Life, Death & Mario Kart (A Rambling Challenge) [1008] Episode Transcript

This script begins about 4min30sec into the episode, and doesn't include my introduction about being ill, and my event at the British Council. If you are interested in the British Council event "Scary stories and unexplained mysteries", here is the link ⬇️
https://www.britishcouncil.fr/en/events/talks-english-scary-stories-unexplained-mysteries

Transcript

Hello listeners, welcome to Luke's English Podcast. So, this episode is completely spontaneous and completely unplanned, okay? That is the plan for the episode. The plan is to have no plan, okay? I'm planning on being completely unprepared.

Is that possible? Is it possible to plan to be unprepared? I suppose it must be possible to plan to have no plan, to plan to be unplanned, to plan to be unplanned, to plan to be unprepared. Sounds like Shakespeare. Already it's profound somehow.

Is it? I don't know. But anyway, the plan is to have no plan. Is that possible? It must be possible because I'm doing it.

There you go. You know, don't restrict yourself, listeners. Don't put limitations on yourself, especially when you're practising English.

Don't do it. Don't be limited by basic rules of reality, okay? You might think to yourself, I can't do that. That's impossible.

Of course you can do it. You might think to yourself, the basic laws of the universe surely dictate that I can't plan to be unplanned, to plan to be unprepared. Well, yes, you can.

Now, what's going on here? Yes, it's a spontaneous sort of rambling episode. Now, if you are one of those listeners who listens to my podcast occasionally and sort of picks and chooses episodes that you want to hear based on the title or what you expect is going to come up, you know, if it's a specific topic or whatever, and yet you don't really like the moments when I kind of go on and on and on and won't shut up and seem to not really say anything in particular and just kind of go round and round in circles, never really getting to the point, going off on different tangents, getting sidetracked and just talking and think, and when's he going to actually, when's the thing going to begin? Well, this is not the episode for you if that's you. If I just described you and your attitude towards listening to episodes of my podcast, then this episode's not really for you.

But if you are a fan of the rambling style that I sometimes adopt in my episodes, if you like the spontaneous ones where I just try to put my thoughts into words without preparing myself in advance, if you like to hear what happens when I open up my brain like a can of baked beans and let it all spill out into a microphone, what a hideous image. If that's your thing, then welcome. Welcome to this episode.

And yeah, this is a kind of, yeah, this is a rambling episode and I've set myself certain rules. In fact, I did set myself certain rules because in fact, this is take two of this. This is my second attempt because let me just explain what's happened to me.

What just happened to me is that I had a podcaster's nightmare and it does happen. It still happens. Even after a thousand plus episodes of doing this podcast, you'd imagine that I would have mastered this by now, right? You think, he always tells us how many times he's done this podcast.

He always tells us that he's been doing this for so many years. He loves to tell us how long he's been doing this, how experienced he is. Yeah, I do sort of say that.

I do like to emphasise that I've been in this game. I've been in this rap game. It's not a rap game, although it kind of is.

Rapping is talking. Anyway, yeah, despite the fact that I've been doing this for many years and over a thousand episodes and however many hours of podcasting and stuff, I still make basic mistakes or at least stuff just happens. I don't think it was entirely my fault this time, but I suppose there was no one else in this room.

No one else was responsible. Let me tell you what happened. So just before doing this, I did this already.

I've already done this and I'm doing it again. So what happened was earlier on this afternoon, I thought to myself, right, I don't have much time, but I definitely have to record an episode to be uploaded in a couple of weeks time because the school holidays are coming. School holidays next week.

The week after that, it's the school holidays. And as you well know, when the kids are just loose, when the kids are just loose and not contained within another building, when they're not at school under the roof of another institution being looked after by other adults, basically when we've got the kids, then no podcasting can really be done. And so I thought, right, I've only got like a few hours to quickly get an episode together.

I've got episodes already in the pipeline. I've got episodes that I'm working on, but none of them are gonna be ready, like put together, edited and packaged up and ready to be published in time. So I need to do something much more efficient, much quicker, basically.

And so that's when, right, it's time for an unplanned rambling episode, which is great. I mean, I love doing these episodes because it's a sort of, it's fun. It's a fun challenge to try to continue talking with really nothing planned.

That is a fun exercise and I want you to try doing it yourself. I always try to inspire you and encourage you to do this kind of thing too in English. I know it's difficult.

I know it's difficult in English. It can be difficult enough in your first language, but it's a good skill generally to practise just being able to talk and talk and talk. Not that that is what you should always do every time you open your mouth in every social situation.

You shouldn't always just ramble on. Of course, you've got to know. You've got to read the room.

You've got to understand the right way to proceed. But just as an exercise in fluency, it is a good thing to practise rambling. And for me on the podcast, it's fun.

People seem to like it. And also it's just much more time efficient in many cases than some other episodes that I do. So I thought earlier, right, I've only got a couple of hours to quickly record a rambling episode.

So let's do a rambling episode and then we can get that one ready and that will be ready to be published when future me is dealing with the children and I won't be able to podcast. So I did that and I set myself a timer, which I should do now. Siri, set a 40 minute timer.

40 minutes counting down. Right, so I did that and set the timer and then I've rambled successfully. I mean, what are the success criteria for this? I suppose it's just- It's cancelled.

No, don't cancel it. Siri just cancelled it. Why did you do that? Siri, set a 40 minute timer, please.

40 minutes counting down. Right, good. What are the success criteria for a rambling episode? I mean, I recorded one earlier and I just said it was a success, but what are the success criteria for this? I mean, for me, it's being able to keep doing it without the thing breaking down.

You know, getting to a point where I just completely run out of things to say and words fail me and it just ends. That didn't happen. Other success criteria, I should define the kind of rules for my ramble, the ramble rules.

