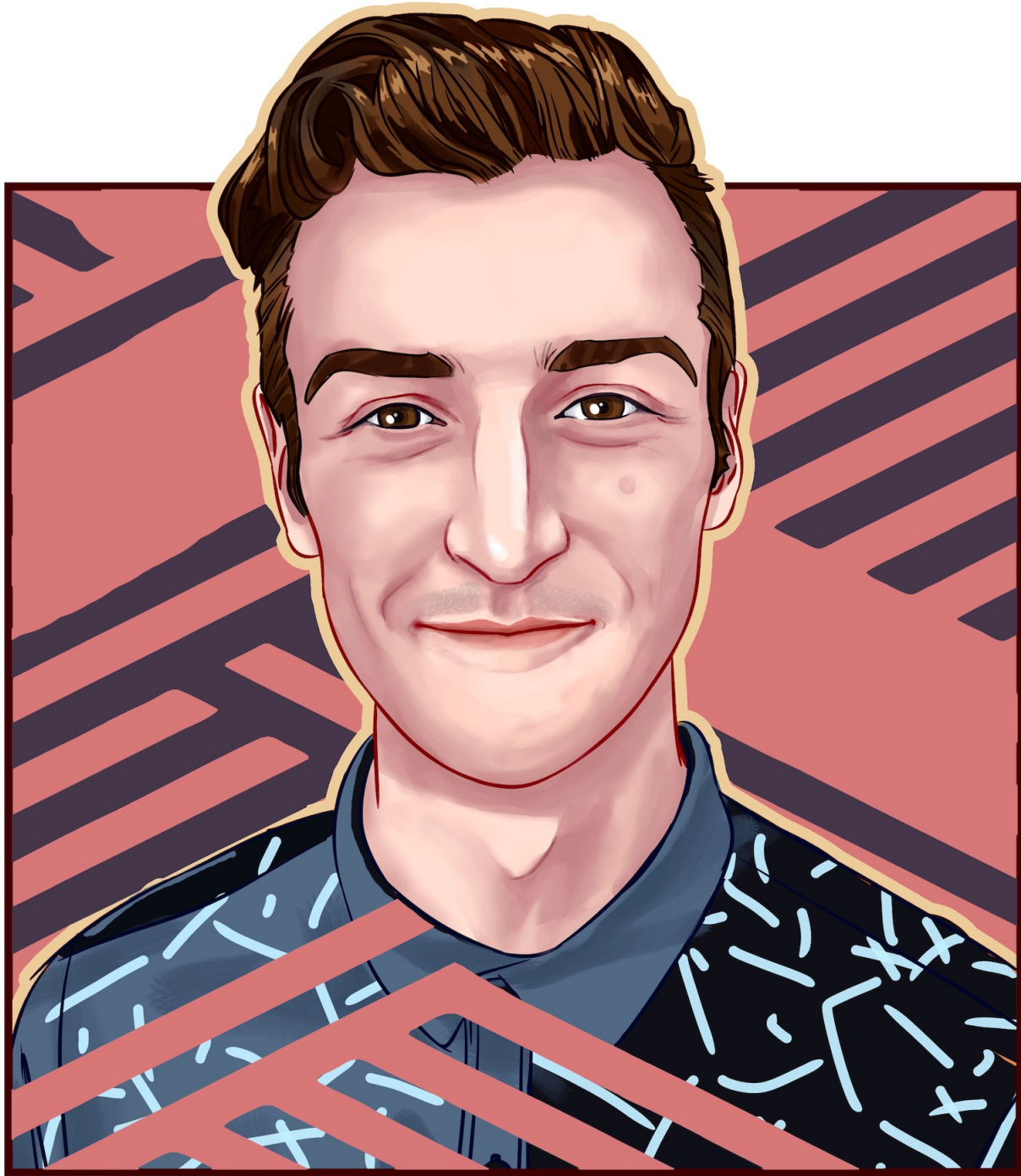


Jeremy's English Tips

Episode #22:

4 Tips for making friends with English speakers



Culips English Podcast

Transcript

Hello everyone, this is Jeremy and you're listening to Jeremy's English Tips, a series by the Culips English Podcast where I teach you interesting expressions or share language learning tips.

I'm back with another episode of Jeremy's English Tips by Culips. Have you ever struggled with making friends with English speakers? If so, then this episode is for you. Now, we'll be talking about some cultural stuff in this one as well. And since there are many different English speaking countries around the world, I will use the word English speaker to refer to people who speak English as their native language. There are some cultural differences between the different English speaking countries, but in general, the advice I will share with you in this episode will apply in most situations. So let's get started.

In English speaking, culture, choices are very important. We really value each person's right to choose. And so when we have conversations with each other, we tend to talk about those choices a lot. We complement choices, we share our choices, and we give each other advice about future choices. So here are four tips for having better conversations with English speakers.

