

931. Overcoming Fears 😨 with Zdenek - PDF WORKSHEET



In this episode I speak to Zdenek Lukas and we talk about the general topic of fears and anxieties, and overcoming them. The conversation includes normal, everyday fears we have both experienced, relating to driving a scooter on the busy streets of Vietnam, learning a language and speaking to native speakers, culture shock when living abroad and more.

During the conversation we used a variety of expressions for talking about fear, but also for plenty of other things related to this topic.

Contents for this PDF

1. **A list of vocabulary** which came up during the conversation
2. **A detailed vocabulary list** including definitions, more examples, memory prompts, discussion questions and phonemic transcriptions.
3. **A big vocabulary quiz** - use it to test your memory and understanding of the vocabulary in the list
4. **A full episode transcript** - every word of the episode, transcribed.

You're welcome!

1. Vocabulary List

Language which came up during the conversation

- To go **out of your comfort zone**
- To be **whisked away**
- To (not) be **a walk in the park**
- To **let the cat out of the bag** - I let the cat out of the bag (I said the reason why we're doing this, revealed the truth or real reason for something - Zdenek wanted to talk about riding a scooter in Vietnam)
- **When in Rome, do as the Romans do**
- To be **blasé** - I was a bit blasé about it
- To be **hair-raising** - It was pretty hair-raising
- To have/get **goosebumps**
- The **hairs on the back of your neck** stand up
- It was **an absolutely terrifying experience**
- **God forbid** - If something were to happen, god forbid, then the bicycle would probably be in a worse state than another vehicle.
- To **jinx** something - You would jinx it
- To **tempt fate** - You wouldn't want to tempt fate by mentioning it
- A **loaded** word - Fear is a loaded word
- To **manifest** itself - Fear could manifest itself in all sorts of forms
- **Peer pressure**

- To **play something down** - The importance of English - you can't play that down
- To be **thrown in at the deep end** - I was thrown in at the deep end
- **Sink or swim** - You have to sink or swim
- To **drown**
- To **remember** something **distinctly** - I remember that distinctly
- **eye -opening** - It was an eye-opening moment
- **A wake-up call** - It was a wake-up call
- **A reality check** - It was a reality check
- **No pain, no gain**
- To **hit the ground running** - You hit the ground running (do your teaching qualification after having done quite a lot of teaching practice already)
- To **tackle** something - You tackle their grammatical errors
- **Anxiety** and **nerves** - There was a lot of anxiety and nerves, especially in the moments preceding the lesson
- To get **butterflies in your stomach** - You get butterflies in your stomach
- A **tightrope walk** - It's like a tightrope walk
- To be **rattling around** - You've got all these teaching principles and methods rattling around in your brain
- To **live up to** something - You feel like "I'm not living up to what they think I should be"
- **Slouched, hunched** - I remember being slouched, hunched
- **Fight or flight** - It's a flight or flight mechanism

- To be **brave** - You have to be brave in these situations. You don't have to be perfect.
- To **face your fears**, to **overcome** your fears - To face your fears, to overcome them
- **Bravery** is not the **absence** of fears, it's acting in spite of them.
- **Complacent** - Now I'm starting to feel complacent. I'm not feeling anxious enough, maybe there's a problem.
- **Cool, calm and collected** - It's preferable to be cool, calm and collected.
- To be **inhibited** by nerves - I do a much better job now, than when I was inhibited by nerves.
- A **steep learning curve** - It's a steep learning curve.
- To **dread** something - I used to dread those observed lessons.
- To be **repellant**, to be **wary** of something - A slithery snake is repellant to us because at a very instinctive level we know that we should be wary of that.
- **Fight, flight, freeze, flop, fawn.**
- **Overwhelming**, to **faint** - It becomes overwhelming and you faint.
- The **pecking order** - In the pecking order, pedestrians are at the bottom.
- **Jerky** movements, **sudden** movements - Don't make any jerky movements or anything. No sudden movements.
- To **pluck up** the courage to do something - Plucking up the courage to step into the road.
- To have **the right of way** - The larger vehicles have the right of way.

- **Organised chaos** - It's organised chaos.
 - To **stick out like a sore thumb** - You're sticking out like a sore thumb.
 - **Sore**, to **swell up**, to **stick out** - If you hit your thumb with a hammer it will be very sore. It'll go red and swell up, and then it will stick out.
 - Like a **fish out of water**.
 - To **blend in** - You feel like you don't blend in at all.
 - To **go with the flow** - You've got to try to go with the flow.
-

3. Extended Vocabulary List (with definitions, answers and discussion questions)

Comprehensive Vocabulary List

1. To go out of your comfort zone

- **Definition:** To do something unfamiliar or challenging that pushes personal boundaries.
- **Example:** Moving to a new country really forced me to go out of my comfort zone.
- **Discussion Question:** When was the last time you stepped out of your comfort zone? How did it feel?

2. To be whisked away

- **Definition:** To be taken away quickly and suddenly.
- **Example:** She was whisked away on a surprise holiday to Italy.

- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever been whisked away unexpectedly? Where did you go?

3. To (not) be a walk in the park

- **Definition:** (Not) to be easy or effortless.
- **Example:** Learning a new language is not a walk in the park, but it's worth it.
- **Discussion Question:** What is something you've done that was definitely not a walk in the park?

4. To let the cat out of the bag

- **Definition:** To accidentally reveal a secret.
- **Example:** He let the cat out of the bag about the surprise party.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever let the cat out of the bag? What happened?

5. When in Rome, do as the Romans do

- **Definition:** Adapt to the customs of the place you are visiting.
- **Example:** I don't usually take afternoon naps, but when in Rome...
- **Discussion Question:** Do you think it's important to follow local customs when travelling? Why?

6. To be blasé

- **Definition:** To be unimpressed or indifferent to something.
- **Example:** I was a bit blasé about it.
- **Discussion Question:** What is something people get excited about that you feel blasé about?

7. To be hair-raising

- **Definition:** To be very frightening or exciting.
- **Example:** The drive along the cliffside was a hair-raising experience.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever had a hair-raising experience?

8. To have/get goosebumps

- **Definition:** To feel a physical reaction to cold, fear, or strong emotions.
- **Example:** The song was so beautiful that I got goosebumps.
- **Discussion Question:** What kind of music or movies give you goosebumps?

9. The hairs on the back of your neck stand up

- **Definition:** To feel very scared or uneasy.
- **Example:** I heard a strange noise, and the hairs on the back of my neck stood up.
- **Discussion Question:** What situations make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up?

10. It was an absolutely terrifying experience

- **Definition:** A situation that was extremely frightening.
- **Example:** Getting lost in the mountains at night was an absolutely terrifying experience.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever had an absolutely terrifying experience?

11. God forbid

- **Definition:** Used to express the hope that something will not happen.
- **Example:** If something were to happen, God forbid, then the bicycle would probably be in a worse state than another vehicle.
- **Discussion Question:** In what situations might you say “God forbid”?

12. To jinx something

- **Definition:** To bring bad luck by talking about something in advance.
- **Example:** You would jinx it if you said everything was going well before the exam.
- **Discussion Question:** Do you believe in jinxes? Why or why not?

13. To tempt fate

- **Definition:** To take unnecessary risks or invite bad luck.
- **Example:** You wouldn't want to tempt fate by mentioning it.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever felt like you were tempting fate?

14. A loaded word

- **Definition:** A word with strong emotional or political connotations.
- **Example:** Fear is a loaded word.
- **Discussion Question:** Can you think of other words that are loaded?

15. To manifest itself

- **Definition:** To appear or become visible in a particular way.
- **Example:** Fear could manifest itself in all sorts of forms.
- **Discussion Question:** How do different emotions manifest themselves in people?

16. Peer pressure

- **Definition:** The influence of people from one's social group to conform to expectations.
- **Example:** Teenagers often face peer pressure to fit in.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever experienced peer pressure? How did you handle it?

17. To play something down

- **Definition:** To make something seem less important than it really is.
- **Example:** You can't play down the importance of English.
- **Discussion Question:** Why do people sometimes play things down?

18. To be thrown in at the deep end

- **Definition:** To be put into a challenging situation without preparation.
- **Example:** I was thrown in at the deep end.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever been thrown in at the deep end?

19. Sink or swim

- **Definition:** To succeed or fail without help.
- **Example:** You have to sink or swim.

- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever been in a sink-or-swim situation?

20. To drown

- **Definition:** To die by being submerged in water, or to be overwhelmed.
- **Example:** I felt like I was drowning in work.
- **Discussion Question:** What situations make you feel overwhelmed?

21. To remember something distinctly

- **Definition:** To recall something clearly and vividly.
- **Example:** I remember that distinctly.
- **Discussion Question:** What's a memory you remember distinctly?

22. Eye-opening

- **Definition:** Making someone realise something surprising or important.
- **Example:** It was an eye-opening moment.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever had an eye-opening experience?

23. A wake-up call

- **Definition:** A shocking event that makes someone change their behaviour.
- **Example:** It was a wake-up call.
- **Discussion Question:** Have you ever had a wake-up call in your life?

24. A reality check

- **Definition:** Something that forces someone to see things as they are.
- **Example:** It was a reality check.
- **Discussion Question:** When have you experienced a reality check?

25. No pain, no gain

- **Definition:** Success requires hard work and effort, even if it's difficult or painful.
- **Example sentence:** "It's a tough journey, but remember, no pain, no gain."
- **Discussion question:** Do you agree with the saying "no pain, no gain"? Can you think of a time when hard work led to success for you?

26. To hit the ground running

- **Definition:** To begin something with a lot of energy and enthusiasm, with immediate success.
- **Example sentence:** "You hit the ground running after having done quite a lot of teaching practice already."
- **Discussion question:** How can someone ensure they hit the ground running when starting a new job or project?

27. To tackle something

- **Definition:** To deal with or approach a problem or challenge in a determined way.

- **Example sentence:** "You tackle their grammatical errors head-on."
- **Discussion question:** What's the best way to tackle a difficult task or problem?

28. Anxiety and nerves

- **Definition:** Feelings of worry, fear, or unease, especially about something important.
- **Example sentence:** "There was a lot of anxiety and nerves, especially in the moments preceding the lesson."
- **Discussion question:** How do you handle anxiety and nerves before a big event?

29. To get butterflies in your stomach

- **Definition:** To feel nervous or excited, especially before something important.
- **Example sentence:** "You get butterflies in your stomach before the lesson starts."
- **Discussion question:** What situations make you get butterflies in your stomach?

30. A tightrope walk

- **Definition:** A situation where there is a lot of risk or uncertainty, requiring careful balance.
- **Example sentence:** "It's like a tightrope walk, trying to balance the needs of the students and the lesson plan."

- **Discussion question:** Can you think of a time when you had to walk a tightrope in a difficult situation?

31. To be rattling around

- **Definition:** To be disorganized or mentally overwhelmed by thoughts or ideas.
- **Example sentence:** "You've got all these teaching principles and methods rattling around in your brain."
- **Discussion question:** How do you deal with feeling like your mind is rattling around with too many thoughts?

32. To live up to something

- **Definition:** To meet the expectations or standards that others have set for you.
- **Example sentence:** "You feel like 'I'm not living up to what they think I should be.'"
- **Discussion question:** How do you cope when you feel you're not living up to expectations?

33. Slouched, hunched

- **Definition:** To sit or stand in a way that is not straight, often due to tiredness or poor posture.
- **Example sentence:** "I remember being slouched, hunched over when I was exhausted."
- **Discussion question:** How can you improve your posture when sitting for long periods?

34. **Fight or flight**

- **Definition:** A natural response to danger where you either prepare to confront it (fight) or escape from it (flight).
- **Example sentence:** "It's a flight or fight mechanism triggered by stressful situations."
- **Discussion question:** In stressful situations, do you tend to fight or flee? Why?

