

Repetition Main Text

Hi this is AJ. Welcome to the seventh lesson. Let's begin. This one is called "Repetition with Intensity." Intensity means power, concentrated power, really, is what it means. Of course, repetition means doing something again and again and again and again and again. So maybe this is the bad news or the good news, I don't know, but the truth is to learn English, to learn any language, to learn any skill, to be a master you have to have a lot of repetition. And this is something that a lot of people don't like and they go "Oh my god, I'm bored. I don't want to listen to this again. I don't want to do this again and again and again."

I'll give you a small example. I've recently started taking singing lessons and every lesson we do the same thing. We do these scales, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. Every single time. Every day, same scales, same exercises. And anyone who wants to get really good at singing, and I do want to get good, has to do this. You have to repeat. You can't just say "Oh, I already know this. I did it 10 times so I'm finished and let's do something new."

Unfortunately a lot of people have this idea with language learning for some reason. Most people understand if you learn a sport you have to repeat the same basic actions again and again and again. If you want to be great at basketball, you probably know you have to practice dribbling, [which] means bouncing the ball, passing and shooting the ball, again and again and again and again. Michael Jordan practiced these same basic skills from a child until he finished his career. What, 20 years maybe, every day practicing the same skills, again and again. And not just practicing, practicing with emotion, practicing with power, practicing with energy, every day for 20 years or more. We've already mentioned Tiger Woods a lot, same thing with golf. He practices the same skills again and again and again and again, every single day, years and years and years.

So why, when we're learning English or learning a language, do we say "Oh, I don't want to study this any more, I already know it. I already know the present tense. I already know these words. I already know this grammar. I already know this lesson." What, maybe you listened to it 7 times, 5 times? It's not enough. We need a lot of repetition, a lot of repetition with power, with intensity. Your whole life, that's why babies learn so quickly and so well, that's why I'm a master of English and not a master of Spanish. Because every day for 40 years I have been listening to English, the same basic English.

When I was 5 years old I didn't tell my mom "Mom, I already know the past tense so stop using it. Let's learn something more difficult now. I'm bored with the past tense."

Of course, that's ridiculous, right? I'm still hearing the past tense used correctly constantly, every single day of my life. And that's why I can use the past tense without thinking, totally effortlessly. Because it's something I hear again and again and again and again and again and I have since I was born until right now and you need to decide that you're going to do this, too. So forget this idea of levels. Forget levels, there is no level. You're not an advanced English speaker and then suddenly "Oh, I don't need to worry about the past tense anymore. Oh, I already know the present tense, I'm an advanced speaker."

Well bullshit! It's not true. You never finish. And in fact you have to focus on the basic things, the most frequent, core, fundamental, important parts of the language. You have to focus on them every day, you never stop. Yes, you'll start to learn some advanced vocabulary. Yes, you'll learn some of that great advanced grammar that you always want to learn. But that stuff is just extra. Always, the core, main focus of your learning must be the fundamentals, the high frequency words, the most common grammar structures, and the basic pronunciation of the language. You never stop practicing those. You never stop improving them. Every day you continue to focus on them.

Okay, you believe me? Alright, we agree? Alright, good. Well, your next question is probably how. Because the problem with this is that it gets boring. Right, and you're like "Oh, I don't want to do it again." And this is a problem that everybody has. Everyone who wants to be a master has this same exact problem. I'm sure Michael Jordan at sometime said "I'm sick of shooting free throws." Free throws are the basic, same shot, all basketball players practice them every day for all their life. Probably at some time he decided, "Oh man, I've already done this 20,000 times, I don't want to do it again." But then he said, oh, I need to. He realized that he could never stop.

How does Tiger Woods keep going? How does he continue to practice the same things every day when he's already a master? It's an emotional problem, right? It's a mental problem. It's not a physical problem. It's easy to do, the problem is we stop wanting to do it. So again, it's a problem of our mentality. It's a problem of our psychology. And we have to learn how to practice with a lot of repetition but continue to feel strong, continue to have energy and intensity. That's the trick. That's the secret.

We've already talked about some ways to do this. So one way you do this is to manage your emotions. Manage your peak states. You get in that peak state. That's why I keep reminding you...are you smiling? Are you moving? Is your head up? Are your shoulders back? Are you breathing deeply? I continue to remind you about this because it's important. It will keep your energy high. It will help you repeat again and again and again without boredom. When your body, when your physiology is strong, you get bored less easily, you focus more. You concentrate more. You can do more repetitions. You can repeat more of the same thing. That's great. So that's one of the key things, what we've already talked about, managing your emotions.

