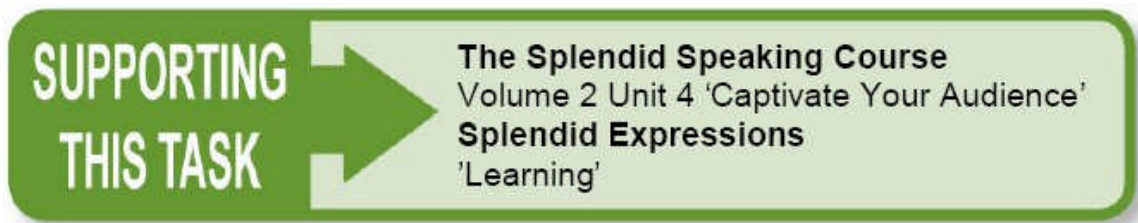

Splendid Speaking Podcasts

Topic: Using Anecdotes to Make a Point
(Interview 17: March Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=33>



Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide whether according to Victoria, the following questions are true or false.

- 1) Victoria met her husband whilst traveling around the world.
- 2) Victoria speaks Russian.
- 3) Victoria and her husband used to communicate in English when they were getting to know each other.
- 4) Victoria decided to learn English mainly to communicate with native speakers.
- 5) Learning a foreign language can make you feel good about yourself.

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Victoria who comes from Belarus and is currently living in Poland. A reminder that transcripts for all podcasts including this one are available to subscribers of our mailing list. You can sign up to the newsletter from www.splendid-speaking.com. Victoria was sent the following question shortly before the interview:

Talk about the importance of learning another language. Here are some ideas which Victoria was told she could include if she wished.

- Travel
- Culture
- Business

Victoria was sent a number of suggestions for making her talk memorable. As you listen for the first time decide how well Victoria uses a personal anecdote to achieve this. If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of Victoria's use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback section.

Let's listen to Victoria. I should apologise for the quality of the recording in places.

So, ... you have asked me: 'Why should we learn a foreign language?' First of all I think that learning a foreign language is a very important thing for everyone who wants to travel around the world and to get to know different cultures better and to enrich your knowledge about them ... I ... can say from my personal experience how important learning a foreign language is because when I met my husband I didn't know that he speaks Russian so we started to spoke ... English and that helped us a lot. We first talked only in the ... Internet and neither knowing each other nor knowing about the other abilities to communicate in any other language so English helped us a lot. And ... well ... generally speaking ... we all know that English is an international language which unites so many nations. You can speak English to native speakers but ... well ... to native speakers ... but not only to native speakers but also to people from all over the world ... and ... actually that was the main reason for me to study this language because knowing English assures me to be able to communicate all over the world. I know that ... whenever I go I know that I will be understood and I will have no problems at all. But actually ... knowing a foreign language provides us with ... several ... several advantages like cultural, economic, political and ... also first of all personal ... personal advantages. When you know the foreign language you ... you broaden your horizons first of all when you learn a foreign language you broaden your horizons and in that way you reinforce your

personality and self confidence of course because you can be very proud of yourself when you know the foreign language and in that way I think that a foreign language can contribute to a stronger personality.

Feedback

First of all, thanks to Victoria for taking part in this Skype interview. If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on her talk. Now for some feedback. Victoria dealt with the topic very well indeed and made some interesting points. There are several ways we can make a short presentation like this memorable and Victoria's talk became immediately more interesting for us through her use of a personal anecdote. Being able to draw on personal experiences can also make the talk more significant for the speaker and therefore easier to contribute ideas. Of course, the anecdote shouldn't take up too much of the allotted time and Victoria kept hers quite short. In general, she managed to signal changes in the direction of her talk well:

"... First of all I think that learning a foreign language is a very important thing for everyone..."

"... I ... can say from my personal experience..."

"... well ... generally speaking ... we all know that English is an international language..."

"... But actually ... knowing a foreign language provides us with ... several ... several advantages..."

Victoria speaks very fluently, with clear pronunciation and she used some excellent vocabulary to express herself including expressions such as:

'to enrich your knowledge'

'from personal experience'

'broaden your horizons'

Finally, listen to the following extracts from Victoria's talk. Can you spot the mistakes in each one?

"... so we started to spoke ... English..."

"... We first talked only in the ... Internet..."

"... knowing English assures me to be able to communicate all over the world..."

"... When you know the foreign language..."

So, did you spot the mistakes?

“...so we started to spoke ... English...”

This was probably a slip of the tongue on Victoria’s part. It should of course be ‘we started to speak English’.

“... We first talked only in the ... Internet...”

This is the wrong preposition. We say ‘on the Internet’.

“...knowing English assures me to be able to communicate all over the world...”

‘Assure’ has two meanings: ‘to promise’ and ‘to make certain’. When it’s used to mean ‘promise’ it takes an object and so you can say ‘assures me’. However, here Victoria means ‘to make sure’ so she should say: ‘knowing English assures that I can/will be able to communicate all over the world’.

“... When you know the foreign language...”

This is probably another slip by Victoria as she used the correct article at another time during the talk. In this context it should be ‘a foreign language’.

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Victoria. Until next week it's 'bye' from me Pete Travis. Bye!

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) Victoria met her husband whilst traveling around the world.

Ans: False

2) Victoria speaks Russian.

Ans: True

3) Victoria and her husband used to communicate in English when they were getting to know each other.

Ans: True

4) Victoria decided to learn English mainly to communicate with native speakers.

Ans: False

5) Learning a foreign language can make you feel good about yourself.

Ans: True

The Splendid Speaking Self Study Course

Volume 2 of the 'Splendid Speaking Self-Study Course' offers five suggestions for starting a talk with a memorable introduction including using an anecdote.

Volume 1: Introductions and Small Talk

In this volume you'll learn how to:

- Make an impact with a 15-second introduction (Unit 1) - a useful skill in a job interview or networking situations.
- Make small talk using the S.O.F.A. strategy (Unit 2)- a surefire way to make social situations much easier.
- Listen effectively and show interest in what other have to say (Unit 2), so you can build an immediate rapport with other people.
- Relate a S.T.A.R. story (Unit 3) that illustrates a personal achievement - ideal in an interview for a job or training course.

Plus 2 other key speaking strategies on body language and giving examples.

Volume 2: Powerful Presentations

In this volume you'll learn how to:

- Captivate your audience by choosing one of five memorable ways to start a presentation, and then signpost it clearly so your audience don't get lost (Unit 4).
- Introduce photographs and information graphics (graphs, charts, tables, etc) to illustrate your talk (Unit 5).
- Avoid worrying when you're asked to "say a few words". You'll soon be giving a T.O.P. spontaneous talk, and using pauses for effect (Unit 6).

In addition to these 12 key strategies you can test yourself with our interactive quizzes on useful collocational phrases to do with work, business, education and relationships, for example.

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