35. **To be brave**

- **Definition:** To show courage in the face of fear or difficulty.
- **Example sentence:** "You have to be brave in these situations. You don't have to be perfect."
- **Discussion question:** What's the bravest thing you've ever done?

36. **To face your fears, to overcome your fears**

- **Definition:** To confront and deal with things that cause anxiety or fear, in order to move past them.
- **Example sentence:** "To face your fears, to overcome them, is part of growing as a person."
- **Discussion question:** What fear would you most like to overcome, and how could you do it?

37. **Bravery is not the absence of fears, it's acting in spite of them**

- **Definition:** True bravery is doing what's necessary even when you are afraid.
- **Example sentence:** "Bravery is not the absence of fears; it's acting in spite of them."
- **Discussion question:** Can you think of an example where you acted bravely despite being scared?

38. Complacent

- **Definition:** Self-satisfied and unconcerned, often to the point of neglecting improvement.
- **Example sentence:** "Now I'm starting to feel complacent. I'm not feeling anxious enough, maybe there's a problem."
- **Discussion question:** How can complacency negatively affect your personal or professional life?

39. Cool, calm, and collected

- **Definition:** To remain calm and composed, especially in a stressful or difficult situation.
- **Example sentence:** "It's preferable to be cool, calm, and collected during a crisis."
- **Discussion question:** How do you stay cool, calm, and collected when things get stressful?

40. To be inhibited by nerves

- **Definition:** To be held back or restrained by nervousness or fear.

- **Example sentence:** "I do a much better job now, than when I was inhibited by nerves."
- **Discussion question:** Have nerves ever inhibited you from doing your best? How did you overcome it?

41. A steep learning curve

- **Definition:** A situation where learning something new is difficult and requires a lot of effort in a short amount of time.
- **Example sentence:** "It's a steep learning curve when you first start teaching."
- **Discussion question:** What's something that you had a steep learning curve with? How did you handle it?

42. To dread something

- **Definition:** To feel great fear or anxiety about something that is going to happen.
- **Example sentence:** "I used to dread those observed lessons, worried about being judged."
- **Discussion question:** What's something you dread doing, and why?

43. To be repellant, to be wary of something

- **Definition:** To be instinctively averse to or cautious about something because it seems dangerous or unappealing.

- **Example sentence:** "A slithery snake is repellant to us because at a very instinctive level we know that we should be wary of that."
- **Discussion question:** Is there something you feel instinctively wary of, even if you know it's not dangerous?

44. **Fight, flight, freeze, flop, fawn**

- **Definition:** Additional responses to stress or danger: freezing, failing, or trying to please others.
- **Example sentence:** "The five Fs—fight, flight, freeze, flop, fawn—are all natural responses to stress."
- **Discussion question:** Which of these responses do you think you would have in a stressful situation?

45. **Overwhelming, to faint**

- **Definition:** To be so emotionally or physically overwhelmed that one becomes unable to function or passes out.
- **Example sentence:** "It becomes overwhelming, and you faint from the pressure."
- **Discussion question:** Have you ever been in a situation where you felt overwhelmed to the point of fainting or nearly fainting?

46. **The pecking order**

- **Definition:** The hierarchical order in a group, where some individuals have more power or influence than others.
- **Example sentence:** "In the pecking order, pedestrians are at the bottom."
- **Discussion question:** How does the pecking order affect group dynamics in the workplace or social settings?

47. Jerky movements, sudden movements

- **Definition:** Quick, awkward, or unexpected movements that can cause a negative reaction.
- **Example sentence:** "Don't make any jerky movements or anything that could startle someone."
- **Discussion question:** Why do sudden or jerky movements often lead to misunderstandings or accidents?

48. To pluck up the courage to do something

- **Definition:** To gather the bravery or confidence to do something difficult or scary.
- **Example sentence:** "Plucking up the courage to step into the road was a moment of bravery."
- **Discussion question:** What's something you had to pluck up the courage to do?

49. To have the right of way

- **Definition:** The legal or social right to proceed before others in a specific situation (e.g., on the road).
- **Example sentence:** "The larger vehicles have the right of way in this situation."
- **Discussion question:** How do you feel about situations where someone has the right of way but still waits for others?

50. Organised chaos

- **Definition:** A situation that appears disordered but is actually under control.
- **Example sentence:** "It's organised chaos, but somehow everything gets done."
- **Discussion question:** Can you think of a time when something seemed like organised chaos? How was it managed?

51. To stick out like a sore thumb

- **Definition:** To be very noticeable, often because you are different in some way.
- **Example sentence:** "You're sticking out like a sore thumb in that crowd."
- **Discussion question:** Have you ever felt like you stuck out like a sore thumb? How did you handle it?

52. Sore, to swell up, to stick out

- **Definition:** Describes something painful or inflamed, typically after an injury.

- **Example sentence:** "If you hit your thumb with a hammer, it will be very sore. It'll swell up, and then it will stick out."
- **Discussion question:** What's the worst injury you've had that caused swelling or soreness?

53. **Like a fish out of water**

- **Definition:** To feel uncomfortable or out of place in a new situation.
- **Example sentence:** "You'll feel like a fish out of water when you move to a new city."
- **Discussion question:** Have you ever felt like a fish out of water? What was that experience like?

54. **To blend in**

- **Definition:** To look or behave in a way that is not noticeable or different from the people around you.
- **Example sentence:** "You feel like you don't blend in at all in this new group."
- **Discussion question:** Do you prefer to blend in with a group, or do you like to stand out?

55. **To go with the flow**

- **Definition:** To adapt to the way things are going, without trying to control everything.
- **Example sentence:** "You've got to try to go with the flow during the busy event."

- **Discussion question:** Do you find it easy or difficult to go with the flow when plans change unexpectedly?
-

3. Big Vocabulary Quiz (answers below)

Part 1: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What does "to go out of your comfort zone" mean?
 - a) To stay where you feel safe and familiar
 - b) To try something new and challenging
 - c) To return home after a long trip
 - d) To avoid risky situations
2. "To let the cat out of the bag" means:
 - a) To release a pet
 - b) To reveal a secret unintentionally
 - c) To lose control
 - d) To solve a problem
3. If something is "hair-raising," it is:
 - a) Extremely boring
 - b) Very exciting or frightening
 - c) Difficult to understand
 - d) Related to hair care
4. Which phrase means "to feel extremely nervous"?
 - a) To tempt fate

- b) To be rattling around
- c) To get butterflies in your stomach
- d) To hit the ground running

5. What does "a loaded word" mean?
- a) A word that has strong emotional or political meaning
 - b) A word with many letters
 - c) A word that is difficult to pronounce
 - d) A word that people frequently use incorrectly

Part 2: Fill in the Blank

Use the correct word or phrase from the list to complete each sentence.

6. When learning a new skill, there is often a _____, meaning that progress is difficult at first but gets easier over time.
7. It was an _____ experience—I saw things in a completely new way.
8. Some people feel _____ about public speaking, but with practice, they can overcome their fear.
9. We were _____ in that big empty house after the children moved out.

10. If you want to succeed in a new job, you need to _____ and start working hard from day one.

Part 3: Matching

Match the phrases to their correct definitions.

11. Fight or flight
 12. When in Rome, do as the Romans do
 13. To be complacent
 14. To be wary of something
 15. Organised chaos
-
- a) To feel overly comfortable and not make an effort to improve
 - b) To be cautious and careful
 - c) The idea that you should adapt to local customs when visiting a new place
 - d) A system that seems chaotic but actually functions well
 - e) A biological response to danger where you either confront or flee from a threat

Part 4: True or False

Decide whether each statement is true or false.

16. "To play something down" means to exaggerate its importance. (T/F)
17. "To be brave" means to act despite feeling afraid. (T/F)
18. "To be blasé" means to be extremely excited about something. (T/F)
19. "To jinx something" means to bring good luck. (T/F)

20. "To pluck up the courage" means to gradually build confidence before doing something difficult. (T/F)

Part 5: Open-ended Questions

Answer in complete sentences.

21. Describe a time when you were "thrown in at the deep end."

Sample Answer: When I started my first teaching job, I was given a class without much preparation. I had to figure out how to manage the students and deliver the lesson as I went along. It was a real sink-or-swim moment.

22. How can "peer pressure" influence people's decisions?

Sample Answer: Peer pressure can make people do things they wouldn't normally do because they want to fit in. For example, a teenager might start smoking because their friends do it, even if they know it's bad for their health.

23. Give an example of a "wake-up call" moment in life.

Sample Answer: Failing my first university exam was a wake-up call for me. It made me realise that I needed to take my studies more seriously and manage my time better.

24. How does "tempting fate" relate to superstitions?

Sample Answer: People believe that tempting fate means inviting bad luck by talking about something before it happens. For example, saying "I never get sick" might be tempting fate, as you could end up catching a cold soon after.

25. Explain the meaning of "to stick out like a sore thumb" and use it in a sentence.

Sample Answer: "To stick out like a sore thumb" means to be very noticeable in an obvious or awkward way. For example, "Wearing a bright pink suit to a black-tie event made him stick out like a sore thumb."

Answer Key

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. b
2. b
3. b
4. c
5. a

Part 2: Fill in the Blank

6. steep learning curve
7. eye-opening

- 8. anxiety and nerves
- 9. rattling around
- 10. hit the ground running

Part 3: Matching 11. e

- 12. c
- 13. a
- 14. b
- 15. d

Part 4: True or False 16. F

- 17. T
- 18. F
- 19. F
- 20. T

Part 5: Open-ended Questions (Sample answers provided above)

Episode Transcript

This transcript was generated using AI transcription software. If you find any errors, please report them to me here luketeacher@hotmail.com

You're listening to Luke's English Podcast. For more information, visit teacherluke.co.uk.

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. Hello! How are you doing today? I hope you're doing fine.

Now, a brand new episode, and this one is another conversation episode for you to give you some more listening practice and the chance to pick up vocabulary in the context of a natural conversation. My guest today in this one is Zdenek Lukas, back on the podcast once again. Zdenek's been on this show a few times, but just in case you don't know him, he is an English teacher originally from the Czech Republic, currently living in Vietnam.

He was first on this podcast in episodes number 569 and 570, when he talked about his story of learning English, living in the UK, and becoming an English teacher. He is a podcaster too, he does Zdenek's English Podcast, and also more recently his show about learning English with football called the Footglish Podcast. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts.

So this conversation with Zdenek today is all about fear. This is our topic, fear, things which give us fear or have given us fear in our lives and overcoming those fears. So yes, fear, being frightened, being scared, feeling anxious or nervous about things.

So we talk about moments when we've been scared or felt very anxious, what happened, how we dealt with them, and what we learned from them. This contains anecdotes from our lives, so little stories and descriptions of things that have happened to us, and also plenty of language for talking about this whole subject. So there's definitely a lot of vocabulary for you to pick up from this.

I should say kind of a little disclaimer, we talk about fear and overcoming fears, but neither of us are experts in this area. I mean, we're not psychologists or professionals in the area of cognitive behavioural therapy or anything like that. We're just two blokes talking about our experiences.

And the aim of this episode really is just to have a natural conversation on the subject and let you notice the way that people talk about this topic in English. So watch out for vocabulary as we go through this. That's hopefully what you should always be doing when you listen to these conversations.

It should be a chance to notice and pick up bits of English. So watch out for vocab. And that means the language we use to directly describe frightening experiences, but also other idioms and expressions around the subject.

So obviously, you've already heard me say the word fear, to have fear, to experience fear, to overcome your fear or your fears, like specific fears. But also we talk about things being scary or being scared of things, being afraid of things, being nervous and being anxious or having nerves or experiencing anxiety. Right.

