



ESL Podcast 522 – Developing a Healthy Mind

GLOSSARY

to get the most out of life – to enjoy life as much as possible; to experience the act of living with maximum enjoyment and success

* Why are we spending so much time at the office? If we quit and travel the world, we'd get the most out of life.

to live life to its fullest – to enjoy life as much as possible; to experience the act of living with maximum enjoyment and success

* Jeremiah tries to live life to its fullest, never saying "no" to a new opportunity.

fad – something that becomes popular very quickly and remains very popular for a short period of time, but then becomes unpopular and almost disappears

* When I was a kid, having pet rocks was a big fad.

lifestyle – a way of living; the way that one lives one's life, including how one spends one's time and what one values

* Zoran decided to change his lifestyle. He quit his high-paying job as a corporate lawyer and instead began working with poor children in faraway countries.

fulfilling – satisfying; giving one a feeling of completion, happiness, and pleasure; meeting one's needs

* It must be very fulfilling to work as a nurse and spend all day helping sick people feel better.

to go through a phase – to experience a certain period in one's life when one is very interested in a particular thing

* Most little boys go through a phase when they love learning about dinosaurs.

to dwell on – to spend a lot of time thinking about something, especially if it makes one sad or angry

* Why do you always want to dwell on the things that you did poorly? Wouldn't it be better to focus on your successes?

to live in the moment – to focus on what one is doing right now, enjoying the present and not worrying about the past or future

* It's good to plan for the future, but sometimes it's equally important to live in the moment and enjoy what you have.



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negativity – one’s tendency to see the bad or negative side of things and believe the worst about things, or believe that bad things will happen; pessimism

* I think it’s difficult to be around Lubijana, because her negativity is very depressing. No matter what happens, she thinks it’s a bad thing.

to appreciate – to recognize and enjoy the goodness in something; to value something; to realize the goodness and importance of something

* I really appreciate your willingness to help me move the piano. That’s so nice of you!

to practice – to follow a group of rules or guidelines that tell one how to live one’s life

* I know that Lorie’s family is Muslim, but is she a practicing Muslim?

mindfulness – an awareness of what one is doing and what is happening around oneself; the act of paying attention and being aware of the moment

* This article says that people who eat with mindfulness, instead of eating in front of the TV, eat less food and have fewer problems with obesity.

mantra – a phrase that one repeats many times, usually quietly, to control one’s thoughts, have focus, and become calmer

* When things aren’t going well, Al repeats a mantra: “Tomorrow is a new day.”

to calm – to give someone a feeling of peace and relaxation, especially after one has been very angry, worried or stressed out

* They tried to calm their baby by giving her a bath and playing quiet music.

meditation – the practice of controlling one’s thoughts to try not to think about anything and become very calm and relaxed

* Sabrina tries to find time for five minutes of meditation each morning, before she has to start thinking about her job and kids.

judgmental – often sharing one’s opinion about whether other things, and especially other people’s actions, are good or bad; having strong, critical opinions about people and things

* Ms. Fritz is so judgmental! Wherever we go, she spends the whole time criticizing what other people are wearing.

close-mindedness – not wanting to listen to or accept other people’s opinions or ideas, because one wants to keep one’s own beliefs

* The way he refuses to listen to other people talk about their religion is a good examples of his close-mindedness.



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to buy – to accept, believe, or adopt; to listen to what another person says and decide that it is a good idea, or to begin doing what another person is doing

* I don't think you'll get anyone to buy your ideas about time travel.

hocus pocus – something that is impossible or false; a set of ideas or beliefs that one thinks are silly or nonsense

* He says he can teach us how to make \$10,000 a day, but it's just hocus pocus.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who would you expect to have the most fulfilling life?

- a) Someone who lives life to the fullest.
- b) Someone who dwells on the past.
- c) Someone who has a judgmental attitude.

2. What does Luke mean when he says, "Nothing can get me to buy your latest hocus pocus"?

- a) He doesn't have enough money for what Lorelai is selling.
 - b) He doesn't believe in the things Lorelai is talking about.
 - c) He doesn't want to change his mantra.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to dwell on

The phrase "to dwell on," in this podcast, means to spend a lot of time thinking about something, especially if it makes one sad or angry: "Yes, your business failed, but stop dwelling on it. Try to think about the future and create a new business instead." The phrase "to dwell on" can also mean to talk about something unpleasant for a long time: "We've been dwelling on this problem for hours. Let's talk about something else for a change." The verb "to dwell" also means to live somewhere: "Many years ago, humans dwelled in caves, but now most of them live in homes and apartments." A "dwelling" is a place to live: "The city is trying to decide whether it should build new dwellings or a park over there."

to practice

In this podcast, the verb "to practice" means to follow a group of rules or guidelines that tell one how to live one's life: "They practice charity by giving 10% of their income to nonprofit organizations." The verb "to practice" often means to



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learn how to do something better by doing it many times: “How many hours per day do you practice playing the piano?” The phrase “practice makes perfect” means that you have to do something many times before you can do it well: “Her cakes keep burning in the oven, but practice makes perfect.” Finally, the phrase “to practice what you preach” means to do the things you tell other people to do: “I’d be more likely to follow his advice if he practiced what he preached.”

