona, in Spain, maybe.

I don't know. Madrid. So keep sending in your suggestions, and if I do go to one of your places, I will let you guys know, and perhaps we could do a little meetup or something.

So Europeans, get sending in your places for me to visit. Thank you also to all of the Japanese people who've been recommending places to go in Japan. When I go, hopefully, next year, not this year, I'll keep you updated on that.

But anyway, this has been a really good episode today, really long. So thanks to those of you, I guess, who've stuck along and stayed till the end. Always a pleasure.

I know some of you, I mean, I've had people tell me they listen to this podcast in the gym. I've heard people say that they listen to it on planes, when they're flying to different places, on long journeys, on the way to school. So thank you, everyone, wherever you are, whatever you're doing right now.

I hope once this podcast is finished, you can return to reality and enjoy whatever the day or evening or night or whatever has for you. Take care. Thank you very much, everyone.

Enjoy the journey and I'll speak to you soon. Don't forget to continue the conversation with me on Twitter at ET] English. I've been tweeting loads recently and would love to carry on the conversation with you.

So send me your thoughts through Twitter and I will see you soon.

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Whew, okay, where do I begin with this one? Hello would be a start. Hi, it's me, Elliott from Journeys With Elliott, ETJ English, wherever you know me from.

Welcome to another Journeys With Elliott episode where today we're tackling something we're all dealing with right now, a journey, if you like, that we are all on. And this is the journey of the coronavirus pandemic. It has affected the world massively.

It's had such a big impact. Just to give you some statistics, as I am talking right now, on the 26th of March 2020 at 2:19 p.m. in the UK there are 491,120, just consume that for a second, 491,120 cases.

There have been 22,165 deaths, and 118,000 have recovered. So just digest that for a second.

Something which is fairly new to us, it's only been around for a few months, has wiped out a massive amount of this population of the planet we live on today.

Some areas worse than others, China, Italy, Spain, Iran, places who have been very, very badly affected by this, and more to come. Some places are just beginning. Some places have been dealing with this virus for a few months, a few weeks now.

The UK, we are rising. We're following the figures of Italy day by day, and we believe that we will probably match, if not be worse than them in the long run. We're just a few weeks behind them.

So people in Italy, people in China, people in Spain, people anywhere in the world where this has affected you, your friends, your family, I am truly sorry that you've had to experience this because it's a very, very horrible virus. It's been killing so many people. Now, I mentioned earlier 491,120 cases.

This is recorded cases. Some countries like my country, the UK, we're not recording all of our cases, and it's actually predicted that there are a lot more cases here in the UK than we have recorded. We believe that there's probably around a million people with it right now, but we have nowhere near recorded that many.

And that's because we're only testing people who are really sick. So another interesting thing is Iceland. I don't know if anyone listening is from Iceland.

I've never actually had any contact with people from Iceland who've joined my course or subscribed to my YouTube channel, but I believe they carried out some tests. I read this in the news. They've carried out, I think, more or if not, a much larger amount than most countries of tests, coronavirus tests, on people.

People who they think are sick, people who don't think they're sick, and their statistics were very, very interesting. I don't have them with me now, but I believe from what I read, a very, very large amount of people had the virus, but they are a word that we would call asymptomatic. And this essentially means that they are not carrying any of the symptoms of the virus.

So they have it, it's in their body, they can spread it, they can give it to people, but they are not showing any symptoms. So you could be absolutely fine doing everything you normally do in life, talking to people, meeting people, shaking hands, doing all of that rubbish, and you could be spreading this deadly virus that's killing people. Scary, right?

The other thing is this virus can, it doesn't start showing symptoms with some people for a few weeks or days, and this can be quite worrying, because for example, I could have it right now and not know that in two weeks' time, I could be really, really sick. I could be in a hospital bed, right? And that's the scary thing, and that's why people are spreading it.

So if there's any message I want to get across to people today is no matter what country you're from, no matter where you are right now, do you really need to go outside? How important is it?

Is it worth risking lives?

Okay, my country is on lockdown, kind of. Not really. I mean, people are still outside.

If I look out the window right now, there were lots of people outside. In groups of two, because that's what we've been told, we've been told that we can go out in groups of two for one little session of exercise per day, whether it's a run or a bike ride or going for a walk or something.

Parks are closed, so we can't go and hang out in parks, have barbecues.

Really, we should be staying at home. We can go out to buy medicine. We can go to buy food, but only if it's really necessary.

The only people working, going to work, are what we call key workers, so people who have jobs which are still important. For example, my partner, she works in a pharmacy, so she is still working. She has to deal with sick people every day.

People come into a pharmacy with problems, with colds, with flu, and she doesn't know if the person she's talking to could have the virus. It's quite scary. And, you know, she still has to work.

Lots of people are at home. Other workers are people who work in supermarkets and, of course, are amazing doctors and nurses. And not just mine, yours.

The people in your countries who are saving lives now more than they ever have needed to before. On a daily basis, they could be saving hundreds of lives. Of course, they are losing many too, but some of those people are incurable.

We just can't save them. The message we're sending across in our country that the TV shows are pushing, that the channels are pushing, that the news channels are pushing, is stay inside, save lives. And I think this is something which, wherever you're from right now, you need to think about.

Do you really need to go outside? If we want to get back to normal life, if we want to go out and party, go to festivals, go to see our family members, go back to normal life, we have to stay inside just for a little while. And it's difficult, right?

I miss the gym. You know from this podcaster, I used to spend a lot of time in the gym every day.

Gyms are closed now in the UK, so I can't go.

But that's just a sacrifice I've had to deal with. I'd rather be saving lives than going to the gym and potentially spreading a virus that I could be carrying, that somebody else could have, you know, and we all need to stay inside and stop spreading it between different households. And that's the action our government has taken.

However, the rules don't carry very big punishments. Now, I'm a very liberal, fair person. I like, you know, freedom for the people, you know, everybody to be respected, no matter what race, gender, anything like that.

But right now, I would like to have a more draconian government, a government that's ready to give us strict rules and strict punishments. We've seen that these work in various countries over the world. For example, China has managed to massively reduce their cases.

Why? Because they were strict. And why?

Because the people complied. People listened, and they agreed to the rules. South Korea, exactly the same.

Okay? And we're seeing it in countries who have been following these new procedures. We've seen the curves, the statistics, flatten and start to go lower.

I'm really, really upset to see the numbers in places like Italy, Spain, China, when it was bad.

And, you know, it really has affected some countries more than others. But we're all suffering in one way or another.

And as a planet, we all need to listen to just one thing, which is stay inside. And, you know, a lot of people have been asking me, Elliott, how has it affected you? And to be honest, it's been tough for me.

Now, I'm very lucky because at the moment, it hasn't affected any of my family. It hasn't affected me yet, but who knows? It could.

And the way it's affected me is actually this year was going to be, and I strongly believe it was going to be the best year of my life. I had so many concerts planned to go to some of my favourite bands, amazing bands that I was really excited to see, and they've all had to cancel or reschedule. And obviously those reschedule dates, we don't know if they'll even be OK then, you know?

Some bands have postponed their concerts until September, but really, is this all going to be OK in September? They're saying that there's not going to be a vaccine until next year, and they still have to mass produce it and give it to all of the countries. So I'm not too sure.

I also had an amazing festival planned, which I've spoken about on this podcast in the past kind of three episodes. I've talked about how excited I am. And the other thing which has been mentioned a lot since the beginning of this podcast is my wedding, which was planned in Italy, in Italy.

And of course, Italy are probably the most, the worst hit country on the planet right now. So I don't think it's going to happen. So I had all of these amazing plans, all of these fantastic things which were going to happen, and everything's just stopped.

Now, it might sound a bit selfish, me talking like this, because I know some people have been affected in much worse ways. There are people who have lost family members, there are people who have died. But you know, it's affected people in different ways.

And I guess my perspective is just a bit of a different perspective, more of the social side of things. For somebody who doesn't really go out much, somebody who is quite an introvert and likes to stay inside, I had one year planned where I was going to do a lot and see a lot of people and do a lot of things and get married and all of this stuff. And now it's all been ruined.

And you know, we do have to try and see the positives in this, but it's also okay to accept how this virus has really turned the whole world upside down. So please do share with me on Twitter how has it affected you? How is your country dealing with the virus?

Are there rules in place which are really helping? Are you scared? Be honest, tell me on Twitter, at ET/ English.

You can contact me with any worries, any questions or anything you want to share with the world. And I'll reply to your comments and your questions or anything you have as long as they are respectable. And we can continue the conversation there.

And people are saying, this is a virus which only kills the old. It's a virus which only kills people who are old and people who have already got some health conditions like lung conditions or blood pressure problems, things like this, because of the pneumonia it eventually causes, which basically causes you to be unable to breathe without a machine, without a ventilator. But yesterday, we had some tragic news in the UK that a 21-year-old girl, healthy, no conditions, no problems, no past health issues, died, just died from the virus.

And that's really, really, really sad. And I'm sure this has happened in many countries, but it really proves that nobody is safe. Even if you think you're young and healthy, you're not safe, okay?

So just be careful and think about it before you go outside the door. Now, I know it's hard to stay inside. It's hard to stay isolated, to keep yourself away from people, from family members.

But you don't want to put those people at risk, and you don't want to put yourself at risk, and you don't want to make those numbers rise. The numbers are already big enough, and they will continue to grow, the numbers I told you earlier. But we don't want them to get too much higher.

So let's just all do our part right now. Stay inside, talk to each other, okay? You can talk to me.

You can talk to people in the comments section of my YouTube videos. You can talk to anyone, make friends. Try and enjoy things at home.

Of course, go out for exercise if you can, and do things like that. But just remember that we are all, and this is what Boris Johnson, our Prime Minister, said to us. As much of an idiot he can be sometimes.

He said to us, we are all enlisted. Now, enlist is a word that's used in the war. It's a word that's used when people are signed up to fight in a battle.

And that's what we're doing, all of us, but not just as a country, as a planet. We are fighting a battle with an invisible enemy. There are no bombs being dropped.

There are no guns being fired. But there's an invisible enemy that's killing all of us. And how do we stop it?

We stay inside in our warm homes, or cold homes if you live in a hot country and you want to stay cold. We sit on the sofa and watch TV, stay with our loved one who we're isolating with or by ourselves. And we have the internet.

You know, when the war was going on, there was no internet, there was no way of enjoying yourself online, watching videos, watching Netflix, all of these things. We have so many things we can do at home, and all we have to do is use them. Sit at home, use our resources at home, and we are fighting the enemy by doing nothing.

And that's all we need to do. It's been hard for me to stay inside. As I said, it's been hard for people I know.

And there are other ways that this virus has affected my life. Obviously, one of the most notable things, again, in every country, is food. Now, our supermarkets, they have enough food.

They do. But people are panic buying. Now, panic buying is when a major crisis happens like this, and everybody runs to the shops before everybody else can, and they buy everything, all the food, everything, all the things they can buy, toilet roll, medicine, everything.

And the shelves everywhere you go now are empty. And it's because people are stocking up in case they have to stay inside and quarantine themselves if they get sick, because we can't go out, obviously. All of the delivery slots, you know, when you can get food deliveries and things like that, all taken, three weeks waiting list to get food delivered.

And that's quite difficult because it's hard for us to get hold of food now. And we are, you know, we're eating tins and things like that out of tins, not much fresh food around. So it is quite confusing and quite difficult.

But again, could be a lot worse. What else? What else?

I missed Mother's Day. I couldn't go and see my mum on Mother's Day because I actually did have a little scare last week. I developed a cough.

A tickly cough in my throat. I kept coughing and I didn't know why. I would have loved to have been tested to find out if I had the virus, but obviously my symptoms weren't strong enough to say, Doctor, can I have a test to see if I have the virus?

So maybe I had it. I don't know. I could have had very mild symptoms like many people were getting.

But because I had a cough, I was coughing for no reason, which is one of the big signs of the virus. I passed on Mother's Day. I didn't want to spread it to my mom and to my sister.

I haven't seen my dad in weeks. He lives separately to my mom now, actually. In fact, at the start of this year, they separated.

So another kind of problem that's happening at the moment. But that's life. That's just everybody goes through something like that at some point nowadays.

But yeah, I haven't been able to see my dad either. Now he has a heart condition. He's 70 years old.

So he is in the category where it would be quite dangerous for him to catch the disease. So I'm staying very far away from him, calling him every day to check he's okay, if he needs any help.

But yeah, so that's kind of my story.

Not much has really, really happened to me since it started. But you know, I'm living every day like it could be my last, because for all I know, tomorrow I could start showing symptoms.

Tomorrow my partner could, my dad could, anyone could.

So we live in very uncertain times. That's the best way to describe it. So far, as I said, it hasn't really affected me much, just my social life and the plans I had.

And I feel very lucky compared to some people, as I said, who've died and lost people. But keep going, guys. Keep staying strong.

Remember, stay inside and look after yourselves, look out for other people. If there's any way you can help your country, whether it's taking up a delivery job or whether it's helping the old person who lives next door to you by leaving some food on her doorstep or whatever it is, just see what you can do to help people because there are people in need right now. And don't forget to look after yourself.

Self-isolation can really affect your brain, your mental health, and there will be, and I know this, there will be a mental health epidemic after this. There will be so many people suffering from depression and anxiety, from, developed from fears of getting this illness, developed from family members lost, developed from just the mood that the world is in right now. We're all very sad and struggling.

So try and look after yourself. Try and do some breathing, meditation exercises in the morning, just for 10 minutes when you start your day. Sit down, take a breath, and just breathe in life.

Maybe open the window so you can feel the fresh air come in on you. Get into a really good series, like a new TV series on Netflix or something that you look forward to watching. There are loads of YouTubers who are now doing exercise videos, home exercise, things you can do at home to stay fit, keep your heart rate strong, stay healthy, and to not get fat from sitting on the sofa all the time, isolating.

The internet can be a dark place, but it can also be a very useful, happy place, and try and find those happy things online that can motivate you to do things. Maybe you want to get stuck into a book. Maybe you want to work on your pronunciation or just your English in general.

Take up some lessons with the teacher. If you haven't lost your job and you still got money and you're lucky in that way, then maybe use that money for something helpful to either your country or to yourself, whether it's learning. We can use this time to learn

I started playing the guitar again because I want to use this time to help me. Although my work is a lot heavier now because as you can imagine, lots of people are stuck at home. And because they're stuck at home, people who've joined my course who don't usually contact me don't always have the time, they're contacting me a lot more frequently, which means my workload is extremely heavy.

So I'm actually working harder than I was before. It's not a bad thing because lots of people have actually lost their jobs. But so I'm thankful for that.

But also I'm losing my voice every day. As you can hear now, my voice isn't very healthy. And that's simply because I've been talking so much, helping so many students on a daily basis, because they all have free time to talk to me now.

So, you know, there are positives, there are negatives, there are all kinds of things going on right now, but make sure you look after yourself, not just the people around you, because it's very hard to stay inside for such a long time. But there are ways of coping, and you can find lots of useful information online. Celebrities are now streaming mini concerts from home.

I saw that Chris Martin from Coldplay, I'm not a big fan of Coldplay, but I do like what he did. He sat in front of his phone and played the guitar and sang. And, you know, little things like this can keep you happy.

It's a free concert, you know? They can keep you happy, keep you going through the day. And it's amazing how the world, the planet comes together in situations like this.

So, you know, I wanted to finish this episode on a positive note. We started with all the horrible figures, the horrible facts, and the reality that we're facing. But there is also a positive reality here, and that's the amazing things that people are doing to stay happy, the amazing things that celebrities are doing to probably just cure their boredom from being stuck inside, but also to help other people be happy by doing things for free.

So it's just a short update today, really. I just wanted you to know about where I stand, how it's affected me, how I'm doing, and also how I think that people need to be acting during this difficult time. Some people aren't getting the correct information, and I just want to share the useful information I have.

So I hope you enjoyed this in some way or another. It's not really a happy thing to talk about, as I said. So I'm sorry if this was quite a depressing episode, but I felt like I did need to share my thoughts and my opinions today just so we could all have a little bit of conversation.

I would share a travel story today or something like that, but all of us are probably suffering right now knowing that we can't travel. Okay, it's probably the worst thing we could do right now is travel anywhere. So we've stayed away from travel this week, and we will for the foreseeable future until we start to see some positivity.

So over the next few episodes of this podcast, I'll be updating you on how I'm dealing with the problems going on in the world right now and also about how you can. I'll be giving you helpful advice, some tips on dealing with this pandemic and how to stay sane, happy, and to avoid getting mentally ill and physically ill. And we can all work together as a team.

Make sure you keep in contact with me by email or through Twitter and update me. And perhaps I can share some of your stories, if you send me any emails about what's been going on recently. Do you have any stories about the virus?

Do you have any stories about whether they're happy or sad? Maybe send me a story of where you've seen some real good in the world or somebody that you want to shout out for doing an amazing job for helping people. And I will share them in the next episode of the podcast.

We'll try and have a motivational episode next time. So thanks very much for taking the time to listen to me today and facing the facts. And now it's time for us to do our part in this war and stay happy and stay inside.

Do it for me. Cheers, guys. Bye.

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Hello, everybody. How are we? It's Elliott from Journeys With Elliott, here to take you on another journey.

Welcome to another episode of the podcast on this beautiful sunny day in April, mid-April.

Usually now I'd be going out and enjoying the sun on weekends, lying in the sun, I don't know, going and seeing family, playing with my nephew in the sun, you know, just enjoying the warm weather. But unfortunately, as we all know, in most countries right now, we can't do that.

We have to just stay inside and enjoy looking at the nice weather outside, but not actually going in it. I'm going crazy, really, staying inside all of the time. I'm not an outdoorsy person, but I am certainly missing the outdoors.

And I think this whole situation, when it's all over, hopefully sooner rather than later, I might actually become a lot more of an outdoorsy person. I'll probably be going out on walks and enjoying different sceneries as much as I can, because I've got so bored on weekends now that I've started counting the bricks in the walls of the houses opposite. I'm that bored.

It's funny how much life can change just from one single virus. Anyway, we're not here to talk about the old corona today. We're gonna try and talk about some other things, some motivations and positivity, and some ways of dealing with the situation we're in right now.

We're taking a positive outlook on this situation. I'm not going to talk in my usual miserable tone. I'm going to try and talk with some enthusiasm, try and bring you some happiness on another day of isolation.

So welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. I think I've already said that, but I'll say it again. So as well as giving you a usual kind of a catch up on life and everything that's been going on with me, I'll also be talking about some things I've been doing during isolation, particularly on my weekends, as I'm much busier with work right now on weekdays.

But on weekends, I've been trying to find alternative ways to kind of enjoy isolation as much as possible. But also some things I've been doing just over the past few weeks. I'll also be talking about a highly requested topic, which is working from home and studying from home.

The main reason is because obviously lots of you have now had to start adjusting to this new style of life where some of your jobs maybe you've been asked to start working from home now.

And lots of people have been contacting me, many of my students in fact, saying that they're finding it difficult to adjust to this new lifestyle, finding it hard to maintain a good work ethic when they're at home, you know, when there are so many distractions available. So we're going to talk a bit about how I deal with my struggles with work at home, as I've been working from home for around six, seven years now.

So it's nothing new to me. I've been doing this for a long time, and I feel like I have a pretty good schedule, a pretty good kind of structure for my day in order to make sure I get the work done that I need to get done. So we'll talk a bit about that too.

And I also thought, while we're all thinking about how much we'd love to travel, although we can't, I thought I'd start going through my old travel journal. So I've told you before, I went on this trip through Southeast Asia. It's the trip I talk about the most.

Well, I have a journal where I actually wrote every day about my day, what we did. And I thought maybe I'd just read a few pages every episode now, kind of take you on the whole journey over the process of this podcast. Kind of every episode is a few sections of my journal day by day, or my kind of three month long trip, my first ever trip as a 19 year old through Asia.

So we'll also be taking a look at that. So anyway, the first thing I guess is, how have I been dealing with isolation? How have I been dealing with all of this stuff that's been going on?

Well, in the week, as you know, I've told many of you already, and you've probably seen from my Twitter that I've been really, really busy in the week. I've been so busy, in fact, that it's actually been difficult for me to make YouTube videos. I've actually just been flat out voice recording, replying to students, taking my course.

And the reason why is because people who don't usually contact me during my working hours are all contacting me now because lots of people are at home, not working, they've got nothing to do, or maybe they want a distraction from work at the moment while they're working from home. I've had so many people asking me, demanding me, for more episodes of this podcast, and as annoying as it is sometimes to receive those messages, I do really want to. It's annoying because I want to do it, but I can't.

So I always feel really bad when people message me saying, I need another episode of the podcast, please, please, please. I mainly feel bad because I wish I could. But luckily, I've managed to put some time aside now.