These are all like words relating to fear, but also lots of other things about dealing with fear and learning from it, for example, being thrown in at the deep end or fight or flight responses and lots of vocab that comes up. Now you'll hear us explaining some of that vocab as it comes up. You know, we stop and sort of recap some of the things that we've said, but also you

can check the episode PDF for this episode, which is available on the episode page on my website.

How many times did I say episode then? Four, I think. But anyway, you can find the PDF for this, which contains lots of the notes for things that we say and other details to help you build your vocabulary with this PDF on the episode page on my website link in the description. We're ready to start in just a second, but there's just one more thing I need to say.

As you listen to this conversation, you might hear that my voice is not as clearly recorded as usual. This is because, annoyingly, I had the wrong microphone selected during the conversation, which we recorded remotely. I had the wrong microphone selected.

So I was recorded not by my normal microphone, but by my laptop's inbuilt microphone. I didn't realise that was happening. And this is why my side of the conversation sounds quite roomy and it's less clear than usual.

I think it's okay. You can hear me all right, but that's why I sound a bit different this time because I made the schoolboy error of not double checking my sound settings before I hit record. But, you know, you live and learn.

Thankfully, my laptop microphone was running and recording. So there was something because that is certainly one of my biggest fears as a podcaster, recording an episode and then realising that you didn't actually set it up properly and the

audio was not captured. And then when you review the file or the recording, all you have is just silence.

You know, that's just the worst. That's the sort of thing that gives me nightmares, to be honest. This is something I wake up in the middle of the night, like in a cold sweat.

Oh, God, I forgot to press record or got the wrong microphone was selected. Oh, my wife's like, are you OK? So, yeah, God, it's just a dream. And she's like, it's just, you know, it's just a dream.

It's just a dream. Luke, are you all right? The microphone. Ah.

So that's normally a nightmare. Anyway, without any further ado, let's get started then with this episode. And here we go.

So why have we decided to talk about being scared of things? I suppose I suggested it to you. We were thinking, so you're thinking about what we could talk about. And well, I'm in Vietnam and it's absolutely a completely different culture from, let's say, Western Europe.

So obviously there were a few moments that I had to deal with or overcome or get used to, you could say. And fear is definitely part of what I experience here. But to be honest, I'm making it sound very dramatic.

Yeah, because Vietnam is a lovely place, of course. It's not like a scary place or anything. No, not at all.

I know what you mean. When you go to a place that's totally different. Yeah, there is that feeling of being out of your comfort zone.

But just because you don't necessarily know all of the customs and all the ways of doing things. I know exactly how you feel when I've moved to different places, even moving to France when it's not that far away from England or that different, really. But just the fact that people speak a different language.

When I first moved here, or first times I visited, and let's say when my girlfriend was at work, and I was just like knocking around, trying to find a place to eat or just, you know, going to cafes and things like that. Yeah, there's that sense of nerves of kind of like, Oh, God, that's right. I hope I'm doing this right.

You know, I don't want to sit, I would walk around the city looking for a place to sit and have a coffee. And I'd walk past cafes. And I'd just kind of go, No, I don't like the feel of that one.

I don't know why. Because it's different. Like in England, you go to a pub, you just go to the bar, and order your drink and sit down and the waiter leaves you alone.

Yeah. In France, you can sit down at a table, the waiter comes over, you feel like you need to have a little chat or something. So I would often sort of avoid all those, those moments.

I'm a bit better these days. It's like, it's like a little bit of culture shock, basically. Right.

And but but for you, it must have been like, not that hard, considering you have lived in Japan when you were when you were younger, right? So you went to Japan, and we know all the stories like sick in Japan, on Luke's English podcast. So I just want to ask you this question. Was it easier because of that? Because for me, it was because I have lived in the UK before.

And it felt like so much easier going to Vietnam after that experience, even though it's a different culture, but still, it's like I've done it in some capacity, you know? Yeah, absolutely. Like much, much easier coming to France. In fact, it was, I was actually up for it, you know, having when I was much younger, gone to Japan, which is obviously much farther, further away, and so on.

And going through that much more drastic change. Yeah, coming to moving to France was almost kind of like, Yeah, I'm, I'm well up for this. But, you know, when I moved to Japan, I've told the story before, but just the, I was all I was like, full of confidence and thinking, this is just wonderful.

I can't wait to go and everything and everything that feeling lasted all the way up until the moment when I got dropped off at the airport by my dad. So my dad drove me to Heathrow airports, like a two hour drive or something. And I was like, fine

in the car thinking this is going to be brilliant, you know? And then, yeah, bags out of the car and stuff.

And then I started to feel this slight feeling of nerves coming in. And you know, we rolled the bags through into the main part of the airport, you know, the, the arrivals area. And then dad was like, All right, then.

Well, look after yourself. Off you go. At that point, I was like, Yeah, my stomach sort of like dropped out of, you know, just dropped completely.

And I was like, Oh, God. Oh, wow, this is real. This is actually gonna happen.

My dad's like, Daddy's gonna go now, you know, and off he went, you know, kind of said our goodbyes. And he said, Look after yourself, keep in touch. And then I was like, Oh, God, I'm on my own now.

And I just felt so unbelievably nervous in the airport. You know, that kind of airport anxiety that you can get. Yeah.

When you're just sort of like going through check in. And there's that sense of like, Oh, I'm going to be late. I better not be late.

I've got to get the right gate. And then there's the flight. And then I've got my passport.

Where's my passport? Got to make sure it's in my pocket here. And I got my bags and stuff, getting things out of pockets and

putting them back in opening zips in bags. It's this quite a lot of anxiety.

There's a lot, there's a lot that can happen at the airport. And we haven't even mentioned the the phobia of flying itself. Right? So you know, there are a lot of people, a lot of people who really I remember my first flight, I was really uneasy about it as well.

And whenever there are turbulences, it still is a bit like, Oh, yeah, but I can't say I'm scared of flying. For example, there was a football player, right? His name was Dennis Bergkamp. I don't know if you remember him Danish player used to play for Arsenal for my favourite team Arsenal.

Hello, this is Zdenek. And I'm talking to you from the future. I've just made a terrible mistake.

Dennis Bergkamp isn't Danish. He is Dutch. Apologies to all Luke's Dutch listeners.

My bad.

And yeah, he wouldn't travel to European games, because he couldn't fly. So he only played the the domestic league, the Premier League.

And he was he was a really important player for us as well as a brilliant player to Yeah, amazing. And God so Arsenal never did

anything in the Champions League probably because of that. Is that right? It's an interesting assumption.

Yeah. I don't know. I don't know if they did.

But I'm assuming that not having Dennis Bergkamp was a big disadvantage for them. But that's interesting, isn't it? People are scared of flying it. People are very nervous about it.

And it's not logical because flying is much safer than a lot of other things. Driving to the airport is much more dangerous exactly than the actual flight itself. But yeah, that's a that's a phobia.

People have a genuine phobia of flying. Yeah, which is kind of an illogical fear. But yeah, on that flight to Japan, I was I felt awful.

I just felt so uncomfortable and nervous. But it wasn't because of the flight. It was just because I'd been sort of knocked out of my way.

Yeah, just just sort of like knocked out of my normal life. And I like that you use that phrase, that feeling of being out of your comfort zone. So I actually wrote it down.

I did my homework listeners. Luke gave me that homework. He's a teacher after all.

So he's just doing his job. We said that during the episode, we could perhaps note down bits of language that we both use and point them out. You know, language learners out there.

Yeah, we're here to help. So yeah, I said I was out of my comfort zone. Did I? You did? Yes.

Yeah. Nice. Sort of environment in which you were comfortable, right? So suddenly, that's that's hard.

Because you have to like, just imagine you're somewhere anywhere on a desert island. And now you have the first thing you have to do is to explore the bits of islands or sort of to demark. Is that a verb to demark your territory? So to speak? Yeah.

Demark. Is it demark or demarcate? I don't know which one. Demarcate.

Demarcate. Yeah. Demarcate.

Set the boundaries to demarcate your territory. Exactly. So, so that's, that's sort of, because you don't know what's waiting for you out there, right? So it's a bit scary.

It can be a bit scary. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

And just, yeah, the feeling of the foundations of normal, your normal life that you, you just had never really thought about before. Yeah. Things that you just assumed as just being just normal things.

Exactly. That were kind of gone. So that feeling of being on the plane, actually, was quite sort of symbolic in a way that I did feel I could really, I was really aware of the huge gulf beneath

me, that there was obviously my feet on the carpet, and then the fuselage of the plane or whatever, you know, and then below the plane, it was just so much space.

And then way, way down at the bottom was like Siberia or something. And I remember looking out the window and just seeing this kind of, I could see the Arctic tundra or whatever, it just looked like some frozen wasteland. Maybe it was even the canopy of the clouds, I could see, I don't know, but I thought I could see the ground.

And just, yeah, I just got this feeling of like, the earth had just gone out from under my feet. And then as soon as I arrived, as soon as I arrived in Japan, and got out of the plane and walked around, I felt absolutely fine. Because somehow I realised, oh, it's okay.

It's just, it's not that different. I don't know why I was expecting it to be so shocking. Yeah.

But anyway, just to finish this point. Yeah, going to, coming to France was, was much easier. Still not, not a walk in the park.

Hey, there's another one. Yeah, not a walk in the park, but easier than Japan, because the first few weeks of being in Japan, I also felt very sort of, yeah, still out of my comfort

zone, just that feeling about the first few days of walking down the street, trying to find something like trying to find a bank or a post office or a place to eat. And just not just being completely unfamiliar with the way the place works.

For example, I didn't realise that you have to, I was like operating like I would do in England, I was looking for a cafe, like this walking around looking for a cafe, I didn't realise you have to look up that there's, you know, all these different floors and a lot of the time, places to, you know, get to eat or cafes and stuff will be up on the fifth, sixth, seventh floor or something. So I didn't know how to read the city Japanese as well. So you I don't know, you probably couldn't speak the language at the time.

And not at all. So I felt very lost. Yeah.

And how about you then in Vietnam? Is this a feeling because you know, again, going back to the reason we're doing this episode about fears that you talked about moving to Vietnam. And although Vietnam is itself a lovely place, just the fact that you're in a different place, different culture, yeah, that brings a lot of anxiety and fear with it. So what kinds of things have you experienced? I can't say that, like, okay, it's not that bad.

Like, I'm really, I'm really making it sound overly dramatic. But I would say one thing in particular is quite hard. And that's roads.

Yes. Um, what happens is that basically Vietnamese people, they behave in a different way on the road. And also about 90% of them ride scooters or motorcycles.

So there are cars here as well, of course, and trucks and everything and bicycles. But it's like the most common means of transport for Vietnamese people, motorcycles. So I would say that you correct me if I'm wrong.

But for us Europeans, when somebody is a motorcyclist, they are usually sort of they drive this vehicle or ride this vehicle for pleasure and for speed. And just to enjoy themselves, right? But not as a transportation device. But in the end, you think of Yeah, sorry, I was gonna say you think of like those American movies where there's guys on motorbikes, you know, born to be wild.

And they're kind of like riding along open mountain highways with the air, the wind in their hair and stuff. Yeah, it's about speed. So they want to be fast and enjoy it.

And I think I'm not saying it's everyone. But I think most of most people riding motorcycles, maybe some, some of our, some of your biker listeners will prove us wrong. But I would say that it's like that, whereas here in Vietnam, it's the most common means of transport.

It's, it's, you know, Vietnam is a developing country. It's a lovely country and is developing bloody fast as well. But it is considered a developing country from the Westerner point of view.

So it's actually like the cheapest, you know, vehicle they can get. And it's convenient as well. Because roads can get quite busy, sometimes quite crowded.

