

Body and Mind Commentary

Hello, this is AJ, welcome to our second commentary. This one is called “Body and Mind.”

As you might guess it’s about body and mind. Interesting... Specifically what I want to talk about is something that I have been yelling at you and talking to you about during most of these lessons, which is the connection between our body and our mind.

And one of the biggest problems...I won’t say the biggest, but it’s certainly one of the biggest problems with our schools now is that we’ve separated body and mind. We have this idea that learning is something we do sitting down, sitting still, not moving. That we just sit, we passively listen to some teacher talking and that’s learning. That’s what happens in most of our schools in most countries of the world.

Well, in fact, that is a very, very inefficient way to learn. It is not very effective. Do you learn something that way? Sure. You do learn something, but you learn more slowly, less deeply, less powerfully than if you can combine your body and mind; if you can learn through your mind and your body at the same time.

Now I’ve had a couple of very interesting experiences and have learned from a couple people about this idea and it’s helped me develop this sort of idea and this teaching style. And one of the first persons I learned from was Dr. James Asher and Dr. Asher is a language teacher and a professor at San Jose University in California. And he developed a language-learning method called TPR, TPR.

TPR stands for Total Physical Response, Total Physical Response. It’s a teaching method that works especially well with beginners. It’s a great, great method for teaching beginners. In fact, if I ever develop English lessons for beginners I will use TPR to teach beginning English because it is a very, very powerful method. In TPR students learn a language, not from translation, not by sitting passively in a chair, but through movement. They learn the basic core of the language with movement.

How does this work. Well, for example, pretend that I have a class and it’s a beginning class. Zero English, right? Everyone in the class has zero English. They don’t know anything, not one word of English. Well how would I teach them? What’s the best way to teach them? Well, normally, in a normal class, they would be taught with translation, right.

The teacher would say, for example, if they want to teach the word stand, stand up, well they would write stand up on the board and then they would translate that phrase into their native language.

So if imagine, let's say, in Japan, so we have Japanese students. The Japanese teacher – the teacher in Japan – would write stand up on the board and then the teacher would translate that into Japanese and that's how the students would learn the word or the phrase stand up. They would learn it by translation. They would write in their notebook and then they would try to memorize it again and again. Stand up equals this, stand up equals this, translation, translation, memorize, memorize.

Well that is purely mental, right? They're just sitting in their chair, there's nothing happening with their body, it's just a mental exercise. Yes, they do eventually learn the phrase stand up, but they don't learn it deeply. And that's why most Japanese students, for example, cannot speak English very well and they don't understand spoken English very well.

Written English is different because written English is more of a mental process, you can go slowly if you need to. But spoken English requires fast, instant understanding and you really need to learn it in your body. It needs to go deep into your mind and body if you're going to understand and speak fast at native speeds.

How would Dr. Asher teach it, because, really, it's his method originally? Well, Dr. Asher developed a completely different way to teach this, which is with movement and without translation. So what he would do he'd sit in a chair and then he would stand up and as he stood up at the same time he would say the phrase "stand up." Then he would sit down, physically, in front of the class he would sit down. As he sat down he would say the phrase "sit down."

Then he would stand up and as he stood up, of course, he would stand up with his body, physically. Then he would sit down and he would say the phrase "sit down", over and over again. And, you know, pretty soon the students, "Ahhh", they understand. "I see, yes. He's standing and he's saying this phrase it must mean stand up and then when he sits he says a different phrase that must mean sit down, ahhh..." You know? They have some mental understanding, but at that level it's still just mental.

There's no translation so that's better than the old method, but it's still only mental. It's not so deep.

So, next, Dr. Asher picks a couple students, maybe some students who learn very quickly. He brings them to the front of the class and they have chairs. They all sit together in the chairs, Dr. Asher in the middle and maybe one student on his left and one student on his right. They're all sitting.

And then he looks at the students and he stands up and then he looks at these students with him and he kind of uses his hands to...you know, “stand up, stand up”, right? And the students look at him and they copy his movement, so they stand up. And then Dr. Asher says “sit down” and then he sits and they look at him and they copy his movements and they sit down. He repeats this many times.