I'm working overtime right now just to get you an episode of this podcast because it's a nice little release for me, and I know you guys love it too. Why else would you be listening? I don't know why you enjoy listening to me.

That's still something I question. Why do people listen to me just talk about crap all the time?

But I guess there must be some kind of enjoyment in this.

So thank you, everyone, for continuing listening. I don't even know how many episodes we've done now. But yeah, it's going really, really well.

So thanks for that, guys. So how have I been dealing with isolation? Well, on weekends, as I said, that's been the most difficult.

My partner works in the week as well. So when she has her weekend, she has Saturday and Sunday off work. And so do I.

I organize my week so that I don't work on weekends, so that we can spend some time together.

And obviously, when we actually had things to do and places to go, and we could go outside and go and get dinner, go and have lunch and things like that, obviously things were much more exciting. And now we've been having to try and find ways to be fun and exciting, but from the comfort of our own home.

Now, last weekend was interesting. So there's this kind of company who usually go to night clubs in the UK, so different cities around the UK, they travel around, and they're called Bongo's Bingo. And it's usually like a student night, like a club night.

And it's a mixture of dancing, to, you know, music, drinking, and also in kind of intervals, what they do is they play games of bingo. Now, if you don't know what bingo is, I'm not going to explain here because I'm not very good at explaining rules of games, you know. I'm going to be terrible when I have a child because I'm so bad at explaining rules.

I think it's mainly because I just hate rules in general. That's why I hated school. I just hate rules.

Anyway, go and Google bingo if you don't know what it is, but just to put it short, you have numbers that you write down, and the people who are controlling the event read out randomly selected numbers. And if you match all of your numbers, you win a prize. Sometimes it's money.

So this company called Bongos Bingo, they usually travel around the country, but because of the fact that people can't go out at the moment and party and drink and mix with other people, they've started streaming it. So they were streaming it on Twitch. And it was my first time actually properly using Twitch, and it's now made me want to start using it more.

Maybe I'll start streaming on it. I don't know. But what they do is they're at home, but they have all the DJ decks set up.

They have like a table where they're presenting. And it was almost like a TV show, but a very amateur TV show run by two guys from Liverpool with really strong Scouse accents. And what they're doing is they're playing bingo with us.

And they actually have really big prizes. For example, last weekend, someone won a trip to LA when all of this is over, and it was worth about ?4,000. They were giving away like funny things, like a mini Henry Hoover.

They were giving away like giant unicorn teddy bear things. It was just quite a lot of fun, and they also give away alcohol. So what they recommend is that you have like some alcohol while you're watching it, so it's almost like you're on a night out.

So we had a bottle of gin, and we drank about three quarters of the bottle between the two of us.

So we got quite drunk, and we were just watching this virtual night out. And because you get drunk, and because you're going quite crazy inside your four walls, you know, inside your house where you can't get out, you almost do start acting like it's a night out.

Like we actually got up, we started dancing. You could see from my Instagram story, I posted a video on my story of us watching the TV, the screen, with them. One of the guys was dressed up as a woman, and he was dancing, like doing strange, very strange dancing.

And we were kind of dancing at the TV, watching and just having fun. And it was like a real big escape. We were hoping we were going to win that trip to LA, but we didn't.

We didn't win anything actually. But what we did win was a new way of entertaining ourselves on weekends when we're missing our monthly night out that we used to have. So it was really good.

They were playing music, like little sections where they would dance, they played comedy sections, they did quizzes, and of course they did the bingo. And the guys themselves were actually really funny. Unfortunately, I probably shouldn't really be talking about it now because that was their last episode.

So they won't be live streaming for a while now. I think they've earned a very well-deserved break from doing this because they've been doing it ever since the lockdown started. But they will come back.

And I can't wait for the next one because honestly it was very, very close to being on a night out.

And it almost felt weird the next day, waking up with a hangover, with a headache, turning around to my girlfriend and saying, I had a really good night last night. It almost felt weird saying that because how do you have a good night when you're just stuck at home?

You know, so it was kind of weird. But yeah, I had a lot of fun. I was just as hungover as I would be on a normal night out.

But the other great thing is after that, I didn't have to get a taxi home. I didn't have to pay 40 quid to get home and get into bed. I didn't have to wait an hour when I felt quite drunk and tired.

I could literally just turn the TV off, get ready for bed, and go to bed, which was kind of cool.

And I can honestly see change happening right before our eyes. All the TV shows we normally watch now, the live shows, they're now being done from people's homes.

Nights out are now becoming virtual, like the one I had on Saturday. There are even virtual pub quizzes now. So many things are happening and changing so fast.

And, you know, there are rumours going around that this virus perhaps was organised, arranged. I'm going to keep my opinions to myself because I don't want to cause any debates on this very friendly place where we're all supposed to be together and friendly. But, you know, if it is true, and this was designed, I'm guessing it was designed in order for us to become a more technological world, a world which is more in contact with technology.

The older people are now learning how to use apps, how to use phones, how to keep in touch with people virtually. It is changing the world. And if this was the plan all along, if it was manmade, then they're doing it right, I guess.

They did it right. But that certainly doesn't make it right for so many people to lose their lives and for so many people to suffer in the way that they have. So there are pros and cons to everything

And as I said, we're not going to talk about the virus today, but just I want you to take a quick moment to think about the people working and to think about the people who have suffered.

Keep both of those sides of the spectrum, the people saving lives and the people who have lost lives, the family members of those people who have lost lives. Just take a moment, 30 seconds, pause this episode and have a moment of silence just to think about those people.

I will be doing the same after this episode. Now, moving on, moving on. So how else have I been keeping myself entertained during this difficult time?

I've been ordering my food. I've been ordering my whole weekly shop. Now, usually what we used to do was we would do a click and collect.

I don't know if it's available in the country you're in, listener right now, but what we do is usually, when lockdown wasn't happening, we would do our food shop online and then we'd drive to the collection point at the supermarket and pick it up and take it home. Now the whole collection process has been removed from our lives. We can't make contact with people, right?

So what we've started doing now is we've started doing these boxes. They're like subscription boxes. So there's one called The Mindful Chef.

These are in the UK, by the way. There's one called... What's it called?

What's it called? HelloFresh. That's it.

HelloFresh. And at the moment, what we've done both, the first one we started with was

Mindful Chef, and what they do is you pick your recipes. Now we're eating vegetarian food at the moment with one meat meal in the week just as a treat.

So they send you five meals, and it's a very reasonable price, and that you can select what meals you want. So for example, we had like a katsu curry, Japanese. We had some Italian food.

We had Mexican food. And they offer all of these things, and basically they send you each meal as a whole recipe in a bag. And they have all the ingredients as well.

More ingredients than you would find in the supermarket. So actual ingredients which are local to that country that you are purchasing the food from. So it is quite cool.

And then all you have to do is follow the instructions, make the dish, and eat it. The portion sizes, 1 mean, 1 have a really, I have a massive appetite, right? So the portion sizes, no matter what, no matter how much food you give me, I will always say there could be more.

It's just because I love eating and I never get full up for some reason. Like if there was a, my dream, right, is if there was just a building, like a big building, like a skyscraper made of food, I would just eat it. I would just eat it forever.

I would just not stop eating. And then I think the thing is, I'm like this when I'm eating, but then when I finished eating, takes about an hour, and then after an hour, I'm like, whoa, I'm full up.

But then 20 minutes later, I'm hungry again.

I don't know. I should be fat. I don't know why I'm not fat, but I mean, I guess I'm just lucky.

Or maybe in like five to ten years time, I'm just going to put all of the weight on, and I'm just going to be massive, like the size of that building that I'm going to eat one day in my dreams.

Anyway, moving on from food. Sorry, food is always on the brain.

I need to just take a step back from food now. So actually, I still have to talk about food, so that doesn't really make sense. In terms of the delivery service, that has really, really helped.

So we get sent our meals for the week. They're all in a bag. You make it fresh with fresh produce.

It's never any processed food. It's all raw ingredients. You get all the spices, all the powders, everything.

And it's great. And by the way, I'm not here to promote them. Nobody promotes or sponsors this podcast, because, I mean, let's face it, it's hardly a successful podcast.

It's just a nice little podcast with you guys here to chat with me. So yeah, I'm not trying to sell anything to you. So that's been good.

We've managed to keep our food, which is great. And that means we haven't had to go into any shops, because obviously the main goal right now is to avoid as much social contact as possible.

And the one way people are finding it hard to avoid that is going food shopping, which is something we have to do once a week.

So we've managed to find a way around that. So we're minimizing even more our social contact with other people, and we're keeping our distance in the best way possible. So that's been good.

I believe on the menu tonight is some Indian koftas, which I'm very excited to make with some mango chutney and some pilau rice. So it's kind of, you know, it's lovely. I love Indian food, so that should be a lot of fun to make as well as eat.

So also to keep myself busy, I've set myself the challenge of, well, actually the challenge really originally is finding which language I want to learn. So this is the problem. When I set myself a challenge, I always think something really broad.

So I'll be like, hmm, what can I do to keep myself busy? Okay, I'll learn a language. But what I don't realize is the actual challenge for me is deciding what language to learn.

Now, this week, I have been debating over about seven different languages, and each day is a new language that I really want to learn. I'm crazy. So at the beginning of the week, I was thinking it would be really cool to learn Spanish because so many people speak Spanish, and, you know, it's just a really useful language to have.

Then I started thinking, but you should speak a language that you feel really passionate about, a language which you really love the sound of, the one that might entertain you or be quite fun. So then I thought, I really love the sound of Italian. So that was because I like the sound of it.

So then I thought, I need to add that to my list as well. Maybe I should learn Italian. Then I started thinking, oh, but I love Japanese.

I love Japanese culture. I play Japanese games, which are in Japanese language. You know, I'm obsessed with the Yakuza series at the moment, which is a Japanese game series.

And, you know, growing up, I loved Pokemon and all this stuff. I used to watch anime. I loved Dragon Ball series and things like that.

So Japanese now has been added to my list, but that would be quite difficult. I even went through a period, you know, maybe an hour of the day where I thought, maybe it would be cool to learn Arabic. I don't even know why.

I don't need Arabic in my life. I don't watch any Arabic. I'm not religious.

So obviously I don't need to know it for religious reasons. So I just can't make my mind up. At the moment, I'm still kind of set on Japanese, just because Japanese people listening now, you won't understand this, but being British or being English, and if somebody says, tell me something cool about you, and if you just say, or if you just burst into Japanese and just start speaking Japanese, people would be like, wow, that's cool.

How the hell did you learn that? Just because it's such a different language, especially in the way that the rhythm that Japanese people speak. This is my inner pronunciation teacher side coming out now.

But English is a stress time language, so when we speak, every word has a syllable which is stressed. So if I'm saying a word like adventure, adventure, the word then has a bit more emphasis in it, right? Adventure.

But if you're talking in Japanese, every part of the word is treated like a syllable, so nothing is stressed. It's more like a syllable style language. So instead of being adventure, it would be like adventure.

It doesn't change, so we don't stress adventure. That's kind of how it would be. So it's interesting how the flow is different, the rhythm is different.

There's not really any stress, and I just think it's a really cool language. So that's something I'm thinking about learning, mainly because it would benefit me in entertainment ways. And also, as a lot of you know, kind of my number one destination that I really want to visit next year, if everything goes back to normal, is Japan.

So maybe that would be a good challenge for me to do on weekends. So I'm still in the deciding process of what language to learn. But yeah, any Japanese people who want to want to help me with my Japanese, feel free to send me an email, and that would be great.

And what... Oh yeah, so my kind of other way of staying sane during this crazy time is keeping in contact with family. Now, obviously WhatsApp is amazing.

I can contact my mum, dad, sister, anyone, friends through WhatsApp. And it's fantastic. I know lots of people who have been using Zoom to do kind of multiple person video calls.

So it's a bit like Skype, but you get multiple people in the call, and you can all talk to each other.

So Zoom is brilliant if you're looking for a way to bring all of your family members in different households together, or your friends. I've even heard of people who have been doing Zoom meals.

So what they've been doing is they've been calling each other, so like five or six people, maybe a whole family on a Sunday, or friends, or couples who are good friends, and they'll pretend they're out for a fancy meal. They'll even dress up, wear really smart fancy clothes. They'll make some delicious dinner.

Maybe they'll both make the same dinner. And then they'll just talk like they're all together at the restaurant eating through video call. So people have been finding ways to do this.

I've even seen on the news that lots of people have even been doing dating. And these people have been dating now. You know, different groups, different people have found people that they like, and they've been meeting them on, like, dating apps or whatever.

And they've been virtually dating. So instead of meeting each other, they've been forming real bonds online through video call and things like that, which is cool, because when all of this is over and they can finally meet, god, that meeting's gonna be amazing, right? There's gonna be a lot of tension in all senses of the word tension building up that they just want to release when they finally see each other.

So I think that's kind of cool, and I feel happy for those people who are managing to find love during these isolated, difficult times. And if you are lonely and maybe you're looking for a partner, why don't you try it? Why don't you see if you can find someone on a dating app, and they will give you a reason to wake up in isolation.

You'll have someone to talk to, something to do, someone to look forward to talking to, and someone to look forward to meeting when all of this is over. You can even do the same with friends, I'm sure. I'm sure there are many people who are lonely, who are just looking for friends to talk to right now.

And maybe you'll form some great bonds during this time. So that's also a great thing. There's another app which has been circulating the news and various places recently, which is House Party.

Again, that's another kind of family or friends where you can get everyone together and do video calls and things. So that might be another one you'll want to try if you haven't tried this kind of thing yet. I haven't done any of it.

I'm in a difficult situation. I won't go into detail, but just before the whole lockdown thing started, my parents separated, and my mum's living with my dad. My mum was living with my dad.

My mum's living with my sister. My dad's on his own, but he has some good friends around him who are delivering his food and helping him, and I'm living with my partner. So there's kind of a separate household where some people are not necessarily talking.

So we're not really doing that whole getting groups of people together on video chat and stuff.

So as I told you, it's been a dreadful year. Let's hope it gets better.

I have also been exercising daily. I've been doing, you know, you all know, obviously from this podcast that I love to exercise, and I've now been doing body weight exercises at home. So I get my yoga mat out.

I'll do, I don't know, like press ups, sit ups. I have a bar on a frame in my door, which I do pull ups, chin ups with. So I'm actually building surprisingly a lot of strength more than you would in the gym, because body weight exercises are amazing ways of building strength.

So I think I'll find when all of this is over and I go back to the gym, I might even be stronger than I was before. Perhaps my body won't be as toned. I mean, you need weights and you need dumbbells, barbells, and the equipment in the gym to target every part of each muscle.

Because, you know, in your chest, for example, you have different sections of the chest, which you just can't reach with all the bodyweight exercises. So perhaps I won't be as toned, but I will be stronger, which is fantastic. And I think I'll definitely now start applying bodyweight exercises into my usual routine.

So again, I'm building more knowledge on this, and it's helping me. And I'm trying to find all of these positives as we're dealing with this difficult time. I've also found myself digging into my Netflix and Amazon Prime memberships and using them a lot.

Amazon Prime, I've started watching Jack Ryan, which is good. It's about terrorism and about a guy who works for, I think, the CIA, and he gets sent to Syria or somewhere to deal with kind of a terrorist who's plotting something. So that's quite an interesting storyline.

Again, it has other side stories like love and relationships and family and things like that, which is, I found that series to be quite promising. I've only watched two episodes, but I think it will get better. I've also watched, oh yeah, that's it, Friends.

I've watched every episode of Friends from start to finish. And that last episode, you know, I got off the plane. Oh, it really gets me every time.

Honestly, I've seen that episode so many times, but it makes me well up every single time. It's such a great episode. I love Friends, and I never really watched it from start to finish, but because we've had so much time, we'll just put it on in the mornings, or we'll put it on in the evenings when there's nothing else for us to watch and we just want something relaxed.

I do recommend, if you want to keep yourself busy, just throw on Friends, even if you want to have a nap while watching TV, just put Friends on. Another one I recommend is How I Met Your Mother. That's, I prefer that to Friends.

That's like my favorite sitcom, American show. And I was talking to someone the other day and we were predicting like kind of what kind of things are going to change? What kind of things are going to happen after this lockdown?

So not just things about the virus, but things about people living at home. What are going to be the results of people being stuck at home together? One thing we decided is definitely there is going to be a massive, massive boom of babies in nine months.

People right now, as we speak, are probably so bored in isolation at home that they are just going at it like rabbits. They are just making those babies. And the reason why is people are bored, they have more time together, they actually have time to focus on making a child.

Also, there will probably be a lot of babies that are perhaps created by accident during this time.

Because as I said, the couples who are stuck at home, it's going to go one way or the other.

There's going to be a rise in babies, a rise in sex in general, I'm sure.

But there's also going to be the opposite end of the spectrum. And I have seen this in the news, and it's very, very sad. There's definitely a rise in domestic abuse, which is another thing we can't forget about during this time.

I know people are dying of the virus. People are suffering due to the virus. But we can't forget about the fact that there are some women now, and men, who are stuck at home with their abusive partner, who is possibly beating them up every night, attacking them, drinking, getting drunk and causing problems.

Maybe there are children involved. And those are things which a lot of us are probably forgetting about, but they're happening more than ever right now, because people are stuck at home.

Another thing I read, which I thought was really strange was...

This was weird. Someone is actually, somehow, it was in the news, cheating on her husband during the lockdown. I don't know how this is happening, because they're both isolated at home, but somehow she was managing to sneak out, go to another house where her other man was, and sleep with him, and then come back to her husband.

Now, that is another level of messed up. I don't know how that was happening, and who knows, maybe there will be a baby on the way there, but we don't know from which husband or which man it will be. People in this world.

There are so many weird things going on during this difficult time that I just, I don't know where to look. Right. Let's take a pause.

We'll stop talking about people having sex, making babies. Let's just stop talking about all of this stuff. Let's open the journal, the travel journal I mentioned at the beginning.

Now, we're starting on the first day, the first, after the first 12 hours. Okay, so I've arrived in Bangkok. My first ever trip, I'm 19 years old with my girlfriend who I've only been with for a few, maybe just under a year, right?

We were together for about eight months and we just said, screw it, let's go on this big trip.

Okay, first stop, Bangkok, we've arrived. Remember, this is written by me when I was about 19 years old, so some of the grammar, some of the words might be a bit wrong.

I'm a different person now, I'm a changed man. In fact, this trip changed me. And you'll notice as we go through this over the next few episodes that I do change.

And you'll see, I might become a bit more of a spiritual man, a bit more of an emotional man from the experiences I have on this trip. So let's start with day one in Bangkok. Day one, just over 12 hours in Thailand, and it already feels like I've been here for a month.

The journey in was stressful, and we nearly thought we'd never make it to our hostel. It's so busy here. We took the SkyTrain from the airport into the city at rush hour, and I found myself with a numb ass, and I was so cramped that I was unable to move.

So many people pushed next to me. Step two was getting a tuk tuk to Khao San Road. So firstly, let me just pause here and explain.

A tuk tuk is a Thai form of transport. It's a motorbike with a trailer attached to the back of it. It's a bit like a cheaper, quick version of a taxi, very often run by criminals.

So you do have to be careful if you do go there. But yeah, we got in a tuk tuk. Well, we tried to find a tuk tuk to Khao San Road.

Khao San Road is the most popular backpacker road in Thailand, in Bangkok. It has all the things that a Westerner needs, restaurants, tattoo shops, suit shops, clothes, market things, nightclubs. It has all the stuff.

It's like backpacker. People call it the mecca for backpackers. That's what the name is that people give it.

So our aim was getting a tuk tuk to Khao San Road and to make our way to our hostel, which was called Amarin Inn. From there, however, once we stepped off the tuk tuk, we became the biggest attraction there. Salesmen and scammers were grabbing us left, right, and center, getting the same thing every time in our ears as they grabbed us.

Where you stay? You want tuk tuk? After saying no to about a hundred people on the road, we finally found a helpful man who told us the way to our hostel.

So finally we made it. The hostel is good, and the staff are very helpful and friendly. Certainly not the standard we're used to, though.

Now, the reason why I'm saying this is because when I was growing up, I used to go on all kinds of luxurious trips because my dad's a travel agent. I told you that, right? If you've listened to the old episodes.

So I'm used to, like, luxury five-star hotels. Now, I was staying in a marrin inn. In fact, I have the business card with me.

It's on 96 Truk Chakrathong, Phuramasen Road, Banglumpu in Bangkok. Now, so we didn't know this. When we booked the hotel, it was just called a marrin inn.

We didn't know anything about it. When we arrived, there was a big sign outside saying a marrin inn, Muslim hotel. Now we didn't know this, but they called it a Muslim hotel.

I didn't know this. I had no idea. I'm not a Muslim, so I was a bit confused.