And when you have a car, you're actually slower, much slower than in the, than on a scooter or motorbike. So that's one of the reasons as well. The second one is the price.

And what this means, what this means is that everyone, like I said, 90% of people has a scooter, right? Or there's one scooter per family, at least. And then what you see on the road is that everyone rides a scooter. So that's what we're talking,

right? Very young children, barely, barely legally sometimes, you know, then, um, uh, like all the people as well.

And then there's me, uh, with this irrational fear of, of, uh, getting one for myself. Right. So that's, I think this is the main reason we are probably doing this, this episode.

Uh, let me let the cat out of the bag. I think now. Um, because, because, uh, because you, you, you talked to me before about the fact that you decided living in Vietnam, it's normal to have a scooter or motorbike and you put this off, you put off getting one for a long, long time.

And you said you had an irrational fear. I would almost call it irrational because I had enough time to, to get comfortable with it. I even had some people who were trying to teach me how to do it.

And I wasn't even too bad at it. But like when, when it comes to like getting one for myself and, um, actually sort of becoming independent, right. Just it's my scooter or my motorbike and I will ride it whenever I want.

There's no one else telling me what to do or, or being, being there with me in case something happens, you know, because I like, uh, one of my friends was teaching me how to, how to ride it. Right. Let's say, but that was just one day for one hour and in a very quiet area without anyone there.

So that was like kind of simple. It's almost like riding a bicycle. Right.

But uh, anyway, so I procrastinated on this a lot and, um, ended up like just using grab, which is a very convenient, um, taxi service where you just jump on the motorbike, um, behind the, behind the driver and he will take, take you anywhere. There is an app, there's an app, right. Which you, which you can use.

And they, they, they come in within one, two minutes and it's affordable as well. So like that was kind of because of that as well, there was like no need for me to really use it. But then what, what it meant, what it meant was that I was not doing what, what the Romans do.

Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And also doing it like that.

Yeah. You feel like a tourist all the time, you know, jumping on the back of someone else's bike. Um, and yeah, do when in Rome, do as the Romans do when in Vietnam, get your own scooter.

Um, so yeah, absolutely. I mean, I, I've been to Vietnam. I went there for a couple of weeks of, you know, when eight years ago for a kind of travelling experience.

And I, when I was in Nha Trang, yeah. Right. Do you know that place? Um, big tourist destination.

Um, I rented a scooter for a day, I think it was. And, um, yeah, maybe I was a little bit, what's the word for it? Uh, uh, blasé about it. Um, I don't remember.

I thought, yeah, I'll get, I'll rent a scooter. I think the, the, the little hotel where I was staying was offering scooter rentals. Yeah.

I get the feeling. It was like the girl who worked in reception had a scooter. And when she was in reception, she wasn't using the scooter.

So they kind of let the guests rent it. You know, uh, that's the kind of way it works sometimes. It's, you know, it's not like these are scooters, which are just for rental.

These are just rent out scooters of the staff when they're not using them. So I ended up renting out this girl's scooter and you know, she was like, okay, here's the scooter. There you go.

And I sat down on it and it, you know, got the, I think, uh, did I wear a helmet? I don't know. Maybe I didn't. I think I didn't.

You don't have to. You are, you are supposed to. Yeah.

You are supposed to. All right. So maybe I did.

But, um, and the girl was standing there and someone else from the hotel was standing there and sort of like, okay, great.

Put the keys in the ignition and started it. And then just, I'd never ridden a scooter before.

And I just kind of like, cause you know, you, you learn to just gently, um, accelerate and turn and then off you go. And I just put the keys in and just accelerated the thing, jumped forwards and nearly crashed it into a load of other scooters in front of me. And we all kind of like giggled a bit, you know, and I kind of laughed nervously and they laughed as well.

And I sort of like turned the scooter around and awkwardly pushed it forwards without, you know, nearly falling over. And then off I went and I went to visit a local temple on this thing and to pray, to pray, to pray, to pray for good luck. And I, I went off down the main road near the beach and it was okay, but it was pretty hair raising.

Yeah. That's a good one. Yeah.

For you. It was quite hair-raising. It's scary, right? To the point that your, your hair, uh, your hair or hairs, is it, are we talking about hair? We're talking about hair, the thing that you have on your head, right.

The hairs on your, on your arms, which we couldn't, we could use in plural has, yeah. Hazard your arms. Right.

That's interesting. The hairs on your arms stand up, but the hair, uh, hair uncountable on your head sticks up. So I think it's sort of like both.

I think it's the hair on your head and the hairs on your arms, uh, or the hairs on the back of your neck. It depends if you have any hair, right? There are people who don't have any hair as well.

True. True. I don't know what happens when, if you are, if you don't have any hair on your body, if you shaved it off or for some other reason, um, what happens when you get scared? Does your skin sort of still do that? You have goosebumps.

Right. That's good. Goosebumps.

Yes. Yeah. Um, so it was pretty hair-raising stuff because I had to like, you know, I was okay down the little narrow side streets with no other scooters on them.

But then you get to a main road and there's like a sea of scooters all going in both directions and you have to blend in with them and then there you are. And there's lots of scooters very close to you. And then I got to the temple, parked the scooter, felt great.

Yeah. And then looked around the temple and then came on the way home, on the way back, the sun went down and it got to a point where it was like rush hour and the sun had gone down and I was scooting along in the dark. I thought, I thought you were actually making that sound.

No, it was the scooter making. Yeah, that's right. No, you don't actually have to do that when you're riding a scooter, you don't have to make the noise.

Does it help in some way, especially if you are a new, if you're a beginner? It does help with the nerves. It helps to, to, to deal with the, with the nerves, the anxiety. If you just go like that, when you're doing a scary thing, it can actually help.

And the hair, you will, you will keep, you will keep the hair raising under control as well. Yeah. Just anyway.

So I was going along like this, the sun had gone down and there's like trucks on the road as well and stuff. And it was like terrifying. Absolutely terrifying experience.

It's like, well, you're one second or one millisecond away from a disaster, basically. And you're aware of it, right? That's, that's the thing. That's always that thing that that's, that's making it hard for me.

But yeah, have you, sorry. Well, I was just going to say actually final thing, like it's terrifying, but then you realise I'm going like 10 kilometres an hour, the whole time you're going almost at walking speed. You know, people are jogging past you.

Oh God, this is so frightening. Yeah. I should also say, I wanted to say this earlier that we're talking about fears and things.

And you said that you're making it sound dramatic. It's not really that bad. And I think that we're probably, I hope that you would agree that with me, when I say that, um, I think I'm very lucky, uh, that I've never really had a truly frightening experience.

I've had some, and maybe we'll get to them that have really scared me. Um, and some health related things and stuff too, but I've never, you know, luckily I've never really had like genuinely dangerous thing in my life, which is something to mention, I suppose. This is a difficult topic.

There are so many different types of things that can happen to you and different types of fear. We could get into that, but that would take us ages. And I also want to say that we probably chose this topic because it's something that your listeners can relate to, because I think we are all scared at some point, we have been all scared at some point in our life for one reason or another.

So it's, it's perfectly normal. And also like, to be honest, it's, it's a little bit embarrassing to be scared of driving a scooter or riding a scooter. But then again, I'm sure that our listener, why do I keep saying our listeners, your listeners, they're listening to us.

That's why. Yeah. But they are your listeners.

So your listeners, some of them might be yours too. Yeah.
True.

True. And I know for a fact, some of them are my students too.
So hello.

Um, hello. It's the next student. Yeah, exactly.

So, um, I'm sure they have their own fears and it's some probably something different, right? So, um, that's why like, I don't, I don't feel that embarrassed because I know that, yes, this is, this is weird that a grown up man, a man is scared of, of doing this. And yeah, there is a followup to this. I did, uh, um, take a motorbike course or enrolled enrolled in a, in a driving school in summer, but, uh, I have still haven't got my own scooter.

So really now you need to sort that out. I think the initial, the initial scariness of doing it, I think is quite, quite quickly replaced by a general sense of convenience. Yes.

Cause it's very convenient. Isn't it? Having your own scooter. I'm looking forward to that Luke.

Yeah. And also I'm looking forward to making that sound. Oh, do that.

Yeah. It makes you feel better. No, I almost regret not doing that when I was taking my test.

I was doing the exam. How was the exam by the way? Was it difficult? It was, it was all right. Like I did really well, like to be honest, like when I started it, it was tough, but that guy, the, my instructor, he didn't seem to be that keen on having a 40 year old, uh, doing the, doing the course.

He, he, he even told me at one point, then the neck, if you, if you hadn't told me that you ride a bicycle, I wouldn't have, I wouldn't have let you in. Well, maybe you don't need, maybe you don't need a scooter. Then if you've got just a normal push bike, you just carry on with that.

I mean, it's better for you better for the environment. The thing is though, first of all, is it slow, which again, it's not such a big deal because I will be probably slow as you said, when I, when I get my motorbike, but I think it's, I have a feeling it's a bit more dangerous because if something happened, if something

were to happen, God forbid, then, um, the bicycle will probably be in a worse state than any other vehicle. Right.

Because it's a bit like fragile, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. At least with the scooter or motorbike, you've got a bit more weight to it.

So exactly. If someone bumps into you, you're less likely to be knocked down. That's it.

Um, you know, I, in Paris, they have these, uh, rental bikes, these e-bikes, uh, which are actually very sturdy. They're like, almost like a scooter in a way. They're very sort of quite heavy and sturdy.

And I was riding the other day, turned a corner into a street and a car was there on the side of the road and people were getting out of the car and one person opened their door onto me. So as I rode past the car, they opened the door and it hit the bike. Um, and I was quite lucky.

It sort of glanced my hand on the handlebar, whacked my hand a little bit, but it was fine. It wasn't hurt. Right.

But it was lucky that I was dry. I was riding one of these heavy e-bikes, these rental e-bikes because the door just sort of like bounced back off the front of the bike. And I kind of slammed into the door, the door went bam and bounced back onto the person who was opening it.

So, you know, backfires for him. Yeah. Yeah.

I mean, he obviously didn't realise because he wasn't looking because he's just like, Oh, I'll just open my door without looking. He realised when he got, got smacked by that, by that door, right. Later on he realised, yeah.

And I kind of stopped the bike and turned around, you know, like waving my hand in the air, like, ow, and feeling pretty shocked because I'd just been hit by the door of this car. But yeah, I was lucky that it was one of these heavy bikes because the, yeah, the, the door took the hit of the, uh, the bike took the hit of the door. If it had been a lighter bike, I might've been knocked out and I turned around and I was waiting for the apology.

You know, I was waiting for the, Oh, sorry. I just whacked you with the car door and no apology came. Wait a minute.

I thought, I thought you were British. Luke, you should be the one apologising. Even if they do something to you, right.

If you bump into someone on the Metro or something, then, uh, usually it's the person bumping into someone that should apologise. But in, in the UK, it's the victim that should apologise. Right.

Well, in other scenarios, maybe if it had been less serious, if it had just been bumping into someone in the street and I'm all sorry, then yeah, naturally my inclination is to say, sorry, first, you know, Oh, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. And we carry on. But, um, in this case, yeah, it was, I felt like it was significant enough and dangerous enough and careless enough on, on the part of the person in the car that I, I went into a different mode and I went into the, I'm going to be angry with the driver, but I still did it in the most British way because in, in, in Paris, people will, you know, they'll argue and defend themselves quite confidently and aggressively.

Let's say, you know, they'll, they'll say an insult or they'll shout at the person, you know, fair enough. Uh, but I'm so British that I still can't quite do that. So I was there, I stopped them, waited for them to, so this is how angry I was.

I was like, I will wait for you to apologise. You know, and that was how, that's how aggressive I was. I just waited angrily.