The first tip is show interest in their story. When I say story here, I mean the story of their life. When you watch a movie or read a book, you get interested in the story, right? You want to know more about it. You want to know what happens next. This is the same attitude you should have when talking to a potential English speaking friend. Be interested in their life story. You can show them that you're interested by asking them about their life. For example, you can ask, "Where are you from?" After they answer, you can ask them more about the place they are from. "Oh, wow, what's it like out there?" They will then tell you about their hometown, the weather, the economy, the lifestyle there. After that, you can then ask them about their job by saying, "What do you do for a living?" Once they answer, you should follow up by asking questions about their job. You can ask things like, "How long have you been doing that?" Or, "Do you enjoy your work?" Or, "Where is your office located?" By asking these questions, you are showing them that you are interested in their story. You are showing

interest in the choices that they have made in their life as well. This is the first step in making a good relationship with an English speaker.

The second tip is don't ask these questions. Showing interest in the person's story is great, but there are some parts of that story that are off limits. That means that there are some things you should not ask about. Those things are physical appearance, marital status, personal finances, politics, and religion. In general, you should avoid talking about these things until you have already become very close with the other person. That means you should not ask these questions until you have known the person for quite some time. Let's talk about why these aren't good conversation topics. Physical appearance is something we don't really talk about. This is because your physical appearance is not your choice. You have no choice how your nose looks, or how big or small your eyes are. That means that we don't talk about how skinny or fat someone is. We don't talk about facial features like nose size or ear size. And we don't talk about how pretty or handsome someone is, especially during the first conversation. Even if you are interested in dating, the person that you are talking to, it is better not to tell that person that they are good looking until you have known them for a while.

The one exception to this rule is with hair. Hair is something that people get cut often, and therefore, is a choice. We choose what we want our hair to look like when we go to the barber. So commenting on someone's hair is okay. For example, "Your hair looks great today."

Marital status, meaning whether someone is married or not, is something we don't usually talk about either. If someone is 45, and unmarried, of course, this may be something they chose. But usually it is not. And if you ask them, "Why aren't you married yet?" It can make them feel bad. Maybe they want to be married, but never found the right person. So by asking them this, instead of helping you to get closer to them, it pushes them away and makes them feel bad. So that's why it's better to avoid talking about this.

Personal finances is another topic to avoid. Just like the other two, personal finances are not something we can choose. If we could, everyone would be millionaires, everyone would choose to have lots of money. People work hard, save, invest, and do whatever they can. But how much they make, their salary, is not something that is in their control. So, it's best to

avoid this topic. Politics and religion should be avoided for the same reason. Most English speaking countries are very diverse. And so everyone has a different religion, and different political views. If you make the mistake of asking about these things, you may find that you disagree with them. And the friendship could end right then and there. So it's a good idea to avoid talking about these topics until you are much closer. Alright, that concludes the second tip. Let's move on to the third.

The third tip is ask about their likes and dislikes. You can ask things like, "What do you like to do in your free time?", "Do you have any hobbies?" Or, "What is your favorite food?" Asking about people's favorites is a great way to get to know them. And to get them to open up to you. The concept of favorites is very important in English speaking culture, we tend to think that what you like defines who you are. So by asking people what kind of music they like, or where they would like to travel someday, you are showing them that you are interested in who they are as a person. And this will help you to get closer to them.

The fourth tip is to compliment their choices. Saying, "nice choice" when an English speaker chooses something usually will make them happy. For example, you can say something like, "Nice shirt" or "I like your shirt" and this will usually make the person smile. If you see their car, you can say, "Nice car!" If you go to a restaurant with them, and they choose something on the menu, you can say, "Nice choice."

In fact, this is something you will often hear when you go to nice restaurants in English speaking countries. When the customer orders something, the server will often say, "Very nice choice sir." Or, "Very nice choice ma'am." What a person chooses to wear, chooses to eat, or chooses to do with their time shows you their personality. In a way the life of an English speaker is recorded as a series of choices. So if you want to make friends with English speakers, be interested in their choices and show them that you are interested by asking the right questions.

So, to review, here are those four tips again. Tip number one, show interest in their story. Tip number two, don't talk about physical appearance, marital status, personal finance, politics, or religion. Tip number three, ask them about their likes and dislikes. And finally, tip number four, compliment them on their choices.

And that's a wrap for today's episode. If you have questions or comments you can get in touch on social media or by email at contact@culips.com. I wish you the best on your English learning journey. Thank you for choosing Culips.

Key points

1. Show interest in what English speakers have to say and their stories.
2. Don't ask questions about physical appearance, marital status, personal finances, politics or religion.
3. Ask questions about what English speakers likes and dislike.
4. Compliment the choices English speakers make.
5. Choices are highly important in English speaking culture.

Writing and Speaking Questions

1. How can you use the right questions to show interest in a person's story?
2. What questions can you ask to find out about a person's life story?
3. Why are physical appearance, marital status, personal finances, politics and religion considered off limits?
4. Why do you think "favorites" are so important to English speakers?
5. Why do you think English speakers value "choice" so highly?

Study Challenges

1. Write 5 questions you can use to get closer to an English speaker.
2. Try using these questions with the next English speaker you meet.

Credits

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