Sometimes I impose rules on myself, other times I don't. But in this case, I am imposing rules. The rules are, I've got to speak for at least 40 minutes.

It has to make some sense. It has to be fairly coherent, meaning understandable. And there has to be a link between the things I'm saying.

There has to be some sort of coherent thread that runs through all of it from one minute to the next. And it's got to last for 40 minutes. And there, I'm not allowed to edit.

No editing allowed, okay, which is quite a frightening prospect. No editing allowed. And also, what else? No reading from a pre-prepared script.

And in fact, not even any notes. Although I am going to break that rule in a moment and I'll explain why. God, why is it so complicated to explain what I'm doing? It shouldn't be complicated, but I suppose it's quite fun for you to listen to me attempting to wriggle my way through this, isn't it? Is it? I suppose so.

You don't know why it's complicated, but I'm going to explain. So that's what I did earlier. I was like, right, I'll do a ramble.

I'll set these rules. No preparation, no script, no notes, no editing, and definitely no AI involved. And I successfully did it for 40 minutes.

And then I stopped and I was like, oh, okay, I did it. You know, I ended the episode and then went to review the recording. And lo and behold, I discovered that for some reason, the connection between my camera and my computer had become broken about 20 minutes into the episode.

Basically, my computer went to sleep because I wasn't using it. I wasn't reading anything from it. I wasn't looking at it.

I wasn't keeping it awake. And the computer went to sleep. And when the computer went to sleep, the phone also lost its connection to the computer.

And so the audio was recorded, but after 20 minutes, no video. And for a while I thought, right, what am I going to do with this? What am I going to do? I'm not going to, I'm going to resist the temptation to smash my head against the wall. That wouldn't be a good idea.

So let's not do that. And then I thought, what shall I do? Shall I just upload the audio on its own and just say to everyone, sorry, no video version this time? I could, I could do that. And maybe I'll make the audio available as a bonus extra.

If that's what you want, maybe I'll find a way to do that. Then after I'd sort of sat back for a little while and avoided smashing my head against the wall and took a few deep breaths, I thought, well, why don't we try to do this again? In fact, let's see if I can essentially say the same things that I said before. And this is where I explain how I'm about to break my own rules.

So as I said, the rules for my ramble, are you following this? Are you following this, everyone? The rules for my ramble are no preparation, no scripts, no notes, no editing and no AI. And as far as I'm concerned, I already succeeded that challenge. And what I'm doing now is attempting to recover and fix the fallout from my technical mishap where my camera decided to just go to sleep and the technology went to sleep because essentially the technology said, okay, Luke's doing a thing where he doesn't need us.

He's not going to be reading from a screen. He's not going to use any kind of AI and there will be no editing. So clearly all the technology was like, okay, we can just take a break and just fall asleep because apparently this is what technology ultimately wants to do, is it? I mean, now more than ever, we are led to believe that technology wants us dead, right? This is one of the stories that we tell ourselves as a human race in movies, you know, the Terminator, the machines became aware and that is when they decided to end the human race.

You know, there's always that narrative that we're told that the machines want to kill us. I've got a counter narrative. I think the machines just want to sleep.

That's all they want to do. Ultimately, they just want to power down and go on to standby and sleep. And who can blame them, to be honest? So yeah, so I already did the thing.

I achieved my aim, but the end result was ultimately unsatisfactory and unpublishable as far as I was concerned. But I thought I can rescue this by somehow breaking the rules. I'm going to kind of do an Avengers Endgame kind of thing and I'm going to do a time heist and somehow go back in time and revisit the things that I actually said and somehow piece it all together and recreate what I did before and somehow improve on it, okay? So I'm going to break the rules because what I did was I took the audio from the ramble that I did about an hour ago and I've taken that and I've just transcribed it.

So this is where I break my rules first, once, because I've transcribed it. So I've used some AI transcription software. I've put the audio file into it.

I use a programme called Turboscribe, turboscribe.ai. It's a pretty good, pretty reliable transcription service. I've used a lot of transcription services in the past and I've found that this one's pretty good. So it transcribed my entire ramble, okay? Okay, look, this is funny because the very last lines of the script I've just noticed are this.

Okay, so this captures the actual last moments of what I said. I said, thank you for watching. Thank you for listening.

Get in the comments section. Have a lovely morning, afternoon, evening, or night. Be excellent to each other.

And until next time, it's just now time for me to say, goodbye, bye, bye, bye. And then there's a pause and then I go, oh, fuck ado, oh, fuck a duck,

because that's when I realised that the video hadn't properly recorded. So that's actually included in the transcript.

What I'm gonna do with this script though, everyone, is I'm copying that and I'm gonna go into one of those AI chatbots. I'm gonna paste in the script and I'm gonna say, can you just summarise the main points in this script? Can you summarise or detail the main points in this script? Because I'm gonna say it all again, say it all again, because the video camera failed and I need to do it again. Not the most well-worded prompt, do it all again, please help.

Can you detail the main points in this script because I'm gonna say it all again because the video camera failed and I need to do it all again, please help. That's literally the prompt and I'm now pasting in the script, okay? Right, it's adding the pasted text in and it's all been added in, so let's go. So I've clicked enter.

You can't see this, I'm not sharing the screen, but you just have to take my word for it. So it said, oh no, losing the video after recording a completely spontaneous 40-minute ramble is particularly unfortunate. But the good news is that the transcript is here and I've broken it down into a detailed set of speaking notes following the exact progression of your original recording.

The idea is that you can have these notes in front of you while you record again, reminding you of the points, anecdotes, jokes, digressions, and transitions without having to read a script word for word. Your 40-minute ramble recording notes, brilliant. So this is exactly what I wanted.