And then he, um, and the person, yeah, nothing. Did he walk up to you and say, is your bike okay? No, not even that. No, no.

There was a few other, there were a few other people in the car getting out and they all kind of looked at each other and didn't acknowledge me. And I said something again, typically British and passive aggressive. I was like, well, excuse me.

I think I said that, you know, uh, which is almost equivalent to saying, well, sorry. You know, where you shout sorry at someone because they haven't said sorry to you. So you sort of sarcastically and angrily shout sorry to them.

Um, and then I, so I was like, well, excuse me or like, um, something like that. And then I, nothing, I got no response. So I just carried on and just angrily carried on and buried the emotion and feeling about the emotion.

Yeah. Until now, when I can tell you until now. Wow.

That's been ages. Look, how long was it? Has it been? I dunno. It's been a few months.

It's been a few months for sure. I actually, I did tell my friends, so I was on the way to a band practise, uh, with an English friend and a French friend. And I told them, and the French friend was like, you know, really angry.

You should, you should have said something. You should have gone over to them. You should have done this and that and the other.

And I was like, no, I can't, I can't, I can't do that. I couldn't do that. Um, so, um, you said letting the cat out of the bag, which is sort of like revealing something that we perhaps weren't going to going to reveal.

So not that it was a secret, but the reason why perhaps we chose to do this episode is because you were talking about your experience of riding a scooter and stuff. So by saying, when you said, Oh, Luke, I think you let the cat out of the bag. You meant that I revealed the actual reason why we chose to do this episode because of your scooter motorbike experience, hair raising, we've mentioned that already.

Um, you said if something were to happen, God forbid is what you said. Uh, meaning, uh, if when riding a bike, if something were to happen, meaning if something happened, if something bad happened, if an accident occurred, God forbid, which is like one of those things that you add as a way of sort of saying, uh, hopefully that won't happen. You know, you don't want to, you don't want to jinx it.

If, if you were, uh, if you didn't say that, then you would jinx it, which means you would, it would sort of bring you bad luck basically. Yeah. You wouldn't want to tempt fate, um, which is a thing to tempt fate, like mentioning something like, Oh, you know, riding a bike's totally safe.

I've never had an accident. Ooh, don't tempt fate because then, you know, um, the chances are that you're going to have an accident then. So yeah.

And you don't want to jinx it, which is the same thing. It's just like we're on the ground. Yeah.

It's like superstitions. Basically we are talking about if you're superstitious, you might think that something like that would even like a black, if talking about cats, you mentioned a cat out of the back. So if there is a black cat crossing, crossing the road, like, I mean, I don't know if you have this superstition in the UK, but we, we have it in the Czech Republic and, uh, that, that shouldn't happen.

Yeah. If a black cat crosses your path. Yeah.

That could be bad luck. And so you have to do something normally to kind of get rid of the bad luck. Like you, you knock on, knock, touch wood or knock on wood or something like that.

Um, for some reason, I, for some reason, I thought you were going to say to get rid of the cat, but thankfully, thankfully you did not say that. So you have to chase the cat down and put it in a bag and throw the bag into a river. No.

And then you let the cat out of the bag. Yeah, exactly. Then you finally let the cat out of the bag.

Exactly. I don't know why we're putting cats in bags. Don't do that everyone.

Um, so yeah, yeah, yeah. So we say things like God forbid in order to, you know, make sure we're not jinxing something or, or, or tempting fate and bringing bad luck to ourselves. Um, uh, you, you mentioned, uh, our listeners being able to relate to the idea of just being afraid of things, even if, um, objectively these are things that we shouldn't really be afraid of.

What about, we should talk about learning English. We should talk about, uh, sort of confidence issues and the fear involved in learning a language. What do you think about that? Is fear a part of the process? Absolutely.

You know, and again, like fear, it sounds very, like a very super strong word. It's loaded, isn't it? Like, yeah, like dice or something. It's just very heavy.

That word that, but fear could, could manifest itself in all sorts of forms. So it could be anxiety or just something, something that makes you nervous. But, um, I guess that there are all sorts of things that happen psychologically when you're learning a foreign language, especially because language what's, what's the aim of learning a foreign language or any language for that matter is to be able to communicate with people.

So, so especially if it's like combined with also, it's like you being an introverted person or having some sort of social anxiety, um, then, you know, uh, it could be a deadly concoction, so to speak. So it's, it can be tough, right? So I have to say I'm an extrovert, but even so it was hard when I was learning English at first to, to communicate with people in English. You know, I've, I've told this story on your podcast before.

Um, in 2025, I went to London for the first time in my life. And what did I say? He said 2025, like what you invented a time machine. And I wanted to say 2005, sorry, actually 2005.

Yeah. Sorry. Um, or 2005, I could say as well.

Yeah. And so, so, you know, um, I remember my first day, I had been learning English, I don't know, for eight years, but it was the school school English, right? So I hadn't really used, used it much other than during my tests and exams and stuff like that. And then, then I was thrown in at the deep end and, um, um, I had to communicate in that language.

And I was already like at a B2 level, which is upper intermediate, which is very high level. I'm sure some of your listeners are at this level and some people would love to be at this level and they are still intermediate. So I had a great level technically, but, um, not in terms of my listening and speaking.

It was more about my, I had good vocabulary knowledge and, uh, I knew very advanced grammatical structures, but then, so on my first day, I remember I was a witness to, actually, again, we, it's, it's interesting. We are getting back to the, to the road because there was like an accident. I was walking along, um, pedestrian cross.

No, no, not crossing. Sorry. Pavement.

I was walking along the pavement and then like a few metres away from me and my friend, there was a, there was a little accident. The, the, the people didn't get injured, but I think it was a cyclist or, um, um, rider motorbike rider. Yeah.

Yeah. What they hit a car, they fell, they fell off the bike and, and then there was a, there was police. I remember that very distinctly.

And they were asking me questions about like who I am, what, what my data of birth is and, uh, what I was doing then and what I saw. And I was like, at first, I think I actually kind of liked the opportunity to use English. I sort of was kind of excited about it.

But then after I did all that, I realised that, uh, I hadn't been very good at English yet because, uh, I, well, you gave them the wrong name, wrong day. Not really. My name's William Shakespeare born in 1633.

Um, no, but that was too much of, can you repeat that please? And I didn't get that. And, you know, like I, I wasn't very fluent and, um, that was like an eye opening moment for me, you

know, it was a wake up call. And, um, I think again, like a lot of people can probably relate to this because I know a lot of your listeners have lived or are living in a, in a foreign country and perhaps in an English speaking country and they are, they have gone or are going through this now.

And so, um, yeah, it's, sorry, you mean that, that moment where you're, you're kind of, as you say, school English is suddenly tested by real world English. You're having to talk to a policeman, describe what you saw, understand the questions he's firing at you and try to, uh, give your, give your date of birth, which is something pretty simple. But, uh, in the moment you might be scared by it, by the way, William Shakespeare was not born in 1633.

Just wanted to add that just in case anyone was like, um, blowing the dust off their fingers to correct me on that one. Um, so yeah, real world English. Yeah.

That can be a pretty frightening moment because you've come face to face with it, especially when, um, especially when you English, it depends on your relationship with English as well to an extent, doesn't it? Because if you're coming from the context where English is like this pressured academic thing, where there's a lot of pressure from different point, different places, like pressure from yourself, pressure from school,

pressure from your parents, peer pressure, exactly. You're comparing yourself to other people. And there's this awareness that English is really important because this is, you're told all the time, right? English is really important for your future, your career opportunities.

You've got to be good at English. And everyone seems to, um, make it really clear how you should be improving it. But then, you know, maybe you don't.

No, you do. It's true. Everything is true.

Everything that you said is true. It's just the pure fact that there's great proof. Just the, just the fact that I'm talking to you right now is the testament to, to that, because like, how, how else would I be talking to you? Or how else could I teach English? I'm an English teacher too, as you know.

So how else could I do it? How else can you function like internationally? If you go to Vietnam, I can't speak Vietnamese, right? They can't speak Czech. So you talk about just the importance, the simple importance of having a good level of English in your life, the doors it opens. I can't, I can't state that enough.

It's, it's something. Oh yeah. It's true.

Like we can't play that down, especially for you because you know, it's become, it's become your, your, your, your living. And this is so important to your, your life, isn't it? Your, your, your English, it really opened huge doors for you. You can't play that down.

I would say a gate, not a door. It's a gate. It's a massive gate, you know, without English, who would I be? No one.

Yeah. A huge gate, which is like a kind of a big automated gate. AI controlled.

Well, yeah, everything. It's a massive AI controlled gate at a border somewhere. We just have to decide, are we using? There you go, Mr. Lucas, off you go.

And you walk through this huge, massive gate into this whole other realm. Bits of language. You were thrown in at the deep end.

Yeah. That's a nice expression where you're suddenly in a situation where it's, it's a bit like being thrown in learning to swim. You know, you can spend ages in the shallow end of the pool where your feet are on the bottom and stuff like that.

But maybe the best way is just to be thrown in at the deep end and you just have to sink or swim. Right. Which is another one.

It's another one. Sink or swim, right? You just have to sink or swim. And you just kind of learn.

So it's like thrown into a situation where you're sort of struggling and you just have to learn very, very quickly in that situation. Otherwise you sink, which means you won't make it alive. You drown.

Yeah, exactly. Don't do that, everyone. You said, I remember that distinctly, which is a nice phrase to remember something distinctly, meaning you remember it very clearly.

You said it was an eye-opening moment. So a moment that made you realise something. I mean, it's sort of, it's obviously an idiom, an eye-opening moment, something that makes you realise or see something.

And it was a wake up call as well. Something like wake up Stenek, your English isn't quite good enough. For the real world.

I faced the reality. It was a reality check is another one, right? Yeah, that's right. A reality check.

Yeah. And it was an important moment and it's, you know, we shouldn't play that down, meaning we shouldn't make it seem less important than it is. Yeah.

So a lot of people have a lot of fears about opening their mouth and actually starting to use English. A lot of people study English, but they don't actually use English. And I think in a lot of people's minds, they think I'm not quite ready yet.

I just need to study a bit more. And then when my English is, when I've mastered it, then I'll actually start using it. Never worked like that, right? Never works.

Does it? No. And also I was going to say that for you, the fact that you overcame those fears or you came face to face with those, with those, with the reality, you had that reality check probably allowed you to make progress. Didn't it? It allowed you to get to where you are now.

Exactly. And you know, as you know, I have the next English podcast and it was part of it because yes, yes, I graduated from university and became a teacher, but there's so much more you can learn. And there's so many teachers who, who are like teaching low level students, let's say somewhere at elementary school.

But when, when they are sort of put in those situations when they have to perform in English, they struggle as well. And I'm sure I was one of those people too, but to be, to be honest, you have to, you have to keep improving. You have to keep developing.

So one, one of the things I did was I started the next English podcast inspired by your podcast, as you know, because back in the day, in one episode, you said, baby, you should start your own podcast. For example, it could be called Jose's English podcast. I remember that it was like 2000, we are talking 20, 2013.

It was in 2013. You said that 12 years ago, time flies, right? When you're having fun. Yeah.

Yeah, that's true. Yeah. So these were ways to push yourself out of your comfort zone, challenge yourself.

Yeah. You've got to ultimately, you've got to come up against those difficult experiences, face those challenges and ultimately learn from them. Yeah.

There's no, no, no pain, no gain. Exactly. That's one I should explain.

I guess I don't seem to be explaining anything these days. So go ahead, go ahead. No pain, no pain, no gain.

This one is kind of self-explanatory. Isn't it? Like it is an idiom, but it's one of those transparent phrases because you've got idioms, which seem to be like, Oh, it's hard to really guess what they mean unless you know what they mean. But with this one kind of it's clear, right? Because it's evident what it means.

