Keynote Proficient End-of-course Test A

Audioscript

Track 1, Part 1

MP3 file: Track1_Keynote_Prof_TestA_Part1

1

Man: Do you fancy having a go at painting?

Woman: What, you mean like go to an evening class or something? I can't paint to save my life! I was worse than useless at art at school. I never really engaged with the whole thing – didn't think much of the teacher if I'm honest, 'cause he just homed in on people who had some kind of skills – not me, in other words! The lessons were like some kind of endurance test, stretching on all morning.

Man: You never know, they might come at it from a different angle. You might suddenly find you have a flash of inspiration with someone else in charge, and discover you're a born portrait painter or something!

Woman: I appreciate what you're trying to do, but honestly, it really isn't my thing. It's not that I hold with the idea that it's all in the teaching – clearly I'm lacking innate ability, too – I just think my fate was sealed on the art front at a young age. I've no intention of revisiting those feelings of failure any time soon!

Man: You really *are* on a downer, aren't you! OK, let's look for something else we'll both enjoy.

2

Man: Have you ever overcome a fear?

Woman: Yeah – flying. Interestingly, I only became fearful after I'd had kids – previously I'd flown all over without a care in the world. Then suddenly there I was at the grand old age of 35 in mortal dread of stepping foot inside a plane. Regardless of knowing everything about flying like the back of my hand – the physics of it, how safe it truly is – I was a bundle of nerves every time I got anywhere near an airport. Deep down I knew that in all likelihood the worst-case scenario would be a bit of turbulence en route, yet I'd dread the whole thing for days in advance and sit gripping the seat arms the entire journey.

Man: So, how did you combat your fears, then?

Woman: There are a myriad of things you *can* do – see a therapist, try relaxation techniques – none of that for me – I just persevered. Kept putting myself out of my comfort zone until eventually it paid off, and I wasn't breaking into a cold sweat at the mere thought of flying. It may never be my favourite thing to do, but at least it's tolerable these days, thank goodness.

Man: Well done you!

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Woman: Jack, you design tables which you produce sustainably. So, cutting through the jargon...

Man: Well, it means that nothing I make has resulted in trees being chopped down – my ethos is to reuse and recycle whatever I can get my hands on in order to create bespoke pieces for private customers, by which I mean I'm not producing stuff on a large scale for trade.

Woman: Mm, you so often see mass-produced tables, chairs, entire ranges of furniture which have been rather shoddily put together and yet they're prohibitively expensive in spite of that. Whereas your custom-made pieces are not only affordable but beautifully crafted, too.

Man: Thank you for the vote of confidence! It simply makes perfect sense to me to make use of other people's cast-offs – unwanted doors, paneling, any other useable wooden item, really. Both the customer and the environment reap the benefits – the former ends up with the perfect made-to-measure piece for their home and the environment doesn't suffer in any way, shape or form. My pieces are far from elaborate, I should add, but they're genuinely ethical.

Woman: Yes – something that increasing numbers of customers are seeking when they furnish their homes.

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Track 2, Part 2

MP3 file: Track2_Keynote_Prof_TestA_Part2

Wendy:

My name's Wendy Harbrook and I'm a researcher currently carrying out a study into eating habits – specifically how they differ between countries and cultures, with a view to aiding cross-cultural understanding and avoiding embarrassing blunders when you're away from home.

When I was working in Japan recently, I jumped at the invitation to dine with a colleague's family locally. I was apprehensive as opposed to self-confident, having purposefully declined to read up on dining etiquette in advance. There's nothing like throwing yourself in at the deep end – no playing it safe for me – it's something which is vital to my research style. Don't get me wrong – I certainly wasn't out to offend, merely to experience what it feels like to be unaware of what are known as the norms of an unfamiliar culture in order to gain first-hand learning.

I put some thought into choosing a gift for the host. Initially I went down the route of trying to find something a little out of the ordinary – an item of food from my own country, perhaps. I was forced to rule that out due to the lack of availability, and I'd long since finished my provisions of favourite treats I'd brought with me from the UK, so I settled on flowers as is also customary in the UK – fortunately I was aware that I ought to give an uneven number, as the opposite is thought to be unlucky.