CULTURE NOTE

The New Age “movement” (a group of people who believe the same things and try to get other people to share their beliefs and way of living) is a type of “spirituality” (interest in one’s purpose in life and one’s connection to a god or a creator). The New Age movement “draws from” (takes pieces from) many different religions, “atheism” (the belief that there is no god), “cosmology” (the study of how the universe was created), “environmentalism” (the belief that people should take better care of the natural world), and “astrology” (the belief that the position of stars and planets affect people’s personality and actions).

The New Age movement became popular in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. It is very “individualistic,” meaning that each person is encouraged to have his or her own beliefs. “Adherers” (people who follow) of the movement generally believe that there is a greater power, but they might believe that it is in nature, or that it is “abstract” (something that cannot be seen or easily understood) and not a human-like god.

The New Age movement believes that the human mind has a lot of “untapped” (not yet used) power, and that the power can be “enhanced” (improved and increased) by being “in tune with” (connected to and aware of) the natural world. Many New Age followers believe in the power of the “healing touch” (the ability to make a sick person better by touching him or her) and “healing crystals” (special rocks that can make people feel better).

The New Age movement also encourages people to have a “sustainable lifestyle” where they try not to hurt the planet, maybe by buying fewer things and driving less. Many of them are “vegetarians” (people who don’t eat meat) who eat only “organic” (grown without chemicals) food.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 522: Developing a Healthy Mind.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 522. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there immediately to download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster. Remember, the Learning Guide membership is one of the ways you can support these ESL Podcast audio files, so be sure to go to our website and take a look.

This episode is called "Developing a Healthy Mind." It's a conversation between Luke and Lorelai, giving their views on what it means to have a healthy mind. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Lorelai: I just finished reading a book about how to get the most out of life. Starting today, I'm going to live life to its fullest.

Luke: Oh no, not another one of your fads. Weren't you eating only blue- and red-colored foods a couple of months ago?

Lorelai: This is not a fad! I'm changing my lifestyle so I'll be able to live a happier and more fulfilling life.

Luke: And didn't you go through a phase where you spoke only to animals?

Lorelai: I'm not listening to you, and I'm not dwelling on the past. I'm living in the moment and enjoying everything around me. I'm ignoring your negativity and concentrating on appreciating the moment.

Luke: What are you doing now?

Lorelai: I'm practicing mindfulness. I'm repeating my mantra and calming my mind. You should try meditation. It may help you with your problems.

Luke: What problems?



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Lorelai: We could start with your judgmental attitude and your close-mindedness. How's that?

Luke: Forget it! Nothing can get me to buy your latest hocus pocus!

[end of dialogue]

This episode is called “Developing a Healthy Mind.” “Healthy” is the opposite of “sickly” or “ill.” We usually use this term to talk about your physical body. But here, it's being used a little differently, it's being used to talk about your mind, the way you think and whether that is healthy or not – the way you think, perhaps. People have different ideas about this, of course.

Lorelai begins our conversation by saying that she just finished reading a book about how to get the most out of life. The expression “to get the most out of life” means to enjoy life as much as possible, to experience life in its fullness – in its completeness. Usually people talk about this when they are referring to success or enjoying life somehow. So, Lorelai's reading a book which is very common at least in the United States, what we call “self-help” books, books that people read to try to make them happier or better or healthier. Lorelai says that she's going to live, starting today, life to its fullest. “To live life to the fullest” means something similar to “getting the most out of life,” to enjoy life as much as possible.

Luke says, “Oh no, not another one of your fads.” A “fad” (fad) is something that becomes popular very quickly and remains popular for a short period of time, and then everybody forgets about it. This happens with songs, this happens with television shows, it happens with dances. In particular, I remember a few years ago there was a dance fad called the Macarena, and it had these moves that you would...oh well, forget it. It was a fad, and everyone's forgotten it already. That's what a fad is, something you forget that is very popular but then is no longer popular. In the 1970s a fad was pet rocks. People sold these rocks like they were pets; it was amazing!

So anyway, getting back to our story Luke says, “Weren't you eating only blue- and red-colored foods a couple of months ago?” Obviously Lorelai likes to try new and different, perhaps strange things, like eating food that is blue and red. Lorelai says that this is not a fad. “I'm changing my lifestyle so I'll be able to live a happier and more fulfilling life.” Your “lifestyle” is the way that you live, the way you spend your time for example. “Fulfilling” means satisfying, giving you a sense of happiness and completion. So, a fulfilling life would be a life that was satisfying, that was happy, that was complete.