Next, Dr. Asher walks over to the corner of the room, maybe. The students in the front of the class, the model students, are still sitting in the chairs. And this time he just says it. He doesn't demonstrate this time. No demonstration he just says it. He says “stand up” and he looks at the students. And what happens? Well they're smart students, right? So they just stand up. They're starting to understand. They stand up and then he says “Ah, good.” He claps “Yeah! Good job, yeah, yeah!” Everybody in the class claps “Yeah!” And then he says “sit down” and the students in front of the class – the two students – they sit down. Everybody claps “Yeah, very good job!” But it's not finished.

So these students are now models, they're examples, they're role models and all of the class is learning from them. They say “Ahhh, I know what to do.” So, of course, at this point, mentally, everybody understands. They know what's happening, they understand the two phrases, but it's still not deep enough yet because they've got to get it into their own bodies.

So, next, Dr. Asher says “Okay, thank you.” The students go and they sit down. And now all of the class follows Dr. Asher. So he sits in his chair again and he says “stand up” and then he stands up and he points to the class and everybody in the class stands up with him. Then he claps “Yeah, good job!” and then he says “sit down.” He sits down and all of the class sits down with him.

Now they're getting it in their bodies, it's not just intellectual it's becoming physical. They are learning with their mind and their body at the same time. And he repeats this again and again and again. And then what he does is he stops demonstrating, so he stands in the corner of the class and he just says “stand up.” All the students stand. He says “sit down.” All the students sit down.

They're not copying him anymore, now they're just responding to his words. Stand up, sit down. Stand up, sit down. The class is standing up physically, sitting down physically, standing up physically and sitting down physically again and again. By doing this process what happens is the language goes deep, deep, deep into the unconscious, into the physical body. As a result, the students learn these phrases much more deeply. How do we know this? Because we give them tests.

All right, so he continues. Of course this is a very basic example; it would be the first class. But this process gets more complicated very quickly so that later in the class, maybe two weeks later, Dr. Asher is saying something like “Go to the corner, pick up the red book, bring it to Susan and then sit down.” Wow, right? So now we have a very long, complicated command. What happens? Well, the students actually do it.

They stand up, they go to the corner, they pick up the red book, they give it to Susan who's another student and then they sit down. All these physical actions, they have learned all of this. They have learned the verb "go", they have learned the location "corner", they have learned the verb "pick up", they've learned the word "book", they've learned the word "blue", the adjective "blue", etc.

So in this way they're learning all these nouns and verbs and adjectives and prepositions, but they're learning it with their bodies, their physical bodies. There's no translation happening and it's not just intellectual they are doing all of these things. They're getting it deep, deep, deep because they're using mind and body at the same time.

So what's really great about this is the final result. Here's what happens. We have a class with a Dr. Asher or with me using TPR, using this physical way of learning. And then we have another normal class, you know, using translation and grammar and textbooks. We start them at zero. They're both zero level and we teach them for six months, one class using the physical method -- body and mind -- the other class just mental.

At the end of six months we give them tests. We test their vocabulary. We test their grammar. We test their listening ability. We test their speaking ability, their writing ability. We test everything and this is the amazing part. The class that learned with their bodies has learned four or five times more. They have learned not just a little more, a lot more than the traditional normal class. Their understanding is much better. Their vocabulary is much larger. Their speaking ability is better. Everything is better and not just a little better a lot better.

Here's another thing we found with research. Over a long time, let's say one year, two years, we look at both groups and we see which group continues to learn English and which group, you know, quits. Because really the biggest problem with language learning, with English learning, I think, the number one problem is people quit, they just stop, you know? They get frustrated, they're depressed. They think "Ah, I can't do it" and they quit. You can't learn if you're not trying.

And so they compare the rates, they compare how many people eventually quit from the physical class and how many eventually quit from the traditional classes. And this is another big advantage. The people who use the physical method stay with English, they continue studying. Why? Because they enjoy it. Why? Because they're successful. They feel successful, they feel confident, they're learning faster, they're doing better and it's fun.

They're using their mind and their body at the same time. They're moving and they're laughing. It's great. The other class, they're bored and they feel like failures. So, their dropout rate, their quitting rate, is much, much higher in the traditional classes over time one year, two years, four years or five years.

Most people in the traditional classes just quit. If they're not forced to learn, if they have a choice, eventually they just leave the classes. They stop studying English as soon as they can. Most people, like 80 or 90%, it's a really high level. But the people in the physical classes, many more of them continue learning English, they stay in the class. And, as a result, many more of them actually become fluent.