When I arrived at the house, I was fully prepared for the custom of taking off my shoes, and did so immediately. I'd been labouring under the misapprehension, however, that slippers would then be presented to me – socks were in fact what my hosts were wearing throughout their home, to protect the delicate tatami mats covering the floor.

When we sat down to dine, the dishes subsequently served by my host were divine! I was presented with lots of things to sample and I have to say I enjoyed every morsel, from the delicious *sashimi* – salmon – raw, not cooked – to something called *maki*. Its principal ingredient being shrimp, something I adore, this was without doubt the real highlight of the meal.

The issue of what to do whilst eating was a steep learning curve for me. Yes, I'd used chopsticks a million times, and had mastered the art of holding them – no problem there. Somehow, though, I managed to overlook a certain tradition. Putting my chopsticks on the holder between courses was second nature – not so was remembering to place them in a parallel pose – at one point they were crossed, which is terribly impolite, but my host gently pointed it out, and any embarrassment on my part was spared!

Something I hadn't accounted for was the discomfort I found myself in by the end of dinner – physically, I mean. British people are pretty unaccustomed to folding their legs under themselves at the table. I knew better than to complain, of course, but I think my host could sense how I felt and she presented me with a chair so we could continue the evening, which consisted of chatting and board games – which were a source of endless fascination for me, never having played Japanese versions previously.

Over the course of the evening, I learned a considerable amount about Japanese customs and traditions surrounding dining in someone's home, and there's little doubt they'll find their way into a new book I'm writing about eating habits around the world. It took me a while to come up with the perfect title – what started out as *Customs and Courtesy* later turned into the more simplified *Table Manners* – I thought that said it all, really. It's a mere drop in the ocean of the hundreds of titles out there on the subject already, but I think my first-hand experience is what will hopefully set my writing apart from the others. It's in the shops next month, so I do hope you'll buy yourself a copy!

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Track 3, Part 3

MP3 file: Track3_Keynote_Prof_TestA_Part3

Int = Interviewer, JB = Joseph Bloome, AO = Amanda Owen

Int: Today we're talking to psychologists Joseph Bloome and Amanda Owen about success and happiness. Joseph, first of all, the age-old question – does being rich equate with being successful?

JB: In order to answer that, let's pause for a moment and consider what success is. Let's call it happiness, because that's what I think is the crux of the matter. Being rich doesn't preclude being happy and being poor doesn't preclude being miserable, yet so often people cling to a kind of fundamental belief that if we're saying money doesn't make you happy then it can't do so – which common sense and the law of probability tells us simply isn't the case. What I've discovered over the course of my career as a psychologist is that those who *do* equate wealth with success are actually all too often not that happy – and the more unhappy you are, the less likely it is that you're going to strive to make wealth happen!

AO: Quite. And the acquisition of material goods which generally accompanies wealth may or may not have a direct influence on someone's feelings – it may bestow a momentary thrill, followed by subsequent disappointment when the realization dawns that nothing which really matters has changed. It may be altogether meaningless, or something which generates great joy. It's all about your overall state of mind – and to a degree whether it's down to a change in circumstances – a first big purchase, like a car, can be a milestone, a step on the way to – you've guessed it – 'going up in the world', whereas acquiring another designer suit, for the person who already has a wardrobe full, is an everyday occurrence barely worthy of a second thought.

JB: If you look up the word 'success' in the dictionary, there are multiple definitions and there's a stark contrast between them. On the one hand we've got the cherished view most people cling to – that idea of attainment of wealth we've just talked about – though that attainment can also relate to fame or social status. But ahead of that entry in the dictionary is this one – success defined as 'the accomplishment of an aim or purpose'.

AO: Which as you say flies in the face of what many consider the true definition of success to be. Let's say you've set your sights on a fantastic social life – now I'm not talking about the status thing you just referred to, but rather being surrounded by lots of friends and family, getting out there, doing stuff, gathering fascinating life experiences. You could have little financially, but still be really rich in other ways.