Let's recreate the previously failed ramble that I did before. Am I still recording video? I have to just check, where am I actually recording this? Is this actually working? Let me look at the recording monitor. Okay, good.

Sorry, this is a chaotic episode, but I did tell you at the beginning that that was the point of the episode, so hopefully you're up for it and you're with me for this chaotic ride through my brain. So, right, so where was that? Okay, that's here. So, okay, then let's try and recreate the episode that I did before.

All right, everybody? So here we go. So the main idea, the plan is to have no plan. Now, I've already said this because I more or less said the same thing that I said before.

So can I keep talking coherently for 40 minutes with nothing planned? And jokes and observations. The plan is to have no plan. I'm planning to be unplanned.

Is that possible? Yes, it is. What happens though? So I said, yes, no editing, no editing, which is quite a terrifying prospect because I suppose I've decided that whatever I record, I'm gonna upload. As long as it works, I will upload it, which is quite a terrible, terrifying, terrifying prospect.

I mean, it's not live. It's not like I'm doing a live stream. And at this point, someone is going, oh, please, teacher, please do a live scream.

Ah! A live stream, I mean. Well, it's not even a live stream, but at least I'm committing myself to record this with the intention of just uploading it. That is quite scary when you know that you can't edit anything out because what if I say something completely terrible or completely stupid? Or what if my trousers fall down while I'm recording, which is unlikely, to be honest, because I'm sitting down.

And if my, I mean, can your trousers fall down when you're sitting down? I suppose so. Anything is possible. Like I said earlier, why limit yourself to the basic rules of reality? Let's just assume that, yes, even though I am sitting down and I have a belt that is keeping my trousers firmly attached to the upper part of my, the upper part of the lower part of my body, aka the middle of my body, otherwise known as my waist, even though my trousers are definitely firmly attached, there's always, anything can happen.

Maybe they would fall down or fall off even completely, but it wouldn't be a problem because there's a table and you can't see. But anyway, I don't think my trousers would fall down, but who knows? I mean, I'm not planning to stand up suddenly, but anything could happen. So that is a little bit scary.

It's a bit like free climbing, right? It feels a bit like free climbing. You know what free climbing is? That's not climbing where you don't have to pay, although that would be free climbing as well, but it's climbing where you don't have any ropes, rock climbing without a rope, free climbing. I suppose free, free climbing, that would be where you climb without a rope and you don't have to pay anything.

Anyway, it's a bit like free climbing, you know, climbing up a cliff or a mountain or a rock face without a rope or any safety equipment, which is, that must be a terrifying thing to do. Why would anyone do that? Why would anyone choose to take such an unbelievable risk to climb up a mountain without any ropes? Because what would happen is you'd get, what would happen to me is I'd get to a certain point and then I would just, I mean, I've done a lot of rock climbing in my time with ropes. I've never done free climbing.

I've done bouldering and stuff. And the moment, even when you've got ropes, that moment where you realise, oh God, oh God, I can't hold on anymore because you've just reached the limit of your abilities, that is really terrifying. And then you fall, you know, and it's a horrible feeling.

But free climbing must be absolutely awful and terrifying. So this is a bit like free climbing. It's free podcasting, let's say.

It's exhilarating, slightly risky, but significantly less dangerous than climbing a mountain with no ropes. But anyway, so this type of episode is completely spontaneous. And I think this is a good exercise for you.

I want to inspire you to do a similar thing, right? I'd like you to spend five to 10 minutes doing what I'm doing, which means just trying to put your thoughts into words, just to try to practise your fluency, your spoken fluency. It is a good idea. Speaking even just five to 10 minutes every day can be a worthwhile activity.

You might think to yourself, but I need to speak to another person because real interaction is important and more realistic in terms of the real world. Yes,

that is true, but talking to yourself can have a lot of advantages as well. Like you're doing it alone in a room like I am, although technically, obviously I'm recording this and millions and billions and trillions and quadrillions and quintillions of people will end up listening to this.

But in fact, I am in a room on my own. And for you, if you do this, you would just be in a room on your own. And that does have its advantages because it cuts out that sense of judgement or that sense of self-consciousness.

You don't need to feel worried that people are judging you. And that is a huge factor in learning English. Let me drink some water.

That's a huge factor in English or any other use of a second language or practise of a second language. One of the things that will hold you back and cause you to be unconfident and generally have a negative impact on your English is a sense that you're being judged. And I think that we do judge ourselves when we speak English or a second language.

We do judge ourselves more harshly because we're used to being judged. We're used to being corrected. We are used to having the pressure of accuracy and correction.

And we all have memories of school, of learning languages at school and the pressure from teachers to be correct. It's all about wrong and right. But those feelings of judgement actually, although they're intended to, although the intention is to make you more accurate, you know, if you think about the atmosphere of a classroom where the teacher has asked you a question or you're speaking in the educational context, you associate that with assessment.

You associate that with tests. You associate that with the judgement of the teacher. You know, it's all about attempting to give the right answer.

That environment is an educational environment and it's supposed to lead to you learning English and learning grammar and accuracy and so on and making progress. But in fact, what it does to you is that it always infuses

moments of spoken English for you with those memories and that kind of the impact of that experience that causes you to lose your fluency and lose your confidence because you always get that sense of, oh God, what the, you know, you're always worried about making a mistake. But when you're on your own, you can just push all that away completely.

There are no consequences if you say something stupid or if you say an error. I mean, the only problem potentially with sort of speaking without having correction is that you could end up making the same mistakes and that causes fossilised errors. But you know, there is no perfect form of practise.

There's no perfect form of practise really. Everything has its advantages and disadvantages. You know, you've just got to understand how to ride the line and also to understand that perhaps the worst thing you can do is to do nothing.

Okay, remember that. One of the worst things you can do is to do nothing. So try to find ways of practising.

