

Transcription:

Curtis: Hi, everybody. I'm Curtis and I'm here with Amy.

Amy: Hi, everybody.

Curtis: And today we're going to have a really interesting conversation – it's an important one too – about the relationship between consistency and motivation, especially when you're learning a language. Right, Amy?

Amy: Yeah, that's right. And the first thing that I want to jump right into is talking about how important consistency actually is and how this is really the magic tool, the secret weapon, whatever you want to call it. This is the easier way to learn.

I'm going to give you a really, really quick example to demonstrate this really clearly. So, if we have one person, Person A, they have to learn 100 words within a week, and then we have Person B who has the same problem. Person A decides they're going to spend three hours on Sunday afternoon studying these words because they know that they're working throughout the week. Person B also decides to take some time on Sunday to learn maybe 40 words, and they decide that on Monday they're going to spend 20 minutes reviewing those words and learning some new ones and they repeat that each day of the week until the following weekend.

At the end of this time, Person A, they can't remember the words. By the following Sunday, maybe they know a few but the majority of them are very difficult to recall or they've forgotten them completely. Whereas, person B has these words very, very well known and their vocabulary now they understand them, they can recall them easily, and most importantly, they can use them. But Person A has to relearn, where Person B is ready to learn more.

This is a very, very clear example of the power of consistency. And if you want to learn faster, you really need to focus on how you can be more consistent. Because when you're not having to relearn, this is when it starts to get easier and faster.

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: So, Curtis, when you're studying consistently, what happens?

Curtis: Well, I get more motivated. I become more motivated. I learn things. I actually learn.

Amy: Okay. So you're realizing you're making progress then?

Curtis: Right.

Amy: Okay. So, how does that connect to the consistency? Can you elaborate?

Curtis: Yup. Okay, so when I'm being consistent and learning a specific thing, I keep reviewing. Reviewing is the most important part for me as well – reviewing consistently, learning consistently. And then when I have that realization of, “I know this, I've learned it, perfect, exactly,” and then I get excited and I want to learn the next thing.

Amy: Like you were able to use something that you learned or you saw it being used and something that you read or something that you were watching, and you realize, “Oh hey, cool. I'm learning. Okay. I have space in my brain to learn something new.”

Curtis: Right. Yeah, it's that feeling of accomplishment and achievement that drives me to remain consistent because it's all the pieces coming together for learning.

Amy: Yes. So it's more like when you're consistent, you are learning faster, which creates motivation, which creates motivation to study again. And in my case, when I'm highly motivated, I'm actually more motivated to do activities that are more challenging compared to periods where maybe I have lower motivation because I've been too busy, I haven't been consistent, and I'm kind of on that downward spiral out of consistency.

So it's kind of a winning combination. If you're studying regularly, you're going to be learning faster and just able to have more room in your brain to be able to learn new things. You're going to have high level of motivation, which is going to help you naturally want to study without feeling like it's a chore. And if you're really motivated, you're probably going to be doing activities that are more demanding on your concentration, right?

Curtis: Yeah. With me, another thing that I realized was consistency is the thing of not having to relearn something over again.

Amy: Oh yeah, because you were a Type A.

Curtis: For sure.

Amy: Yeah. I would say Curtis was – well, why don't you tell us about your learning strategy for the first two years? Just a quick version.

Curtis: Well, it wasn't really a strategy at all. It was putting way too much information into my head and thinking, “Oh okay. Well, I learned that. Move on to the next thing without any review.”

Amy: And then learning something else random the next time that you were studying for three or four hours at a time.

Curtis: And I have a bad memory as is, so it really locked me into a basic level and I wasn't moving anywhere.

Amy: No. You were just relearning and relearning. I mean we're talking about basic, basic, basic stuff. It's not that you didn't have the guidance. I mean I certainly gave you the guidance. I said, "Why aren't you reviewing? You know, you learn something and then you never look at it again. Do you think you're going to remember it? Sorry, man, it doesn't work that way."

Curtis: Yeah. You were on me. That's for sure.

Amy: Yeah. So anyway, I would say there's one thing that really changed in the last year. We actually have been living in Mexico now for three years. So for the first two years, your studying was pretty inconsistent, I must say.

Curtis: Yes.

Amy: Or those long sessions, the three hours at a time, once every week or two, not reviewing anything, and that strategy wasn't working. So why don't you tell us about the moment where you realized that you had to change and you had a strong reason to help you change?

Curtis: Okay. Well, it was when I was with a group of friends and they invited me to sit at their table. There was 10 or 12 people, Mexicans, native Spanish speakers, and I was like, "Oh my God." I sat down at this table. The music was loud in this place, it was a lounge. So I couldn't really hear what's going on and I couldn't involve myself in the conversation at all.

Amy: It was just trying to hear something or if somebody is looking at you or they're kind of saying something right next to you then it was okay, but you were lost at that point.

Curtis: Yeah. So it was a realization of, "Oh my God. I thought I've been studying and learning a lot, and I couldn't participate, I couldn't be a part of that conversation." So I had this realization, "Well, I've got to do something to change this."

Amy: Yeah, exactly. And this is when we really started to focus more on your consistency and creating a plan to help you become more consistent.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: I mean, I haven't made you a plan and I said, "Do Day 1, Day 2." I had review in there. I said, "Just follow the instructions. You need an hour a day, follow these instructions." But that plan, it was still difficult for you to stick to that plan, right?

Curtis: It was.

Amy: Because you've got the distraction syndrome.

Curtis: Yeah, and I've got a bit of the "put it off" or procrastination problem with some things.

Amy: Yeah, Curtis has a bit of a procrastination problem. So for him, it's really, really difficult to remember the importance of review coming back to something and also puts it off. He usually puts it off until another time.

Okay. But lately you've been okay. You've been more consistent with your studying?

Curtis: Yes. Yeah. And I don't move on to the next thing until I know that I've learned something and that I've reviewed it and I'm always keeping it fresh by using it. Then I move on to the next thing that I can be consistent with to learn that.

Amy: Yeah, exactly. It's a little bit more instead of having so many different things that you're focusing on, you're just focusing on one thing, trying to learn it better, at least reviewing it a couple of times.

You know, I've been talking about using your flash card deck to put in new rules or examples of a sentence or whatever it is that you're having to learn, whatever you're reviewing. Put again in your flash cards because when you're reviewing your flash cards for the vocabulary, it's really easy just to see a sentence or the general rule of something that you've been reviewing, that can be your moment to review.

That's a strategy and a trick I've been using for a very long time. I don't reread a page of grammar rules. I take the most essential part of that lesson and put it in my flash cards so I see it like 10 more times before I'm done with it.

Curtis: And learning something new now has been very exciting for me. I have that moment of achievement. It's like, "Wow. Yeah, this is cool. I want to keep going."

Amy: Yeah, exactly. So right now you're motivated, everything is good, you're on track, and really this is the key if you can find some sort of cycle to stay motivated. You know, sometimes it's a reason, something pops up and you realize you have the sudden pressure that you have to learn the language, but other times you just have to go back to the consistency. Do things that you enjoy, do things that you look forward to doing, and just really let it help you to have the motivation that you want to have, and get that consistency going and get it working for you.

Curtis: Exactly.