

Identity Main Text

Hello, this is AJ. Welcome to our next lesson. Today's lesson is called "Identity." Your identity is what you believe about yourself so this topic is a little bit similar to the topic of beliefs. We've talked a lot about beliefs before remember? Limiting beliefs and empowering beliefs. Identity is really an important kind of belief or beliefs really, it's a collection of beliefs, about yourself. The reason this is important, more important than just normal beliefs, is because these are global beliefs.

Now by global I mean some that affects everything. It covers everything. Global comes from globe which means all of the world. But we're not internationally here. Here global means everything, covering everything, about everything. So global beliefs are beliefs that affect everything else. Your global beliefs affect all your other beliefs. They influence all your other beliefs. They influence all of your other emotions. They influence everything. They're kind of the most fundamental beliefs, the core, deepest beliefs, the central beliefs. And other beliefs come from them.

So you're already been thinking a lot about your beliefs related to English, for example. But now I want you to think about the beliefs you have about yourself, who you are. What kind of person you are, what your abilities are. These are very, very important. You need to choose them because most of us grow up and we learn them from other people. We don't even know its happening. For example, we grow up thinking we are citizens of a certain country. And that's true, of course it's true. But if we identify too much, if that belief is too strong, we can become negative, possibly even violent towards people from other country. Say "I'm an American. I'm an American, American is number one! I'm the best. Everyone else sucks." Well, believe it or not, there are people in the United States who think that. There are people like that in every country. Obviously this is not a positive belief, not positive for most people. It has a lot of negative consequences.

So we've got to be careful about our global beliefs, about what we believe about ourself. More commonly, we have a lot of beliefs about what we can do and what we cannot do. We have beliefs about ourselves "I am this and I am not that." I'll give you an example of my own, my own limiting global belief. For many, many, many years I had a belief "I'm not a good language learner." This was a very strong belief that I had, a global belief about myself. Now, every time I tried to learn a new language, this belief was there. Do you think it helped me learn other languages? No, it did not. It had the opposite effect. It frustrated me. It caused me to quit again and again and again. And here's what happens. I have this idea in my head from the past "I'm not a good language learner. I'm a poor language learner."

So when I start to try to learn Japanese, for example, what happens? Well, I start learning. And unfortunately I was trying normal, traditional methods, not effortless methods. I know better now, but in the past I didn't know. So I was trying just these normal methods. And, of course, it was difficult. I had problems. I made mistakes. It was difficult to understand. So what happened is this experience touched, interacted with, my global belief "I'm not a good language learner" or "I'm a poor language learner" and then these experiences which were kind of difficult. So I looked at these experiences and I decided the meaning was "Well, see, I'm not a good language learner, of course. Of course Japanese is difficult because I'm not a good language learner." So I quit.

Now another person can have the same experience. Let's say somebody who has the belief "I am a great language learner. I love learning languages. I am fantastic at languages." And they start to learn Japanese and guess what happens? They have some difficulties. They have trouble understanding, of course, they're a beginner. They're just starting. Now they don't think "Oh, see, I can't do it." They think "Well, this is normal but I'm a great language learner so I'm going to solve this problem and keep going. I'm going to get better and better. This will improve." Their whole attitude is different. So when the same thing happens to them it doesn't stop them. It doesn't hurt their emotions, their energy doesn't drop. They don't lose motivation. They get stronger and better. They decide "Well, this is a short-term problem. I'm going to solve it. We're going to keep going."

So that's the power of a global belief. It affects everything. Every specific experience is filtered through the global beliefs. So every language experience I had was filtered through this belief "I'm not a good language learner." And if I have the opposite belief "I'm a great language learner" well then every experience will be filtered through that.

Okay, so we need to choose our global beliefs. It's very important. We need to develop empowering global beliefs as well. Not just beliefs about English or beliefs about specific things, but also beliefs about ourselves. Who we are, what we can do, what kind of person we are. These are the most important kinds of beliefs, these global identity beliefs. So you need to look at your own right now about English and learning in general. Do you have limiting, negative global beliefs? What do you think about yourself? Do you think "Oh, I'm not good at English." Or do you think "Oh, I am a fantastic English learner. I am a fantastic English speaker. I learn languages easily and quickly." Which one? It's a big, big difference. It will have a big effect which one you choose.

So let's talk about how can you build up this identity? How can you choose your identity? Well the first thing you need to decide, just rationally, very carefully, just thinking logically, what kind of beliefs would help you? What kind of beliefs would guarantee your success? Those are the ones you want to choose. Consciously choose the beliefs you want about yourself. So go ahead right now, pause this. Get a piece of paper and write down maybe three or four beliefs, positive, strong beliefs that will change your feeling about yourself. Write down at least a couple that are related to

language learning and English learning, English speaking, and maybe just some very general ones about yourself. And begin every sentence with “I am...” I am a great language learner. I am a great English speaker. I am a fast learner, etc. Okay? So four or five, I want you to write them down. Four or five positive empowering global beliefs, identity beliefs. I am...something. And then after you finish, hit play again and we'll continue. So pause right now and do this, real quick.