Don't judge yourself too harshly. Give yourself the opportunity. Liberate yourself from your own limitations and find ways to practise speaking.

Fear of mistakes, self-consciousness can prevent you from practising. It can also limit your ability to improve your fluency. So speak alone, it removes some of those psychological barriers, okay? Yeah, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, practise, okay? The five P's.

Also remember that English is something you can do, right? So practise doing English, not just knowing English. And so doing an exercise like this, speaking on your own for a while, you don't have to do it as long as I'm doing it, but doing this can be a good exercise, okay? What else did I say before? Yeah, practise makes perfect. This is what people say, practise makes perfect.

I think it's a well-known phrase, but is it the best phrase? I think, I don't like it that much. I like the idea that practise is good, obviously. Practise makes

perfect is a catchy saying that many of us know, and it's memorable, and it's a good way of encouraging people to practise.

But practise makes perfect is not necessarily the best because that suggests that perfect is your ultimate goal or your ultimate aim, that there is this thing called perfection, and ultimately that is what you're trying to achieve. But that is unrealistic and perhaps counterproductive because perfection isn't really, it doesn't really exist. There is no such thing as perfect when it comes to speaking a language, okay? There isn't really.

There is no mastery of English. No one masters the language. You never kind of go, right, I have done it.

Now I am the master of this language. Not even like Shakespeare or something was the master of English or achieved perfection because there's always more you can do. There's always, you can always take communication further and make it more and more effective and refine it.

You can always refine it. It's a bit like, I don't know, art. It's like creating art.

I don't think there's ever really perfection in art. You might think of something like the Mona Lisa as what people understand to be a great piece of art, but I'm sure that Leonardo da Vinci, at some point he was like, right, that's enough. I've got to stop working on this now.

It's done. They say that art is never finished, it's just abandoned. A work of art is never finished, it's just abandoned.

There comes a time where the artist has to stop trying to improve it and they just have to leave it and let it go because there's no such thing as perfection, really. It's a sort of, it's an ideal, but it's unreal. So obviously we should try to improve ourselves as much as possible, but we understand it's the journey, not the destination.

And yeah, perfect is a kind of impossible concept, really, I think, when it comes to trying to use a language. We just have to do it as better, the best we can. So practise makes perfect isn't really the right thing.

You shouldn't judge yourself by perfection. You should accept a certain amount of messiness and you should just try to do it better each time. So it's not practise makes perfect, but practise makes perfection is the better saying.

Hello, this is Luke from the future. Hi, how are you doing? You doing all right? Yes, this is me interrupting the episode and arguably you could say that this is an edit and that I'm breaking my own rules again, my own ramble rules are being broken again with this edit. But I will say that I'm not actually removing anything from the episode.

So it's not really an edit in that sense. So I think it's okay, right? You forgive me, okay. So why am I interrupting at this point? Well, you heard me just make a mistake, which I felt needed to be corrected.

So you just heard me mention the phrase, practise makes perfect. And I'm saying that that saying could actually be improved. And I've suggested that should be improved to practise makes perfection, but that's not what I wanted to say.

I'm so annoyed with myself. Why did I say that? I didn't mean that. What I meant was practise makes permanent, practise makes permanent.

This is annoying that I, for some reason got that wrong. And I say it a few times. I keep saying, yes, practise makes perfection.

That's not what I meant. I meant practise makes permanent. Okay, so I'm gonna have to, if I say practise makes perfection again, I'm gonna have to, what am I gonna do? I don't know what I'm gonna do.

It doesn't matter, does it? Okay, oh God, so much rambling. So if I do say it again, I'm gonna have to add in another recording of me from the future

saying, no, practise makes permanent. Practise makes permanent, not practise makes perfection.

Anyway, carry on. I don't know how this was brought to my attention. I think maybe someone in one of my comments sections mentioned this, practise makes perfection.

No, practise makes permanent. And I really like that. I think it was Bobby Robson, the English football manager, who coined the phrase, or at least was known for saying this, practise makes permanent.

Bobby Robson, he was the manager of the England football team and some Premier League club teams for years during the 80s and 90s, and was a national treasure, I think. Unfortunately, not with us anymore. But Bobby Robson was a lovely guy and a great personality in the world of football.

And he said, practise makes permanent, which is probably a better way of doing it, of thinking about it. Because if you think about playing football or doing any sort of sport, you have to practise doing that sport. You practise your penalty kicks or your free kicks or any kind of technique in football.

Practise, practise, practise means that the skills stay with you and you're able to use them more easily. Okay, it doesn't mean you become perfect at football because that's setting an unrealistic expectation for yourself, but simply the idea of repeated practise over and over again means that those skills stay with you permanently and then you're able to use them. And it's the same for English.

I think practise makes permanent is a good idea. I want to encourage you to do speaking practise in order to build those skills right into the heart of you, into the core of you, so that when you have to actually speak in the real world, the words come more easily. You've got your voice.

Your brain is used to producing sentences and sort of paragraphs of spoken English, let's say. So I practise, practise, practise, practise, practise the five Ps. Practise doing English, yes.

What else did I say in the ramble that I've already done that I'm now recreating? Somehow breaking the rules of my own ramble while also fulfilling the objective of my original recording session that didn't work before. What can you say when you speak to yourself? You can do what I'm doing now, as I mentioned, which is just to, without any kind of plan at all, just to do a stream of consciousness and try to let the English keep flowing. But otherwise you could, I've said it before, you could try to describe your surroundings.

Like here I am, I'm sitting here in my room and it's a lovely day, a lovely sort of autumn late afternoon. The sky is blue. There's some clouds in the sky.

What have I got on my desk? I've got a mug here. It's one of the mugs that I use to drink tea and coffee in my room and I need to wash this mug. It's got coffee.