But the reason why was because it was attached to a mosque. Now we'll hear about this more as we read through. So, after freshening up and calming down a bit, we made our way out to explore the area we are staying in, and we grabbed a lovely pad thai, which is like thai noodles, in a local cafe, and a chang beer, probably the most common beer, as well as singer, in Thailand.

Later on, we paid a visit to Siam Square, but once again we got lost trying to find the night market after being given terrible directions from a local who we asked. This happens a lot in this trip. It was fun once we made it through, and we bought a few useful items.

The journey back, I was made to realize how scary Thailand or anywhere can be. We were in the back of a tuk tuk, and a motorbike suddenly sped past us. He grabbed my bag and tried to tug it off me in an attempt to steal it while I was in the tuk tuk.

Our driver then got the eyes of the devil in him and chased the bike down the road. We were in the back of the tuk tuk screaming, wondering what was happening. Luckily, I still had my bag and I was holding on to it tightly.

Sadly, he lost the driver. We're not sure whether that's good or bad. Maybe he would have killed him.

So maybe it was good that we didn't experience a crime scene. I'm just glad my bag is with me.

It had my passports, it had my camera, it had everything I needed.

So it's been an eventful day. I can't wait to get lost some more tomorrow and cause some more problems for Sam, who's my partner. You find the best things when you are lost.

I think that's one of the best things I've ever said. You find the best things when you are lost.

Elliott, 19 years old.

Amazing guy. You know what? I'd probably put that on my dating profile.

If I had one, I'd be like, Elliott, I like long warps on the beach, traveling, I play the guitar, and my quote of life is, you find the best things when you're lost. Oh, powerful stuff, that. So just quickly, I didn't write it in here.

I think it comes up later on, but just to mention a bit more about this Muslim hotel thing. So as I said, we booked it on Hostel World or Hostel Bookers, which is like a common backpacker website where you book hostels to stay in cheap places where you just have a bed basically and a toilet. And we had a private room, but as I said, this hostel was attached pretty much to a mosque.

And we noticed this at like, I don't know what time it is that the call to prayer is, but essentially mosques do this thing at a particular time of the morning, very, very early in the morning. And I remember we were really tired and jet lagged from, you know, our first sleep off the long journey from England. And we were woken up, like absurdly early in the morning, by this very loud, and I mean very loud singing.

And it was the Muslim call to prayer. I don't know if you've heard it before, if you're not a Muslim, but I've heard it before because I've been to Dubai and a few places in the Middle East where I've heard it. And basically they grab this massive microphone with massive speakers and they sing kind of prayer sounds to bring people to the mosque, to know it's prayer time.

It's a bit like in the UK, we have church bells, which ring when it's time for prayer. So yeah, that happened. But as I said, it was so loud that it felt like this guy was in the room with the microphone just singing directly into our ears while we were trying to sleep.

So I wouldn't recommend a Ma Rin-In hotel unless you are going to get up and go to mosque. It was a good alarm clock if we needed to get up early, but unfortunately, we just wanted to sleep.

So that was quite difficult for us.

And that's day one. Now we have many, many days to go through. If I just open the book and I just go to the back page, bear in mind, we will have been to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, lots of time in many different places.

We get all the way up to day 132, which is the last day. So we will get to that day. Perhaps in some episodes we'll talk about a few different days, but I thought I'd just introduce this to you.

And if you liked this, and believe me, I told you I have some crazy stories from this trip, please, and I need you to do this, please either send me an email journeyswithelliot.gmail.com or tweet me at ET/English and just tell me if you like this idea, and I will add a little segment into each episode from now on where I read some pages from this trip. So if you like it, please tell me. If you don't like it, please tell me.

I need to know so that I know whether to keep doing this or not, because I thought it was a cool idea, but I know you guys are all different. You might have different ideas, but trust me, there's some really funny stuff in here. Right.

So just to continue on then, I wanted to now briefly talk about working from home, keeping a routine and things like that. So the first thing I want to tell you is you need a routine if you're working from home. Number one, you need to make sure when you wake up, you have a goal.

Make sure that you have, you know what work you need to do, or you know what tasks you've been set for the day by your boss or whether you work for yourself. You need to wake up and know what you have to do today. My best way of doing that is the day before, when I'm finishing the work I've done, I will write down a list of things that are important that I need to do tomorrow.

So then when you wake up in the morning, you don't need to stress about what you have to do.

You know. So you could save this in a to-do list on your computer.

So when you turn it on, it immediately pops up, add it to the calendar of your phone, whatever works for you. But the biggest key is do not wake up immediately and start doing work on your phone. Never.

All it takes is for you to read a bad email from bed when you wake up in the morning, a complaint or something horrible that you have to do, and it will ruin your day immediately.

Work starts when work starts, not when you wake up in the morning and you haven't even had your bloody breakfast, all right? So, wake up, literally wake up, and do whatever you need to do.

I usually have a whole glass of water before I do anything. It's a great way to start off your day.

I'll then stretch my legs, have a little think about life, do some stretches, have a piss, you know, do all that stuff you need to do.

And then I will go and make my coffee and my breakfast. Now, my partner and I do this together.

So she'll make the coffee, I'll make the breakfast, for example.

And whatever you want to have, you know, if you have a bit of time before you start work, why don't you make a cool breakfast? Have you got some eggs? Have you got some bacon?

Anything, whatever. Cook up a nice breakfast. Start your day right.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Moving on. I then sit down on the sofa, eat my breakfast, relax, watch some TV, some morning news, see how many people have bloody died.

All that stuff. That's all it is at the moment. You wake up and watch the news, and it's just talking about people dying, which is horrible.

But maybe wake up and put on Friends, as I said, or one of your favorite TV shows, something lighthearted, not a serious thriller about killing people, but something more relaxed, where you can casually watch, maybe check Facebook, just chill on your phone, but don't do work. Not yet.

And then after that, what I'll do is my partner gets in the shower first.

So when she gets in the shower, that's when I have a little bit of game time. I'll go on my PC and I'll play a game for an hour while she's getting ready. And then when the shower is free, I get in the shower.

I get ready, and then she leaves for work once I'm ready. I sit down at my desk and work begins.

As I said, you should have priorities.

What are your most important jobs? Make sure you do those first. Don't just think, oh, that job's horrible.

I'll save it for later. Trust me, I used to do this a lot. And then I'd find that I was rushing so much at the end of the day.

And then when it comes to the evening, when you need to relax again, you're not relaxed because you were rushing so much to get the horrible jobs done right at the end of the day. So get the worse, longer, more tedious things done first. And then save the things which maybe could be left for another day until the end of the day, but make sure you do them because you have less work then to do.

And make sure you have a break. Okay, make sure halfway through the day, you stop, you have some lunch. Now I make my lunch the evening before.

Even though I'm at home and I work from home, I just find it more convenient if my lunch is already made from the day before. So that could be leftovers from the dinner I had last night, or it could be a tuna sandwich I made the night before. It could be some noodles or like some ramen that I've made or something like that.

Just to have, ready to eat, to heat up and eat. And that's really convenient because all you have to do, you don't have to think about making food, it's done. You go to the fridge, you grab it, you eat it.

Do not eat it at your desk. Sit down and relax and eat that food. You need that one hour break.

And make sure it's one hour. If you want to play a game, if you want to watch your favorite series, if you want to go for a walk outside, I would highly recommend going for a walk. In the UK, we're allowed one period of exercise per day, so go for a walk.

I might do some exercise depending on how heavy my work is. If not, then I'll do it during that free time. When I play a game, I might instead do some exercise in the morning when my girlfriend's in the shower.

So, you know, the main thing is variety, but also routine. So you have your routine with your little time slots where you have different things that you do. But in those time slots, don't be afraid to change it up.

You know, as I said, if you have an hour free in the morning, maybe one day watch a show, one day play a game, one day do some exercise. Mix it up a bit so you don't get bored of your mornings because the mornings really are what determine how good your day is. A lot of people have a problem with losing concentration, and there's no answer to this.

You just have to make sure you have priorities. How important is your job to you? How important is your schoolwork to you?

How important is it? If it's important, you need to constantly have in your mind something that motivates you to keep doing it. Maybe it's competition.

Maybe there's another employee in your job who's doing more work than you. They're getting better feedback from your boss than you. Well, that means you need to match them.

They should be your motivation. Maybe, you know, you see a really successful person in your company or at your school who's getting really good grades, but you're not. They should be your motivation.

You have this time now to think about those people and work hard to be better than them. So it's actually a really useful time to work hard and do well. So make sure you try that.

And that's it, really. Make sure you finish at the same time every day. I finish at 5 p.m.

every day, and then my partner comes home, we make food, we relax, and have a lovely evening, doing whatever we want. Make sure your weekends are weekends. Don't work on weekends.

That's one of the best things I've ever done, is saying to my students, don't message me on weekends. The reason why is because I need time to rest. I can't think about work 24-7.

I love my job, but I love my weekends, and I don't want to work on my weekends, right? So make sure you do have days free. Now, this will be different for everyone.

Some of you listening right now might have children who you also have to look after. Some people have to teach their kids right now, like they're at school, and you are doing an amazing job if that's something you're doing right now. Whatever it is, you just have to fit those things into your day, but make sure you have a routine.

Now, if it helps, write that routine out now. Grab a piece of paper or grab your calendar and organize your day in time slots and stick to it. Tick off every day.

Do a tick once you've done that thing, and keep that going for about 30 days and you'll hopefully form a habit. And this goes the same for people who are learning things. Make sure you have that time in your day where you're learning.

And, you know, I'm no expert. I'm just telling you how I do things my way. You can do things your way.

Do whatever works for you, but if it's not working, then maybe try some of the things I've mentioned today. So I did post a tweet, actually, just finally to finish today, asking people to tell me if they had any questions about working from home and things like that. So I'm just going to quickly go through some of the comments and questions I received.

The first thing I had was from Anthony, saying, the first thing is to be able to get out of bed.

Sometimes it's tricky for me when it comes to work from home. And when I'm finally working, there are so many distractions, such as my parents, my dog, the telly.

I don't know. Working from the office seems to be the only solution. And this is why you need to make, okay?

If you listen to me, you need to make the distractions a pleasure. They are things which you earn. Just like when you're a child, you only get the things you want when you earn them.

So you need to do that work and earn those pleasurable moments. The television, chatting with your parents, doing whatever you need to do. They should not be a distraction.

They should be a reward. Treat them like a reward. Getting out of bed, I know how that feels.

Luckily, my partner has to go to work. She has to go and work in a pharmacy. So because of that, she gets me out of bed because she has to get out of bed.

And that's a big thing. Working from home, get dressed up. Dress for the day.

Wear the clothes you would wear to work. Maybe not if you have to wear a suit, but, you know, wear a shirt and some jeans. Don't wear lazy clothes because that will make you lazy.

Big one. Pedro said, doing the same activity for years from home could carry the risk to get boring. Well, I hopefully this is...

And he said, how do you deal with the routine? So hopefully this answers things for you. The key is have an organized routine, but be playful with it.

Do different things in those different time slots you give yourself, and it should stay fun, or at least bearable. Variety is the spice of life, my friend. Any other comments?

Let's see. Oh, Chow, I think, maybe said, it's always difficult to concentrate on the job. I couldn't help but sometimes lying on the bed, grabbing some food from the freezer, cleaning up my room, or doing something else.

I'd like to ask how to focus on and finish work efficiently. As I said, organize your day by important goals. Do those important things.

Give yourself rewards every time you finish one of those things, like going to the fridge and getting some food, watching the television for half an hour. Reward yourself for doing those things, and hopefully that will keep you focused, okay? And also alarms help.

You set an alarm to say when you should stop watching the telly, for example. Nicholas asked how to start a business from scratch. Now this is a big, big one.

Maybe I'll have to save this for another time. We could be here for a long time if I'm talking about how to start a business, okay? So we'll save that for another episode.

Perhaps I'll talk about that in the future. Let me know, guys, if that's a good idea, if you're interested in learning how to start a business. Dennis, the last question I'm going to answer today, he said, is it useful to make a timetable or plan for each day?

Does it help you to increase your own productivity? Now the first thing to know is everybody's different. But for me, as I said, the way I just mentioned is kind of like a timetable.

So hopefully that helps. Okay, hopefully everything I've talked about today about organizing your day kind of helps you understand that that works for me. It might not work for you, but it's worth a try, right?

And that's it for today. We'll leave it there. Please give me feedback.

Let me know if you enjoyed this. Remember, you can email me at ET] English on Twitter or email me journeyswithelliot at gmail.com. I won't be able to answer all of your emails, but I'd certainly read all of them.

Just so you know, I'm not doing the travel stories that you send me at the moment. The reason why is because, you know, it's not really the right time to be talking about travel and stuff. So I'm just going to leave that for now, okay?

Sorry, my cat keeps... She's hungry. I need to feed her, so I'm going to stop here.

Thank you very much, everyone, for listening today. I hope you enjoyed it. My voice is hurting now.

I think this is the... Wow, I've been talking for nearly an hour. Thank you very much.

Take care. Happy isolating. Stay safe.

Keep your distance. And hopefully we can have one big party when all of this is over. I'll see you next time.

Cheers, guys.

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Hello, hi guys, how are you doing? It's me, Elliott, from Journeys With Elliott. I hope you're all doing well, staying safe.

I hope your family members, your friends, anybody close to you who you care about is safe.

We've kind of had a long break from this podcast, and you know, I have my reasons. I'm not going to go into detail, but I did take some time away from from recording this podcast for a while.

I have actually been very busy with work as well, but you know, excuses, excuses. This is just something I do for fun whenever I can. And right now, I can.

So I'm decided to create another episode of Journeys With Elliott. We're not really going to talk about the virus today. I mean, we don't really much here anyway, but you know, a lot of you probably expect me to start discussing this.

But to be honest, I've been trying to keep the virus, you know, the whole COVID thing out of my mind. I'm trying to move on from this stage in life now, because I have a lot of exciting things which are about to happen in my life, and I want to avoid negativity. Now, I know this could be just me being silly, being oblivious to all the horrible things which are happening in the world.

But if you keep clinging on to all of these, these depressing news, these horrible stories which keep coming up in the newspapers, on websites, then you're just going to get down. I mentioned this when I talked about the virus in a previous episode. We're going to have a mental health pandemic, not just a virus pandemic.

And if there's one thing that I'm a big advocate for supporting, it's charities supporting people with mental health problems for personal reasons. And I'm going to do the best I can to support companies, charitable organizations who help people with mental health issues, as I think now is going to be one of the biggest outbreaks of a pandemic of mental health issues, because we've been surrounded by negativity. We still are.

We're not out of this virus situation yet, but we're still in this difficult situation. We're seeing depressing news every day. We're hearing of family members, friends, even people from our past who are dying or seriously suffering in hospital because of this virus.

And we're all being affected by it, whether we like it or not. I've read a news story that even because of this lockdown situation, we're not living our normal lives or previously, we're kind of back to normal here in the UK now. But because when this was all going on, people were having crazy dreams.

And I was right. You know, I told you that I thought there was going to be a rise in domestic abuse, a rise in mental health problems. All of these things I predicted have happened.

And these are the things which get forgotten. I want you guys to remember that, yes, and it's horrible, people are dying, people are being affected by this virus. But also, it has caused a knock on effect for women and men to be abused by their partners in their homes, children to be abused by their parents more.

And this is because they're stuck inside with each other and they can't get out. And I'm still waiting on the other one thing I predicted, which was a massive rise in pregnancies. That's one thing I'm really interested to see in nine months' time or, you know, kind of nine, ten months' time to see whether there's a huge rise in pregnancies or birth.

There's going to be a boom of children, I believe, because of this, and we're going to call them COVID babies. That's my guess, and we want them to be a positive sign of life from this horrible, dreadful situation where we've lost so many people. So just one final thing on the whole virus situation.

My heart goes out to you, your friends, your family, anyone who you know who has suffered from this. I'd love to know, have any of you had the virus? Please send me an email, journeyswithelliott.gmail.com.

Feel free to share your experience, your story, anything that may have happened. And if you really want to, if you want to have a family member or a friend remembered, please feel free to write to me, and I will share whatever you want to share about someone who may have unfortunately passed on because of the virus. I really hope I don't get any emails like that.

But if you do have any stories you want to share with thousands of listeners, then please feel free. I love sharing people's voices, people's opinions here. But we're going to kind of stay away, as I said, from the whole virus thing now, because I have a few updates for you.

Number one, I've bought a house. I'm not in the house yet, but everything's going through. It's a very long process.

It takes a few months to officially buy a house. When I say I'm buying a house, it's a mortgage. I haven't bought it outright with cash.

It's a mortgage, so I owe the bank money, and that's how everybody buys a house unless they're a millionaire, which I am definitely not. But yeah, the first stage of my real adult life is beginning now. I've purchased a house.

I'll be moving in hopefully in four to six weeks. So pretty much all of my time is consumed by now spending money, and I'm going to have no money after all of this. I can tell you that now.

I've been buying furniture, of course, because I need to have furniture in the house. I need a bed to sleep on. I need a sofa.

You don't think about these things before you buy a house. You know, it's kind of weird. You don't think about how much you need to spend on furniture.

You don't realize how much sofas cost, or beds, or mattresses, or rugs. A rug is like 250 quid. I had no idea.

I thought rugs were like 50 quid, you know, just for a nice rug. But no, no, no. Unless it's that Sam, my partner, has expensive taste.

Maybe it's just her taste. But yeah, you know, we're slowly getting the furniture. I'm really excited to set up my office.

It's going to make me so much more productive. And as well as that, you know, we've been having to pay for lots of different things. Obviously, you have to pay for the mortgage.

You have to pay for stamping fee. I don't know if you know what that is, some of you, but that's another thing you have to pay for. You have to pay for insurance, solicitor fees, just so many fees.

I even had to get a survey, you know, when you get someone to go and look at the house and check kind of that everything is safe and the pipes aren't going to explode when you move in, you're not going to be like drowning in shit after a few days. You know, you have to make sure everything is kind of safe. And that costs like a grand nearly.

It's crazy how much it all costs, and it really does add up. A lot of you might be asking, what's happening with the wedding? You said you were getting married in September.

Yeah, I was. That's cancelled now. We're not going to Italy to get married.

We decided just to focus now on the house, spending the money on the house, getting it all nice and equipped. And also getting another cat. We want to get Kiki a brother.

Well, technically not a brother, because they're not going to be related, but a mate, a male mate.

Because, you know, in a bigger house, it will be nice for her to have someone to fight with, to play with, to snuggle up to. And you know, I actually really love seeing cats cuddling each other.

It's like one of those things that really relaxes me, seeing two cats like grooming each other, cleaning each other, cuddling and sleeping next to each other. It's really cute. So yeah, with regards to the wedding, it's not actually, it's not been cancelled.

It's been postponed. We're trying to move it now to May next year. So still be going to Italy and all that stuff.

But yeah, we'll be moving it to next year in May. And yeah, I'm looking forward to it because obviously it would, it's July now and we were supposed to be getting married in Italy in September. And obviously I was really, really excited for that.

I told you in the previous recordings, I had loads of concerts, loads of bands to see. That's all gone now. So yeah, this year has been a write-off, a bit of something to forget about, because nothing really that exciting has ended up happening, except for moving into the house, hopefully, within the next few weeks, which hopefully will be the beginning of starting fresh and everything moving on.

And that's what I recommend to all of you guys right now. Have something which maybe you're going to do in the next one or two weeks, obviously depending on the situation in your country with the virus and things. And use that as your kind of cocoon moment.

You know, like when the cocoon opens and the butterfly comes out, you need to have one of those moments that releases you from this terrible virus situation and starts fresh, starts a new life and moves on with things. So that should be kind of what you're looking into now and thinking about. Not that I'm a psychiatrist or anyone that can actually help you with your problems if you have any.I'm just trying to make you guys think a bit more optimistically as we kind of, I guess, slowly move and phase out of this dreadful period in our lives. So let's move on to some positivity. Let's talk about travel, and I'd actually like to first start by saying thank you to everyone who sent me e-mails.

I've also had lots of positive feedback e-mails from people saying, you know, well done with the podcast. It's really good. Keep it up.

And also people saying, are you dead, Elliott? You've been gone for ages. You know, I had to take a break because of the virus thing.

But yeah, thanks everyone for keeping in touch during my short break. But I do have an e-mail I wanted to read from Michelangelo, because it's a very good one, actually. It has a story, which I'm going to share with you today.

So let's first start with the beginning of the e-mail, where Michelangelo says, Hi, Elliott. I'm Michelangelo from Mexico. I hope you're doing well during this lockdown.

I've been following your content for the last few weeks, and it seemed to me what you do is quite helpful, not just for people who want to improve their English, but to get a different view from the world. And I've seen that you accept stories to tell in your podcast from your subscribers or those who follow you. So I thought to myself, I've got an anecdote that happened during this pandemia and is fresh from the oven.