Managing your beliefs will also help. Thinking constantly about what you want in the end. Imagining yourself as a successful English speaker. All of these things are

building your energy. And that will help you repeat more often with more energy. But there's one more secret to repetition and this is something that all masters do and have always done. It's a key point to using repetition most powerfully. Because if you just repeat and do the same thing, if you do it badly, well then you're teaching yourself to perform badly. If you practice English every day with no energy, repeating, repeating, well you'll learn to be bored and tired when speaking English. And you don't want that. So here's what you're going to do.

First, of course, you're going to get yourself in that peak state again. Always, every time before you listen to English, you're going to manage your body, your physiology. You're going to move. You're going to smile. You're going to change your posture. You're going to breathe. You're going to change your emotions. You're going to change your focus. You're going to think about that big goal, all those great benefits to speaking English. And you're going to do your incantations. You're going to say "I'm a great English speaker" or "I'm getting better and better with English every day." And now you're feeling great. And you start to repeat. You say "Okay, now, I'm going to listen to that lesson again. Again, 7 times, 12 times, 20 times, 50 times, 100 times."

On the 100th time how are you going to keep your energy still? Well, you're going to get in that peak state but you're also going to change your focus. When you repeat, you don't just do the same exact thing. You find small distinctions each time. A distinction is a difference, an important difference, okay? An important difference. So you're doing the same thing, maybe you're listening to the same lesson, for example. But you, with your mind, are doing something a little differently each time, a different distinction each time. What do I mean? Let me give you an example. Let's say you listen to this lesson the first time. The first time you probably want to focus on just understanding.

You need to understand all the words I'm using. You need to understand my pronunciation. You need to, most importantly, understand the whole meaning of this lesson, of what I'm saying, the meaning, the basic meaning of the English I'm speaking. So the first time you probably read and listen at the same time. And you're focused just on the meaning, just on understanding. Maybe you do that 1 time, maybe 4 times, maybe 10 times, it depends, everybody's different. But eventually you start to feel bored. Eventually you think "I understand this, I understand the meaning. I know all these vocabulary words, no problem." Most people will then change. They'll go to a new lesson "I'm bored, I already know this vocabulary, time for a new lesson." That's what most people do.

But someone who is focused on mastery will not do that. They will stay with the same lesson. What they will do is find a new distinction, an important difference, a new way to focus. For example, you know now all of the vocabulary. You understand easily. So next you change your focus, a new distinction. Next, you don't focus on just understanding. Next, you focus on speed. You decide "I'm going to answer those mini-story questions very fast." And it becomes a game.

So the first time maybe you answer somewhat slowly. The next time you listen you try to get faster. Maybe you still need to pause, but you're getting faster. The next time you try to go faster, answer those questions more quickly. Then you try to not use the pause button. Answer before I answer. And it becomes this game, a challenge. It's repetition, it's the same thing again but now you have a new distinction, a new focus, a little bit different way of repeating. First, you were focused on just meaning and understanding. Now, you're focused on speed, the speed of your response, faster and faster and faster. And that's kind of a game, it keeps your brain awake. It keeps your brain alive. It keeps you learning with this same repetition.

Now eventually that will become boring. You'll get really fast. You'll become faster than me. At that point you have two choices. You can stop and go to a new lesson, what most people will do. But you are a master, you want to master English. So you will not do that. You will continue repeating the same lesson but, what do you need now? A new distinction, a slightly new way to focus on the same lesson.

So next, for example, you might focus on listening deeply and carefully to pronunciation, to my pronunciation. What do I mean by that? I mean you listen carefully, how do I pronounce each word? You especially listen to my intonation. Intonation is kind of the music of a language, it's when I go up and when I go down. It's when I stretch a word or say a word very quickly. All of those things are important. If you want to improve your pronunciation you've got to first listen very carefully. Not like a normal person, just listening and hearing it.

You have to really focus on the sounds. You want to hear the emotion in my voice. You want to focus, when do I get loud and when do I get quiet. What do I stress, what do I not stress. So that's your next distinction, you're going to focus on listening very carefully. Not so much for meaning, you already know that, you're going to focus this time on the sound, the music. Pretend you are a musician and you want to hear the notes, the rhythm, the small important sounds of my pronunciation. Hear everything. So you do that again and again and again, 5 times, 10 times, 15 times, 20 times or more, focused on pronunciation, each lesson, the main lesson, the vocabulary lesson, the mini-story lesson. This time you're focused on pronunciation, listening, listening, listening super carefully. Very detailed listening.