JB: And I think it's important not to overlook those other aspects of success.

Int: Moving on, what do you think of the idea that being successful is maintaining an element of control over your life, be that at work, at home, whatever?

JB: That's a thought-provoking question. I think the answer is two-fold. Isn't control an artificial concept, an illusion? Some of the most stressed-out people I've ever come across have been what I'd call 'control freaks' – they fixate on the idea that they can steer their life – and other people by the way – in the direction they choose. But as we all know, things can change in an instant due to no fault, or indeed effort, of our own. But

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if we say – and this is just one example – that control means having a level of autonomy at work – we can vote or make suggestions and know we'll be taken seriously – then of course that will be of enormous psychological benefit. And there are people who just take everything in their stride – let go of responsibility in a way – surrender to the idea that what will be will be, now that control is out of their hands – that's pretty freeing, isn't it?

AO: So, is *that* success? That impression of liberty? That must be exhilarating. Speaking purely for myself now, I do tend to succumb to worry at times. It's not that I'm saying my major concerns in life have centred around the aspiration of 'keeping up with the Joneses', peer pressure if you like – if he's got a flashy car then I want a flashier one so I can prove I'm going places or earn others' respect. I'm no snob and it isn't that I'm not content with my lot, far from it, but, if I could banish all feelings of worry that would feel pretty successful to me. Those happy-go-lucky people have got it made!

Int: Well, I'm with you there! Thanks very much to both of you for such a fascinating discussion!

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Track 4, Part 4

MP3 file: Track4_Keynote_Prof_TestA_Part4

1

Woman:
Generations of my family went into medicine, so becoming a novelist meant breaking with convention. I was intent on the pursuit of a career which would satisfy my creative urges. I was always penning stories as a youngster and as I matured as a writer I became fascinated by developing fully-rounded characters – I'd feel their pains and joys! This transferred itself to real life – I'm more empathetic now. Of course, there are days where words flow from my fingers, and others where all I seem to do is stare out the window, without getting round to writing anything. The cogs are turning inside my head, though, and often, following a period of apparent inactivity, I'll churn out my best work.

2

Man:
I'm a portrait photographer now, but I originally intended to become an architect like my grandfather. My about-turn was prompted by something I overheard. This photographer was giving a talk and I sensed his overriding desire to establish a rapport with people who'd come to see his work. I thought, bricks and mortar are difficult to develop a relationship with – I want to do what he's doing. The feedback I get from clients is inspirational. It was hardly a seamless transition – I was initially secretive about my techniques till I grasped the concept that being in discussion with others could work to my advantage – I've learned so much from colleagues that my work has come on enormously.

3

Woman:
When I embarked on my career as an interior designer, I used to be overjoyed when a client went into raptures about my work – and come crashing down if I sensed they suspected an error of judgement on my part. I had close friends in the field and learning of their successes would send me into a spiral of self-doubt and resentment – how disgraceful! I came to my senses, eventually – why not just celebrate with them as they did with me? I poured my heart and soul into projects, left my own stamp on every building I worked in – that was the element of the profession which drew me in. And what more could I do than my best?

4

Man:
Becoming an animator was a must for me – I loved cartoons from being a toddler and there was little I loved more than messing about on computers. In fact, unless I was in front of some kind of screen I was pretty disengaged at school. Some animators make it big, earn a fortune – go from rags to riches overnight. I've only ever sought to attain a level of acknowledgement from critics who review my animated films. One outcome of my early work is that I learned to recognize the value of formulating a strategy – something to fall back on should anything unforeseen crop up during the production process, rather than suddenly having to radically rethink halfway through.

5

Woman:
Working in sales I felt my creativity had been well and truly stifled and so I embarked on a course in fashion design. Following the conventional route of becoming a wage slave at a prominent fashion house failed to engage me and I set up on my own, offering bespoke designs to clients with a keen eye for fashion. These people want to be noticed – no understated pieces for them! Not that they advocate mismatched items, but the bolder the better! Fostering a sense of confidence in them is what makes it all worthwhile. I keep an eye on other designers' work – to stay ahead in this game that's the only thing to do.

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