

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

00:00 Welcome to the very first episode of the English with Rhys podcast. My name is Rhys, I'm a professional English teacher from the UK, and I'm going to help you level up your English.

So, in today's episode, you're going to learn some key phrases to help you talk about yourself more accurately. You're going to learn some signposting techniques, improve your listening comprehension, and hear some conversational phrases.

So, this episode was not scripted. I have some bullet points, like a short list of things I want to talk about, but I haven't scripted it. And the reason for that is I want you to hear how a native naturally talks, okay?

So, you're going to hear some hesitation, you're going to hear some backtracking. and you're going to hear some other conversational patterns that you don't find in
01:00 scripted media. Okay, that's quite important that you get this kind of media too.

So, every episode of English with Rhys features an entertaining topic or an interesting interview. So, since this is the first episode of the English with Rhys podcast, I thought it would make the most sense to talk to you about me and my career in teaching English.

So, I'm going to talk a little bit about where I grew up, how I first got into teaching, how I beat the quarterlife crisis, my travels around the world, teaching English, and the steps I took that make me who I am today.

If you'd like to get more out of this podcast, you can get the transcript for free on my website. That's englishwithrhys.com. English with R-H-Y-S dot com. Okay, the transcript is available for free there. Studies have shown that when you read
02:00 along to the same thing you're listening to, you can improve your vocabulary acquisition. In other words, you will learn vocabulary more quickly if you read along at the same time.

But if you're really serious about levelling up your English, which I know most of you are, well there's no better way than by downloading the PDF worksheet from my Patreon, okay? The worksheet has pre- and post- listening activities. You'll get much more out of the content, and you'll have vocabulary practice, questions to get you thinking, and target language practice. So, Patreon supporters can also listen to the podcast ad-free and get additional behind the scenes content and feel good about themselves for supporting my work.

So, the links to my Patreon and my website are in the description.

MAIN PART

03:00 So, a lot of you might be wondering about my origin story, okay? That's, uh, where someone comes from. So, my origin story starts in the mid-90s in a country called Wales. Wales is a very small country in the UK, there's about

three million people, and it's a little different to the other countries in the UK because, in Wales, we have our own language.

Now, here's the thing. A lot of people can't speak the language, like me, I'm not fluent in Welsh. But we still learn it at school. In Wales though, most people's first language is English, and by most, I mean like 99%.

04:00 So, I was born in the mid-90s, and I sort of grew up in Wales, and as I became a teenager, I started to develop some kind of personality, like many of us. And so, I became a theatre kid, if you can believe that. So, I really enjoyed acting, and being in plays, and, well, being the centre of attention. I've always loved being the centre of attention, I don't know why. Maybe it's a problem with my ego, who knows? But I've always enjoyed it and it's a reason why I'm making podcasts right now too.

Um, so that's what I did, and when I reached sixteen, in the UK, we have to do something called work experience, okay? So, work experience is when you are sent to do a job, you become an assistant somewhere, you get a taste of work life. Because in the UK, at least at that time, you could leave school at sixteen. So, it's getting you ready, getting you to decide. Are you going to leave or are you going to continue in education?

05:00 So, I didn't really think much about what I was going to do. I just chose somewhere close, somewhere familiar. So, I ended up going back to my old primary school as a teaching assistant, okay?

Now, I'm only sixteen so I didn't have to do much, just sort of look after kids, maybe the teacher needed a certain book or something, I'd go get it, tell a story, that kind of thing, you know. It wasn't really hard work, but it was my first taste of teaching.

Okay, so I think it's very important that I bring it up because of where my life has led.

So, anyway, I got a little bit older and when I hit eighteen years old, it was time to go to university. Now, like most teenagers, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. So, I just chose what I liked. You know, my hobbies. I like making videos. So, my first degree is actually in film and television studies, which might be hard to believe.