No pain. Right. So if, if you don't go through any pain, no gain, you don't gain anything.

You don't win or you don't achieve anything. So that one is pretty clear. Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. So we've got other scary moments that I guess we can talk about. Right.

Yeah. I mean, so obviously for me speaking French, you know, I don't need to go into it because it's more or less the same thing as, you know, what we've just talked about that, you know, opening your mouth, you're worried about making a mistake. You're worried about making a fool of yourself.

Exactly. And lots of other, lots of other things. But as a teacher as well, and I've, I've talked about this before on the podcast and lots of times that my first experiences of being a teacher, I, this is a long time ago and I was much younger and I'd never really had a lot of experience of talking in front of groups of people.

So when I was training to be a teacher, when I did my CELTA, I didn't have any teaching experience prior to that. Some people, they just sort of start teaching, you know, they just end up teaching for whatever reason, maybe because like you, they're in a place where people don't speak English. And so, they get to a certain good level themselves and they realise they can start helping other people and they get certain amount of teaching experience.

And then they do their teaching qualification, which is like the Cambridge certificate. And you're in a slightly better situation because you kind of hit the ground running in that context. But for me, I came out of university, didn't know what to do with myself.

And I was a bit sort of lost and decided that I would train up to be a TEFL teacher, having the privilege of having English as my first language, you know, that's an option. And so, you know, I went through the process and it was a training course and it

was quite intensive. And part of the course, you know, you learn about teaching methods, you learn about linguistics and stuff.

And a lot of it was new to me, you know, analysing my own language, being able to explain my own language and also being able to facilitate other people learning it. All of that was a big learning curve, very steep learning curve for me. But the really the most uncomfortable aspect of it was the teaching practise sessions and observed lessons.

So every week, we would have a certain period of time in front of a class and there would be the trainer there. Not a football coach, you mean like a tutor? Yeah. Yeah.

I like the idea of a football coach. Come on, Luke. Come on.

Shouting encouragement at me from the side of the classroom. Instructions. Yeah.

Give them feedback. Don't forget about the feedback and homework as well. Give them homework.

Monitor, monitor, monitor. What are you doing? Not that, not that monitor. That's, that's a screen, Luke.

That's a screen. And then you get substituted. Yes.

Still better option than getting sent off. This is true because you slide tackle one of the students who has used present perfect tense wrong and you just come in a bit too hard with two feet. You do tackle their problems though.

You do. You do try to tackle their grammatical errors. You also have to anticipate it in the planning phase, which is very extensive when you do a CELTA or DELTA course, right? Oh God, that's another part of it that you'd spend ages working really hard on a lesson plan for like just 45 minutes or even half an hour of a lesson.

You've slaved away over a hot lesson plan, trying to do it, studying all of the grammar and planning it down to the millisecond. And then you're in the front of these people doing it. And yeah, I would feel so awkward and uncomfortable.

There was anxiety, a lot of anxiety and nerves, especially in the moments preceding the lesson. The evening before, I just couldn't relax. The morning, I'd get feel nervous, you know, you kind of felt butterflies in your stomach.

But then in the class, I found my anxiety was physical. It was like a physical thing where I felt completely trapped inside my own body. It was incredibly frustrating.

It really, really bothered me a lot. It has happened to me too. I know what you mean.

I know exactly what you mean. Because mentally, you have to process a lot of things. You're processing the lesson plan that you're trying to do.

You're processing the language point that you're trying to deal with. If that's the moment in the lesson that you're doing where you're having to explain certain language point, you're processing all of the things that you've been told you should be doing, the right ways of doing it, the wrong ways of doing it, not talking too much, keeping it simple. You know, making it learner centred, making sure your board work is really clear and well organised.

This is the most absurd thing. So making it learner centred. So you have to do all that while not talking at all, almost.

You've almost got to be invisible. And yet, you can't be dominating the lesson. So it's almost like a tightrope walk where just one step to the left and you fall, one step to the right, you fall.

It's like this very slight thing. Plus all the students in front of you aren't aware of the challenge because as far as they're concerned, it should be easy. You just go up there and just tell us how to do it and then give us a task and listen to us.

We've seen the likes of you before. We have been taught before. So why is this person bright red? I think it's even extra, extra like, um, emphasised by the fact that you are English, right? Well, you're British.

So, so they expect you to just talk to them and they don't understand that there are challenges to, first of all, to being able to teach, but also these sort of social, social blocks, like even being in front of so many people and talking to them. I

don't know. I'm sure some, some of our listeners are your, our listeners are managers or stuff like that.

And you're a manager, you have people under you and you have to talk to them and give them instructions. And if you have never done this, maybe the only person you have instructed is your, like maybe your kids, your husband, your wife, your cat. I don't know.

For me at the time, I'd never instructed anyone. I mean, I couldn't even instruct myself. Yeah.

You know, um, and there I was suddenly in this position where it's like quite, there's a certain high status involved. Yeah, exactly. Where you realise I'm, I'm, I'm the high status person in this situation, but I don't feel like it.

And yeah, you've got all these, all these teaching principles and methods rattling around in your brain that you don't even fully understand yet anyway, because you've got no frame of reference for them. And, and then, you know, that the students in front of you who are from all these different countries, they have a preconceived idea of what the teacher does, looks like and should, and you feel like I am not living up to what they

think I should be. Um, and so all of this, it's like a lot of, it's like a computer when you, you, you've got an old computer and you ask it to do too many things.

You've got loads of browser windows open and you open this, that and the other. And then the computer's just like, can't do it. And everything slows down.

It freezes at some point. Right. And so that's, that's what's happening to your body.

As you said as well, like your body starts failing, your body language shows it. Right. Yeah.

You don't, you know, you, you don't breathe properly. Uh, so, so I would, I would lock up, my whole body would lock up and I would just suddenly become very uncomfortable. My throat would get tight and, uh, and I wouldn't know how to stand in front of everyone and just talk to them.

And the worst thing is that you know it in that moment, right? You know, it, you're aware of what's happening to you. Like I remember the first time I was, when I was in the UK teaching,

teaching English to in 20, 2019, it was right before COVID. It had been my lifelong dream as a teacher.

It was like my, my sort of thing I always wanted to achieve, uh, in my career, like to teach English in England. Right. So I got that opportunity.

I got the, um, there was a demo lesson. I had to give a demo lesson first though, as part of my, uh, as part of the recruitment process and exactly what you've just described happened to me there. And I'd been an experienced teacher as well.

Right. I'd been teaching for eight years and I thought I was all right as a teacher. I had always had great feedback from my students, but there in London, in Oxford street, that's the school is called speak up London.

Suddenly it, that, that sort of pressure got to me because it was like pressure that I exerted on myself. It came from me because I knew I, I wanted that so, so badly. Right.

When you want something really badly, like let's say it could be a, um, you see a very good looking girl and you want to chat

her up or something, but usually when it, when she's really good looking, usually you become very awkward and you don't know what to say suddenly because, because it's something you, you desire so much. Right. So that kind of feeling, I had that during my demo lesson, doing something that was like bread and butter stuff for me at that point.

Yeah. I knew exactly what I was supposed to do. And yet my, my body was completely failing me.

So I remember being slouched my shoulders like this, like hunched. Yeah. My, my, my sort of head was among, between my shoulders.

And I knew I was like that. I was like, what, what's happening to me. I can't get out of that.

I couldn't get out of that because that wasn't observed. That was an observer. The, the director, the director of studies from that school was there observing my lesson, taking notes and deciding whether, whether I was good enough, whether I was a good fit for their school, which was very prestigious.

And for some reason she hired me even after that, but it was just one of the worst lessons I've ever taught. Well, if she, if she was a good director of studies, she would know that you were under a lot of pressure in that moment. And maybe we should put ourselves in the shoes of the observers in these situations and think they know that the person, the person they're observing is nervous.

And so maybe they're interested in seeing how we react to the nerves. And this is maybe if we, if we start talking about how to deal with these sorts of things, not that we're experts in it or anything, but it's probably worth talking about it is how to deal with these things. Like first thing you've got to remember that it's just a totally normal response.

Yes. So what's happening is just a natural response in your body. And, you know, you talked about sort of like your body language changing and your shoulders coming up and your head going down.

It's kind of like a defensive body posture that your, your body naturally assumes. And because you're kind of going into the fight or flight mechanism, you know, when you feel a challenge, the adrenaline kicks in, your heartbeat rises, and you go into defensive body positions and you want to run

away or So that's just a normal response. Also, you've got to think about, okay, so this is happening.

How do I react to it? The way that you react to it is perhaps the most important thing. Yes. And way to react is usually try not to panic, right? Try not to be too concerned about it.

Just remember, it's a normal process and you just have to take a moment to breathe, right? Slow down a bit. Take a breath and just keep calm and carry on knowing that what's happening to you is totally normal. It's easier said than done, right? I have a good phrase for you, Luke.

You have to be brave in these situations, right? Like, and we all sorts of different moments could happen to us in our life. Like there are all challenges of all kinds and you have to be brave in order to overcome them, to face your fears. And basically there's a phrase that goes like this.

Bravery is not the absence of fear, right? It's acting in spite of it, which means that it's absolutely fine to be brave, to be nervous, sorry, to be afraid. It's absolutely fine to be afraid. What's not fine is if you just do nothing.

So you have to do something, right? So you will probably not be perfect, but that's not the point. You just have to do it. You just have to do something.

And that goes for everything we have talked about so far. My motorbike fear, the flying stuff, speaking to native speakers for the first time in your life. Like anything we've just mentioned, teaching English, standing up in front of a lot of people for the first time.

You just have to be brave in that moment. You don't have to be perfect, right? Yeah. And the fear wins if you do nothing.

Absolutely. If you can't do this, if you give up and you do nothing. Yeah.

You have to just carry on. You have to just push through it and do it in spite of the fear, knowing that next time it'll be a little bit easier because you've got to climb over this thing at some point. You know, these obstacles come in your way and you've got to climb over them at some point.

So it might as well be now, because if it's not now, it'll be next time, you know, and once you're, once you've climbed over it, once you've done that thing, despite the fear, you'll be a little bit better prepared for it the next time and the next time and the next time until eventually you kind of swinging and you're fine. You kind of, you go with it and you're doing fine. So like if we compare me then, I mean, it's over 20 years ago.

When was it? 2001. So it's like 24 years ago. Oh my God.

And how nervous and horrible I was. And I used to think, I used to just, I was so disappointed in myself that I wasn't better at it. And I just dreamed, wished that I could be more comfortable and confident as a teacher.

But it just came, it just came with experience that just doing it again and again and again every day. And I'd have sort of good and bad lessons. And for me, a bad lesson was just a lesson where I felt out of, out of my depth or out of my comfort zone.

And you just like, you've got no choice. You can't just like, well, that's the end of the lesson. I don't really want to do this.

So, um, we'll leave, we're going to stop 45 minutes early. Um, you know, you can't do that. So you forced to continue and you just sort of like learn, you really develop skills in that situation.

You develop a lot of skills. And now these days, it's like, I feel, uh, maybe, maybe too comfortable as a teacher in class. And I'm starting to, yeah, complacent.

I'm starting to think, wait, I'm not feeling anxious enough. Maybe there's a problem. No, you see, you see, that's interesting.

That's a good point because that can happen too. Right. When you sort of think like, you know it all, uh, or it's just so comfortable and it has happened to me before, I have to say that that's just, that, that, that also is dangerous because then it's, it's, I think it's, it can be good to be at least a little bit nervous, right? Because it, it sort of pushes you to, to perform.

And, and, and, and keeps you sharp. Right. And I mean, to explain that, that feeling again of like, I'm, this is too, I'm too comfortable in this situation and I feel like there must be things I'm missing.