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Luke says, “And didn’t you go through a phase where you only spoke to animals?” Luke is reminding Lorelai of all of the somewhat crazy fads that she was part of in the past. He says, “didn’t you go through a phase?” “To go through a phase” (phase) means to experience a certain period in your life when you become very interested in a certain thing; it’s sort of like a fad, but it’s something that you personally get involved in. It could be for months or even years. The expression is often used to talk about people who are going through some sort of change in their life that perhaps isn’t necessarily positive or is experiencing some sort of difficulty. We might talk about a teenager going through a phase. They’re going through a part of their life where they’re angry at everyone or they don’t like to talk to their parents. This is usually a somewhat temporary situation; it doesn’t go on forever, we hope. That would be going through a phase.

Lorelai says, “I’m not listening to you, and I’m not dwelling on the past.” “To dwell (dwell) on (something)” means to spend a lot of time thinking about something, especially something that makes you sad or makes you angry. People may say, “Don’t dwell on it” if something bad happens to you – don’t keep thinking about it over and over again. “Dwell” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Lorelai says, “I’m living in the moment and enjoying everything around me.” This is a popular self-help idea: to live in the moment – to focus on what you are doing right now; don’t worry about the past, don’t worry about the future. Live in the moment – live in the now. Lorelai says, “I’m ignoring your negativity and concentrating on appreciating the moment.” “Negativity” is when someone always sees the bad side of things, one only thinks about the negative things. The noun is “negativity.” “To appreciate” means to recognize the goodness in something, to value something. So, Lorelai says she’s going to ignore Luke’s negativity and concentrate on appreciating the moment – appreciating what’s happening right now.

Luke says, “What are you doing now?” Lorelai says, “I’m practicing mindfulness.” “To practice” means to follow some rules or guidelines about how to live your life, in this case. But “practice” has a couple of different meanings, so take a look at that Learning Guide, once again, for some more explanations. Lorelai is practicing mindfulness. “Mindfulness” is a notion – an idea that you are aware of what is going on around you; you are paying attention to what you are doing. There’s an old expression: “to be mindful of (something)” means to be paying attention, to be concentrating on, to know what was going on. More recently, people have talked about mindfulness as being a way that you are always aware



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of what is around you, and this is supposed to somehow help you be calmer, help you appreciate life.

Lorelai goes on to say that she's repeating her mantra and calming her mind. She says to Luke, "You should try meditation. It may help you with your problems." So, Lorelai is doing "meditation," which is the practice in many different traditions, both religious and nonreligious, of focusing on something, controlling your thoughts. In some types of meditation, it's focusing only on one thing. In other types of meditation it could be trying to focus on nothing – emptying your mind, if you will. Those are kinds of meditation. One way of meditating in some traditions is to use what's called a "mantra" (mantra). This is a word or a phrase that you repeat many times to yourself quietly as a part of concentrating – focusing on a certain thing, and not having other thoughts. The idea is that it makes you calmer physically – physiologically. "To calm your mind" means to give you a sense of relaxation, of peace.

Lorelai says that Luke should try meditation to help him with his problems. Luke says, "What problems?" Lorelai says, "We could start with your judgmental attitude and your close-mindedness." "We could start" means well, there are many things that we could talk about, but here's one. "We could start with your judgmental attitude." To be "judgmental" means to always be giving someone your opinion, whether you like something or don't like something. Usually, it's a negative way of talking about someone. If you say someone is judgmental, that's a criticism. You're saying they're always telling people things they don't like – they're always judging other people, criticizing other people. So, you're criticizing them, which I guess would make you judgmental, I'm not sure. "Close-mindedness" means not willing to listen to other people's opinions or ideas, only having your own ideas and not even paying attention to what other people are saying, not being willing to listen to other people. Lorelai is saying that Luke is judgmental and close-minded.

Luke says, "Forget it! Nothing can get me to buy your latest hocus pocus!" When Luke uses the expression "to buy," he doesn't mean give money to someone in order to get something back. He means to believe or accept something. Someone may say to you, "I'm not buying it." He says that he didn't go to work today, but I'm not buying it." That means "I don't believe it; I don't accept it." Well Luke doesn't believe the ideas that Lorelai has about meditation and mantras and mindfulness; he says "I'm not going to buy your latest hocus pocus!" "Hocus pocus" is something that, in this case, is impossible or false. It's a set of ideas that you think are silly – that you think are nonsense, and that's what Luke thinks about Lorelai's ideas.



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Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Lorelai: I just finished reading a book about how to get the most out of life. Starting today, I'm going to live life to its fullest.

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Luke: What problems?

Lorelai: We could start with your judgmental attitude and your close-mindedness. How's that?

Luke: Forget it! Nothing can get me to buy your latest hocus pocus!

[end of dialogue]

We appreciate the great job that our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, did on today's episode.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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