What's going to happen eventually? Boredom, you're eventually going to get bored. Not in the beginning, in the beginning it's a new challenge. Your brain is awake and alive but this will become easier and easier and finally you'll think "Oh, I finished listening to his pronunciation, I can hear it." Now you have another choice. Is it time to go to the new lesson or do you find a new distinction? Well, of course, you're a master so you're going to find a new distinction, yet again, a new focus, a small difference, something a little bit different to focus on using still the same lesson. You've been listening deeply for my pronunciation, well your next step is to imitate my pronunciation, to imitate me. And to imitate means to copy perfectly.

So now what you're going to do, you're going to listen to me, after every sentence you're going to pause. And you're going to say the same sentence. Now here's what you do not do. You do not do listen and repeat. So I say "Hi, how are you?" You pause "Hi, how are you?" I mean that's the normal school way of doing it, listen and repeat. You're not repeating, repeating has no power, repeating does nothing. You're imitating. Think like an actor or an actress. Your job is to be me, be AJ. So when I say imitate, I mean copy everything. Copy my speech exactly, perfectly, the sounds of the words, the exact pronunciation. That's just the beginning. The whole sentence, the words in the sentence, that's easy, that's just the beginning. I'm talking about my intonation, the exact music. You were listening to it before, now you're going to do it.

So when I go up, you're going to go up. And when I go down, you're going to go down. When I'm loud, you will speak loudly. When I'm quiet, you will speak quietly. You want to sound like me, just like an actor. You want to copy my emotion. So when you speak it has the same emotion and power as my speaking. Copy my accent. If you're really serious, copy how I move. You can't see me but you can imagine how am I moving. Am I standing stiff, not moving? Not usually. I usually move around a lot when I'm speaking. My hands are moving. My face is moving. You should do that, too. That's the final distinction, imitation.

You can do this with anybody, not just me. You can watch a movie and copy the actor or actress. And this is great because you have a picture to look at, so you can definitely, you can copy how they're moving their body, how they're moving as they speak. And then you're going to copy exactly how they speak. When they pause, you pause. When they're loud, you are loud. When they stretch a word, you stretch it. You copy everything. And that's an even deeper distinction, a deeper level of repetition.

So this is very important. This is how the masters do it. This is how Michael Jordan gets better and better and better, or got better and better and better as a basketball player. He didn't just shoot, shoot, shoot, same thing every day. No, every week or every month he changed his distinctions. He reached a certain level, he decided "I want to go higher." So he focused on something a little different. Same action, same skill, but now he's focusing on something even higher or something even deeper.

And when that became easy, he found something else, something else that was new and he went higher still. And he kept doing that endlessly. Same with Tiger Woods, same with anyone who is really great at what they do. It's what you did naturally as a native speaker of your language. You didn't know it, it was happening unconsciously, intuitively, effortlessly. But it's what you did as a child as you grew up. You were at a certain level but then every day or every week or every month you focused on something new, you got something new.

So that's what I want you to do. This is your homework. This is your homework for life, for the rest of your life, every day. You're going to learn more deeply than other people. You're going to repeat more with more intensity. And the way you're going to do it is by always finding new distinctions. You can start with these lessons now. You're going to

go more slowly. And you can follow my plan. You can add more to this. There's always a new distinction. If imitating me becomes easy, think of something else. Keep getting better and better. But for now, try my plan. So in the beginning you're going to listen for what?

Basically for understanding, that's the first level of repetition. Listen for understanding. Focus on the meaning, the general and specific meaning of what I'm saying. And do that for as long as you can, until you can hear it and instantly know the meaning, no problem, no effort. When that becomes super easy, then you go to the next level, the next distinction which is you're going to focus on speed. You're going to focus on answering the mini-story questions faster and faster and faster and faster, until you can beat me. What's next? What's the next distinction?

That becomes easy, then what do you do? Well then maybe after 50 or 100 repetitions with the mini-stories going fast, then maybe you decide "Well, now I'm going to listen very, very carefully and deeply to AJ's pronunciation." Every tiny detail of pronunciation, the intonation, the individual sounds, the loudness, the pauses, the emotion. Everything, carefully, carefully listening to the music of English, the music of my speech. And you'll do that as many times as possible. And then finally you'll go to the deepest distinction, the deepest for us right now, which is imitation. When that has become easy, you will go on to imitate me perfectly. You will try to copy exactly my pronunciation. Be me when you speak.

By following this system for every single lesson you will get a lot more repetitions for each lesson. Therefore, you'll learn it much more deeply. Not just a couple times then on to the next one and forget it. You won't forget this. You will never forget this. If you follow this system, every lesson will be stuck in your brain 10 years from now. You'll still remember it. I promise you but you have to follow this system.

Okay, then. Good luck. Keep finding those new distinctions, always, again and again and again. Increase your repetition. Increase the intensity. And always go deeper, deeper, deeper to a deeper level.