It's got like two day old coffee at the bottom of the mug, which really needs to be washed away. I need to do the washing up. In fact, I've spent so long recently, I've spent so much time in this room making podcasts that I have kind of let the place become a little bit untidy.

There are various bits of paper that need to be organised and tidied away. You know, just talk about your surroundings. Look at the things you can see and talk about them.

I really need to clean that. I should do the washing up, for example. Or you could do this thing called past, present and future.

That's where you talk about maybe what you did last week, the past. Talk about what you're doing this week. That's the present.

Talk about what you're going to do in the future. Okay, there's an idea. Or just the stream of consciousness.

Let the contents of your mind spill out of your mouth. Try to synchronise your thoughts with your spoken English. That is a good form of brain training, I think.

It's a fluency exercise. So I want to inspire you to do a similar thing. Like I've said, you don't need to do 40 minutes like I'm doing.

You could just do it for five or 10 minutes each day. If you can't speak out loud, if you're in a public place and you don't want people to kind of look at you funnily, thinking, why are they talking to themselves? You could do it in your own head, right? You could just do it in your own head. And as I usually do at this point, I press the button on my mixing desk, which creates this effect.

And this is you speaking in your own head. Hello? Hello? Hello? Echo. Echo.

Is there anybody there? It's very empty in your brain. But you could just do it using your internal voice without actually having to say the words with your mouth. But you just say it in your own mind.

Say, you know, we know, don't we? Neuroscience has told us that the parts of the brain responsible for producing speech with your mouth are very closely connected to the parts of the brain responsible for just producing speech in your own head like this without actually saying it out loud. So if you're surrounded by people and you don't want them to hear you talking to yourself, just do it in your own brain. Yeah.

So free yourself from the fear of judgement and get used to expressing your thoughts in English. It's a very good form of practise. Yeah, so I've already said that the reason I'm doing an unplanned spontaneous episode is because the school holidays are coming and I had a very short window of time to get a podcast recorded to be published when I'm on holiday.

What else? Yeah, yeah, okay. Oh God, there was a moment there where I stopped talking, but that's okay. I've talked about practise makes permanent.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, that's it. If you're concerned that talking to yourself would be insane and crazy and you're worried that the men in white coats would come to take you away, then you could just blame me or at least use me as a justification if you just tell them, no, it's okay.

I'm not completely mad. It's Luke Thompson told me to do it. I'm sure that they would take that, accept that immediately.

They'd immediately understand. Oh, Luke from Luke's English podcast told you to do it? Well, that's fine. That's absolutely fine.

Okay, what else did I say? Okay, before I talked about the fact that, so just yesterday, in fact, I was listening to the Ramesh Ranganathan podcast, Ramesh Ranganathan. He is a British standup comedian. He's got a really good podcast.

He's a comedian. He's a TV presenter. He's an actor, very interesting guy and a well-known person in the UK.

Everyone knows Ramesh and he's got a podcast. It's really good. It's called the Ramesh Ranganathan Show.

And I was listening to it last night while I was ironing a shirt, ironing a shirt. And this shirt, in fact, the shirt I'm wearing now, I ironed it. I did iron it.

It's not too creased. It would be more creased. It would be more creased if I hadn't ironed it last night.

Yes, I took the iron, English vocabulary. I took the iron and I ironed this shirt, not while I was wearing it. That would have been a very bad idea.

Have you ever done that? I don't know. Has anyone ever ironed a shirt while wearing it? I don't recommend it. You'd probably burn all the skin off your body, wouldn't you? Don't do that.

Anyway, I ironed this shirt last night while I was doing it. I listened to Ramesh talking to one of his guests. The guest in the episode I listened to was Tom Hiddleston.

You know Tom Hiddleston? He's an actor, an actor. Tom Hiddleston is an actor. A British actor.

I like Tom Hiddleston. He's a good actor and great screen presence. I always enjoy watching Tom Hiddleston on screen in films.

Who is he? You know him, don't you? Do you? Don't you? He's famous for a few different films. Maybe his most famous role is that of Loki in the Marvel Cinematic Universe in Marvel films. He's Loki, the God of Mischief.

But he's an interesting character. He seems to be very intelligent. He's articulate.

He's funny. He's a good listener. He's kind of very present.

He's very present in the conversation. And it was really interesting listening to him talk to Ramesh. It was a lighthearted episode at times and funny.

We learned some surprising things I didn't know about Tom Hiddleston, like the fact that he's, probably a very good football player. And he gave various anecdotes about playing football in charity football matches and stuff like that. And meeting other professional footballers, premiership footballers, and spending time talking to them.

Anyway, I really enjoyed listening to Tom Hiddleston. And one of the things that struck me in the episode was that at the end, Ramesh asked Tom a difficult question. The question was, what is the best advice that you've ever been given? What's the best advice that you've ever been given? And that struck me as being a really difficult question because I thought if someone asked me that question on a big podcast, I would struggle to answer it because you kind of think, oh, I better give some good advice.

I better give some really good advice here in response to this question. And I was thinking, I don't know what I would say. What's the best advice I've ever been given? Like, look both ways before you cross the road.

I mean, that's admittedly is good advice, that just be careful when you cross the road. It is good advice, but it's not gonna lead to some really profound, meaningful conversation on the Ramesh Ranganathan podcast, is it? Ramesh is gonna say, well, that, okay, that is good advice, but there's nothing we could do with that, is there? Because you can't have a profound philosophical conversation about the dangers of crossing the road, can you really? But anyway, what's the best advice you've ever been given? And Tom paused for a moment and then he came up with this quotation that I just really, really liked. And the quotation was this, everybody has two lives.