So why not try to share it with you? So anyway, here we go with the story that he has sent. So my story starts off like this.

I was doing my working and holiday visa in New Zealand, beautiful country, friendly people, and great landscapes to hike. I highly recommend it. My parents came to New Zealand to see me and my brother and take a family trip.

After a month travelling around New Zealand, we had added our next country in our bucket list after New Zealand, Thailand. We know that in every group, when you travel there is always someone who makes things much easier before or once you get there. For instance, prior bookings or scratched maps showing all the places you will visit, and that member is mum.

She is the head leader of our crew, my Gandalf of the Shire. While my brother Ozzy was quite good at looking for the fastest and safest ways to go to our destinations, I found myself helpful in communicating with some of the locals. And dad, well, he made our days just more fun with his jokes and sense of humour.

So I thought to myself our trip was quite sorted out already. Until this virus showed up. Playing the villain of the film, which had turned out like that.

During our first week, everything seemed to be normal. We visited the temples, tasted the style of the Thai food, and also got lifted by these tuk tuks. I'm not going to tell you what that is or how it feels.

I don't feel mum enjoyed it quite as much as me. But if your next country to visit when things go back to normal is Thailand, you definitely have to ride on them. Well, I don't know if you've been listening to this podcast, but pretty much in every episode I talk about Thailand,Michelangelo, I think you've got some listening to do.

For those who've experienced getting on a tuk tuk already, well, you may know what I'm talking about. Yeah, and those of you who've listened to this podcast already, you may know that I nearly got robbed on one of them and in a kind of car chase, which was entertaining. Anyway, back to Michelangelo's story.

It was one day at our hostel when mum and dad came into my room and said to us that their return flights to Mexico had been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, according to the countries they were going to transit through. And this is when things became a walking nightmare. We had to call the airline we were flying, checking the latest border restriction updates, checking for new flights, checking that my flights were still valid.

It was driving us all a bit crazy, but we could make it get out, but we could get out of Thailand.

Finally, my parents would go back to Mexico, and my brother and I would fly back to New Zealand, regardless of when I was in the air off to Australia, as I would transit through it. New Zealand had announced its borders were closed and wouldn't let anyone in.

Also, I wouldn't be able to stay in Australia's land since I was not holding a valid visa, and the option they came up with was sending me back to Thailand. I was lost, not just because of the fact I was going to be sent to a place I barely just left, but the fact that I was not being able to land in New Zealand, not being able to see my friends, leaving all my stuff there, leaving without being ready. After hours of trying to think what I could do and looking for better options, Helen, one of the head managers of the airlines, could find us a flight to Mexico.

Helen, if you ever hear this, thank you again. Superheroes don't need capes. So I was going back to Mexico after being two years away from home.

I didn't expect it like that, to be honest. But I guess that's what life's like, a mystery box full of surprises like the magician's hat. And we're the audience watching it.

Cheers, Michelangelo. Firstly, Michelangelo, really cool name. I love your name.

It's a fantastic name. It reminds me of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, which was something I was a big fan of back in the day. Secondly, great story.

Thank you for sharing that. We've all had those kind of weird travel experiences, and I think so many are going to be sent to me and are going to come out after this COVID situation. So many people stranded.

I have some friends who were stranded in Bali, and they couldn't get out. The government wouldn't fly them home, so they were screwed. And obviously it was quite...

I think it was quite bad there at one point, apparently, so I've been told. So that was a bit of a disaster. And, you know, sometimes, although we love to travel, when situations like this happen, I think we just want to be in the comfort of our own homes.

We want to be a place we know, a place that's familiar, a place that we feel safe and near people.

Even if we can't see them because of social distancing, we want to be near people that make us feel secure, safe and happy. And that's what a lot of people, unfortunately, didn't experience.

The most horrible thing for me is knowing that a lot of people can't afford to travel or couldn't afford to go back and see their family members, or it was too quick. It all happened too quick for people to get back home and isolate with their families because they were away or traveling or whatever, you know. A lot of countries just immediately, boom, shut down.

And we were unable to get to our family members and stick with them and isolate with them, which is very horrible for some people. I told you guys that my parents, they separated this year about two, probably about a month, actually, before the virus broke out in the UK. My dad, well, my mum left my dad, just to put it that way.

We won't explain why. There's a lot to it. This is a long story and it's personal anyway, so I don't want to talk about it.

But my dad was essentially left on his own. He's in his seventies. He's vulnerable.

He's got a heart condition and I couldn't go and isolate with him. He was on his own. So that was really tough for me.

And ever since day one of lockdown, we've called each other every single day. And to be honest, I've never been closer to my dad. We talk about everything now, every day on the phone, every single thing.

And we've gained a stronger bond. But if something bad had happened to him, I would have really regretted not staying at home with him or getting there soon enough to be able to stay with him. As I said, it was like this lockdown just happened.

And we had to stay safe. And obviously the other thing is my partner, she works in a pharmacy.

So immediately, I'm a danger to people because she is exposed.

She was a key worker, right? She was constantly working. She was potentially being exposed to people with the virus, people who were sick that come in for their medication.

So because I breathe her air, I kiss her to bed. When we go to bed, I kiss her at night before she goes to sleep. And I'm in close proximity to her all the time.

So I'm potentially a carrier of the virus. So I had to stay away from everyone, which was really sad. I felt a bit like I was someone with a disease, even though I know I didn't have it.

Well, actually, some of us don't know that we have had it, because so many people are asymptomatic. So who knows? Maybe I have had it.

Maybe I'm COVID free now. Who knows? But anyway, thank you very much, Michelangelo.

A really good story. And yeah, I think you might need to take a listen, because this podcast is pretty much all about Thailand, as it's like my favorite country in the world. So yeah, thanks very much for sharing that story.

You know, I have a few other stories, which I will definitely share in the future. But Michelangelo, you were the winner today. Thank you very much for that.

And again, thank you everyone who sent me your emails. I do read them. I may not reply.

And that's simply because I also have to reply to my ET) English emails. You know, I even have to reply to emails from my solicitor about buying this house at the moment. You know, it's crazy.

So many emails. I just want to sleep for a day. And not receive any emails.

But please, you guys, keep sending me emails. It's fine. I do read them and they do cheer me up.

And now it's time for one of my stories. And yes, we're back in Thailand again. Sorry, guys.

If you don't like Thailand, then you probably won't want to listen to this podcast. I'm still waiting for Thailand to sponsor me. If the country of Thailand would like to sponsor this podcast, that would be amazing.

Any Thai people who know someone in the government maybe, you know, or the tourism board, come and get me. I can talk about your country forever and bring you loads of tourists. Anyway, we're back in the journal, okay?

And we're talking today on day eight. So I've skipped a few days now. You know, we've arrived in Chiang Mai, which is, as you guys know, one of my favorite places in the world.

I stayed there for a very long time on multiple occasions and experienced many life experiences there. And one of them was a jungle trek. My first time in a real jungle.

So day eight. Today was one of the best days I've ever had. The jungle trek.

So we had a lot of things involved in the itinerary for the jungle trek we had booked in the information booklet. It started with a long drive up to the mountains to visit a hill tribe village.

Our guide taught us about how they lived and their celebrations on New Year, where they sit on this four-way swing.

Now, this is quite hard to explain, guys, but basically it was like this big pole, like a big stick. And then there are four swings attached to it, and you sit on it, and then you kind of... When one person goes down, the other person goes really, really high up in the air.

And I had a go. They let me try it. It was terrifying.

It felt very flimsy and like it was going to snap any second. So I did fear for my life a little bit. I thought I was going to kind of shoot up in the air and fly away.

But yeah, it was an experience. And, you know, I'm one of those people who never really says no to weird, crazy experiences like that. So anyway, yeah, four-way swing.

Where was I? There are celebrations on New Year with a four-way swing. It felt a bit like a human zoo because our group of six were constantly taking pictures.

Our tour guide was making fun of them, making jokes about them because of their long necks.

Basically, they put these metal circular kind of rings around their necks, and it makes their necks go really, really long. It's like stretching your neck.

I mean, our tour guide was kind of joking about them all the time, and I didn't really like it. All the other tourists in our group were joking and laughing about it, and I kind of felt a bit like, oh, this isn't right. I feel like I'm at a zoo, like staring at people.

Obviously, my money was helping them and their community, but I did feel like a tourist, you know? I felt a bit bad just kind of being there and watching them live their daily lives like a tourist. But anyway, it was certainly an experience, and they were really smiley, really friendly, and really kind, so it was nice.

Next up was the journey into the jungle to see some elephants. Now, I do just want to highlight, this was an eco-friendly tour in the jungle. The elephants had not been abused.

In fact, it was a sanctuary kind of one where they try and look after the elephants and stop them from being poached because elephants are, you know, in danger, and they are treated very poorly by bandits and criminals who steal them in Thailand and use their horns to sell things, create things to sell, which is bad. The government in Thailand are trying to crack down on this, but of course it still is and always will be an issue. Whereas this tour I was on, it cost a bit more money, but that's because the money went towards a charity which tried to stop this poaching of elephants.

I care a lot about animals in case you didn't know, so that was why we did this tour as well. This was a mind-blowing yet terrifying experience. We fed the elephants bananas, and we rode them through the mud, rivers, everything.

Now, this is the only thing I wasn't sure about. I didn't know if it was animal-friendly to ride an elephant. I mean, people ride horses, so I assume it's okay.

And back in the day, in history, people rode elephants. But I did feel maybe like this could have been a bit of a negative side to the tour, just because I don't know if it's good to ride an elephant or not. Someone maybe correct me if it is fine.

But I did feel a bit bad and a bit like I was... But the elephant seemed happy, so I guess that's all we want. But I can't talk to elephants, so he could have been basically saying, Elliott, get the fuck off me.

But, you know, I'm pretty sure it was fine.

So we fed them bananas, rode them through mud, rivers, everything. It seemed very unstable, but we all got off in one piece and we survived the very bumpy journey. I had the typical luck that runs in my family.

I had the one elephant that didn't do anything. It was very tired and bored and it just stood still the whole time. Occasionally, my guide managed to get it to move forwards and to walk through areas, but it decided to always choose the paths that made it harder for us to get through.

And I kept getting hit by twigs and branches, and everybody else seemed to be going through the very easy, normal path. Typical Elliott luck. Anyway, I'm not sure...

I actually write in here. Anyway, I'm not sure if this was cruel or not. It's supposed to be an animal-friendly experience.

I did feel bad for the elephants, but I was told that this was all for the good. So let's hope those people weren't lying to me and I wasn't a naive tourist. Next up was the trek.

First, we ate a lovely homemade pad thai from our starting point. It was made by a local lady who works on a farm. Once we were ready, we were set off into the jungle.

Our guide pointed out trees that grew things like lychees. All the other growing things you see in Thai markets as well were growing all around. He also told us the jungle hosts wild elephants, bears, snakes, gibbons, and even tigers.

The trek itself was challenging for Sam, my partner, but we both enjoyed it thoroughly. I would definitely do it again, although my legs feel like they are broken. The aim was to reach the waterfall, and as we got closer, it became more visible.

We could slowly see the water beginning as a trickle, becoming thicker and thicker when eventually we reached the waterfall. After tripping and falling and getting covered in mud and bitten by ants, and I even had ants stuck inside my shoes, which was really, really uncomfortable. But we finally, yeah, we reached the waterfall, and this was almost like a scene from a movie.

It was like approaching a beautiful scene in slow motion. Immediately, the French guy who was on the tour with us, we both threw our t-shirts at our girlfriends, and we sprinted towards the waterfall. We both jumped in and immediately stood underneath the very heavy water.

I remember this, this French guy, he was crazy. He was like a proper crazy adrenaline traveler.

He'd been skydiving and all this stuff, and he was only like 18.

And yeah, we both stood under the waterfall, and it hit your head so hard, it was like being punched in the head constantly. It was really heavy. It was like when someone drops something, literally heavier than you, on you, and it just forces you down.

It was a huge waterfall, but it's amazing. And I remember later on in the tour, when we did the Vietnamese motorbike tour, our Vietnamese friend always called it a natural shower. Natural shower.

That's what he always called it. Rain, waterfalls, natural shower. It's a way to wash and clean and stay fresh on the road.

Anyway, moving on to the next page. We dried off by the waterfall, which didn't really work because the water was just constantly splashing at us by the crazy French guy who was kicking things and throwing water at everybody. But anyway, I eventually dried off.

And then we had to make our way back down. So we had to basically do the trek back down the hill. And it was really, really steep.

So again, we went from the water, the river being very, very thick, to now being, you know, less thick. It was time for white water rafting now. I never thought I'd do this in my life.

But since doing it, I know I definitely will again. We were in a rubber dinghy, I remember this.

And, you know, like four of you, two on each side have to kind of paddle your way down.

But the water was so rough and so crazy that, you know, I remember banging my head. I remember the French guy again, he smacked me in the head with one of his oars, you know, the sticks you use to control the boat with. He literally smacked me in the face with it by accident.

It was crazy. It was mad. But yeah, definitely a really fun experience that.

After we eventually got out of the rapids, suddenly it was like rapids, crazy, bumping into rocks.

Everything's going mad. You're getting splashed with water.

And then suddenly, silence. And I remember this moment. It was just like all the craziness had finished.

After a long day of stress, climbing hills and riding elephants that made me get smacked in the head by branches, getting hit in the face by a French guy, getting splashed with water and attacked by a waterfall, being scared of getting eaten by a bear or a tiger in the jungle. And then suddenly, after all that, it's like your life flashing before your eyes. And then suddenly, silence.

And we were on this really still, quiet water, just kind of riding along, and everybody went silent.

Even the French guy, the mental French guy, he was even quiet, which I thought would never happen. And it was amazing.

That experience of just craziness and then calm. The sun was hot though, so I was sweating and kind of getting a bit pissed off with the sun. But, you know, other than that, it was quiet, it was relaxing, it was nice.

And then we had to do something else. I remember after the rafting, yeah, here we go, we ended with a bamboo raft. So here we had to sit literally on some bamboo that's tied together, and some guy stood on the front and used a stick to move us along the water, which was kind of weird, but it was fun.

And then it was time to go home. Such a brilliant day. I will never forget the French guy.

I will never forget his girlfriend as well. She was very nice. I'll also remember the smell of the French guy.

He did have a bit of a body odour issue, and that smell is still in my mind. In fact, I can kind of taste it right now. Anyway, it was an amazing experience.

And yeah, I've always remembered that, getting to that waterfall and that rafting experience.

And you can explain a jungle trek in a story in your journal, and you can read it on a podcast, but nothing compares to being there. You know, the sounds of the crickets, even the sounds of probably snakes running through the grass or sliding through the grass.

Just the little things, the heat on your back, and climbing over rocks and sticks, and hearing the sticks crack as you stand on them, and hearing the waterfall get louder and louder as you get closer. You know, all of these things, I try to paint that picture, but you just can't. And especially with Thailand, it's a very hard country to describe because it's so diverse.

So yeah, another great experience there that I've shared with you today from my travels. If you enjoyed it, please let me know, and I will share more from the journal. Maybe we'll jump to another place in Thailand or another experience, or maybe we'll jump to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.

Who knows? There are so many stories in this journal, and I love it. If I ever lost it, I would cry.

Actually, I'd probably just use it as an excuse to go back again and do it all again and write a new journal. I do want to relive this experience. All of this, all of this journal.

Hopefully, I will one day. Anyone want to come? Why don't you come with me?

We're still waiting on that sponsor, though, from Tourism Thailand. Anyway, that's it for today, guys. I just wanted to catch up with you.

Check you're all okay. Please do email me. Remember, share with me any stories from the COVID situation, the COVID era.

Also, if you're still going through it, if there's still difficulties in your country, please email me.

Let me know so we can share the news and maybe people can help in your community, in your country. If you have any travel stories to share, keep sending them in.

And again, thanks to everyone for your emails. It's been a pleasure as always. Take care, guys.

Love you all, and we'll speak soon. Bye.

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Hello, hi, hello. I'm not really sure how to start this. Welcome back to Journeys With Elliott Season 2.

Season 2? Yeah, I don't really know what kind of possessed me to create a Season 2. I just took a long-ass break, and I thought, well, I guess I might as well just kind of bury the hatchet with the old season, and let's just call this new one Season 2.

And then it doesn't seem so weird that I took a break. And even better, this is kind of a Christmas special. Yes, those of you who are interested, I am recording this episode on the 16th of December, 2020.

That's right, guys, in 10 days' time, Christmas will be over. Sorry to ruin your day. So yeah, welcome to Season 2, Episode 1.

Just to catch up, really. Time for some friends to talk, to catch up again, and see what's been going on in each other's lives. Well, I would say each other's lives, but this is kind of a one-way relationship, isn't it, really?

We don't really talk to each other. I just talk to you. I guess that's all right.

I don't have to put up with any rubbish from you. So it's kind of good to have a one-way relationship with you. One special word of warning for this episode and for the future episodes.

I have made a big decision. No more filtering. I am gonna swear.

I'm gonna say rude words. I am going to say what the hell I want to say. If you don't like bad language, just leave.

Leave. I wanna be me in this podcast, and that was the goal. And I found that a little shit here and there, it can push people away.

And I know that I have a wide audience from different cultures, but you know what? I'm not gonna change. So like it or lump it, this podcast will have the occasional F-bomb or S-bomb or something along those lines, and well, you just have to accept it.

So what's been going on? Why did I take a break? Well, to be honest, I got absolutely swamped with work.

My course has been growing in popularity, and I love my job, and my job, my students, the education I provide always comes first. The YouTube, the podcast, the other stuff, that always will come second, I'm afraid. And I'm sorry to say.

My mistake, I guess, I kind of just let work take over my life. But then a few things started to happen. Some things I'm allowed to mention to you today, some things I am not.

No, I didn't commit a crime or go to prison. There were just some things that it's too early to tell you about yet, but there are some things I will share with you in the future in this podcast, some big, big things. But today, I'm just going to tell you about the things I can tell you.

First, I moved house. Now, we know that I was buying a house around the time of maybe the last episode of the podcast. Well, we bought the house, we moved into the house, we're living in the house, and we've lived here for a few months now.

It's lovely. Kiki's adjusted well, both Sam and I, we've adjusted well, and we're happy. We love it here.

I talked about the adjustments and maybe kind of some of the things we had to do in the early stages in a YouTube video, which you can see on the ET] English YouTube channel if you want to. By the way, I apologize if you just heard a strange kind of snorting noise. That's not people taking drugs in the background.

That's my dog. Although you might think he would be on drugs because he's absolutely crazy.

He's a nutter.

He's a puppy, so he has an excuse. We'll get on to the dog situation in a second. Let's just finish off with the house thing.

Let's hold your horses. Some of you are thinking, what? He has a dog?

When did that happen? A lot can happen in a few months, guys. So yeah, I mean, we kind of left the podcast while I was moving house in the middle of the pandemic.

I was also getting married. What's happened with that? I feel like, you know, I've kind of called this a Season 2.

It's a bit like an American drama. I feel like at the beginning of this episode, we should have had some like heartbroken American guy voice saying, previously on Journeys With Elliott. But I'm kind of doing the recap now anyway in my rather poncy British accent.

So I guess is going to be, instead of the OC, it's going to be like the royal twat or something.

Anyway, moved house in the middle of a pandemic. Didn't realize the pandemic would get so bad as well.

I did an episode on the coronavirus when it was first kind of hitting the UK, and I was shocked about the fact that some measly figure of people had died or been affected. And now we've passed like 60,000 in the UK. Boy, if I could go back in time and tell myself that it's going to get this bad worldwide as well, not just the UK.

In fact, maybe I should go back and listen to those old episodes and see how perhaps even optimistic I was trying to be back then, thinking that we'd get control of it. But here we are, still struggling, still not really finding a full light at the end of the tunnel, maybe in some senses with vaccines and other things in the pipeline. But we won't really talk too much about that today.

I want to go back to talking about me and what's been going on. So we moved into the house.

What's next on the timeline?

We canceled the wedding in Italy, obviously. I think it's pretty obvious that travel is kind of a write-off for the rest of this year. I mean, I would be married now.

I would be married, I would have got married in September. I'm still engaged, but engaged to be married on the 29th of January 2021. It's going to be a lockdown wedding, which means we can, in tier 3, which is the tier that Bristol, my city, has been placed in, we can only have a maximum of, I think, around 15 people at the wedding.

So as you can imagine, we've had to be very, very strict with who comes and who doesn't. We've just stuck to very close family. And believe it or not, included in the 15 people is myself and Sam, the bride and groom.

So yeah, that already knocks two people off the list. But yeah, you know, it is what it is. Some people might be saying, Elliott, why didn't you just wait to get married?