So another person I learned from about this idea of body and mind connected and learning with both is Tony Robbins. Now I've mentioned Tony before, especially in the beginning lessons. Tony is a...he doesn't like to be called a motivational speaker. He teaches people how to, you know, take control of their lives, how to live the kind of life they want. And a lot of those beginning lessons talk about many of Tony's ideas.

And, Tony, in his seminars, especially in his seminars, he uses body and mind at the same time. You don't go to a Tony Robbins seminar and sit in a chair for 12 hours and do nothing and just listen to him and take notes. No. He has you jumping and shouting and yelling. You're always using your body to learn from him.

And he has this phrase, he says, "Get it into your body." He's like "You don't really know something, anything, until it's in your body, until your mind and body have learned it together." That's when you really know something deeply, any idea, any belief, anything. When it's in your body that's when it's effortless, that's when it's easy. That's when you are a master, when you get English into your body. When it's not, just understanding the word "run", you know, run, run and then you translate it to your language. That's mental. That's nothing.

But if you say the English word "run" and then you run in place, you're running with your body, you're moving your legs up and down – like I am right now – there's a much deeper connection in your mind, in your nervous system, in your physical body. And then when you get that and you do it again and again and again, body and mind, body and mind, that word becomes part of you. You'll never forget it and you will use it quickly, easily, effortlessly, like a native speaker. That's why native speakers speak their language so effortlessly. It's not just in their head it's in their body, their whole body.

So that's why I talk so much and I'm always reminding you and telling you, you know, move while you do these lessons. Move your hands, move your arms, shout loudly. Move your face, big smiles, big facial expressions. Exaggerate everything. I have one more example of this and that comes from a time in my past when I studied Italian for a little bit. And a little bit, I mean very little, I studied Italian for one month because, actually, my sister won a free trip to Italy, just to Rome. Go to Rome and Florence for one week, basically. Ten days, I think it was.

So I was excited. She said "Oh, you can come with me." Because it was two people, it was a free trip to Italy for two people, so my sister and I were going to go. And, you know, I'd never studied Italian before, but I thought, oh, it might be fun just to learn a little Italian, just for this one week. I'm not going to become fluent, I don't care about

becoming fluent in Italian and speaking perfectly, I'll just study a little bit, just for one month. Maybe I can, you know, talk to somebody at a bar or, you know, just order something in a restaurant, very simple.

So I studied Italian. I had these CDs, it was actually Pimsleur CDs, and I listened to them in my car when I went to work. But I did something different when I learned Italian, different from other languages I have studied. What I did is I moved my body like crazy when I was learning Italian.

I'm driving in the car...and I think it's because I've seen a lot of movies with Italian people or Italian-Americans and they're always like moving their arms and they're very passionate when they're speaking. And I don't know if that's true of all Italian people...of course it's not true of all Italian people, but it's certainly this image you get from movies. And it's really fun, you know, I like it. I love that image of Italians, you know, very passionate and moving their hands and speaking with passion.

So I don't know why, but it just was fun. As I listened to these tapes and I would repeat, you know it was just normal repeat the phrase, I would move my arms. So I'm driving with one hand on the wheel in my car and I'm moving my arms and my body and I have these big facial expressions and I'm saying "Buon Giorno!" Right!? I didn't say it quietly I would say it really loud.

And I even had this fake, exaggerated Italian accent when I spoke. It wasn't a real Italian accent because I didn't know any Italian, but I tried. It was just a normal American plain, flat accent. I remembered the accents I've heard in movies and I thought oh, this is fun "Buon Giorno! Buon Giorno!" And I moved my arms when I said it. I was screaming it in my car.

So I didn't know at the time what I was doing, really, but something interesting happened. When we went on our trip, when we finally went to Italy, I found myself speaking Italian. I had a tiny vocabulary. I mean just one month of studying, so my vocabulary was tiny, tiny. I didn't know grammar at all, nothing. I didn't know the past tense. Present tense that was it and a tiny vocabulary, but because the little bit I learned I had it in my body it just came out! I mean I don't know what happened.

For example, I got on a bus with my sister and some other people. And we made a mistake we did not pay for the bus. There was a machine at the back of the bus. You had to get a ticket and pay. I didn't know about this. And, ah, so we got in trouble. These little like bus police pulled us off the bus and said, "You didn't pay. You don't have a ticket" and they wanted us to pay this big amount of money, like a big penalty, a big fee.

