Hey everyone.

Today I wanted to share something more personal and even vulnerable 9about my journey as a speaker of English as a second language, as

well as a language entrepreneur or a content creator here on YouTube.

And the reason why I wanted to do this is because I wanted to show that to be able

to get to a place where you are proud of yourself or that you are comfortable, it

means that you probably had to overcome a lot of obstacles and a lot of challenges.

And I wanted to share some of my biggest obstacles and challenges and

the things that were so freaking hard for me to show you that if this is what

you were experiencing, then it just means that you are on the right track.

And when I was learning English and working on improving my English and then

building my business, I had really no one to tell me the things that I'm gonna

share with you today, and I wish I had.

Because then probably it would take me a lot faster to get to where I wanted to be.

But also I would have more certainty about my journey instead of just

feeling constantly fearful or unclear about what's possible for me or

what my future might look like.

So, this is for you if you are a speaker of English as a second language and you're

struggling with feeling like yourself in English, and you don't know if the work

that you're doing is actually paying off.

And it's also for you if you are a teacher or a content creator or an entrepreneur,

or you're thinking about starting your own business and you're thinking to yourself,

Okay, like this is going to be so hard.

So I wanna share a little bit about my experience so that

maybe it could help you as well.

So yes, I'm going to connect my English journey with my business journey

because they are so related, they are so incredibly related, and you will see how.

And I just think that a language challenge is really like any other

challenge that you face in your life.

And if you've already faced other challenges in your life and you were able

to overcome them, then know that this is possible for you in English as well, cuz

you already know how to figure things out.

So, when I think about the hardest things I had to overcome as an English

learner, I would say that the first thing is the imposter syndrome.

The imposter syndrome is a psychological pattern that a lot of people suffer from.

And it's basically this feeling that you're not good enough, this feeling

that no matter what you're doing, it's really hard for you to celebrate

your accomplishments, you're not even aware of your accomplishments.

And when people compliment you, for example, or they have certain thoughts

about you that are positive, maybe you're thinking to yourself, "Oh, it's only a

matter of time until they discover that I'm a fraud, until they find out that

it's not really true, that I'm not as successful as they think that I am."

So, I feel that the imposter syndrome has been a big part of my

journey in every step of the way.

So, for example, going back to when I had just moved to the US

and I was looking for a job as a server or as a bartender, and I was really afraid of people looking at me, hearing me, and not even considering me for the job, not because I...

my English was not good enough, it was okay, like I could communicate.

But I was afraid that because I didn't sound American and because I didn't have

the cultural nuances and I didn't get a lot of the idioms and the expressions,

people would just not wanna work with me, they would think that I'm not fit

for the part because my communication abilities were limited at the time.

That was when I was 21 or something.

And I remember going into different places looking for a job, and I

was terrified of people asking me too many questions, right?

I practiced what to say, but then I was afraid that people would start

a longer conversation with me.

And that was pretty intimidating, and luckily I did not let that stop me,

but I definitely remember how scary that was to ask for a job when English was not my first language in the US.

Luckily, I ended up working at a Haitian bar called Cafe Creole

in the village in New York City.

And the owners were immigrants and most of the customers were international

people from all around the world.

And I really felt at home and I never felt judged, luckily.

So that gave me a really good experience of being welcomed just the way I was.

I did name myself Julia at the beginning.

I called myself Julia because I didn't want people to think that I'm a foreigner.

I mean, I did have a pretty noticeable non-standard accent, but yeah.

So, that was the first experience where I felt the imposter syndrome.

I also felt it when I was in acting school, again, in New York City.

And we had this one class, an improv class.

Now, improv is hard for me in any language, in my first language as

well, and definitely in English.

And all of my students, except for one person, were native speakers of English.

And for them, I felt that it was so easy to come up with the

right sentence, the right word.

You have to be really quick.

Something happens and you need to respond right away.

And I really remember in one of the lessons, I went to the bathroom cuz I was

so stressed out, it was so scary to me.

And I started crying because I felt so helpless.

I felt that I just couldn't get the language quickly enough into my head, out of my mouth, and everyone was doing so well.

And I was like, it's not fair.

I'm the only non-native speaker here.

Or almost only, the other guy was so fluent that I always compared myself to him and I said, Oh, you know, he, it's so much easier for him.

So I kept comparing myself to them thinking how easy it is for them and

how they don't have to deal with the things that I have to deal, but I am

expected to perform exactly the same.

So that was also a moment where I was like, I can't do this, can't.

It's not a fair game.

How will I ever be able to feel equal to those people, to my peers?

So yeah, definitely felt like an imposter.

And also when I started my YouTube channel, and I was recording videos and I...

I don't think I was that great.

You can totally go back to the first videos that I created and see them.

But I remember watching other YouTubers who taught pronunciation and English, and some of them have millions and millions and millions of subscribers, and they're excellent teachers.

But they were just starting out back then as well.