To be quite honest, we love each other, and we just want to get married. We don't need that fairytale, perfect wedding with the perfect dress and all the perfect photos, and oh my God, look at my wedding. We just want to get married.

We're quite simple people, and we don't like to show off. We just like a simple life. We just want to be a simple couple with our dog, with our cat, with some kids in the future, hopefully, in our house.

And that's it, really. Go on some holidays, enjoy life. We don't really need to show off.

You know, I don't really post much about my life on Instagram and things like that, mainly because I think that is kind of private to me. And the only things I do share, really, are through this podcast, and even that's not the full picture. I think it's enough to kind of leave the rest to your imagination.

I kind of like that you guys can create this kind of character that maybe you think I am. Maybe some of you are very accurate in thinking, I reckon Elliott goes to bed and he reads The Great Gatsby, which I don't. Or some of you might think, oh, I reckon Elliott sits at weekends when his partner's out the house and plays World of Warcraft for five hours.

You would then be correct. You know, people have different imagination or images of who I am and what I do. And I kind of like how that's left a mystery.

What's life without imagination and creativity? Just like I imagine who you are listening right now, I'm picturing a very attractive, young... No, I'm joking.

It could be anyone. And I love you. It's just who you are.

So cancel the wedding. We're getting married locally in Bristol. And now we are...

Well, we got a puppy. That's one thing I kind of mentioned at the beginning. His name is Bruce.

Some of you may have seen him on Instagram. Again, haven't posted many pictures of him. He's growing like a bloody...

What grows fast? Mold. Mold, that grows fast on very damp walls.

Yeah, he's growing fast. Really, really fast. And he's got...

He's very lively, because he's a puppy, of course. He's an English Labrador, a black English Labrador. Labradors are very well known for being hyper, crazy, and for being a puppy for about three years.

So we're really just at the beginning phase, but I've just turned around and looked at him.

Behind my desk is a sofa. He's upside down, wrapped in my scarf.

Somehow he managed to somehow... It actually kind of looks like he's put my scarf on, which is weird. Didn't know dogs could do that.

And he's got all of his sexual organs exposed. And yeah, he's loving life upside down. And believe it or not, Kiki is in exactly the same room, a few meters away, staring at him.

Now, some of you were a bit confused as to why I was getting a dog. Oh, but Elliott, cats and dogs, they can't be friends. What are you doing?

Are you trying to kill your cat? I have you know they can. And we did loads and loads of...

Come on, you guys know how much I love my cat. It's almost embarrassing how much I love Kiki. Would I really get a dog if I thought it was going to hurt her?

Yes, I took a risk and the risk paid off because they're actually getting on really well. In fact, you know when cats do that thing where they rub stuff, like they'll go up to like walls and they'll rub it with their face or they'll rub their head against your leg or something. That's them spreading their scent.

They usually only do it to nice things. They wouldn't, for example, go up to a bloody crocodile and rub their head against it because it's dangerous. And in the beginning, of course, she was scared of Bruce.

But I noticed just a few days ago that she actually came up to him and rubbed him. And you have no idea how amazing that was for me to experience that. It was like a real achievement.

My cat and my dog, they like each other. Sometimes they just tolerate each other, but aside from that, they like each other. I hope they can eventually love each other and cuddle and sleep next to each other.

But at the moment, they sit next to each other, they stand next to each other, they tolerate each other. And that's more than I could ask for. I'm just glad that Kiki's not hiding in another room all day, because she's scared if she comes down, the dog will bite her head off, right?

That's the main thing we don't want, and things have gone very well. So yeah, his name's Bruce.

Two reasons why we named him that.

The main reason was because we love Australia. Bruce is kind of a really stereotypical Australian name. You know, good-eye Bruce.

It's, you know, like they have Bruce and Sheila, which are like the male and female Aussie names that you'd call people. It's not, they're not really very common names over there now, but you know, it's just that kind of name that you associate. So yeah, his name's Bruce because of that.

So Sam thinks, but I did have a second reason, which he doesn't know about, or she actually found out about a few days ago. I also called him Bruce. Any people guess why?

Yes, Ilove Batman, and Batman is called Bruce. So that's kind of the other reason he's called Bruce. The Australian thing, but also I love Batman.

I wasn't going to call him Joker, so I had to call him Bruce. So yeah, that's kind of an update on my life. As I said, there are some other things which I can't quite share with you at the moment, but one day I will.

And aside from that, things are good. It's amazing how I did my best. We all did our best, I think, to turn around a year that was, in all honesty, a shit show.

This year has been absolutely shite for everyone. But we have found ways to cope, to make it better, as good as it could be. And that's something I've really worked on this year, is finding the diamond in a pile of shit, right?

And I've managed to sift my way through all that sewage and kind of find something worth holding onto. And that is family. It's my home.

It's the future and what it may hold and accepting that the future could be an amazing thing.

And also just life in general and appreciating it. I think we've all had, and you'll be lying if you said you haven't, we have all had this year at some point, a little dip, a little point where we felt like, oh, what am I doing with my life?

Whether you've lost your job because of the pandemic, whether you've just got depression because of the pandemic, whether your partners left you. There are so many things that have, bad things that have happened to people this year as a result of the pandemic. Maybe you've lost a family member, which is absolutely dreadful.

And my heart goes out to everyone who's lost loved ones throughout this time. But we've all tried to gain something. We've all found a way through that.

And this podcast is called Journeys. And it started off being about travel, about our journeys through the world. And then slowly I realized, I kind of like talking about this deep life shit.

And when we really think about it, down to the root of it, this is one occasion. And you could see this as a positive if you want. This is one occasion where everybody, everybody, everybody in the whole world right now is on the same journey.

We're taking different little paths, different routes, which are going down different jungles, different alleyways, dangerous, happiness, death, life, birth. So many things have happened along this little journey. We've all had different routes, but we've all been carrying on down that same direction, which is the Corona bus.

We've all been on the Corona bus, whether we've had the virus, not had the virus, whether we know someone who's had it, whether we don't. We all know about it, and we're all going through it. And we should feel a sense of unity right now, like we're all experiencing this together, and we can all help each other.

That's the main thing. Make love, not war. By the way, just so you don't know, I'm not on camera right now.

I wish I was. I'm throwing the peace signs at my microphone. I actually am, and I'm actually just still here with my two peace signs up.

Anyway, I'll take them down now. The hands are down, just so you know. Bruce is looking at me now.

He actually woke up. He's looking at me like, what the fuck are you doing, you weirdo? So that's kind of what I wanted to share about the Corona bus.

We're on a bus route, and let's hope we're on the way out. But this year, it has been, as I said, a shit show, but we've managed to sift through and find those positive things. For me, as I told you, family, life, all these kinds of things.

What things have come out of this for you? I know people who've made relationships. Someone I know has found a girlfriend who he thinks he's fallen in love with through online video chatting and like lockdown dating on Zoom.

And it's amazing how this has happened, you know? Have you met any new friends, family, partners, anything through the virus? Let me know if you've found a loved one, if you've gained a relationship from online dating or something.

I'd love to hear your positive Corona stories. In the next episode, that is something I want to talk about, positive outcomes from Coronavirus, COVID-19. So please share positivity, journeyswithelliotte at gmail.com, and I'll share your positive stories related to the virus next episode.

So travel. Obviously we knew that I had a big trip to Italy planned, in which I was going to get married as well. Well, that didn't happen, did it?

So yeah, I kind of get a bit emotional. I'm almost teary. I can feel my eyes getting a little bit moist, just talking about travel, the word travel.

Oh God, it makes my heart sink. I miss like the weirdest things. It's gone beyond the point now where I just missed being in the sun or eating like a bowl of pad thai or something.

It's now got to the point where I miss like airports. I miss being bored, sat in an airport and realizing, oh shit, I forgot to put deodorant on. You know, like stuff like that.

Or I miss being on an aeroplane and having no leg room. Like on one of those Asian flights. Oh, that reminds me.

I forgot to share this. Once I flew with, I think it was a Vietjet, one of these Vietnamese airlines, and boy, how do you Vietnamese people survive with that leg room? Or is it just that I have big gangly legs?

I had to sit with my legs crossed on that flight, like sat cross-legged on the seats. I couldn't put my legs down because they simply did not fit. There's just no space on those flights.

That would be my advice. Just don't fly if you have big legs or a big body. I mean, I don't have a big body.

I'm just a bloody skinny guy, but somehow my western body did not fit on that aeroplane. But yeah, I miss being on an aeroplane and just flying, even though it's boring and you just want to get there. You know, we start to miss and appreciate the really random things that maybe we didn't appreciate.

And we do anything now just to go and be completely safe in another country, having a lovely holiday, a break from life. You know, for me, I need a break from work. For you, maybe you need work.

Some people, I know so many people have lost their jobs. We all, but we all want to travel for different reasons. And for me, I need a break.

I need to relax, but I can't really do that. I can do it at home very easily, but I still feel like I'm obliged to work when I'm at home, which is one of the big downfalls of working from home. You always feel like, oh, my office is just there.

You know, I could just do this. I could just reply to this student, even though I'm on holiday. So I just don't really take holidays unless I actually go away, like take a trip.

So when all this is over, I am taking a nice trip somewhere, even if it's in the UK. I mean, I have a dog now, which is great. We can go on trips and go on beautiful walks in places like Scotland or, you know, local places.

We can go down to the coast in Cornwall and at different parts of the UK and explore because we have an excuse now. I have always thought of my country as quite boring, which is another thing I find funny. Like, you probably think that your country is quite boring, but you think the UK is amazing, and that's why you like my videos and my podcast and all that.

And then I think my country is boring, but I probably think that your country is amazing. We all want what we can't have, or we all want something that's very different to where we live. But I'm trying to now learn to embrace my country.

I think I've mentioned this before when I said that I traveled a little bit of the UK, and I have more places to go, and now I have a reason. I have a dog who loves exploring and going on adventures and sniffing piss on a lamppost. Well, he can go and sniff a cornish dog's piss on a Cornwall lamppost, or he can go to Manchester and sniff a Manchester dog's ass, you know?

Why not? Because I can. Maybe not right now.

I mean, COVID, but you know, we can't even really travel locally at the moment, but hey ho, we look forward to the future. Now you remember in the previous episodes, I was reading segments from my travel journal. I've actually lost it whilst traveling from house to house while I was moving house.

We know that it is in my house, definitely, 100%. I just can't find it. So it could be in the attic.

It could have gone in some boxes somewhere. I need to find it, and then I'll be able to continue the story I was reading from the previous season, the excerpts from my travel journal. But for now, we can't do that.

So that's not going to happen in this episode. Another request, you know, I said I want you to send me your positive Corona stories. I also want you to send me your travel stories.

And by the way, if I missed any of yours last season, send them again. It's fine. Maybe I'll read them out this time round

You can just copy and paste and send them to me. JourneysWithElliott at gmail.com. And I'll share some of your travel stories in the next episode as well.

One more thing that's been going on with me. I nearly forgot to mention this. This is a weird one.

Yesterday, I was actually at the hospital. Why, you ask? Are you okay?

Do you have coronavirus? Not that I know of, although I haven't taken a test. Maybe I should now after being at the hospital.

I have something that's called a salivary stone. Now, maybe there are some doctors listening, some oral hygiene medicine doctors listening. I don't know.

Probably not. If you're that intelligent and you're listening to me, talking about my dog sniffing piss on lampposts, you're probably not that... You probably got better things to do if you're that intelligent.

But, you know, it's this thing, which is in my mouth, in the floor of my mouth, so under my tongue on the bottom bit. If you feel your... Move your tongue along the bottom of your mouth, where all that gummy stuff is, behind the teeth.

So I'll give you a kind of explanation that my doctor gave me. So if you put your two fingers behind your ear, and then move along underneath your jaw, all the way along, and stick your tongue up to the roof of your mouth, while you do that, you should come across a bump, like a bump under your jaw. This bump should be called the submandibular gland, I believe.

Now this is a gland which produces saliva, and it allows the saliva to come up and into the mouth. You know, when you think about something really nice, like for me right now, oh, I really fancy a burger. Oh yeah.

Oh, it's happening. Oh God. So basically, when you think about these things, your body starts to shoot up bits of saliva into your mouth, you know, your mouth waters.

This is why we say that food is mouthwatering, because it's so delicious, it makes saliva shoot up into the mouth. Well, when this happens to me, because one of my glands has a blockage, there's a blockage inside the very small pipe that pushes this saliva out, the saliva kind of goes backwards, and it collects in my gland. And then, so when I get excited about food, sometimes, not every time, sometimes, this part of my neck, this gland, it swells to the size of like a date or a fig, let's say.

So, like a little ball, and it's very hard. And if I massage it, I can feel it kind of push back into my mouth, and it tastes a bit salty. Probably too much information there.

TMI, TMI, as they say. So, basically, the doctor has told me that I need surgery. Had an x-ray yesterday, and they've just said, you've got this thing called a salivary stone.

Luckily, it's not in the gland. It's actually in the duct. Now, a duct is where the opening is, so it's more in the mouth rather than in the neck.

So, luckily, I don't need my neck cut open, but I need my mouth cut. Now, apparently, all they do is give you a little jab, anesthetic, local anesthetic in the mouth. We said a couple of jabs, which I'm quite scared about.

I thought, okay, just one, hopefully, but. And then they're going to make a small cut in my mouth and then pull it out. Boom, and apparently, I can keep the stone.

So I don't know, maybe as a trophy, maybe I'll make a necklace out of it. Let's make a salivary stone necklace. Hey, that could be quite a good business idea.

Maybe I'll auction it for charity on eBay or something. That might be a good idea. So yeah, any doctors in the house who can give me some advice or let me know about how the surgery is, is it scary?

Please try and make me feel better. I'm terrified of needles. I'm terrified of being cut.

I'm terrified of falling over. I'm terrified of anything dangerous. So surgery is really, really horrible for me, and I am so nervous.

It's gonna happen in the new year sometime, apparently. Apparently it's nothing urgent. It's not dangerous, essentially.

I think I could actually live with it, but they were determined to make me have it removed. So yeah, that's another worry in life. But you know, you think about these things.

You think about the things that other people have to go through. There are people on ventilators and bloody hospital beds suffering. And I'm getting worried about just having a little cut in my mouth to have a bloody stone removed.

It's, you don't realize really until it happens. But you know, I guess I just need to man up and deal with it. I mean, when you think about women who go through childbirth, that's big and that's a lot worse.

But just briefly, I did want to kind of stick to the whole travel thing a little bit in this episode. I just wanted to mention somewhere I haven't really talked about before, but somewhere I've been a lot. So Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

And there was the reason why is because, you know, lockdown has kind of caused me to go through some old photos. And I really encourage you to do the same. Ask your parents, your grandparents, or get your old photo albums out, which you haven't looked at for 10, 20 years, however long, and look at old holidays you've been on.

And you'll be surprised that, especially at a time like this, where our minds are like potatoes. You know, they're just empty. We're like vegetables at the moment.

We're just at home, fertilizing. And, you know, we need some kind of stimulation and reminders of life and how it was, and how it can be again. So I went through and looked through some old photo albums, and I came across this photo of myself with my family in Dubai.

And we're sat in a tent in the middle of the desert with shisha pipe and a table full of Arabic food. And we have some lovely guys around us who are just kind of having fun. And I remember, I can, and then, you know, when you see this picture, immediately, it's like boom, boom, boom, boom.

You know, in the movies where it's like they go down a tunnel and suddenly all these memories start shooting into their brain. It was like that. And I thought back to the whole holiday.

I thought about how we were staying in a hotel which was called the Royal Meridian in Dubai, which I really recommend, by the way. I met a French guy called Alex. I remember playing football with him.

And every time we took a corner, he would say, conner, conner, because he was convinced it wasn't a goal kick, but it actually probably was a goal kick. He was just cheating. Many British people would say typical French.

I don't mean that in an offensive way. And then, you know, I remember also I met a Korean guy there, really fat Korean kid, and he was a bit older than me. And I just remember he couldn't speak a word of English, but he seemed really nice.

I remember that time where the photo was taken. We took a day trip out on four by four, you know, like Land Rovers, and we went into the desert on the sand dunes. And I remember all the dust flying everywhere.

And when you go over the hills in the sand dunes, you feel like the car's going to tip over every 10 seconds. And I was quite young. I was probably about 10 years old.

So it was quite scary. I remember getting out and I had sandals on and in the middle of the desert. And you will never feel anything like the heat of that sand on your feet in the middle of the desert.

If you've never been to a desert, wear shoes. Because if you go bare feet, your feet will burn.

That was one of the worst decisions of my life.

And then I remember sitting in this tent. My parents were offered the shisha. They don't smoke, but they were offered to use the shisha.

And I remember thinking that they were going to die, because when I was that age, if you smoked anything, I was just convinced you're going to die. You're going to get cancer and die.

Oh boy, did I grow up a lot since then.

But just these little things. I remember the food. I remember the dips.

I remember the lamb. I remember the barbecuing and the people. I remember also they made me dress up in the traditional white cloth that is very common in Arabic countries, which many of you listening now are probably wearing right now.

I don't know. But yeah, it's just all of these memories flashing back. And it's amazing how one little photo can do that.

So I encourage you to do the same. And maybe next episode, I'll talk about another photo and all the memories that shot back into my mind. There's one I can already think of in Spain, where my sister had dressed me up as a woman.

That's another funny drag story to share with you. I was a drag queen at the age of like six years old. So yeah, this is something I really want you guys to do.

And if you want, feel free to send me a picture in an email and share a little story with me of all the memories that came back. Maybe again, I'll share it in the podcast. JourneysWithIlliot at gmail.com.

So I think I'll leave it there, guys. This is just a little reminder episode that I'm not dead. I am back.

And I just wanted to take the final moments really to say thank you. You guys are addicted to this podcast. Not all of you, but some of you really, really are.

looked at the figures, even during the months and months that I was away, those figures were high. Lots of you have been listening and sharing with your friends. Some of you, I know, listen to these episodes on repeat, and you just repeat, repeat, repeat.

Repeat. Whether you're listening for listening practice, whether you're listening for fun, whether you're listening because you like me, whether you're just listening because you've got fuck all else to do, I don't really care. I just thank you.

And I know it's a bit like heroin to some of you. You're addicted to this podcast. And I saw that in the emails while I was gone.

You were bombarding me with emails saying, where have you gone? Where's the podcast? We need you, Elliott, especially now during these difficult times.

And I'm sorry that I took a break, but we've all been through it this year. Now I've woken up. I've smelt the coffee.

I've realized how much you guys love this podcast. And I'm back to keep you entertained through the final part of this pandemic. Let's hope, fingers crossed, let's fight.

Let's get vaccinations. Let's hopefully hope the vaccinations don't have chips that Bill Gates put in them. Let's hope that we don't start growing three eyes and seven legs from these vaccinations.

And let's hope they cure the world of coronavirus. Let's all be hopeful. And I'm done with being hopeful.

Let's just be happy in the moment. Let's be present. That's what we need to do.

So come and join me guys on this journey as we continue through Season 2. Love you all.

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Hello, hello, hi, everybody. Welcome to another episode of Journeys With Elliott. I have a bit of a confession to make.

Some of you are a little bit confused, because I uploaded a podcast episode last week, and then suddenly a few hours later, it was deleted. Why did this happen? Some of you may have got the, or have been lucky enough to listen to it.

And it was a good episode. I was actually really proud of it. It was a lot more personal, less about travel, more about me and my life and what's going on right now.

But very soon after this, I received some pretty bad news, and I felt like everything I'd spoken about that day in that episode was pointless. So I just got angry and disappointed and I deleted it. So now I'm coming back again and updating you on this.

So those of you who did get the chance to listen to that episode last week, you'll know that the wedding had been rearranged. I'd kind of talked some things about my dog, about my baby, and don't worry, the bad news is not about the baby. Everything is fine in terms of the pregnancy.

And yeah, so far so good. Lots of kicking, he's very active, and it seems as though he's a healthy little baby inside of my partner's belly. However, the wedding again, again for the fifth time now has been canceled.

We really thought we'd seen a glimmer of hope, and the government had made it seem as though, yes, you can have weddings again, 15 people, social distancing, and then suddenly some other information was released, and it's only religious weddings, apparently. So yeah, feeling a bit annoyed. I'm not religious.

Obviously, I'm not having a religious wedding. Why would I if I'm not religious? So it's something about religious weddings.

I'm not sure exactly what it is, but basically our wedding planner called us, and she told us the wedding, unfortunately, has to be postponed. And she says the next day possible is, believe it or not, the 26th of June. And the 26th of June is just a few days before my son is due to be born.

So not possible. My partner's really upset. Obviously, I'm annoyed.

I deal with things in a different way. I don't really get upset. I don't really cry about things unless it's something that's completely life changing.