Okay, did you do it? Did you write down your empowering, strong global beliefs? Beliefs about yourself, the ones you want. Good. Well, here's what you're going to do now. You're going to make those strong. And if you remember, the way we make a belief stronger is we add references, we add experiences, we add evidence. We add specific examples that show that it's true. And here's what you're going to do. You're going to think back, think in your life. Think about a time, any time, one experience where you succeeded. You did something that was difficult and you succeeded. And I want you to write that down again. Pause really quickly, write down just one example. Something you did that was difficult, you succeeded even though it was difficult. Go ahead, pause, do it.

Okay. Here's what I want you to do now. Think again. We're going to find another reference, another example. Think back again in your life, any time in your life, now, in the past, in the far past, as a child, last week, yesterday, doesn't matter. I want you to think about a time when you learned something...a time when you learned something that seemed difficult. So you learned something, it might have seemed tough at the time, but you did it. You learned it, a new skill, knowledge, anything. Just think about successful times in your past when you learned something. And you should have more than one so I would like you to write down four or five of these. Four or five successful learning experiences, things that you learned. One example, we all have, you learned your native language. You are a master of your native language. Write that down. And write down four or five other examples of successful learning in your past.

Okay, did you do it? Good. Now I want you to think back, this one might be a little tougher for some of you, maybe not. I hope not. I want you to think back to a time in your past where you were successful with English. Maybe a time where you read something and you understood it and you're really happy “Wow, I understood that article. I understood that story.” Maybe a time when you listened to something in English and you understood, and you were very happy. Maybe a time where you spoke a little bit of English and you felt proud, you felt strong “Oh, this is great. I just spoke English.” Maybe you wrote something in English. It doesn't matter. It does not have to be big, something small is fine. But I want you to find two, three, four, maybe five, man, maybe ten if you have them, experiences, specific examples of success with English. They can be small, it's okay. Just little examples from your past when you did something successfully with English. Pause now and write them down.

Alright, did you do it? So now here we have, you have a list of examples. You have examples of meeting a challenge, doing something difficult in your past. You have examples of learning difficult things in your past. You have examples of succeeding

with English in your past. Review them, remember them. And the next step, with each one, one by one, you're going to remember these and you're going to remember them vividly. Remember that word? Vividly, colorfully, big, clear. So take the first one on your list. A past challenge, something in the past that was difficult but you succeeded. Imagine it. See it in your head right now. See the picture of yourself succeeding. Now make that picture bigger. Bring it closer to you. Make it large. Make it brighter, like a TV set. Turn it, make it brighter, more light, more light. More light, it's big and it's bright now, this success that you had in your past. Now add color. See all the colors in this picture. Make it very colorful. Remember all of the colors in this experience, in this picture. It's big. It's bright. It's colorful.

And finally, associate with the picture. Associate, associate means you're connected, you're in the picture. In psychology we can disassociate or we can associate. Disassociate means you're separate from something, an experience for example. It's like you're looking at it from the outside. But if you associate with it, it means you're in it. You're part of it. So I want you to associate with this picture. Step into the picture. You are there again. There you are, in your body again in this successful challenge. You did it successfully, something that was difficult. You're there. It's big. It's bright. It's colorful. Remember every detail. Feel what you felt at that time. Feel the feelings again. See what you saw. Hear what you heard. Live it again.

Now come back. Now the next one, choose again something on your list. A time when you learned something difficult, you succeeded. It was difficult but you learned it, you mastered it. And again, see the picture. Make that picture larger and larger and larger. Turn it up again, brighter and brighter and brighter. Add color, make it more colorful, more colorful. And finally, step into the picture. Associate with the experience. Live it again. Be there again with this second experience. Successful learning, you did it. Feel it. Feel how it felt. Live it again, breathe it again. Feels good.

One more time, let's do it again. From your list choose a successful English experience. Anything, it can be small, it's okay. It can be big, that's fine, too. A time you did something with English successfully, you understood. You spoke. You read something. It doesn't matter. But you had some kind of success with English in the past. I know you have something. So pick one. Got it? And one more time, the same thing. See that picture. See yourself succeeding. Speaking English or understanding it.

Live it again. See it. Now make that picture bigger, bigger, closer to you, closer to you, closer, bigger, larger, larger, larger. Let's add some light. Turn it up. Make it brighter and brighter and brighter. A nice bright, large picture in your brain, this successful experience from your past with English. Once again add color. It should be a colorful picture. Remember the colors. See them clearly, distinctly, powerfully, vividly. And the last step, step into the picture. Become part of the picture. Associate with it. Be in that experience again. Live it again. Live it again, the success with English. Feel what you felt. Feel the happiness. Feel the pride.

Okay, and come back again. Now here's what I want you to do. Every day this week I want you to do this. I want you to review your list. Look at this list and do this exercise every time, every day. You pick something from your list. See it. Make it bigger. Make it brighter, more colorful. And then step into it and live it again. Feel it again. Do this every day this week. You'll start to change your global beliefs. You'll change your identity. And just to be sure, make sure you write down those beliefs "I am a fast learner of English. I am an excellent English speaker." Write those down and review them also. Through this process, by doing this just one week, maybe ten days, maybe two weeks, you will have a big change in your identity related to English.

You can do this in any part of your life. I'm focused on English learning so that's what we're focusing on but you can actually do this with anything. But for now, focus on English and see if it makes a difference. See how it will change your learning, your confidence, your feelings when you learn English, when you speak English. You'll feel stronger. You'll feel smarter. You'll feel more successful and you'll become more successful by doing this.

Alright, well that is the end of our main talk for "Identity." I will see you next time.