I must be kind of, uh, being, uh, what's the word for it? Uh, negligent in some way about my, about my teaching. And if that observer from years ago came back to me, they might say, yeah, you're a lot more comfortable. This is great, but you're not doing these things that you were supposed to be doing.

Uh, but actually having said that, I think it's, I think not. I think it's preferable to be a car, cool and calm. Uh, and collected.

Yeah. Cool, calm and collected. It's just so much nicer.

And I think I do a much better job now than when I was completely inhibited by, by nerves. I think you've been following your rule of seven peas. Yeah.

Practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise. Was it six? I don't, I can't remember it. Six or five, but seven is seven is even better.

Isn't it really? I mean, nine, nine, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise. That's even better. Yeah.

Fair enough. Practise makes perfect. Right.

Yes. Uh, any language that we could mention? Yeah. Um, basically, so you were referring to your, um, experience of, um, doing CELTA and you said that it, all of the stuff you had to do there and you had to learn, it's a steep learning curve, right? So we are talking like we're talking about graphs, I suppose, mathematics.

So what is it? And, uh, if, so it's really tough, right? It's like a, you have a lot, you have a mountain to climb to, to learn all of that. So if something is a steep learning, if something is a learning curve, it's really hard. It's really hard to learn it.

Exactly. That for those of you watching this on YouTube, Lucas just showed a lovely, what is it? Is it sinusoid? I don't know the graphs anymore. So which one is the line graph showing a steep learning curve where I mean, you know, the, I guess it's time across the bottom and like difficulty or pro I don't know what it is.

Progress versus time or challenge versus time. X is X, X is Y, something like that. Yeah.

X and Y axes. And, uh, the line is very steep, like a very steep hill that you had to climb. Exactly.

Showing that the challenge is, um, very, you know, steep, um, especially at the beginning. Yeah. I also like the phrase of up you used when you were describing about your lesson planning experience.

You said that you, you really have to slave away over your lesson plan. You said so to slave away to, to really work extremely hard, uh, in order to, uh, finish your lesson plan. Right.

Yeah. Um, yeah. I'm so glad that, uh, those days are behind me.

I have to say, I used to, I used to dread those, those, uh, observed lessons, you know, I really used to dread those

things. Yeah. To dread, to dread, like to, to, to be really afraid of something, to be super scared to have this like low level feeling of, of, uh, nerves or anxiety or fear about something that's going to happen to dread something.

Like I'm dreading it. I've got a dentist appointment on Monday and I'm absolutely dreading it. Or I've got like a big presentation to do in front of all, in front of the board of directors and I'm dreading it.

Um, yeah, exactly. It's like when you're absolutely not looking forward to something. In fact, the opposite, you're really dreading it.

Yeah, exactly. Then you also said that you felt butterflies in your stomach. I think you were referring to those moments before you had to teach.

I can't remember exactly, but that means that you were, you were nervous basically. If you have butterflies in your stomach, like that doesn't mean that your breakfast consisted of insects, right? No, that's right. It's just that feeling of being nervous.

Yes. Okay. Yeah.

Do you have any, yeah. Was there something else? Yeah. It's just one more.

It's like you keep, you keep using this phrase flight or fight. Um, you, you, you fight or fight. So you said, you said like that when you, when things happen and you, you are in that moment where you have to do something, um, I can't remember exactly when you used it, but you used it several times.

Like it's a mechanism. Basically it's like how our body responds when we are in danger. Right.

So we either flee, which is a flight. We flee, we, we, we, we escape, we run away or we fight. Right.

So it's like the, the, the basic, the basic response, like the, the two things we could do. I think there's this one more, I think, or freeze. I think there's freeze as well or something.

Right. I don't know because I've got, I've got a student Helen and she knows all this stuff. And I'm, I'm now, I'm actually a little bit anxious about this myself now that I'm messing it up and she's going to tell me off during our next lessons.

I've just, I've just got, I've just Googled it actually. And it seems that there's a few of these things. This is from web MD, which is like a sort of medical website.

Fight, uh, flight, as we've said, uh, then also freeze, also flop. And also there's fawn as well, which I didn't know about. So fight and flight, you've explained.

Freeze is basically the inability to move or act against a threat. Not that teaching and not that being in a class was a, was a sense of threat, but maybe it is. I mean, any, you know, maybe that's part of the fear that we have naturally of public speaking.

I'm sure you can apply. There's a lot of people, a lot of people in front of you and, you know, maybe at a very basic sort of elemental level. Um, it's basically, you realise that all these people could quite easily get you if, if they wanted to, you know, you're standing in front of all these people.

Well, yeah, just like turning to zombies or something. And so yeah, they might, they could easily just get you if they all decided to. It's like you've, you're massively outnumbered.

It sounds more like some paranoia or something, Luke. Yeah. But I'm just trying to get to the fact that maybe this is why we have an intrinsic fear of public speaking is that it goes back to very basic, um, instincts, instincts, instincts, right.

So of self-preservation and knowing, knowing that if you are suddenly, if the attention of a large group of people is on you and it's you versus them in any way, you're facing them, then that's a potentially very dangerous situation. And you can imagine, you know, thousands, thousands, hundreds of thousands of years ago, um, you know, you can imagine, you know, you've seen it in animals where animals gang up on each other and stuff. Um, so that, that might be, it might be an instinctive fear.

In fact, maybe a lot of these phobias, so fear of public speaking, fear of certain animals, you know, fear of heights, they just are really basic, instinctive fears that probably go back sort of a long way into our, into our sort of genetic history, which is basically be careful of spiders because they can kill you. Be careful of rats because they can, some of them can, right. So, so it makes sense in a way, right.

It's like genetic memory or whatever it is that we've just learned that we have to be careful of these things. And if you see a slithery snake, even just like the shape of it is repellent to a lot of us because, you know, we just add a very, uh, instinctive level. We know that we should be wary of that.

And similarly, other situations being in front of a large group of people with them all looking at you, there's something deep inside you, which goes, Oh, be careful because they might all get you, you know? So, um, so anyway, we're going back to the story. Luke, I just wonder what, like, so it's understandable, like flight, the response flight would be in that classroom that may, may, maybe, yeah, you just want to run away. You may be, you get nervous, your body language, what would be the fight response then? Like you're not going to have a punch up with your students or anything, right.

No, but again, it's just an instinctive reaction. Like your, your, your conscious mind, as we've said before, is aware that this stuff is happening and just like, these things are happening. I don't want them to happen.

I want to be relaxed. I don't want to, uh, I want to control my body. I want to do the things that I intended to do in my lesson

plan, but then all of these, these sorts of like, uh, natural body responses are coming in and mental responses too, because it affects your thinking.

These are just sort of reactions that, that we've learned through evolution, you know? So yeah, fight, flight, uh, and freeze is just where you just can't move, which is what happened to me. You know, my neck freezes up and I can't look stiff, like become stiff. I'd turn my whole body like, uh, what do you think? And over here, what do you think? You know, I'm like a robot.

Um, and then a flop is to essentially to just collapse. Well, you, you flop your lesson as well. Like it's, it's a flop, right? Yeah.

It becomes a flop. You failed the lesson most probably. And especially if it's an assessed assessed lesson, this, this is an issue.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

But, um, in, in terms of what your body wants to do, you just want to kind of like, you become a bit lifeless and you just

want to kind of fall on the floor or something, or just sort of, um, sit down or you people might even faint, which is a, a response that people have. They faint and they just lose consciousness because it all gets too much. You see this in weddings, right? Have you seen, you know, there's videos on the internet of, of, of, you know, fail videos and stuff.

And sometimes you see videos of people passing out, uh, there's always someone at a wedding standing at the altar and you see them start to walk, they start to wobble and then over they go slam. And it's like the group overwhelmed with emotions. Like, let's hope it's not, let's hope it's not the priest, right? Because that wouldn't be, that wouldn't be very, very professional.

I think you can imagine that in that situation, someone fainting at a wedding is, you know, it's very stressful. And so that's, that's a response that the, it becomes too much and you sort of, you collapse. Uh, and then fawn, fawn means that you, your behaviour changes and you try desperately to please people in order to avoid, um, any kind of conflict.

So that's where you become, you give your students chocolate and, and sweets for, for doing, doing well in, in their exercises. Yeah. I've seen it in, I've seen it in standup actually, where people are on stage and they've, you know, they're supposed

to be making people laugh, but the nerves get the better of them and you start basically kind of, um, uh, talking yourself down.

Right. You know, it's, it's that, it's that desire to be like, Oh, I'm, I'm, I'm rubbish. Thank you very much.

You're overly polite. And thank you so much for coming. This is so wonderful.

You sort of like, yeah. Yeah. You become very sort of, yeah.

Fawning in front of the people that, that, that you're talking to. And you exactly, you kind of start playing yourself down and being overly thankful and stuff. So those are, those are five responses.

I wasn't really aware of the others, but fight or flight, uh, and, and faint, uh, fight, flight, freeze, I understand, but then also faint and fawn as well as interesting, uh, interesting stuff. Yeah. Have you got any other anecdotes to, to end this episode of being scared of things? Well, I should also mention that

crossing the road here in Vietnam, especially if you do it for the first time, it can be quite a tricky scene.

Uh, because, uh, again, it's a bit different here because I don't know how, how it is in France, but in the Czech Republic, there's a rule that when, when you are on the pedestrian crossing, you have the right to, to go first. Of course you have to look as well. Yeah.

You're supposed to look some people crossing with their phones, looking at their phones. That's, that's also illegal. Yeah.

You can't do that in Czech Republic. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. If you're looking at your phone, then, then you're, you're also responsible if there is, if something happens.

Right. So you, you, you have, yeah. Yeah.

So you, you, you, it's your responsibility to look. Right. But if you're there and if, if the car hits you, let's say, God forbid to

use that phrase again, then it's, it's, um, it's their fault because you, you have, you have, you have the right to go first.

Yeah. You have the right of way. You have the right of way.

Yeah. But here it's, it's different. Yeah.

So nobody, nobody cares about pedestrians here basically. And, uh, what you have to do is to just enter the road. Like I say, nobody cares about pedestrians as if they hate, they hate them and they, they, they, they want to kill them.

No, not like that. But like in the hierarchy, in the pecking order, pedestrians are at the low, at the bottom. Right.

So when you, when you enter the road, basically the people will always go around you. So you, you, you're fine as long as you keep, keep an eye contact and you, you don't run, don't try to run, don't accelerate, just steady, steady pace. Yeah.

And, um, keep an eye contact and then people will contact with, with, with, with, with the, with the, with the people that

are approaching you on, on the vehicles. Right. So as if to kind of communicate, I'm here, I'm here, I'm here.

Make yourself bigger as well. You can do that. It's almost the same thing you would do if you were to face a bear or something, just make yourself, make yourself look bigger and just steady pace confidence.

Yeah. Like it sounds weird, but it's exactly what you should do. Yeah.

And then, yeah, sometimes you have to sort of stop, like, it's okay to stop, but don't like, just don't make any jerky movements or anything. Right. Don't no, no, no, no.

Just go slowly. I mean, and then ideally you, you get to the end of the road. Because what you're facing there for those people who've never actually experienced this, what you're facing is a, a road.

It might not even be that wide, but it could be, it could be a four, four lane road. It is sometimes as well. Yeah.

Inside I go on in Ho Chi Minh city, but not, not here in Da Nang. I'm in, I'm back. I didn't say that yet.

I'm back in Da Nang now. So you're in Da Nang again. Yeah.

So it could be like four lanes of road or maybe just two lanes going this way and that way. And you stand there and it's basically yeah, as I said before, a sea of scooters where it's just a huge, almost like a swarm of scooters. I don't know what the right word is for it, but a massive deluge of scooters, just, you know, I don't know how it could be a hundred scooters all in a big group going down the road and you have to somehow cross it.