It's very hard to get me to cry. But yeah, she's been quite upset about it. We're all quite annoyed.

So it's just another issue. Anyway, I don't want this to be a depressing episode today. I have a few travel related things.

You know what? After that episode, after deleting it, I thought, wow, I talk a lot about myself and about my life, and I'm sure some of you are really interested in it. But you know what?

I made this to talk about travel, about adventure. Yes, about my life and my journey through life, but we need to talk about some travel too. So I'm kind of bringing back some of those vibes today.

We're gonna go on more of a travel vibe, get us in the mood for when the lockdowns finish, in the mood for when we can go out and explore the world again. So I have a few funny travel stories to share with you today, a few personal things, and also just really some thanks and things to send back to all of you listeners who really mean a lot to me. So without further ado, let's bring back the old music.

Let's bring back those vibes that we had right at the beginning of this podcast, when I really did feel like we had a life. And let's get back into Journeys With Elliott.

So, I'm sitting here with my dog, led on his back behind me on the sofa with his testicles hanging out, dribble running down his face. He's snoring, I'm sorry if you do hear any loud snoring noises in the background. I guess it adds to the atmosphere.

But yeah, he's doing well. Just a quick update for those of you who missed the episode last week before it was deleted. Yeah, he's growing fast and we've come to this difficult situation in life when you get a puppy.

When they get to about six months old, you have to make the decision, am I going to neuter, castrate, remove the testicles from my dog? Obviously, we don't want him to be sexually active.

We haven't adopted him so that he will breed and create puppies.

And obviously, you'll speak to many owners of dogs and they'll say it's the only right thing to do is to remove a dog's manhood, its testicles.

I've been really struggling with this because obviously he's become a big part of the family and apparently it's around 60% of the British public get their dogs neutered or the female dogs have their ovaries removed. They get spayed, we call it, and male dogs get castrated. They have their balls, their nuts removed.

And yeah, I've done loads of research. I've tried to see, are there any real benefits of not doing it or what are the real benefits of doing it? And everybody has contrasting opinions.

And it always seems as though when I start looking these things up, when I start looking up, should I remove my dog's balls? He then just looks at me with these eyes, these puppy eyes, and they just melt my heart and they make me want to cry because I'm looking up basically a serious operation for him to have online and I'm calling vets or organizing appointments and he's just looking at me. And oh, it's horrible.

But I think we're going to do it. If anybody listening now, JourneysWithElliott at gmail.com, if you have an emergency, you want to say, Elliott, just stop, just don't do it. If you want to tell me, please do tell me in an email reasons why I shouldn't.

But we're having a baby and we need him to have good behavior. And I know just chopping his nuts off isn't going to fix that. But it does control extreme testosterone levels, which can cause a lot of problems.

Aggression, and from what I've read, I don't really want to be out on a walk with my dog. I want to be able to let him off the lead, right? To let him go and run free in the field.

But what if he runs up to a female dog and starts trying to, starts humping her, starts trying to make babies with her? I couldn't forgive myself. And it does, it's something you don't think about when you get a dog.

You don't think about the facts that at some point, you're going to have to make the decision, do I need to chop his nuts off or not? And yeah, I guess it does make me feel like a bad person, a little bit doing it, but you have to do what you have to do. And I think it's the right decision.

But as I said, if anybody extremely disagrees, please let me know, don't hate me. But as I said, it's the norm. It's considered the normal thing to do in the UK, in the US, in Australia, and all the countries I've looked up, many European countries, it's very, very normal.

So yeah, it should take a few weeks, maybe a week or two for him to recover. He'll have to have a cone on his head, one of those plastic things to stop him from licking the wound. And then he should be back to normal and forgetting everything that happened.

I've had two family dogs in the past, growing up when I was young, and they were absolutely fine as well, and they were just very normal, loving dogs. So yes, it sucks, but it's one of those things, isn't it? So yeah, that's one thing I'm dealing with.

So I think that's happening next Thursday. That's happening. Other than that, boring adult stuff I'm doing at the moment.

I'm thinking about selling my car, getting a new one, looking at buying loads and loads of baby stuff for my son, loads of clothes, loads of things. So we'll stay away from that boring stuff because if I speak any longer about my life, you'll probably start falling asleep. So let's talk firstly about the first topic of today, which is travel related.

So this story is based in Florida, which is in America. It was a place we used to go to a lot when it was cheaper. As a family, we used to, as I told you before, in previous episodes of the podcast, we used to go there for the theme parks, like to go to Universal Studios and Disneyland and all of that stuff.

But this story isn't related to that. I told you a story in the past about when I got lost in Disneyland. This time, it's actually about something that happened in the house we were staying in.

So it was me, my mom, my dad, my sister, and my sister's boyfriend. And they were about 18 at the time. There's eight years difference between my sister and myself.

So I was probably about 10 years old. And yeah, we were in Florida. We were doing the theme parks circuit, and we were also staying in a two-floor house.

Okay, so these houses that you usually stay in, like holiday houses in Florida, they're usually on the river. So you have almost like your own, your own kind of pier at the end of your house, where you could do like fishing and stuff in the river, and everybody kind of lives on the river, on the Keys. And this isn't related to the story, but my dad and I, I remember the days when we used to just sit out there all day, and we used to fish.

We actually learned together how to fish. Neither of us had been fishing before, and we learned how to do it in this river in the back, because one day we stayed in a house, and in the garage, there were fishing rods. So we ended up going up to a bait shop and buying fishing bait, which was at the time prawns, and we'd hook them up and just chuck the rods in, you know, let loose the fishing rods into the river, and just see what happens.

And one day, I remember, I was like 10 years old, and I caught this huge catfish. That was the first time I caught a fish, and I was so surprised. I couldn't believe that this is what happens.

I kind of felt bad when I was watching my dad, like, pull the hook out of its lip, because obviously you hook them, and it hooks into their lip. But apparently, they've obviously, fish have like two second, or I don't know if my dad just told me this, or if it's true, but apparently they have like two second memories. So as soon as you throw them back in, they completely forget about it.

He also told me that they can't feel the hook in the mouth, because they're completely numb in their lip. I don't actually know how humane fishing is, and now thinking about it, I don't know if I do it again. But anyway, that was something we used to do.

And it reminds me of one day actually, we used to sit out there doing the fishing on our chairs.

And I remember seeing a manatee. A manatee, Google it if you don't know what a manatee is, but it's, I don't even know how you explain it.

It's like seeing a dolphin, but it's like a mini whale. Sometimes they just look like little rocks, but they're very native to Florida and also very endangered. So it was a really amazing experience seeing one of those.

But yeah, this house, so it had a pier at the end, and then you'd have your, before, so connected to the house would be a swimming pool with like a kind of patio area, and that would be covered by netting, like really strong netting, and that's to protect you from any flies, insects getting in.

And then you'd have one of these doors that you could open from that netting, which would then take you to the pier where we did the fishing. Now the house was two floors.

You had your ground floor and then the floor above. I never know whether to call that a second, first floor, second floor, whatever. It's the floor above the ground floor.

I always end up calling the ground floor the first floor because technically it is the first floor. But anyway, I never understand that. But basically the floor upstairs where all the bedrooms are.

And this had a balcony attached to it, okay? Now in the evening, sometimes in Florida, it gets really, really stormy, like really tropical storms because the humidity gets so intense. Now, those of you who are listening who live in tropical climates, you'll obviously understand this.

That yeah, all the energy builds up and big thunderstorms can happen in climates like this. And Florida is a very, very tropical area of the US. And yeah, I remember in the evenings, sometimes we'd go to a restaurant, like on a beach, but also other times, we would just chill on the balcony and we'd have a barbecue because the house we stayed in used to have a barbecue.

So we would usually like cook up some nice meat that we'd get from the supermarket with and cook some rice and salad and stuff. And we'd sit outside and my parents would, you know, have a few drinks with my sister and her partner. And obviously, I was 10 years old, so I was just drinking orange juice.

But yeah, you know, we used to have a lot of fun out there. And I remember one evening, we were just relaxing, eating, and it was probably around 10 o'clock when my dad decided to bring out the desserts, which we'd bought from the supermarket. So he went in, we were playing Uno, which by the way, is an amazing game to play as a family when you're on holiday and you want to get away from technology.

It's a great card game. I don't know if you've ever played it, but love that game. It always reminds me of holidays with my family playing Uno.

This podcast is not sponsored by Uno, by the way. I'm not trying to make you buy it. So yeah, we used to do that.

And my dad went out to get the dessert and the ice cream and he kicks the door closed behind him to come out onto the balcony. And that was probably the really, you'd think, oh, whatever, he's just closed the door. But about 30 minutes later, when he needed to go back inside to go for a wee, to go to the toilet, he couldn't get in.

We were locked, all of us, out on the balcony. None of us had phones, okay? We all left our phones inside.

All we had was some plates, knife and fork, a barbecue, and a pack of uno cards. And some glasses of wine that my parents were drinking. So yeah, this wasn't the best situation.

And what was worse, this storm was really starting to kick up. You could see the electricity, the lightning in the air, the forks of lightning that you'd never see in England. You never really see these kinds of storms in England.

So this is like something special. It was quite fun to watch, but at 10 years old, I was kind of a bit scared of thunder. It can be a bit loud sometimes, and it even creeps me out now.

Even fireworks make me jump now. So yeah, I used to be scared of loud noises quite a lot when I was young. But anyway, yeah, we were stuck out here on the balcony.

It wasn't cold because it's quite humid, but it was really thunder and lightning. You know, there's a lot of thunder and lightning. It was very aggressive, this storm, and the rain was getting heavy.

It reminds me of a Family Guy quote, but it was raining sideways. It was raining sideways. So the rain was starting to actually come onto the balcony and hit us.

So what did we do? Well, my dad came up with this idea. Well, it was either smash the window and get back into the house, but then we'd have to pay the cost.

We'd have to pay the guy we were renting the place from for the two weeks. So he decided, you know what? I'm 50 years old.

I don't care. I'm going to climb down the balcony. Now this balcony was really high up, really, really high.

And he just climbed over the edge and just started climbing down the side of the house. And he thought that they'd be able to get back in to the house somehow, but we didn't have any keys. So this was just a pointless idea.

So he just climbed down and then realized, oh, wow, yeah, we're completely locked out. We can't get in through the balcony, but we also can't get in through the front door or the back door.

We're just, we're completely, we're screwed.

So then I started crying being a 10 year old. I was getting quite emotional. And then my sister's boyfriend decided, okay, I'm gonna climb down too.

So then it was just me, my mom and my sister remaining on the balcony. The thunderstorm was absolutely in full swing now. And my parents, I'm sorry, my dad and my sister's boyfriend decided, okay, we'll just have to walk somewhere, walk to the police station, I guess.

So yeah, they were gone for a good hour, maybe an hour and a half, because it was a long walk to the police station. And then they had to call a special number. I think, I don't know, I don't, they haven't really told me what happened here, but somehow they managed to get hold of the police.

And then somehow they managed to get the police to contact the guy who owned the flat, sorry, the house we were staying in. And then he managed to arrange us getting keys from his assistant somewhere. And then they had to walk back, because the police wouldn't drive them back to the house.

So they had to then walk back for another hour. So yeah, this was a long time that my, I was asleep in my mom's lap, my mom was probably just drinking until the bottle was gone. My sister was probably asleep as well.

But I remember that the storm was really bad. So they had to walk in that. I mean, fair enough.

That's one of those things where you know your dad's a hero, you know, when your dad is an admirable person, when you see him walking through the rain and the thunder and the storm for your family to just get you back in the house. I mean, that was quite, I did feel like my dad was like Superman when he did that. So yeah, we were so relieved when we could get back into the house and go to sleep finally.

But yeah, you know, it's not really a huge story, but it's just one that I was reminded of recently and it did make me laugh. Sometimes you have these stories where it's kind of like, you know, you had to be there. Telling the story can't really do it justice.

But yeah, you know, I love sharing these little family stories with you from when I was on holiday, and maybe some of you can relate to things like this, being locked out. It's so easy to lock yourself out of your house, of the place you're staying in, when you're not familiar with the locks. It actually happened about two months ago.

We've recently, as you know, maybe about six months ago, we moved into this new house, our first house that we've bought together, my fiance and I. And I'm not used to how the front door works yet. So I actually locked us out when we went walking with the dog.

Now luckily, it was just such a coincidence. I'd left the back, we have a back door. Luckily for one time, just once, I never do this, I'd left the back door open.

But I didn't think about this for a while. So I was panicking thinking, oh God, we're gonna have to get someone to knock the door down. What do we do?

What do we do? And then I realized, oh shit, I left the back door open. I'd never do this.

And I just couldn't believe it. I was so lucky. But I did have to climb over the fence to get in.

So it looked like I was breaking in to my own house, climbing over the fence to get in. Bear in mind, we're new. So the neighbors probably thought, God, are these the new people?

They're already climbing over the fence to get into their house. Some of them might have not even thought it was us. They were probably all looking out of their windows thinking, bloody hell, they're weird.

But yeah, we managed to get back in. So yeah, it happens a lot. I've been locked out of hostels in Vietnam, in Thailand, where we've had to get spare keys.

I've lost keys when I've been drunk, traveling and things like that. It happens all the time. If you have any funny stories, remember Journeys With Elliott at gmail.com.

Any times where you've been locked out of a room or locked out of your house or anything, please share with me, and I'll happily share that in the next episode. Now, you know, a while ago, I was talking about how things can remind us of travel. I wanted to talk a little bit about music and about how certain songs really remind me of certain places I've been, because people were saying to me, Elliott, you talked about that, but you didn't actually say what songs remind you of your trips.

And yeah, it's funny little things. Like for example, on my first trip around Southeast Asia, one song that really reminds me of traveling is, there are two Thai songs. I'd never listened to Thai music in my life, but if there are any Thai people listening, I'm probably not going to say his name correctly, but there's a guy called Singto Namchok.

Namchok, Singto Namchok. And there was this song, it was just playing everywhere you go. It was like the number one pop song at this period of time, like 2018 maybe.

And I just remember this song was playing over and over and over. And in the song, he goes like, ah, ya, ya. And over and over again, you just keep hearing him doing this.

Now, believe it or not, I actually know all of the words to this song, and I can sing it word for word, but it's completely in Thai, in the Thai language. So that's like, I don't know what any of the words mean, but because I downloaded it and found it and listened to it on Spotify, whenever I feel like I want that feeling of being in Thailand again, I listen to that song. Now, the other one is, I told you before about this place called Ko Jum.

I think it was the first episode of the first season, and we found this paradise island. And in the bar, this guy called Matt, who owned the bar that we used to go to and have our drinks, he had this CD that was always playing, which apparently was given to him by a fellow traveller from the UK, in fact. Now, on this playlist, there were many songs.

There were Jack Johnson songs, you know, Banana Pancakes. I don't know if you know any of these songs, those of you listening. But whenever I hear the Jack Johnson album now, I think of this place, but also a Thai song.

Again, now it's by a reggae Thai singer, and his name is Job To Do, number two, Job To Do. Now go on Spotify and search for this, Job To Do, and the song is called Do Do Do, maybe Do Te Tum.

And this song is just a reggae song.

And on the playlist in this bar, he had both the Thai version and the English version. So this time I learned all the words in Thai, but also because he had an English version, I would also hear what the words actually meant. And it's about this guy and his wife is leaving him or his partner is leaving him, and she's taking everything from the house except for his Bob Marley CD, which is really random.

I think that's right anyway. So yeah, it's like, I think it's something like Do Do Do, why do you do this to me? And if you listen to the song, you can listen to it in both Thai and in English.

And it's fun. I like listening to songs from different languages and translating them and seeing the difference. Another one is Country Roads, Take Me Home by John Denver.

Again, if you haven't heard this song, this is a classic. It's an American song, bit of a country and western song. And this song reminds me of one of the saddest moments of my life, which was when my four month backpacking trip around Southeast Asia ended.

We were in the car on the way back from a beautiful beach, and then our guy was taking us to the airport. We took like one last stop on the beach before we went to the airport, and it was a beautiful day. Everything was perfect.

It was the evening. The sun was starting to go down. We were driving through this road with all these rice paddies around us, but unfortunately, we were on the way to the airport to go back to England.

And even now, I remember this moment. We were in the car, and this song came on, and it's about going home. It's about leaving, and it was such a coincidence that this taxi driver played this song or it came on on his radio.

And I remember hearing this, and my partner and I, we both looked at us, and we were really feeling it. You know, we were feeling, this is the end of this amazing four-month trip. We've had all over, we've traveled over borders, we've had terrible things happen, we've argued, we've been happy, we've swum in different oceans, and we've been on, we've tried some of the most amazing food, we've had weird food, we've met so many people from all over the world, and now this is it.

We're going home, and this song is playing, and it's an emotional song. And I remember looking at her towards the end of the song, and she was looking out of the window, and I could see in her reflection, she was crying. Oh, God, I can just remember all of this.

And it was a really sad moment, and this song, whenever I hear it now, it just hits me, you know?

So music's really powerful, really, really powerful. Now, Spain.

Again, back to these family holidays. When I was younger, we always used to go to Spain. And as a joke, because it's the only Spanish music we knew, my parents always used to bring the Enrique Iglesias CD.

So the song Hero, Let Me Be Your Hero, by Enrique Iglesias, that always reminds me of being in Mallorca. It reminds me of being in Spain. And the whole album, I know the whole album, this album with Hero on it.

I think it's called Enrique Iglesias. Enrique Escape, I think is the name of the album. But yeah, that's one of my kind of hidden talents.

I know all the words to every song on this album. And then we talked about Florida earlier. So in Florida, we used to, I only went like four or five times, as I said, because my dad was a travel agent.

So he used to have to go there for business purposes. Luckily, he could take his kids. And one thing we always used to do was because we rented a car and we used to drive around a lot in Florida, we had to buy CDs from the airport.

But we'd just pick any random CDs. Now, the first time I went to Florida, I was probably about seven years old. I was just starting to get into rock music, which now obviously is my passion.

It's what I love. And we used to just pick up CDs from the rock section. We wouldn't care who it was.

There was a time we picked up a Nickelback CD, and we listened to that for the whole holiday.

So that reminds me. Another band is Queens of the Stone Age.

I don't know if you know who they are. They're a fantastic band, almost like the American version of Arctic Monkeys. They're very good friends with the Arctic Monkeys as well.

So yeah, that's another band. And another band, I don't know if any of you will know this band.

They're called Breaking Benjamin.

They're like a goth rock band. And they remind me they have a song that really is called The Diary of Jane, Breaking Benjamin. God, it's like a heavy rock song, but it really reminds me of just driving around Florida in the car with my dad driving us places, going to pick up bait for fishing, or just random things.

And I love this. And then we have New York. Of course, New York, New York.

We went there for my 18th birthday, and my sister thought, you know, of course, we're going to New York. We have to play this song everywhere we go. So in the hotel room, my sister and I were sharing a hotel room.

My parents were in another hotel room. And my sister was just constantly on loop playing New York, New York by Frank Sinatra. So that song, it just instantly takes me back to that hotel room, looking out over, seeing the Empire State building, going to a New York Knicks game.

So yeah, that's another one. Another thing is Vietnam. Now I have loads and loads of songs that remind me of Vietnam.

One of them is Smooth by Santana. Now this is really random. We were in the middle of nowhere in a hotel near the Mekong Delta, which is like the river, very famous river in Vietnam.

And we were on that motorbike tour. Now we were staying at this place where we had, oh, it was amazing, we had a venison curry. And it was this guy who was, he wasn't Vietnamese, but he spoke fluent Vietnamese, and he lived in Vietnam, but he was actually like Indian.

So he made this venison Indian curry, but with like a Vietnamese twist to it. It was really weird, but amazing. And I remember he just came up to the table.

We were the only people sitting in the restaurant. He just walked up to us and said, do you like Santana? And I was like, sure.

And then he just shows me this CD, which he was really proud of. And he just put it in a CD player, and we were just listening to Santana, the whole album. And then he said, oh, I have rooms where you can do karaoke.

Oh, and that night turned into just a night of mayhem. We met some British people who were like lads, lads, lads, like proper guys who were on a backpacking holiday, but the only reason they were there, you could tell, was just to get drunk every night. So we bumped into these random British people, and what happens when you meet British people when you're traveling, you end up partying with them?

So we ended up doing karaoke with them, really, really bad singing. And then some Vietnamese people joined us, and we had this huge party in the middle of a karaoke room. We were all really drunk and having fun.

I remember singing Robbie Williams. Robbie Williams, Angels. And everybody was like cheering me.

They were like hugging me, holding me. I felt like a king, just singing this Robbie Williams cheesy classic, a proper British song. And then I remember doing Champagne Supernova, an Oasis song, which I'm sure many of you know.

And all of us were just belting it out in this karaoke room. And it's one of those nights you just never forget. And I have many karaoke stories.