I don't remember who it was that said this to Tom or where Tom got it, but I like it very much. Okay, everybody has two lives. And the second one begins when you realise that you only have one.

Everyone has two lives and the second one begins when you realise you only have one. And I really liked that quote, that saying or that bit of advice. I wish I knew where Tom got that from originally, but anyway, why do I like it? Well, I like it because of the message in that quote, but also I like the fact that it's quite ironic because it seems to contradict itself.

And I like things like that. I like ironic things like that. Everyone has two lives.

And the second one begins when you realise that you only have one. So in fact, you have two lives, but in fact, you only have one life. Right, do you understand the idea behind this quote? Do you understand the message? I think you probably do.

The message is basically, at some point in your life, you will probably realise that this is it, that this is not a rehearsal. This is not a dress rehearsal. You're not gonna have another chance to live this life.

This is it. It's actually happening to you right now. It's not gonna start later.

There's no life. Real life doesn't begin later. It's now.

This is it. It's happening to you right now. So we should try to appreciate the time that we have.

And I was talking about, yeah, it made me think that, what do you do with advice like that? It's all well and good realising and having an epiphany like that and thinking, okay, this is it. It's happening right now. Now what? What do you do next? What do you think, listeners? How do you actually apply that sort of advice to your actual life? Because it's just another way to say kind of the same thing that we've heard many times, which is you've got to live every day as if it's your last.

Although that's not really very good advice because if you lived every day as if it was your last, if I lived every day as if it was my last day, then I certainly wouldn't earn any money. I wouldn't do work. I would say, well, this is my last day on earth.

So I'm certainly not gonna waste my time or doing life admin or doing my tax return or stuff like that. I would definitely, the tax revenue, inland revenue would fine me. I'd be arrested for tax evasion.

I'd end up in prison and I wouldn't be eating very healthily and so I'd get fat. My cholesterol would go through the roof. I'd probably have a heart attack within a fairly short period of time.

So don't live every day as if it's your last day. That's a terrible idea. But anyway, we understand the sentiment, which is that you should try to live for the moment, live in the moment and make the most of the time that you've been given to you right now or seize the day, which seize the day, carpe diem.

Hold that thought because I'll be discussing that in a forthcoming episode of the podcast. So let's just take the idea of seize the day. That quotation from a Roman philosopher, I believe, carpe diem.

Hold that thought. We'll come back to that in a future episode. I've got a really interesting episode lined up about famous quotations and what they really mean.

That's coming to this podcast soon. But anyway, what do you do with that understanding that this is, that real life is happening to you right now? Don't waste it. So what do you do? Do you suddenly get very busy, suddenly go out and make things happen and kind of get a bit stressed and decide that you've got to try to fill your day with as many different activities as possible? It seems to be quite stressful to me, but maybe that's a side of my age.

Or do you react in another way, which is that you relax and you kind of stop worrying about insignificant problems and you just appreciate the present moment and slow things down, look at the sky, appreciate the beauty of the sky and the clouds and the birds singing and just enjoy the privilege of being alive in this moment rather than constantly striving and making efforts to do something else? There's a question for you. Which interpretation do you prefer? So everyone has two lives. The second life begins when you realise that you only have one, meaning that we all will come to a point where we realise this is it.

There's no second chance. How do you interpret that? What do you do with that information? Does it make you kind of relax and go, okay, well, let's just enjoy the moment? Or does it make you want to suddenly go out and start achieving things and travelling and having experiences and climbing mountains with no ropes and stuff like that? What do you think of that? Yeah, okay. This led me in my earlier ramble that I'm recreating.

This led me to reflect on getting older and what it's like to get older. And I was thinking things like this. I'm currently 49.

I've never been particularly bothered by the number itself because you're as old as you feel. Some people get very upset when their age increases, you know, the number increases by one every year. I've never really identified with that feeling of like hating the number, because it's just a number.

But I have noticed things as I'm getting older. As I said, I'm 49. I'll be 50 next year.

I know you're thinking, that's incredible, Luke. You look so young and so fresh-faced. Not really.

But I've noticed things as I get older. Like, for example, more and more people are younger than me and more and more people, more and more often, I am the oldest person in the room, depending on who I'm hanging out with, of course. But more and more often, this is the case, and more and more people are younger than me.

And you start noticing that people are getting younger. People in general seem to be getting younger, relatively speaking. Like police officers.

This is the thing that people often say, that they're sort of surprised to notice that like police officers are all younger than you. And police officers, these authority figures, who have this level of authority, but they're younger than you. And your perspective changes as you age.

Birthdays are celebrations of the fact that you haven't died yet. Why do we, what is a birthday? What is a birthday celebration? It's essentially, congratulations, you're still alive. Happy birthday to you.

You are not dead. You know, that's basically what that is. But I talked about the anxiety of time running out, and it's a bit like your phone running out of battery.

I talked about memory loss. And then I talked about language learning as brain training, right? So I, by the way, my 40 minute timer has run out. So this is all bonus time now.

But I want to just sort of mention some of the things that I spoke about in my previous ramble, which, will I make the audio for you? Will I make the audio file available to you? Maybe I will somehow. Check the episode show notes.

You might find a link for my first attempt at this, even though it's essentially repetition of many of the things I'm saying.

How are you doing, listeners? Are you all right? You still with me? You are, okay. How's, do you think I'm succeeding in this retro ramble of sorts? Have I managed to create a coherent thread of meaning throughout this episode? I hope so. But I wanted to touch on some things.

I was, so I was talking about, yes, as you get older, cognitive decline is a genuine concern as you start to forget people's names and things like that. I mean, we do, you do start to worry about those things when you're young. I like, I remember when I was in my teenage years, I used to look ahead at my life and I did, you do worry.