And I was looking at them and I said to myself, They're so good and they're

native speakers, and who am I to even dare to do the same thing as they do?

Because I'm not a native speaker.

What am I thinking?

And I kept comparing myself to them and they were doing a lot better on YouTube than me.

And I just felt like a fraud.

And I really did, I really did.

And I think that's also what held me back from being more active and persistent with my work.

Cuz back then I would only publish videos every now and then, I wasn't that consistent.

So as you can see, this has been a big part of my journey throughout all those

years, as an English learner and as an English teacher and content creator.

I think that the secret to beating the imposter syndrome is really to keep on doing a lot of things so that eventually you will prove to yourself that it is possible for you to succeed.

Because where I am today, you know, it's possible just because I did not listen to those voices.

And I was affected by it, but I kept going anyway.

And I think that is the most important thing, like to recognize that it's happening.

It will slow you down.

I hope it won't for you because you won't let it, but it definitely slowed me down.

But eventually, like the fact that I kept going, was the best remedy for the imposter syndrome.

Cuz now I can look back and say, Okay, yes, it was hard, yes, I felt like a fraud, but also I still did it.

And I was able to overcome this with time.

So now I still feel like an imposter every now and then, or that I'm not good enough, but I really don't let that stop me or even bring me down.

Well, sometimes, sometimes it does.

There are moments that still till this day I'm like, you know, feeling... feeling a little down.

But there, there is so much more involved right now that I definitely don't let that stop me.

Okay, I'm gonna take a sip, and talk about the next thing.

I actually have notes.

What is the next thing?

The next thing is I was procrastinating.

Well, I definitely think that it had to do with the fear of not being good enough.

But as a result, what happened is that I, I just did not create the right circumstances for me to succeed.

So in English, I was practicing, but not consistently in school.

And I didn't have the right system throughout the first year of my studies.

And then by the end of it, I felt, Okay, I really need to step up.

There is a real challenge here that I struggle with overcoming.

Especially when it comes to pronunciation, which is a small part of, you know, communicating in English cuz there's also intonation, rhythm and stress, and I did not learn that at that time.

But I think like, everything was really scattered and messy.

I didn't have a really clear plan, I really didn't have a strategy.

I was doing whatever was available to me.

And back then when I was studying, luckily, I don't know if it's luckily, but not luckily, like the only source of information was the library and the internet, but I didn't even have a computer.

So, I used to go to the public library in New York to search for information, or I would just go and read real books when I had to....

I'm, yeah, I'm that old.

So, so I just did whatever, you know, whatever I studied in school.

And then when I needed to learn on my own, that's when I started learning more from YouTube.

That was already when I moved back home, outside of the US.

And it was really all over the place.

And in a way it's good, but it just took me so much longer that it could have been had I had a really clear strategy.

So, I think this is, this is the...

the secret here – to have a clear strategy.

And that was not something that I had, and I constantly felt overwhelmed.

I constantly felt like, Ugh, this is too hard.

And this is why I kept procrastinating and not doing the work, and not building habits, and not creating consistency in my practice.

But that's the same thing with my business, because everything felt a little like overwhelming.

And I didn't have a plan, I didn't have consistency.

So that also is the reason why things took me a lot longer to get started than, you know, had I had a better strategy and plan.

But, but I think that for you guys, especially if you're here because of the language, not having clarity around what I needed to do was one of the hardest things that I had to overcome cuz it wasted a lot of expensive time, valuable time as well.

And when time passes, and you don't see great results, it's defeating, right?

It's really frustrating.

It really makes you feel like, what's the point?

Will I ever see a change?

And this is why now when I teach, I am so focused on clarity and priorities and strategy.

Because I know, I know how important that is for my students.

And I know that had I had that, my life would've been a lot easier, a lot easier.

Okay.

So the next thing was, and this is interesting, is finding my own voice and feeling authentic.

So again, going back to my high...

not high school - acting school days when I was 22 or 23, I was in an acting school in New York City, like I told you many times.

And when I was working on my pronunciation, it was still something foreign to me, right, it wasn't my organic pronunciation like it is now.

Now I've made it my own, but back then it was not my own.

And I remember I had this friend in class, her name was Yana.

She was amazing.

She was just like perfect.

She was so beautiful, she was funny, she was sarcastic.

She was a good friend, she was so kind and she was so talented and she had the most beautiful voice ever.

And I remember always wanting to be a little bit like her, especially how she sounded.

And she was a good friend of mine.

We would actually, you know, she would help me with my pronunciation.

I remember we sat down at the lobby and with a cassette tape... video recorder?

audio recorder?

tape recorder?

Tape recorder.

And she would record lines from a certain scene and I would repeat them.

So we were doing shadowing exercises before anyone decided to coin them as shadowing exercises.

And I really wanted to sound like her.

And I didn't.

And I think the attempt at trying to sound like someone who is not me diminished my own voice or the permission I gave myself to be authentic, to be myself even with mistakes.