I have one where I met a bunch of Korean people. Hardly any of them could speak English, and we all just went to a karaoke room. And that's how we communicated with each other because we knew songs.

So they were singing in English, really bad. But these things are just great. Karaoke is a great way to break the ice with people who don't speak the same language with you

Just have a few drinks, get drunk, and go and do some karaoke. And that night really made me love Vietnamese people. Sorry, Korean people.

People from South Korea. Also, because I don't know anyone from North Korea, in terms of Vietnam, also, all the kind of dancey songs at the time, so Avicii, Swedish House Mafia, because in a lot of places in Vietnam, you'll be walking past the bars and the pubs, and you just hear these songs being played really loudly. And yeah, it was always funny hearing these Swedish House Mafia songs and things like that.

And there's many others. Whenever I hear a reggae song, I think of Jamaica, because I spent some time in Jamaica. So many songs that remind me of so many places.

And if you have any stories, as I said, I love you getting in touch. If you have any stories connected with your travels or memories, please share them with me and try and explain. And I'll share them with everyone in the podcast in the next episode.

Now, let's take a little break and let's share one of your stories. This one's from a guy called Julien, who sent this quite a while ago. And I'm sorry for really sharing this and taking so long to share this, because some of you sent me some amazing things.

But Julien's really stood out to me, so I thought I would share this today. So let's get straight into it. Hi Elliott, I finally made up my mind about writing this email, because I didn't know if I actually wanted to make it.

Finally, I'll explain this email. The main good thing which led to my 2020 year, and which will stick to in 2021. Number one, I sucked at English before.

English was stuff I hated at school for many years. Actually, since I was born, I just hated English. He says, haha.

You have to know that I am Britain, which is Breton in French. Oh, he's from, that's where he's from. La Breton.

I don't know how you say it. I come from there. My origins are from there.

And I'm a bit of a narcissic, which I guess means narcissistic. I like myself. I trust in me.

I feel handsome. I feel smart. So yeah, you feel, we would say in English as well, you feel pretty sure of yourself, quite confident about yourself.

And you have, he says, I have big ambitions and big goals for my future. I always said, I'm gonna live in Bretagne. And it was my first goal.

But soundly one day, during the first lockdown in France, which started in March 2020, I said to myself, Julien, Bretagne isn't enough for you. You deserve more. You deserve something bigger than this place, Julien.

You will live in Great Britain. It was actually ironic because I was rubbish at English at the time. I even didn't know how to make a full sentence in the future.

But I made up my mind and I was on the fluency way. So I started learning English. I'm bloody proud of myself now because all of my effort throughout only a year paid off.

I'm now good at English, at least good enough for understanding people, reading books, having a call in English, and even to have a chat with you, Elliott, on Instagram about how to get long hair. As you got in the... Oh, of course.

Yeah, I was reading this earlier and I was thinking, really? And now I've just remembered. I spoke to this guy about growing my hair, about growing hair.

He said to me, how can you grow your hair? And he was in the awkward phase where it just wasn't really growing enough.

Oh, well, Julien, you'll be pleased to... I'm pleased to know that you're not in the awkward phase anymore. Unfortunately, I'm back in the awkward phase.

If you've seen my videos, I shaved all my hair off during the lockdown as a joke and dyed it all kinds of strange colours. And now I'm trying to grow it long again, and I'm back in the awkward phase. So Julien, you're doing better than me now.

Well done, mate. So he said, I used an application on my phone which was called Hello Talk. By the way, we're not sponsoring it here.

This is honestly just a message from Julien. It's an application where you can meet people who want to learn your native language and the other way around for you. I met beautiful people on this app, such good people, that we even send parcels and letters off to each other.

It's incredible to receive stuff by post, so I recommend everyone to try doing it with a pen pal or just with a friend. Then I created my own podcast on Spotify, which is called Story of a French. It is basically a podcast where I talked about everything and nothing just for fun to train myself to speak in English alone when nobody can talk with me.

Now I have a little routine with English. I think in English. I speak English every day.

I read in English. I write English. And I even dream of English.

Such odd stuff to dream in another language, but pretty cool. I'm happy, content and proud of me when I see all of my effort I put in this English language, mostly because I got spontaneous, crazy idea to one day live in England. This was my positive story with my relationship with Corona, because without it, I wouldn't have been in lockdown.

Therefore, I wouldn't have thought about the idea of living in England. I hope you, your wife, your cat, and Bruce are doing well. Labise from South France.

Well, Julien, thank you so much. It's one of the best ones I've received in a while. All of you sent lovely messages, but this one was lovely because, you know, it's about a journey that we've had throughout this very difficult time in lockdown.

You know, me, I wish I really wanted to get better at Spanish, but I just didn't. I just worked. I just put all of my energy into working throughout this time.

So it's good to see that people have really invested in education. I mean, I guess I can't put myself down too much because I've been giving a lot of people education. I've just been working to educate people during this time.

So, you know, I definitely need to work on self-improvement, and I think, Julien, you've given me the motivation to do that. So well done, and glad you're out of the awkward phase with your long hair now. I can't believe that's you who I messaged, who I responded to on Instagram about that.

Yeah, I don't usually respond to people on my DMs, by the way. So by the way, guys, if you start contacting me now, please don't expect me to reply. You know, I just try to reply to people when I can.

I don't reply to messages like, Elliott, can I have a free lesson? Elliott, can I have this for free?

Can I have that for free?

But if it's a genuine question, which I managed to see, I mean, I get hundreds a day, but if I see one and it's like, Elliott, you know, I really like your hair. How can I grow it like you? Of course, I'll help you with that, or I'll give you some advice, or, you know, Elliot, I'm thinking about joining your course.

Can you give me more information? Of course, I'll give you some help. But, you know, I can't just start teaching people randomly on Instagram.

So I really appreciate the people who do take that time to send me a question that's not just about learning and not using me for my education, because sometimes I feel a bit like a robot, you know? So, yeah, thanks very much for that, Julien, and keep in touch, mate. Do get back in touch.

Send me an email if you've listened to this, and let me know how everything's going, if you've made any plans for your moving to the UK at some point. You'll be welcome here. If you ever come to Bristol, feel free to let me know, and perhaps we'll meet for a beer or something once we all can finally do that.

I can test out my French skills, which I haven't used since I was in like year nine of school, so probably, I don't know how old that was, like 14. I was quite good at French, believe it or not.

That's a language I should have continued with, but the reason why I stopped was because I thought it won't really be that useful for me.

And we all have different ideas of what we need and where we want to be. For me, Spanish is more important than French, mainly because I do want to maybe have a home in Spain one day, maybe I'll move to Spain, maybe I'll retire in Spain if I can. So learning Spanish is quite important for me.

I'm not very good at it, as I said, and I don't have much time to learn it, but I'm trying to fit it into my daily life, and hopefully I can keep going with that. Also, I do kind of, as I told you in the past, I was trying to do a bit of Japanese learning. That's something I've played around with a bit.

You know, I like to learn bits of languages, so now I understand how pretty much all the kind of phonetics side of Japanese works. I don't know many words, but I can read Japanese. I don't understand the grammar, but I can read a word and see how to pronounce it with all the different symbols, the alphabet.

And I've also been learning some basic Thai phrases for the next time I go there. So I like to learn little snippets of languages, but if there's one I'm going to stick with, it needs to be Spanish. I mean, it's a bit more realistic for someone with a brain like mine.

And the final thing I wanted to do today is just say thank you for listening to those of you who have kept listening. Some of you have been repeating my podcast while I've been absent, and some of you have been emailing me. And I haven't gotten back to all of you, but I want to say special thanks to those of you who have thanked me by email and really opened up.

Some people have said how this podcast is, and you know who you are, okay? Some people have sent me emails saying that this has helped them through depression. It's helped them through some problems they've had during this coronavirus period where it's been really difficult to feel human.

And I guess listening to me talk utter nonsense in one way or another has helped some of you.

And if I've done that, then I've done my job. You know, my main job is teaching pronunciation and teaching people English, and I'm helping people.

I love that. I don't necessarily have a job here with this podcast, but I guess if there's any reward I want to get out of it, it's giving you guys who are suffering, guys and girls, by the way. When I say guys, I mean male and female.

Some people get a bit confused by that. But I want to be giving all of you who are struggling a reason to not struggle, maybe some motivation. And then those of you who are not struggling, I just want you to enjoy.

And also, if there's anything else I want to get out of this, maybe a sponsorship deal with, I don't know, Thailand tourism, perhaps. Or maybe a real estate agent who wants to sponsor this podcast and buy me a house in Spain. Of course, please get in touch in my dreams.

Anyway, I think we'll leave it here today, guys. It's been an interesting one. If you enjoy me rambling and talking rubbish, then thanks for sticking along throughout all of this.

If you have any ideas, anything you want me to do, I told you in the episode that got deleted, I still can't find my bloody journal. I'm still on the lookout for it. So when I have found that, I'll read some more travel stories from that journal.

But for now, we'll just have to leave it here, and hopefully you enjoyed the episode today. It was completely improvised. I didn't plan any of this.

It's just all come off the top of my head. So hopefully it was okay. I just felt like I needed to give you something after deleting that episode last week.

So thanks again, guys, for listening. Love you all. Take care, stay safe.

Look after yourselves. Keep wearing your face masks. Get that vaccine.

There's nothing wrong with the vaccine. It's gonna help us. All of you anti-vaxxers, fight me.

Cheers, guys. Bye.

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March 2021. Hi, by the way, it's Elliott. You haven't heard my voice on this podcast since March 2021.

Wow, crazy, crazy times. It's been that long since I've decided to talk to you, decided to just waffle about my travels, about life, about this and that. And this kind of feels like a revival.

A lot's happened. I'm a different person. You probably have changed a lot over this kind of long period of time since we spent some time together.

But it's nice to be back. It's nice to be here talking to you again. And I come back really refreshed from a lovely five-day holiday in Corfu in Greece.

We're going to talk a little bit about that today. And also, I've managed to dig out my journal. I told you, I lost it.

And that's why I stopped reading from my travel journal from my trip in Southeast Asia in 2013.

My first ever backpacking trip. So we're going to do a bit of reading from the travel journal from an experience in Vietnam.

And as well as that, I also have an interesting topic, because while I was on holiday in Greece, I realized that there were just so many things that happen when you're traveling that are annoying, like just annoying things. So I like to call these things, or we call these things, pet peeves. So pet peeves are things that just irritate you.

Maybe it's when somebody chews really loudly while you're eating. You know, someone sat next to you is just chewing really loudly, and it's just so annoying. You know, things like this, and I have loads of travel-related things that I noticed just during a five-week, five-day trip to Greece that I would like to discuss.

So we're going to begin by just having a catch up about my trip to Greece. So yeah, I got back a couple of days ago from Corfu. It was my first time in Greece.

And I have to say, I absolutely loved it. Greece is one of the most beautiful places I've visited, and I'm so annoyed that I never went before. It's just a really mystical, beautiful, interesting place.

I can't even begin to come up with the words to explain it. You know, I've done a lot of traveling.

I've been to places that are very different to Europe.

I've been to Southeast Asia. I've been to the Middle East. I've traveled around and I've seen beautiful things everywhere.

And a weird way of explaining Greece is like it's a mixture of everything. It has that European charm. It has that ancient history.

It has, in a way, some aspects of the Middle East. And it also has, I would say, some aspects of Southeast Asia as well. It felt like a mixture of everywhere I've been in my life.

And what I like to do when I talk about places I've been is I like to talk about all of my senses. I like to share with you all of the senses I experience. So what do we start with?

Well, we start with the sights. What kind of things did I see with my eyes while I was in Corfu, Greece? Ionian Island, Ionian Sea, full of history.

What are the main sights? The first things that come into my mind. I haven't written this down.

What are the first sights that come into my mind? Blue, green. Let's start with that.

The colour blue, it's everywhere, because everywhere you look, you can see the ocean. It's one of those islands where the ocean is literally everywhere. And I loved it.

I'm a water baby. I am just... The ocean is my home.

And it was so nice to be able to see that turquoise water. Whenever you look at pictures, if you Google Greece right now, I'm sure that one of the first things that will come up is that really crystal clear blue water. And that's what you see everywhere.

Not just in Corfu, I'm sure. I know it's in all the other islands as well, and even parts of the mainland, if you're on the coast. And that crystal clear water, it's not Photoshop.

It's real. It's crazy, the color. Like that turquoise color that you expect.

It's absolutely beautiful. Green, why do I say green? Well, you know, when I first went to Greece this time, I really, in my mind, was comparing it to Spain, which is stupid, really, because they're so different from each other.

But Spain, the difference between Spain and Greece for me is, you know, the south of Spain, where I've spent most of my time, a lot of my time, it's very brown. Of course, you get your green, but it's very brown. Whereas when you go to Greece, you've got that brown in the countryside, but a lot more green, a lot more greenery, a lot more colour, I would say, in the countryside.

So that bright, piercing green mixed with the blue of the ocean is such a beautiful sight to behold. And I really appreciated having that variety. That's not me, you know, saying I'm disappointed with Spain.

I love the brownness of Spain. And of course, you do get the green colours as well. But just something that was so shocking from the moment we were flying in and we were flying, descending down into the runway and the airport, I just noticed this vast array of greenery and blue.

And those colours will always be in my memory when I think of Greece. On top of that, what other things did I see? What comes into my mind?

My table, my table and restaurants. Because we ate out every single night. We wanted to experience real Greek food.

And we made sure we went to Greek restaurants. Apart from one night, we did actually go to...

Okay, two nights, sorry.

So we had Greek food for lunch every day, and we had Greek food most of the evenings, but there were two nights. One night, we tried a Mexican restaurant, and that's because it was one of the best reviewed restaurants on the island. It's your very typical Mexican food, and I loved it.

I love Mexican food, so it was great to have that as a kind of break from all the Greek salads and all that. But also, we went to an Italian restaurant. It was run by a Greek Italian family, big family, and the pizza was like something you would have in Italy.

So I have to say it was authentic tasting, in my opinion. I know Italians are very sensitive about their pizza, and if it's made in Greece, then it's not Italian. But to me, it tasted very, very authentic compared to what I've experienced in Italy.

So I give it my approval. I had... And remember, by the way, I have to let you guys know.

So a long time ago in the podcast, I was talking about how I had converted to becoming a vegan.

And that's still the case back here in the UK. But when I go on holiday, I have to cheat sometimes.

And that's because, I mean, you go to Greece. I'm sorry. It's almost impossible to be a vegan.

There's cheese everywhere. Cheese, absolutely. I mean, there's meat everywhere.

Everywhere you walk, you can smell lamb. But we're going to talk about the smells in a minute.

But yeah, lamb, you smell lamb everywhere.

But also there's cheese everywhere, particularly feta cheese, which is feta cheese in those Greek salads. Lots of fresh tomato. I mean, okay, let's talk about taste later.

I'm getting sidetracked. I need to continue talking about what I was talking about, which was my table, right? So the reason my table comes up in my sights, because I have this just vision in my mind of those tables full of Greek food, because we were being vegetarians while we were there, we didn't have the souvlaki and the typical Greek food.

Instead, we were going down more of the Greek meze route. So we would just get plates that would fall of vegetarian food, kind of Greek style hummus, cheese pies, but it's weird, a cheese pie, but it was amazing. Even halloumi, which I know is Cypriot, and I really want to go to Cyprus, but we had some halloumi, some kind of honey cheese, loads of aubergines, or what you would call in many of your countries, eggplant, probably.

All of these things, just loads of Mediterranean food, basically. And I did post a picture on Instagram. You'll find it in my highlights on my adventures section, where I took a picture of this massive plate of food on my final night in Greece, and it just had all of these amazing things on it.

And olives, I just remember seeing olives. Olives were everywhere. Everywhere you look, there's bloody olives.

But I don't have a problem with that, so I know a lot of people don't like olives. I actually spoke to a lady, a Greek lady, while I was there, and she said, Can you believe it? I hate olives.

And I was like, what? You're Greek and you don't like olives? I mean, it's hard.

It must be hard because olives are everywhere in Greece. Olive trees, that's another thing you see everywhere, and it's another reason why everything is so green, because there's olive trees everywhere. And she said that her dad even grows olives.

He has a massive area where he grows olives, and yeah, she hates them. So, free olives, and she doesn't even like them. But yeah, I just remember that, having my table full of small plates.

Now, you know, I said I posted that picture on Instagram of kind of some Greek meze. This did cause a few issues, and those issues were from Turkish people. So I know that there is a bit of...

I know it's changed now. It's not so much, you know, real physical conflict now. It's more verbal or online conflict between Greeks and Turks.

I know you guys don't really have the best relationship. You know, everybody has their differences. Countries have their problems with each other.

History is history. And I guess it's more between the older generations. I think, from what I've been told, the younger people, just like we, you know, the UK, with their issues they have with other countries and things, we just move on as younger generations.

But of course, conflict or rivalry is always going to be there. And I think I may have offended a few Turkish people by posting a picture of some Greek meze because the Turkish people were saying, Elliott, you need to try the real version of this food in Turkey. Yeah, I understand.

I'm fascinated by both countries. Greece fascinates me a lot because I'm a big lover of the ocean and islands and things. So, you know, I do want to explore more of Greece, but don't worry, Turkish people, I will be coming to Turkey.

I know I have a massive, massive amount of people from Turkey who listen to the podcast, who watch my Youlube videos, who join my course. So, yeah, I'm fully aware of how much the Turkish people love me here, and flove you too. And I don't get many Greeks, so I don't know.

If you're Greek and you're listening to this, please respond as well because I don't really talk to many Greek people. If you are Greek and you have a place in your country to recommend me to go and visit next when I go to Greece, please let me know. Remember, I'm traveling with a two-year-old boy, who is crazy.

But yeah. Smells. What did I smell while I was in Corfu in Greece?

Olives. Just the smell of Greek olives. I can literally picture the smell now.

And also like kind of fermented peppers, that kind of... It's like a really sweet smell, vinegary sweet smell of fermented peppers, fermented things, like things that smell like they've been in jars for a long time. And I like that smell.

Definitely smell the ocean, you know, that kind of seaweed-y, egg-y kind of smell. You smell that a lot. We were sat in a restaurant one night on the beach during a beautiful sunset, and we were having some food.

Usually then I would have had seafood, but again, I was being a good vegetarian, even though I'm supposed to be a vegan. And I was eating vegetarian food, and we were looking over the ocean. We were sat right on the beach and just looking at the beautiful sunset.

But you could smell this really rough ocean smell, you know, that kind of egg-y seaweed smell.

But anyway, the other smell is street juice. Street juice is something I talk about a lot.

I first came across the smell of street juice in Thailand. If you've been to Thailand or you're from Thailand, you know exactly what I mean. You're walking down the streets of Bangkok, and you walk past a drain or a bin, and you get that really sewagey vinegary smell, right?

Do you know I actually kind of like this smell? I know, it's weird, right? I think it's because it reminds me of travels.

We don't really get this smell in the UK, unless you go and smell someone's food waste bin. But when you're walking around the streets of Vietnam, Bangkok, Greece as well, supposedly, apparently, you tend to smell this kind of what I call street juice, and it's just that juicy stuff you see on the street that stinks. But as I said, I kind of like this smell, and I don't have a problem with it.

So yeah, that's the other smell I remember. So the ocean, street juice, and those kind of fermented olives and pepper smells. Sounds, what did I hear?

What did I hear while I was there? Do you know what I've heard? Where I was staying, pretty much nothing.

It was so quiet. And that's something I haven't experienced in a long time. It just being in a hotel that was by the ocean, it was quiet.

The sound of waves, just the sound of quiet. And that's why I went on holiday. I needed a break from just blah, blah, blah, blah, blah noises.

It was just nice to be in a quiet place. And that's something I really, really appreciated. And the other thing that I heard a lot, of course, was the Greek language.

Now, I've never been to Greece, and I don't know much about the Greek language. I've probably only had one or two Greeks join my course. So I'm familiar with the accent issues.

But in terms of how it sounded, it's a beautiful language. It's weird. It's a very weird language, but it's ancient, right?

And that's one of the reasons why I wanted to explore Greece as well, because of the history. As a kid growing up, I was fascinated by the ancient Greeks, their mythology, like, you know, stuff about the gods and Alexander the Great and all of these amazing stories in history. You know, ancient Greece was the birth of our civilization.

It really was the beginning of the modern day. And it's so interesting reading about that. And I felt like while I was there, I was trying to imagine all of these things.

So yeah, like, hearing the accent really made me think, you know, wow, this, you know, I know there's an ancient Greek language as well, so it's different. But, you know, it's just nice hearing that language, a different language for once. You know, from a British person's ears, if I were to compare how hearing a Greek person talk sounds, I would say it sounded kind of like a similar, a weird version of Spanish to me, a Spanish-Italian kind of thing.

