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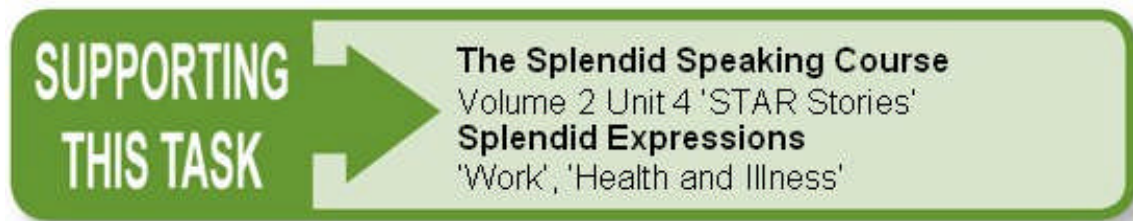
# Splendid Speaking Podcasts



Topic: Structuring a Short Talk  
(Interview 22: April Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=39>



## Comprehension Questions

Listen and decide if the following questions are true according to what Isabelle says.

- 1) She is interested in attaining a good work-life balance.
- 2) She has just got a new job.
- 3) You can't be a top manager and have a fulfilling private life.
- 4) PR (Public Relations) consultancy is a typical 9-5 job.
- 5) Tele-working can be quite stressful.

## Transcript

### Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Isabelle from Switzerland, who is currently living in London. 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](http://www.splendid-speaking.com).

Shortly before the interview in Skype I sent Isabelle the following question:

Talk about the importance of having a good work-life balance. You can include any of the following issues if you wish or ideas of your own:

- Leisure time

- Family commitments
- Flexible hours.

There are various ways a short talk like this can be organised. As you listen, try to identify the structure of Isabelle's presentation. How many main sections does it have and what role does each section play in her talk? If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of Isabelle's use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback session.

Let's listen to Isabelle.

Well, work life balance, it's kind of a red hot topic for me right now because I'm looking for a new job these days and I'm having many interviews and ... yeah ... and of course the topic or the question of the work life balance comes up all the time during these interviews. In my opinion ... it's all about ... how could I say that ... effecting a good compromise because I don't think that it's possible to ... to ... have a fulfilled private life going out to cinema or to theatre having ... a great time with the family and on the other hand being ... a good top manager ... I don't think that it's possible to combine those two sides completely but it's important to find a kind of a compromise and ... yes I'm certainly looking for this searching for this compromise. Actually I am a PR consultant and in my profession ... it's not very common to ... it's not how should I say ... a 9 till 5 job and it's not very common to ... to work just a few hours but ... the good thing in my profession is that we've got kind of flexible working hours which means that I'm free ... of course with some ... some limits when I want to work and this ... this for example gives me a great flexibility and that helps me as well to ... find the kind of compromise between work and my private life. Actually, while I was working in Switzerland I had the chance to work as a tele-worker which means that I could work from home using my phone and Internet and that was just an excellent idea and I also got good feedback from my clients as well as of my family because I was all relaxed in these days I could do my job at home I wasn't disturbed by anybody else and I didn't feel stress and also my clients were very ... happy with my work and this I think is for me the best way of finding a work life balance.

## Feedback

First of all, thanks to Isabelle for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on her talk.

Now for some feedback. This was an excellent long turn. If you analyse the organisation of her talk you will see Isabelle used a very simple but effective structure:

- she stated the significance of the subject
- then expressed her opinion
- and gave examples to back up her opinion.

Her talk started with a clear reference to the importance of the subject:

*Well, work life balance, it's kind of a red hot topic for me right now because I'm looking for a new job these days and I'm having many interviews and ... yeah ... and of course the topic or the question of the work life balance comes up all the time during these interviews ...*

She then gave her opinion of the topic explaining that for her it was a question of compromise:

*In my opinion ... it's all about ... how could I say that ... effecting good compromise because I don't think that it's possible to ... to ... have a fulfilled private life going out to cinema or to theatre having ... a great time with the family and on the other hand being ... a good top manager ...*

Finally she gave examples of how she's managed to achieve this during her own employment.

*... the good thing in my profession is that we've got kind of flexible working hours which means that I'm free ... of course with some ... some limits when I want to work...*

Relating the topic to her own personal experience like this made the talk interesting and memorable.

Isabelle has excellent use of English and her talk was delivered fluently with very clear pronunciation. She used a wide range of vocabulary with some impressive collocations such as:

a red hot topic  
effect a compromise  
a fulfilled private life

Her English was also very accurate throughout. Most of the mistakes she did make were of a similar nature. Can you spot them?

*...going out to cinema or to theatre...*

*...this for example gives me a great flexibility...*

*...Actually, while I was working in Switzerland I had the chance to work as a tele-worker which means that I could work from home...*

*...I also got good feedback from my clients as well as of my family because I was all relaxed in these days...*

So, did you spot the mistakes? Most relate to the incorrect use of articles.

*going out to cinema or to theatre*

This should be 'the cinema' and 'the theatre'.

*this for example gives me a great flexibility*

Flexibility has a general meaning here and so there should be no article.

*Actually, while I was working in Switzerland I had the chance to work as a tele-worker which means that I could work from home*

This is a pronunciation issue which Isabelle is aware of. The words beginning with the 'w' were of course pronounced with a /v/ sound rather than /w/

*I also got good feedback from my clients as well as of my family because I was all relaxed in these days*

It would be more natural to say 'completely relaxed' or 'totally relaxed'.

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Isabelle. Until next week it's 'Bye' from me Pete Travis. And remember that you can download the transcript to this and all previous podcasts by signing up to the Splendid Speaking newsletter, a link to which you'll find at [www.splendid-speaking.com](http://www.splendid-speaking.com)

## **Answers to Comprehension Questions**

1) She is interested in attaining a good work-life balance.

Ans: True

2) She has just got a new job.

Ans: False

3) You can't be a top manager and have a fulfilling private life.

Ans: True

4) PR (Public Relations) consultancy is a typical 9-5 job.

Ans: False

5) Tele-working can be quite stressful.

Ans: False

# The Splendid Speaking Self Study Course

Strategies for structuring short talks and using anecdotes to make your talk memorable are practised in Volume 2 of the 'Splendid Speaking Self-Study Course'.

## **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 others 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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