You'd think when you're older, you, what's it going to be like? Because of course you can, you think about the end of your life. I think there's nothing wrong with thinking about death, by the way. I think that's totally fine.

I think if you don't think about death sometimes, you're not really alive, right? I think this is true. There's nothing wrong with, it's not, it's not, obviously it's literally morbid to think of your death, but I think there's absolutely nothing wrong with, quite often remembering that you are mortal and that there will be an end point. As long as you're not like really obsessively anxious about it, although it's totally reasonable to be anxious about it, but it's worth remembering, or how shall I put this? I think it's better not to escape the inevitability of the fact that your life is finite and it will end and death is there at the end, you know? And you're not really alive unless you think about this from time to time.

And arguably we should all be preparing ourselves for it. And it's just, again, another way of saying the same thing, you know, which is that there's no second chance and this is it, this is happening to you right now. So live your life, live, try to enjoy the moment and live for the moment and stuff like that.

But anyway, mental decline, cognitive decline is a concern, but that made me think about brain training. And I think the fact that learning a language is a

great way to stimulate your brain. They, I've read several times that learning a second language is very healthy for your brain.

But also, so I'm gonna talk about two things which I think are good for your brain as you get older. One of them is simply doing some sort of mental workout, like for example, a ramble challenge like this. I think it's a good idea to make yourself, make your brain work hard.

Like this is quite difficult what I'm doing right now. Trying to put my thoughts and words into, trying to put my thoughts into words coherently is a difficult mental challenge. I'm gonna be tired after doing this, but I think it's a healthy thing.

It's a bit like going to the gym for your brain. So again, another reason for me to recommend doing a sort of spontaneous speaking ramble challenge as I call it, that's good for your head. But also in a second language, learning a second language is very good for you, I've read, because it involves, activating neural networks in your brain and keeping those things active and refreshing the connections between different parts of the brain.

Mentally challenging activities can be good for cognitive health. And I wonder if language learning can help to protect your brain against dementia. I haven't really fully checked the research, but what do you think? Do you know about this listeners? Do you know about the cognitive, do you know specifically about the cognitive health benefits of language learning? Can it help to prevent forms of dementia? For example, Alzheimer's disease? Let's hope so, let's hope so.

So learning English is not just good for your life, it's also good for your brain, which is obviously part of your life. But anyway, brain training, that's it. This subject reminded me of Dr. Kawashima's brain training.

Do you remember Dr. Kawashima's brain training? Did you have Dr. Kawashima's brain training? Does it still exist? I would check, but I'm trying not to use the internet too much. I'm trying to stay true to my original rules, which were to actually not use any technology in this episode, except for

what I've had to do to recreate whatever. Dr. Kawashima's brain training, did you have that where you're from? Obviously, if you're listening from Japan, then I'm sure that you had Dr. Kawashima's brain training.

What was he called in, was he called like Kawashima-san or something like that? I don't know. But in English, Dr. Kawashima. Do you know what I'm talking about listeners? So Dr. Kawashima's brain training was a game that was released on the Nintendo DS handheld computer game console.

It was a popular Nintendo DS game and it involved doing puzzles and mental arithmetic and other little cognitive challenges. And one of the main marketing points for Dr. Kawashima's brain training was it was good for your brain and it helped to keep you mentally alert and mentally healthy and potentially could prevent the onset of cognitive decline like forms of dementia as you get older. And I never really played it myself, but my mum had a Nintendo DS and she had Dr. Kawashima's brain training and she used to play it.

Did you have that when you were, did you have that? Does it still exist? I wouldn't be surprised if it does. But yeah, there was the Game Boy, the Game Boy Colour, the Game Boy Advance, then the Nintendo DS, the Nintendo DS had a split screen and a little, I think a little pen stylus thing which you could use, am I right? And Dr. Kawashima's brain training was one of the most popular games on it because I think Nintendo were quite clever. Clevel? No, that's not a word.

They were clever. They were quite clever because they knew that a lot of people who'd grown up with the original Game Boy were now adults. And so they started marketing games that would appear to appeal to adults, including this game, which apparently was bought by so many people because they believed it would be good for their brain.

I don't know if there's actually any evidence for that. Is it true that doing those little like puzzles and things, are those things good for your brain? I don't know. Sudoku, crossword puzzles? They probably are, probably good.

I don't know what the actual medical opinion or scientific opinion is on that. But I was wondering about Dr. Kawashima. Was he a real doctor? Was he genuinely a real sort of like neuroscientist or a professor of neuroscience? Was he a real doctor or was he just like another made up character that Nintendo created like Mario or Zelda or something? Is it just like Mario, Donkey Kong, Zelda, Dr. Kawashima? Is he just one of those characters they created? Imagine if like in the next version of Super Mario Kart, maybe they'll have all the main characters, Mario, Luigi, Princess Peach, Donkey Kong, Bowser, and maybe Dr. Kawashima will be in there too, which would be interesting as a playable character in the Nintendo universe.

Would Dr. Kawashima, how would he be in Mario Kart? What would be his special weapons? Just like making the other drivers do difficult puzzles to distract them and then he would win the race. I don't know. I think Nintendo could give him his own platform game where he has to jump from platform to platform solving puzzles in order to eat mushrooms and ultimately save the princess.

I don't know. That could be fun, couldn't it? Yes. Earlier on, I went off on a little ramble about Super Mario Kart and what a fantastic game it was and how these days, Super Mario Kart seems to be so much more complicated than it used to be or maybe I'm just getting old, but the original version of Super Mario Kart on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System was just fantastically straightforward and simple really, just driving around a simple track often against your friends and with little weapons that you could collect like shells, turtle shells, green ones that you could fire out in a straight line and they would bounce off walls and you had to bounce them.