You know, if I'm just talking about how it would sound to a British person.

So, yeah, the sounds, the sounds were quiet, and the language was beautiful. The only other thing I would say is the sound of church bells. I remember going into Corfu town, so we were actually staying about 30 minutes away from Corfu town in a fishing village called Benitzes.

You can Google it if you want. It's beautiful. Very quiet, as I said.

But then you find, as you get to Corfu town, it gets a bit busier, right? It's an old town. It's really cool because it's very old, and obviously.

But there was this beautiful religious area, I guess, a church. I don't know what they're called in Greece, what you call them, but maybe it's just a church, right? Or a monastery or something.

But I just remember hearing the church bells just as we were walking past. And it was beautiful.

And we had my son.

My son was walking with me. And then after he heard that, it made him jump. He was like, what was that?

And then he got excited because it was his first time, I think, hearing proper loud church bells.

And then since then, for the rest of the trip, he was just repeatedly saying, daddy, church bells, church bells. And it's because he thought that I could control them.

Somehow he thought I could make them happen. Two year olds, you know, kids, they're just, their minds are so simple and amazing. And I'd love to go back to being a kid again.

Just watching my son, it makes me so happy. So yeah, church bells would be another sound. And by the way, I really recommend Corfu town.

If you go to Corfu, it's really, really beautiful, historical town. So tastes, olives, cheese, garlic, onions, tomatoes, vinegar, you know, all your Mediterranean things, olive oil. Everything was very olive oily, which is great.

So yeah, you know, your average, I'm sure most of you have tried Greek food before. It's very Mediterranean, let's say. Feel, what did I feel while I was there?

Okay, first thing that comes into my head, rocks. Okay, rocks. Why do I say rocks?

Because I remember our beach. So our hotel had a private beach. And when you would get down there and you'd go on to the beach, it wasn't a beach I was used to, a sandy beach.

You know, whenever I go on holiday, I usually go to a sandy beach. But you'll find in Greece, a lot of the beaches are rock. And originally, I wasn't too interested in this because I told you, I'm very specific about my beaches.

I'm a water boy. I want to be by the beach as much as possible and have a nice experience. But, you know, the rocks were okay.

I didn't have a problem with that. It kind of hurts your feet when you walk into the sea, but you just swim in the sea, right? But the rocks were all such beautiful colors, and I remember feeling them and like picking them up with my hands.

And my son, he was so happy. He was picking up the rocks and throwing them into the sea and just having a wonderful time. So, yeah, I remember feeling rocks.

And do you know the other thing I feel? I felt a lot was when we were eating in the town, the feeling of cats rubbing against my legs. Yeah, so when you're eating, I mean, okay, first thing.

Greece, absolutely full of street cats, just cats that walk around. In the UK, we don't really have that. So that was already kind of weird, just seeing cats everywhere, like literally everywhere.

And I don't think they even had owners. They were just street cats. And they're, you know, they're quite smart because they seem to know when your food is arriving to your table.

They all just start to swarm you. They go under the table and rub your legs. You know, they act all cute because they want you to give them food.

I mean, they're hungry little buggers, but yeah, it's sweet. It's sweet because, you know, I'm an animal person. I love animals.

So it was really sweet having, you know, the cats around me while I was eating. I didn't give them my food though, because I do not share food. It's a bit like friends, right?

Joey doesn't share food. I don't share food. I do if we're sharing like plates.

But if it's my plate, it's my plate. No cats having my food. So yeah, memories, memories.

That's the final thing. What's the first memory? If I'm going to remember anything from this trip, what will I remember?

So I'll remember my son picking up rocks and throwing them into the sea. I'll remember Corfu Old Town, which was absolutely beautiful. I'll remember the beautiful food.

And just the very, very friendly people. My son felt like a celebrity, because just like you don't get this in the UK as much. You do, but it depends where you are.

Just people on the street were just happy to see my son. They were like just random Greek women would be waving at him, smiling at him. Like Greek men would be giving him high fives.

Why is everyone so friendly there? I don't know. But OK, let's stop talking about Greece now, because some of you may not be interested in this.

But anyway, I highly recommend 10 out of 10 holiday. So next, I think we should continue the theme, talking about pet peeves when we're travelling. So a pet peeve is something that really annoys you, irritates you.

Well, let me tell you firstly, a pet peeve I have, which isn't related to travel. It's when podcasts are full of advertisements. That's why I don't do any sponsors.

I only sponsor myself. So it's just a quick sponsor message to say, I don't advertise other people's stuff. The only thing I will advertise is my own thing right now at the moment in this podcast.

And that's why I'm just going to say, if you are interested in working on accent reduction, maybe working towards achieving an accent a bit like mine, I do have a course, a pronunciation course, which you can join at etjenglish.com. Feel free to take a look, and it includes WhatsApp feedback. So you can talk to me on WhatsApp.

We can share travel stories, and I can give you feedback on your pronunciation at the same time, however you like to practice. But I will guide you along the way. So that's that done.

Now let's talk about pet peeves when we are traveling. Okay, this is number one, and this is the big one. When your food arrives in a restaurant, the waiter or the waitress is bringing it out, and that absolute annoying person on the other table is staring.

There's someone on the table next to you, and they are staring at your food. They want to see what it looks like, what shape it is. Oh my god, sometimes they turn their heads around so much, they're so desperate to see your food on your table.

And it's like, oh, I just really hate it when people do that. Like, stare at your food. It happened a lot while we were away.

I remember there was this couple sat next to us. They weren't British. I'm not sure where they were from.

On the other table in the pizza restaurant, I told you I had a pizza. And as the lady was bringing out our food, they would, like both of them, the husband and wife, they were just like, their heads were turning, watching the food come on to our table. Am I the only person here?

Does this annoy you as well when people just stare at your food? And then they continue to like watch you eat. And it's like, do you like look at each other?

You know, you're on a date. It's the two of you out for a meal. Look at each other.

Don't look at me eating my bloody food. Oh, man, so annoying. So that's kind of my number one.

I should have done that last really. That's how you're supposed to do it, right? But anyway, my other one.

When you have to get in an elevator with someone. Oh, God, that feeling when you walk up to a lift, an elevator, we call it the lift in the UK. You walk up to the lift, and there's someone already waiting there.

Oh, I hate that man. I hate it so much. And then you have, you know that while you're waiting, you stood there in silence, you're waiting for the lift, and then you both get into the lift, and then you're in silence, and it's like, oh, please finish, please finish.

Just get me out of here. Yeah, I just, I'm such an awkward, antisocial person that if I'm in a lift with someone, I just feel like I want to be sick. It's like the worst situation being forced to be next to someone.

If it's someone I know, it's okay, but it's when it's someone random in a hotel or something.

Number three, you experience this a lot when you're traveling, particularly on aeroplanes and airports, blah, blah, blah. It's people chewing gum.

So I don't like chewing gum myself, and I don't have a problem with people who do. It's fine. It's just like, can you do it quietly, please?

I just, oh, please. I just don't like gum. I don't like gum chewers.

I don't like that noise. It's just no thanks. Next, people in hotels putting their towels down on the sunbeds very, very early.

So British people do this, I know. So do many other people. When you stay in a fairly good hotel, you'll find that in the morning, there's always a race.

Who can get the best sunbed? Who can get their towel down first on the best spot? On the best spot by the pool or on the beach?

It's just annoying. In the hotel I was staying in, I went to reception to book a taxi, and I overheard a couple complaining. A German couple, they were complaining to the reception, and they said, we're really unhappy because in the morning, all the sunbeds have towels on them already because people get up so early, and then they're like, okay, we understand that, that's fine.

But the problem is, they don't stay there. They don't stay by the pool, they spend the whole day at the beach. So they claim their sunbeds with their towels and their bags in the morning by the swimming pool, and then they spend their whole day at the beach.

It's like, why? They want to own this sunbed so that if they decide, bored of the beach now, going to come back to the pool, they have this towel waiting for them on a sunbed at the pool.

Yeah, there's this kind of toxic culture, isn't there, at hotels where people have to claim their sunbed.

I'm not much of a sunbather myself, don't really want to get skin cancer, so I just tend to spend a little bit of time in the sun, but usually when I'm doing stuff, I won't just go and sleep in the sun.

So it doesn't really bother me, but it does annoy me knowing that people are annoying each other, and there's nearly like these kind of battles going on. It's like bloody England v Germany.

Who can get the best sunbed? You know, it literally is like a war. And then when you get the Russians involved as well with this sunbed claiming, it gets even more extreme.

I've even seen people fight, like properly argue with each other. It's crazy. When you're in a restaurant, again, and you've only just received the menu, and then suddenly, they come and take your order.

I haven't even managed to look at the menu yet. I have a two-year-old child who's throwing toys at me and drawing on the table, and I need to stop him. I do not have the time within 30 seconds to tell you what drink I want and what starter I want.

I know that waiters and waitresses, they do a really good job, and they don't want to leave it too long because you might be annoyed if you take too long. They don't want to be too quick, and it is a dilemma, and I understand that. But yeah, just try not to...

It's annoying when it's so quick. It happens a lot in Greece where they're so attentive. They really want you to feel like they're serving you and they're helping you, and they want to make sure everything's okay for your kid.

And are you happy? Do you want to drink? Can I fill up your water again?

Even in the really kind of less posh restaurants, it's like that. And I love that because they really care about you and your hospitality. But it's just like, give me a bit of time to read the menu first before you kind of...

Yeah. So that's another one. And then there's one more I wrote down, which was again in a restaurant.

I guess it's mostly about eating out. When you want to pay the bill, you know, but suddenly, where's all the staff gone? Now, this happened a lot in Thailand.

And I learned from a Thai person why this happens. They want their restaurant to look busy.

And particularly if you're in a tourist destination, they want a white person sat there eating, or a Western person, a European person, whatever, sat there eating.

So it looks like tourists go here. So when it comes to paying the bill, if the restaurant isn't too busy, they'll just ignore you. And this happened a lot in Thailand.

They just ignore you. They forget who you are, and they stop serving you. They stop walking up to your table because they know you finished your food.

They know you're not going to order anything. And they know you want the bill. Yeah, it's annoying.

But this happened a little bit in Greece as well. Again, these are just silly things. Pet peeves aren't supposed to be like me being a knobhead.

It's more just me saying, hey, these are things that kind of annoy me a little bit, but it's not annoying me to the point where I'm going to start complaining to the police. It's just funny little things, and I'm sure you guys have some. I'd love for you to share with me your travel and eating, dining out restaurant pet peeves.

What annoys you when you're on the road traveling and things like that? I'm sure I have more. I just can't think of them right now.

Now, shall we have a little look into the Journal? I have it here. I'm going to turn a page.

I just need to find the page that I needed to get to. Let's talk about my first motorbike tour in Vietnam. So this was definitely the highlight of my trip in 2013 when I was in Vietnam.

We were in a place called Nha Trang, which is basically Russia. Absolutely full of Russian people.

Russian writing everywhere, but we're in Vietnam.

It must just be a popular holiday destination. But anyway, we were walking around, and then this Vietnamese guy shouted at me, and he was like, hey, you want to do a motorbike tour? And I was like, oh, I'm interested.

What is this? Because previously we'd met some people from Finland or something who told us they'd done a motorbike tour earlier on in their trip in Vietnam. And we were like, okay, well, that sounds good.

Well, maybe we'll do the same thing. So then we came up to this guy and we spoke to him, and his name was Eddie. He called himself Eddie Murphy.

That wasn't his name, but he called himself Eddie Murphy. That was his English name. Those of you who don't know, Eddie Murphy is an actor known for being Dr. Doolittle.

But also I think he might be known for something like sexual assault or something, something like that. I can't remember what he did, but yeah, I think he's been cancelled now. Anyway, motorbike tour.

So we spoke to this guy and then we said, okay, well, why not? And then what happened was we did, he gave us like a trial and we did a day trip on the back of the motorbikes around Nhi Trang.

And then he said, hey, so did you like this?

If so, do you want to book a trip with us? So we did. And I think we booked like a three or five day motorbike tour.

And we used it as an alternative way to travel around Vietnam. So originally, our plan was to get buses and trains, like overnight sleeper trains from city to city. But now, essentially, we had our own tour guide who was going to drive us to all these different places.

And we'd see things, taste things, eat together, drink together. We basically became a family traveling together, but he was a local, so he could talk to the locals in Vietnamese and translate for us. It was the best decision I ever made.

And let's find out why. Day 69 Motorbike tour, Nha Trang to ?à L?t. And I put in quotation marks next to this.

M?, hai, bà, y?. Which means, I think it's one, two, three. One, two, three, cheers.

Which is what they do in Vietnam. When they say cheers, they either say y?, which means cheers, or they do one, two, three. M?, hai, bà, y?.

So I remember that very well, and I remember shouting that. Like, you literally shout it in the restaurant. Everybody turns around and can see you cheersing.

It's lovely. It's a wonderful thing. And the other thing I wrote in quotation marks was, why fucking not?

And that's because Eddie always used to say that. So our tour guide, Eddie, I was riding on his motorbike, and my wife, girlfriend at the time, was riding on his... it was a family member, cousin or something, or nephew's motorbike.

So there was two of them, two of us. And Eddie, the main guy, my motorbike driver, he always used to say, why fucking not? You know, like anything that we did, like, should we do this?

And he would be like, why fucking not? Yeah, you know, why not? But with a fucking in that.

Anyway, woke up bright and early to pack our bags before Eddie and Vin, so Vin was the other guy, pulled up on their bikes to pick us up outside of the hostel. It was very nice to be in their company again when they arrived. We stopped off in so many places on the way to our first hotel.

A fishing village where we learned about fishing in Vietnam and the history of it. War zones.

Ethnic minority house where we saw kids who had no money and no education, but they really just enjoyed living sustainably.

A farm where we picked and ate sugar cane straight from the ground. Lots of coffee shops as Eddie couldn't go one hour without having a coffee. Great food for lunch.

We had Com Ga, which means chicken rice. So Com means rice and Ga means chicken. And so many landscape areas for amazing photos.

Eddie wants us to have the best Vietnam experience and have all the stories, photos, food, everything. It almost gets tiring having to stop for photographs every two minutes on the motorbikes when we just want to keep going and enjoy the breeze or as Eddie called it, natural air con from driving fast on the motorbike. However, I'm sure we will really appreciate these photographs in the future.

At one point, it rained pretty heavily and was very, very windy, which felt a bit weird on the motorbike wobbling side to side. And this was also at the top of a mountain, so I was quite scared we were going to drive off and die. Oh my God, quite scary when you're going so fast on a bike.

And he is a crazy driver, but I still, for some reason, felt very safe with Eddie. After lying in a hammock for a little while, eating fresh corn, we reached our area we were staying in, and we saw a massive war monument, which was for everyone to remember the war in Vietnam. Eddie then decided to pull out a cigarette and smoke whilst he was filling up petrol in his bike.

Now, I don't know, I mean, I even saw this in Greece. I saw someone just smoking in a petrol station. Okay, in the UK, that's weird, because fire and petrol are just kind of a bit dangerous, right?

But anyway, I guess it's normal in some places. In Vietnam, they all smoked. And I was kind of scared then.

I remember taking a lot of steps back just in case the whole station blew up. So yeah, we washed all of the mud off of ourselves, and we relaxed for a bit. In our new hostel, we were staying in for one night, and then we met up with the guys again for proper Vietnamese food.

We were in the restaurant for three hours with our tour guides, and a load of locals ended up joining our table. We all were eating and eating and eating and drinking and drinking and drinking. We had some amazing laughs, and Eddie was translating for us the whole time.

So it was like we were having conversations with locals. We definitely would not have had this experience if we were just traveling on our own without a local, and are really appreciative of Eddie and Vin. For some reason, the Vietnamese have a big dislike for Russians.

I'm not sure why, but maybe I'll find out later on. I don't know. I don't know why, but for some reason they were always complaining about...

I think it's because Nha Trang was so full of Russian people, and I think they felt like their city was turning into Russia. And I don't think they hated Russian people, so to speak, but I think it was more... If you've constantly got tourists in your city, then because British people, I know that we really piss off the Spanish people, because all of our drunk teenagers go over to Magaluf and get absolutely smashed and throw up on the streets and cause trouble.

And so I completely understand. It's a similar thing.

So, Eddie ordered a massive meal of shrimps and beef for a barbecue, which was placed next to us. So we were self-cooking our food at our table. There was lots of bread to go with our eel hot pot.

Oh God, I forgot about this. Yeah, we had an eel hot pot. Now, eel, not really something I'm familiar with eating.

I don't know if you've had eel before, but it's not for me. And I said, well, there's a first time for everything, hey? I ate the eel.

It was extremely slimy, but it was okay, I guess. We really enjoyed our night and loved spending it with the two of them. I'm looking forward to doing even more cool stuff tomorrow.

I wasn't really the best writer back then. I mean, I think I had a lot of learning to do as a writer.

But, you know, it's the way it is.

So this has brought back lots of memories for me already. I remember that excitement being young, and I just want to say now a kind of disclaimer to anyone who is young. If you are 18, 19, 20, all the way up to, say, 25, and you haven't quite reached that stage in your life where you're stable, you have a job, you're sorted, right?

Like I am now, I have a job, I have a family, my life is stable. There's a little stage before that from, like, let's say 17 to 25. Just explore, please.

Like, it's the best thing I ever did. And I get emotional just talking about this, reading pages from this journal. I have so many stories which are just built into, like, four months.

I visited so many cities, so many countries, so many places. And all I did was save a bit of money.

You know, I had a part-time job while I was studying.

I saved some money. And then I was like, I'm not going to go out drinking with my friends, I'm not going to go out partying because this money I'm saving right now, is for something that will last forever in my memory, rather than a drunken night out in a nightclub with my friends. This is a trip that I will always remember.

And it was. It was so great that I had to do it again a few years later, you know? And it's...

That is like... Seriously, anyone who's listening, who's in that age group, it's so important that you go out and explore the world. I know it's hard, like, what country are you from?

You may not be able to save as much money as I could. You may not have as good a minimum wage, minimum pay. It might be harder to get a job now.

Everything is different now. The cost of living is insane. We are all going through a very difficult period in our lives right now.

But don't let this shit that's going on in the world stop you from living a normal life. And a normal life to me is a life where you are allowed to say, I want to go traveling. Even if it's just for one month, you can do so much in one month.

Just please make it something you do, at least at some point in your life. For me now, I have a two-year-old son. I may have another child soon.

I don't know. Who knows? But we would like to have two.

And I know that my personal desires of traveling the world are on hold for a while. I can't go on six-month travel trips. I can't go and live in Canada for a year if I want.

I can't go to Japan for a few months, which is something I really want to do. And it's because I have a young son, and he will be going to school soon. And it's not a way to live just living on the road, traveling.

I can't home school my son. I have to work. So I know my life is on hold now, and I'm now looking forward to and saving for the amazing things that I'm going to do when I'm a bit older.

You just have to hope that your health stays strong, and you stay well, and you stay happy, and you don't become a vegetable, and that you're able to do these things. But I know that there is this little phase in life where you can take a little break. You can take a year, a gap year.

You can do these little things between the ages of 18 and 25. And I just really encourage you to don't just waste it all by putting alcohol down you or by partying. Maybe that's your thing, you know?

But try to travel, whether it's coming to Europe, whether it's spending a year in the UK.

Whatever it is that you decide to do, I promise you won't regret it and you'll have memories forever. And one thing which I don't think people do much anymore, that I strongly, strongly encourage you do, is write a journal, you know?

I would not be able to tell these stories in the same way. I could read just a few bits of this, and it would open up so many more memories that I didn't even write down, and then I can expand and I can share more and more about this one day I had in Vietnam or Cambodia or wherever.

And I think it's something you should do wherever you go.

Even if you go on a week-long holiday, if you're doing lots of exploring and lots of culture discovery and things, take a journal. I mean, journaling is really good for you anyway. It's good for your mind, it's good for your health, it's good for your mental health to write a journal.

But also you'll be able to look back on these things, and you'll be able to read about them and share them with other people. Yeah. So thank you very much for listening today.

Remember, you can send me emails to journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com. If you would like me to share maybe a travel story, or if you want to sell everybody, your country, we're still doing that. If there's a country or city that you need to sell to everybody so that they can come and visit, please send an email in.

And any questions, any queries, anything, journeyswithelliotts.gmail.com. This episode was dedicated to my grandfather, who unfortunately passed away earlier on this year. I'm not a religious man, but he was, so God rest his soul and may he rest in peace.

And for those of you who have lost anyone over the last two years since I've recorded, I'm sorry.

So, I will speak to you all soon. This will not be the last of me.

And remember, for pronunciation content, go to YouTube, ET] English, or my course, etjenglish.com. I'm going to piss off now. See you later.

Bye.