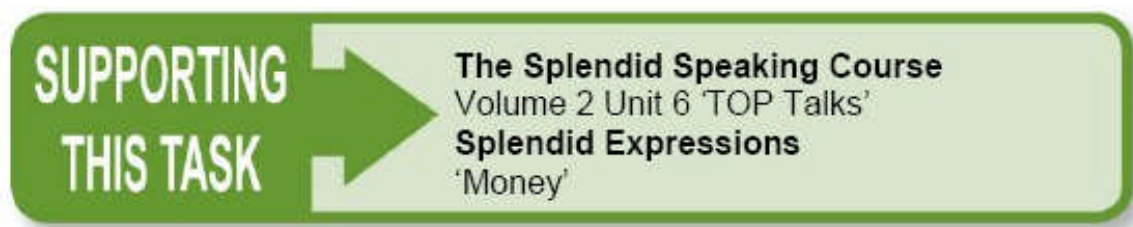

Splendid Speaking Podcasts

Topic: Speculating and Hypothesising
(Interview 23: April Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=40>



Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide if the following questions are true or false according to what Stefania says.

- 1) She often does the lottery.
- 2) She would know exactly what to do as soon as she won.
- 3) She would make her future secure straightaway.
- 4) The money would help her carry out research.
- 5) She would buy a new house in a different area.
- 6) She would be able to use the money to try a new job.

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Stefania from Italy, who is preparing for CPE. 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.

Have you ever thought what you would do if you won the lottery? Well, this week, Stefania was asked to give a short, two-minute presentation on that very subject. Shortly before the interview in Skype I sent Stefania the following question:

Would winning the lottery or a large sum of money make a huge difference to your life? She was told she could include any of the following ideas:

- how she would feel
- how she would spend it/share it
- in what way it would change her life.

With a talk like this the speaker needs to be able to speculate and hypothesize, in this case about how their life would be different if they won the lottery. As you listen decide how well Stefania manages to use speculative language as naturally as possible. If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of her use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback session.

Let's listen to Stefania.

OK Peter, so ... why or how would winning ... a lot of money at the lottery change ... my life? Well first let me tell you ... I ... I never really won anything ... in my life I don't even really buy lottery tickets or anything I think if that ever happened to me ... the first ... feeling would be ... I would just be overwhelmed ... having like all this money all of a sudden having to decide ... what to do with it ... when you actually dream about winning a lottery there's a lot of things that come to mind but I think when it really comes down to it ... it won't be like it wouldn't be like an easy ... decision so. I guess after I got over the initial ... feeling I would probably ... well I would want to secure a future ... that's definitely something that I would want to do ... you know nowadays that's ... that's a nice thing to have security for the future. And something else that comes to mind ... is probably ... perhaps ... funding ... or helping with the funding of a research with ... cancer and that's because cancer has touched my family ... more than once so that's something that I feel ... really strongly about. I think I ... I would probably like also to help ... family and friends ... they are like in need or ... or I think it would just be kind of nice for once to ... maybe just you know tell a friend like you know ... "Oh here this is the car you always dreamt about so here this is going to be your birthday present" ... I think that ... you know that would feel pretty good. And also something that when my husband and I sometimes talk about you know winning a lot of money ... you know we've always talked about buying a house in a place like ... New York just

because we live in a place here ... that doesn't really have like a lot to offer in terms of ... entertainment, culture, you know shopping so that ... that would be like another nice thing. I think my life would change ... mostly in terms of ... again of feeling like a sense of security for the future not having to worry about ... what lies ahead. I don't think I would stop working for a couple of reasons ... a) because I really love what I do ... so I don't think I would want to stop doing it and I don't think I would want to be ... you know just like sitting around all day with ... all this money ... you know ... maybe ... you know just all this money to sort of like play with ... so I still think I would probably be ... having the same kind of life at least at the moment.

Feedback

Let's start by thanking Stefania for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. Why not go to the Splendid Speaking website and leave your own comments on her talk.

Let's give Stefania some feedback. This was an excellent talk which answered the question and contained some interesting ideas as to how she would deal with all that money. Stefania has spent quite a while working in an English speaking environment and has developed a very good level of spoken English. This is apparent in her ability to use language to speculate effortlessly. Did you notice that when imagining how she would react she automatically used 2nd Conditional structures? Here are just a few examples:

"... I think if that ever happened to me ... the first ... feeling would be ... I would just be overwhelmed ..."

"... I think when it really comes down to it ... it won't be like it wouldn't be like an easy ... decision so I guess after I got over the initial ... feeling I would probably ... well I would want to secure a future... that's definitely something that I would want to do"

And this was reinforced by regular use of words like 'probably', 'definitely', 'I guess', and 'maybe'.

Her level of fluency was apparent in the natural way she used fillers such as 'you know', 'like' and 'sort of':

"... you know we've always talked about buying a house in a place like ... New York just because we live in a place here ... that doesn't really have like a lot to offer in terms of ... entertainment, culture, you know shopping so that ... that would be like another nice thing..."

“... and I don't think I would want to be ... you know just like sitting around all day with ... all this money ... you know ... maybe ... you know just all this money to sort of like play with...”

Stefania organised the talk around the three suggested topics that were offered to her, which can be a good strategy to use. However, this is an edited version of the original presentation, which actually went on for about 5 minutes. In the final 2 minutes which have been cut, Stefania went into more detail about how her life would change. In the CPE exam she would not be given this much time and we discussed how regular practice will help her time her talks better.

She used vocabulary appropriate to the context and some nice expressions such as:

to secure a future
when it comes down to it
something comes to mind
a sense of security

Finally, her use of English was of a very good level and there are only a few mistakes this week. Can you spot anything in these extracts which could be seen as minor errors in an exam?

“... why or how would winning ... a lot of money at the lottery change ... my life?”

“... when you actually dream about winning a lottery...”

“ is probably ...perhaps ... funding ...or helping with the funding of a research with ... cancer...”

Did you spot the mistakes?

“... why or how would winning ... a lot of money at the lottery change ... my life?”

We say ‘on the lottery’ not ‘at the lottery’.

“... when you actually dream about winning a lottery...”

The definite article is used with lottery so we say ‘winning the lottery’.

“...probably ...perhaps ... funding ...or helping with the funding of a research with ... cancer...”

Two mistakes here. Research in this context is an uncountable noun and doesn't take an article. We also say ‘research into’, not ‘with’.

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Stefania. 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

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) She often does the lottery.

Ans: False

2) She would know exactly what to do as soon as she won.

Ans: False

3) She would make her future secure straightaway.

Ans: True

4) The money would help her carry out research.

Ans: False

5) She would buy a new house in a different area.

Ans: True

6) She would be able to use the money to try a new job.

Ans: False

The Splendid Speaking Self Study Course

Language used to speculate is covered 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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