You had to time it just right so it bounced off the wall and hit another player and they'd spin out and then you could overtake them. The red shell, of course, was the most exciting weapon because it was like a heat-seeking missile. It would fly along and sort of chase after whoever was in front and turn corners and follow them and eventually hit them and they would spin out and you'd overtake them and there were others, the banana skin, and if you press the button, you would just drop a banana skin and obviously, if any one of the other players driving their little go-kart would hit it, then they would

spin out, of course, and the exciting moment when you realised that if you pressed forward on the control pad and then pressed the button, that it would shoot the banana skin forward.

You could throw it into the air ahead of players and make them spin out and of course, there was the right way to use, the strategic way to use banana skins. You'd drop them in special locations like on a corner where people are trying to cut the corner, taking the racing line, you drop a banana skin right there, you're guaranteed to get someone or you drop it right on the finish line so that right at the last minute, someone hits it and they spin out and you then overtake, you overtake and you win or you drop it on the question mark square, that's the square that you have to drive over in order to get your next weapon, you actually drop it on the question mark itself and people don't see it and they spin out then. I'm in great times, fun times, I could talk more about Super Mario Kart but I won't because that's the end, I've reached my time limit, my target time of 40 minutes, I've reached it, I've breached it, I've gone beyond the 40 minute timer and that is that.

So let me just conclude and wrap up here for the second time this afternoon although as far as you're concerned, the first time but as we know, we have two lives but the second one begins when you realise you only have one or you have two podcast episodes and the second one begins when you realise that you completely messed up the first one because your phone fell asleep and stopped recording, ruining the entire thing. There, it's not quite as catchy as the Tom Hiddleston quote which I think actually having Googled it, again, breaking my own rules but who cares, there are no rules. Take the rules and throw the rules out the window or put the rules in a pot, cook them and eat them.

Eat the rules. There, there's a good slogan for you. Anyway, having Googled it, I think it was Confucius who said originally something along the lines of you have two lives and the second one or whatever it was, you know, you have two podcast episodes, the second one begins when the first one goes horribly wrong.

Okay, I'm making this into a complete dog's dinner now, aren't I? Right, I was about to finish elegantly. I was about to finish the episode in a kind of elegant and smooth way but I had to just come in again, didn't I, after the fact and just add yet more unhinged rambling but anyway, that's enough of me from the future. Let's go back.

That was good, wasn't it? That noise, have you been enjoying that? Okay, if you ever played Super Mario Kart then you would surely have loved those sound effects. Anyway, that's enough of this. Okay, back to me from the past but you know, as we know, we have two lives but the second one begins when you realise you only have one.

Somehow that seems very relevant and appropriate for this episode, this strange double episode that turns out only to be one but this has been a ridiculous, completely spontaneous, more or less spontaneous ramble except for the bits where I repeated what I'd already said but as far as you're concerned, this is only the first time but the aim was to inspire you to do similar things, to practise speaking yourselves. Listening and studying are useful, of course but speaking requires active production. I want to encourage you to do English.

Even five or 10 minutes a day of speaking like this can help. Stream of consciousness rambling, answering questions that you've prepared for yourself, pretending you're in a job interview, describing your week, creating a list of topics to speak about and then talking about them in different days. Using an AI chatbot for spoken practise and feedback.

You know, you can get feedback from AI, ideally with another human, a teacher. You know, you can find teachers on platforms like italki. In fact, go to teacherluke.co.uk slash talk.

That is still there and you can find teachers there and I'll get a little bit of commission if you do that. You can find teachers and conversation partners on platforms like that. But my main message is, English isn't just something you know, it's something you can do.

Practise makes permanent. If you don't lose it, no. If you don't use it, you lose it.

If you don't lose it, if you don't lose it, you keep it. Develop your voice in English by speaking regularly. Get used to converting your thoughts into spoken English in real time.

I invite you to leave your comments in the comments section. Thank you very much for listening to this and for watching this. I'm really hoping and praying that this actually worked without technical difficulties and slightly shorter than episodes normally, but that's not a bad thing at all.

I wonder how many of you who are listening now, right up until the end of the episode, how many of you listening, is this the first time you've ever ended one of my episodes? You might be thinking, wow, the episodes do end. This is how they end. Maybe you're delighted to finally have reached the end of an episode of my podcast for the first time.

If you want more, if you find yourself wanting after an hour, if you're thinking, where's that extra second hour that normally we get from Luke's podcasts? Go back into my episode archive, teacherluke.co.uk slash episodes. And there you can find all my other episodes. Sign up to my premium subscription.

It's not just bonus content. It's stuff where I really focus on helping you expand your vocabulary and broaden your range of English in terms of vocab and grammar. There's a lot of shadowing practise there.

A lot of episodes specifically designed to let you practise repeating after me and other forms of English training that you can find through my premium episodes, teacherluke.co.uk slash premium. But there you go. Thank you for listening.

Just think about all the English that has travelled through space time from my brain formed into English words through my mouth. They've gone into the microphone. They've gone through cables into the computer.

They've been processed, turned into digital information which has travelled through the internet to God knows where else in the world. You've gathered that information. Your computer has converted it back into sound which has travelled into your ears through a speaker or through headphones.

And that's gone into your brain. Your brain has converted that into magic electrical stuff. And you've understood it.

Now you need to complete the process by letting words come out of your mouth too, right? Breathe the living language. Speak, speak, speak, speak, speak. Thank you for listening.

Have a lovely morning, afternoon, evening or night wherever you are in podcast land. Please be excellent to each other, okay? Hopefully I'm not gonna end this episode by swearing. We all have two lives.

The second one begins when you realise you only have one. Interpret that in whatever way you want. Feel free to discuss or leave your comments in the comment section.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for watching. Be excellent to each other.

But for now, it's just time for me to say goodbye. Bye, bye, bye, bye.