And nobody in the little group I was with...they're all Americans...nobody spoke any Italian, zero, so I was the only one. I had a tiny bit of Italian. So the police were telling me "Oh, you guys didn't pay." I don't know how, I have no idea how, but I understood

what they were saying, the basic idea. Not every word, but I basically understood what they were saying and I just started speaking Italian. I have no idea how I did it.

And I'm using some English words, too, because anytime I didn't know the Italian I would just say it in English. So I'm mixing Italian and English, but I'm just speaking really fast and my arms are moving and my hands are moving, just like in my car as I was listening to those CDs before. It was amazing. It was the most fluent I have ever spoken another language and, yet, I was a total, total beginner. Maybe I knew 100 words in Italian, maybe less than that, but the words I learned were in my body and it just came out because I learned physically, it wasn't just mental.

And I said "Ah-ha, this is interesting. Maybe we should do this all the time." Maybe when I teach English I should get my students moving their arms and jumping around and exaggerating their accent so they sound like cowboys or they sound like crazy Americans, like me.

So this is something to think about. I promise you, this works. This works and it works powerfully. So anytime you listen to English, whether it's my lessons or you're listening to something on the Internet or you're watching an English movie, it doesn't matter, when you listen move that body. And when you speak, when you're practicing speaking, I mean, come out of it with emotion. Exaggerate everything. Move your body like an American, whatever that means to you.

Just imagine it like an exaggerated American, like Jim Carrey the actor, the comedian Jim Carrey, you know, John Wayne, the old cowboy, or Clint Eastwood, somebody, you're idea of an American, an exaggerated, typical American or British person if you're learning British English. Move like them, speak like them, you know, exaggerate their accent, exaggerate the facial expressions and when you speak do it really loudly. Get your whole body into it. Use your whole body as you do it and you're going to connect that mind and body together and it's so powerful.

When you do that again and again and again every time, every day, every lesson, everything you listen to, every time you speak English or practice it, you will create amazing fluency. You're going to be shocked and surprised. You won't believe it. Because one day some American person or some native speaker is going to talk to you in English and you're just going to start speaking. It's going to come out of your mouth. You won't know..."Wow! Where did it come from? This is amazing! I'm not thinking. I'm not translating. This is just coming out of my mouth!"

It's possible. Not only is it possible it will definitely happen, but you've got to use your body very powerfully to get this result. You can't just a little bit, "Ah, yeah, well..." move your body a little, smile a little, shoulders back a little "ah-ah-ah," weak voice. That won't work. That will get you weak results.

The more powerfully you move your body as you listen to and speak English the more fluency you will develop. You wire it in. You put it into your body, into your nervous system, mind and body are connected. It is so powerful. You won't believe the fluency, it's amazing, but you've got to do it with all of that energy, all of that passion. You really have got to do it strongly and powerfully every time. Not one time, not one week, not sometimes, every single time you listen to or speak English use all of your body, all of your voice and you will create just amazing fluency. I promise you.

We'll give you your money back. I'll give you all of your money back. I'll give you two times your money back if you do this and you get no result. Why do I promise you that? Because I know it works. It's 100% guaranteed. I have no question about it. I know it works, it works every time, but it only works if you do what I'm telling you. You know some students say "Oh, I'm shy. I can't do that." Bullshit! Do it alone in your apartment or in your car where nobody's watching you, nobody's looking, if necessary.

Some of you are crazy, like me, you'll do it on the street. But if you're shy or something, fine, do it at home. Lock the door so your, you know, husband or wife or kids or roommates can't see you and just get in there and start shouting and jumping and moving as you're doing your English lessons, as you're listening to English, as you're speaking English, moving your body, pouring your body into every single time. And then after you do this for one month, two months, six months, write on the Forums your results. I promise you, the results are going to be amazing.

All right, so this has been kind of a long commentary, but it's so important. It's so powerful and it's damn fun, too. It's really the center of my system. This is the Effortless English System. This is the most important part, the central part. Without this nothing else works. This is the fuel. This is the energy for all of it. All right, so do it.

Okay, good. Do you understand that I feel strongly about this? I hope you do. All right, I will see you next time for the next commentary. Meanwhile, move that body!