And I think it has a psychological effect on me on, Am I even allowed to sound like myself in English?

What's unique about our voices is that they're original and they are ours.

No one has the same voice.

No one has the same way of pronouncing things like the other.

And that is the beauty of things.

There is no need to sound like other people all the time because then it's gonna be so boring.

And I think that the need to sound like her or like other people or like other actors that I had known really limited me for years.

And I just think that when you give yourself the freedom to be yourself and sound like yourself and not that obsession about sounding like a native or sounding like other people, then you will discover a lot more freedom with your voice and what you're actually capable of.

And most importantly, you'll feel like yourself, not like a fake version of yourself.

Because you know, you know what it feels like when you speak like yourself and like when you're speaking a second language, trying to sound like someone else.

And I think that happened to me as well when I was creating content, cuz

I tried to sound like all these other teachers on YouTube instead of like,

Okay, Hadar, this is you, this is your way of speaking, just bring it to the camera, bring it to the world, and be okay with criticism if there is.

And there was a point – I talked about it a lot, I can link to some of the videos below – but there was a point where I made that shift and everything started becoming a lot easier for me.

But again, it took me so long to figure it out, and this is why the content that I create these days is really all about helping you understand that you don't need to sound like a native.

Making mistakes is not a big deal.

The most important thing is that you express yourself and that you feel authentic and like yourself when communicating in a second language.

Now, I'm so happy that I was able to overcome these challenges because today I'm at a place in my life where I'm so grateful for what I do and having discovered English for myself as a form of expression, but also as a way to help people literally change their lives cuz that's what we do.

And I think that that gift of allowing people to be seen and heard and to teach them how to use their voice and how to use their English to fully express themselves is, is such a privilege, really.

And my team and I are all on board with this mission of changing lives through English.

Really, this is our, this is our mission.

Because English has allowed me to create for myself the life that I want and that I love.

Because in addition to helping people from all around the world, whether they're

my followers on YouTube or other social media platforms, inside the InFluency

community, or my students inside my programs – I see and I hear about the

change that they're going through, about feeling more confident, about learning

how to use their voice, about having more clarity, enjoying practicing English.

That is so important to me.

In addition to that, I'm able to provide work, which is again, such a huge privilege to my team members and coaches.

I have created for myself financial freedom.

You know, I used to not be able to pay rent when I was in school.

I would think twice before buying an apple in New York, really.

I wasn't able to afford my tuition for the second year.

You know, my parents are amazing and they're helping me, but I never wanted to take too much from them.

So I said to myself that if I'm choosing to live abroad and to do this, I need to be able to learn how to support myself.

And everything that I have achieved today is simply because of the hard work that I've put in, but also because of what English has allowed me to do, which is to break barriers, to break the glass ceiling of just working in my first language locally.

So, I have a global business and I can reach people from all around the world.

And that has created financial freedom for me and my family so we don't worry about things that I used to worry five years ago.

And in fact, this is a big deal for me.

We just bought our new home, and it's the apartment that we used to live in.

And we never thought that we would be able to buy a house, a home, an apartment.

And my landlord called me one day and she said not too long ago and she said, "We're selling the apartment".

And the first thing I was like, Oh my God, I'm gonna have to move.

And we love the apartment.

My sister lives right downstairs from me.

And I was like, there is no way that we're gonna, we're gonna move.

And it's so hard to find apartments in my neighborhood.

And then we said we're gonna try and buy the apartment.

Now, this would not have been possible a few years ago, but because of English

and because of the business that I have today we were able to do what it takes and to take a big loan, but we were able to do it and to buy my apartment.

And that has been like an impossible dream of mine.

So, I'm telling you that because if you have something that you want to achieve, not only that all the things that I talked to you about are things that you are probably going to experience and you'll need to overcome.

I wanna ask you to not let that stop you.

Because it's a natural process of any achievement that you want to have.

All right, that's it.

I hope this was somewhat helpful, a little long, I know.

But I felt like I needed to share with you this personal experience of mine to see if it changes your mind or inspires you to keep going on your journey and to keep pursuing your goals.

If you want to learn with me more about how to find the right strategy and how to overcome even more obstacles, I actually have a master class that I'm going to be sharing with you all of that and more, but I'll be actually sharing with you the strategy that I have come up with after experiencing all the things that I shared with you.

And I solidified it to a really clear framework of what you need to do to get fluent and to make English your own.

And I wanna share that with you.

So if you are watching this while this is still live, then make sure you click the link below and join the masterclass.

Now, I would love to hear from you what your challenges have been.

Maybe one thing, one really hard thing that you were able to overcome in your English journey or in life, then you can write it in the comments.

I would love to hear about you as well.

Here I was sharing a lot of things about myself, I'm ready to hear about you as well.

Thank you so much for watching this.

Have a beautiful rest of the day.

Please subscribe if you haven't yet, and I will see you next week in the next video.