Now there might not be a moment where the light changes and you get the chance to cross. It might just be a continual flow of scooters. And so, yeah, what do you do? And as you said, rather than waiting for a gap, you just have to just step in and do it slowly and slowly, but surely or steadily, or there's a second option.

Just, just join someone like someone who is local. And then you see, you see it on their face that they know what they are

doing and just sort of, you know, attach yourself to them. Just follow them.

Just shadow them. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. That's good. Yeah.

Right. Wow. Yeah.

It's, it's quite a step to make, isn't it? When you first have to deal with that. Cause like plucking up the courage. That's a good expression as well to pluck up the courage, pluck up your courage, right.

As well. So basically to, to be brave enough to do something. Mm-hmm.

Yeah. You talked, you talked about the pecking order, which is quite a nice expression. And I've noticed that in Vietnam and similar places, also in India, that, that the roads are similarly seemingly chaotic from our point of view, but there is a system at work.

Yeah. So in India, basically the pecking order and pecking order comes from animals. It comes from birds that if you imagine there's food and there are various birds, there's a pecking order, meaning the, the, the birds, which are bigger probably gets a peck at the food first.

Yes. And then it goes down the chain, down the pecking order where you've got the biggest, most powerful, strongest animals at the top. And then the smaller animals at the bottom who, who, who are the last ones to, to be able to feed on the food.

So it's like a hierarchy of power or dominance in a system of animals. But we can talk about pecking order in other situations, and this is a perfect example. So observing things in India, basically the pecking order is the larger the vehicle, the larger vehicles have the right of way.

It's the same here. So if there's a, there's a big bus that comes through, everyone gets out of the way of the big bus. And it kind of goes in that order where the smallest, which would be like a person on a little scooter is basically having to get out of the way of everyone.

This is the pecking order. That's it. It seems like such a chaotic system, but it's a sort of system.

It's, it's organised chaos. It makes sense. Like if, if, if everyone is doing that, it works.

Right. So I guess I never, for a second thought, never, never did I think here in Vietnam that I was the one doing it wrong. I think it's also... They were the ones.

Sorry. I messed it up. Because I think it's also the wrong kind of attitudes to have.

And it's like, if you're like overconfident and it's like lack of respect for the culture. So I, I'm more like, I'm aware that it's different from what I know. And it's a challenge.

It poses a challenge to me. I'm aware of it. I sort of respect, respect that, but I'm not like blaming them for doing something wrong, because who would I be to tell them that they are doing

it wrong? I mean, I'm in, I'm in their country, right? So it doesn't work like that listeners.

It's, it's just different. It's just a different culture, different, different environment, different rules. And it works and it bloody works.

It's just, I don't come from that culture. So that's why there's a, there's a bit of a challenge for me. The culture shock in my experience is always a case of where you're sort of always between two feelings and one feeling is like, everyone's doing it wrong.

How does this, how did these people live like this? And I've, I do feel like that in France, even though, as I've said before, it's not drastically different, but it's just different enough for me to have those feelings in certain situations. Like when I'm queuing, you know, to buy bread and in the shop, in the bakery, and people don't queue in exactly the way that I think they should. And so I'm getting frustrated thinking, how do people live like this? So you either feel like that, where you look at things being different, and you get frustrated because you think they're doing it wrong.

Yeah. Which you shouldn't feel as a, as a person travelling, you should try to avoid that at all costs, because you've got to remember that when in Rome you do as the Romans do. And you just have to be more open-minded, right? If you're not open-minded, it will be harder for you to make friends, harder for you to make progress.

And you will have all these negative, nobody wants to have negative emotions in them like that. It doesn't help you. When you're travelling, when you're travelling, when you're somewhere new, it's really important to just relax and just go with the flow as much as you can.

Yes. And try not to get too uptight. Just, just let things wash over you.

And you just see how things are done differently. And you just kind of go with it and enjoy the difference. So either you're thinking, well, how do these people live like this? Or on the other extreme, you think, oh my God, I'm an idiot.

I'm doing it all wrong. I'm a complete loser. And you feel so alienated and isolated by the fact that you're the one who's sticking out like a sore thumb.

Oh, that's a good one. Doing it all wrong. And I, yeah, sticking out like a sore thumb.

If you've hit your thumb with a hammer, what happens to your thumb? Don't do that by the way. Yeah. We don't, we're not recommending it.

No, if you do it accidentally, you're hammering a nail into a wall and whack, you hit your thumb with a hammer, then the thumb will become very sore. It'll go all red and sore and it'll probably swell up. It will swell up.

It will look different from other fingers. So it will stick out. It will sort of be more prominent than your other fingers.

Right. Yeah. Become really obvious and look different.

Exactly. It'll stick out like a sore thumb. So yeah, when I was in Vietnam on my own, walking down the street on day one, thinking this, I'm like a fish out of water.

There's another one. I stick out like a sore thumb. I just felt like every single person in the street must be, I must be like, um, so obvious, you know, fresh off the boat.

Not that it was a boat. Um, and yeah, you just feel like you don't blend in at all. So yeah, that's the other extreme.

So yeah, you just got to try and go with the flow. Exactly. Yeah.

Okay. I think this is probably a good moment to bring the episode to a close, Stanek. But I think that we've talked about, I think we've achieved what we wanted to achieve with this, which was to have a chat about fears and facing fears and different types of fear.

And some there's been bits of language that have come up and stuff like that. And we've talked about the fear of, of speaking in, in English, if it's not your first language. Yeah.

All right. That's been good. I've enjoyed this.

Job done. Jobs are good. And, um, uh, tell us about, tell us about what you're doing these days though.

So as well as living in, in Vietnam and stuff, you're still doing podcast things. Oh yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. I'm S I still have the next English podcast, although I'm not as prolific as I was in the past. So that's because I'm getting distracted by my other podcast that I recently started.

And that's called the foot glitch podcast, which is about football and English. So I'm trying to teach English through football and I invite interesting guests. And I believe in one of the episodes, we also had looked someone who goes by the name, Luke Thompson on the podcast as well.

And, uh, we, we talked about, uh, I think when there was the euros, like there was the Euro 2024 in Germany. And we talked about the, the, the England team with you, you are that person. Yeah, that was me.

We talked about it before the euros and England's chances. And then we talked about it. You're right.

You're right. England amazingly, and perhaps undeservedly that's, that's arguable. Uh, got to the final where we, we got beaten by Spain.

Fair enough. Spain, obviously with the, with the superior team. And we talked about that as well.

Yeah. So the foot glitch podcast, yes. An interesting concept.

And I'm teaching English online. And so I do one-to-one lessons. I have the achievers chamber, by the way, thank you so much for mentioning it in your, uh, what was it like the new year's eve episode or the new year episode? I think you did.

Thanks for that. Yeah. The first episode of 2025.

Yeah. I did mention the achievers chamber. Just quickly tell us what it is again.

So it's a group, like a community where you can learn English. You are surrounded by several English teachers, including myself. And, um, basically it's a, it's a nice group, uh, to develop your English, especially speaking.

We're focussing on speaking mostly in a sort of lighthearted manner. Like it's not like less don't, don't think like lessons where you have lesson plans. Usually there's a topic that we discuss, but there are different types of like events.

We call them events. They are 30 minutes long and, um, they usually happen in the evening of central European time. So that could be a problem.

Like we had a few people interested from Asia or South America, but they couldn't make it because they were either working or sleeping. So that's, yeah, that's unfortunate. Ideally, ideally both working and sleeping because that's the dream job, isn't it? Literally.

Yeah. Yeah. I've seen some people do that as well.

Like, yeah, me too. And maybe shouldn't have been, it's not, it's not us. It's not the two of us.

We can't do that. Can you imagine like sleeping in your lesson, in your lesson? Have you ever fallen asleep as a teacher? I may have had one of those micro sleeps that you can get behind the wheel as well. You know, those like three second sleeps it has happened to me, but that's, that's the, the, the furthest I would go.

Yeah. This is maybe another episode for another time where we talk about sleeping and stuff. But I think I might have, my head might have dropped once or twice during IELTS one-to-one lessons.

I remember back in the day. Dreaded IELTS, yeah. Dreaded IELTS one-to-ones.

At the end of the day, this is when I used to teach eight, nine hours a day. And at the end of the day, I'd be there. The sun's gone down.

I should be, by rights, I should be at home, you know, watching telly, eating dinner. But I'm there I am in front of someone doing some reading, IELTS reading paper two or something. And the, and the head starts to drop and the eyelids start to sag and I'm like slapping myself in the face.

Come on, you gotta get through this. Put yourself together, Luke. Yeah.

Yeah. So it may have happened. Anyway, the Achievers Chamber, which can be found, the link for that, the details can be found on your website.

TeachersDenik.com, yeah. TeachersDenik.com and it's called the Achievers Chamber. It's not for everyone.

I would say, I would say it's like for high levels, especially for upper intermediates and advanced students mostly. And we have some English teachers there too. So if you're an English teacher who lacks speaking practise or even like I could, I could even let you teach there if you want.

Like it's, it's like, yeah, it's, I would say it's also quite affordable. I need to mention this. It's not, it's not a free group because I had some people like wanting to join and they expected it to be free.

It's not. Yeah. But it's not that expensive.

Okay. All right. Details, TeachersDenik.com. Yes.

Okay. Brilliant. Thanks Denik.

Um, let's get back to normal life then. Now I'll let you go back to your normal life. Have a nice evening.

To my fears, back, back to my fears and phobias. Yeah. Your fears and phobias of crossing the street and getting a motorbike.

Just get it. Just get one. I already had a friend who let me drive his motorbike here.

So I did it for 10 minutes. I even went into traffic for 10 minutes, but still I haven't done it by myself. I have to, it's on the to-do list.

All right. Good. Wear a helmet.

Take care. Yeah. All right.

Nice one. And thank you very much for having me again.
Pleasure.

Bye for now. Cheers. So thank you again to Zdenek for this episode.

You can check out his podcasts, Zdenek's English podcast, the FootGlish podcast, and also that community called the Achievers Chamber. You'll find links in the description. Also, you can check the PDF for this episode because that will contain a lot of vocabulary that came up during the conversation.

You can check it all out there. There'll be stuff there to help you remember it, to understand it, to learn it and stuff like that. So I won't talk, I won't ramble too much at the end here.

I would just like to ask you to leave your comments in response to this episode. If you made it until the end, so if you are still listening and you haven't dropped off to sleep or turned into a skeleton with headphones on, leave us a comment to prove that you're still conscious. Perhaps you can respond to the general subject of the episode.

Do you have any, what makes you anxious? What scary experiences have you had? What did you learn from them? Do you have any anxieties relating to learning English or using English? Have you ever sort of had to deal with specific fears and anxieties in terms of your learning of English? What happened and how did you deal with them? Have you ever experienced culture shock, living in a different place and felt like a fish out of water or feeling like you stuck out like a sore thumb? So if you've got anything to relate, let us know in the comments and use any fear-related words to show us that you're still here, you haven't dropped off to sleep and you're not a skeleton with headphones, that you're a fully conscious and living human with flesh still attached to your bones and your head still attached to your head. I don't know why your head would fall off, but who knows? After however many minutes it's been, let us know your experiences. With fear.

I think that's probably a good time to stop the episode now. Thank you very much for listening wherever you are in podcast land. And I'll speak to you next time.

But I do hope you have a lovely, lovely, lovely morning, afternoon, evening or night. And I'll speak to you next time. But for now, it's just time to say goodbye.

Bye. Bye. Bye.

Bye. Thanks for listening to Luke's English Podcast. For more information, visit teacherluke.co.uk