06:00 But while I was there, I joined the improvisational theatre society, okay, we usually just call that 'improv', okay? So, I joined it, it's acting, and you don't need a script, so it fits in quite easily with university life. I don't have to spend time remembering lines. I can just go, show up, and then in the daytime study, in the evening go to my job in a restaurant.

So, yes, I went to the improv society for a couple of years and then we had elections to get the new president of the improv society and I thought, you know, why not? I love improv, I like teaching, you know I haven't had much experience yet, but I'd like to give it another go.

07:00 So, I went for it and, yes, I was elected president of the improv society. So, every week after that, I was teaching acting skills to groups of adults. You know, eighteen to... probably the oldest was around 35, okay, with mature students. So, that was really cool, that gave me a good taste of teaching and what it felt like to actually be a teacher, even though it wasn't in such a professional role.

So, my degree came to an end in the mid-2010s, and I had that kind of crisis that a lot of people have when they leave university. They still don't really know what to do. They don't feel ready to grow up, they don't know what job they're gonna do, so I had that problem.

So, I thought the best thing I could do is take a break before I look for a job with my degree, which if you remember is film and television studies.

08:00 So, one day, somebody came to my university to give a talk, and they talked about working in China. Okay, they're a company that they send people to China to teach English, okay? But they will send any native speaker pretty much. You don't have to be too qualified for this company unfortunately.

And, you know, I was a dumb kid. I was just twenty-one so, yeah, I thought why not? This would be a good opportunity for me to teach, which I like, and figure out what I'm gonna do with my life.

So, I took a very quick teaching course. I think it was 60 hours, but it was online and I learned to teach. But here's the thing guys, I got some real qualifications later, and, looking back, I must admit nobody is qualified to teach for just learning for 60 hours online. You may have heard of something called a TEFL certificate,

okay. A TEFL certificate can be gotten in even twenty hours, maybe even less,
09:00 they're very cheap, and you can do them online. Sometimes there's no test, you just click through the slides, okay? So, this is a problem but it's the kind of certificate I had in the beginning.

So, I went to China, and I taught for six months. Mostly I taught children but soon I was being invited to high schools and different schools in the area to give guest lectures, weekly classes, and things like that, so I got a taste of a bit of everything. And then, on weekends, I was offered some more work to have conversation classes with adults. So, I really enjoyed that, I got a taste of beginner to advanced, child to adult, different settings, and then it came to an end.

I was only in China for six months and then it was time to come home. But, I still had that crisis, okay? And I've come to call it a quarterlife crisis, okay?
10:00 So, there's a phrase in English, 'a midlife crisis', so it's when somebody turns around late-40s, early-50s maybe, they panic. They think, "I haven't done anything with my life", so they buy a sports car, or they go skydiving. They do some crazy things.

But the quarterlife crisis, for me, I think that's a panic time, okay? You've had a quarter of your life already and you still don't know what to do with it, okay? So, that was a very hard time for me.

I was in the UK; I didn't really expect to teach abroad again so I just got some work where I could, and I ended up working in a supermarket which was fun at

times and not so fun at other times. It is very hard work and, you know what? I gained a lot of respect for supermarket workers because of that.

Now, a supermarket worker, at least in my country, doesn't make much money.

11:00 So, I couldn't afford to rent my own apartment, I couldn't afford to do anything really after food or bills. So, I ended up living with my mother that time and life was just really getting me down at that time, okay?

And then it was just late one night that I thought, you know, "I need to change something, I need to be happy". It's very difficult to get a job with my degree, which again is film and television. It is difficult to get a job in that field. So, I thought, "Okay, here's what I'm gonna do. I'm just gonna do something totally different", just like the midlife crisis, "I'm gonna just move abroad and see what happens".

So, I found this company online and what they do is match you up with people who need workers, okay? So, you work a few hours, and they'll give you a bed and they'll give you food, okay? So, I ended up moving to the Netherlands where

12:00 I worked in a hotel. My job was to clean the rooms some days and be night watch the other days. And that was a nice job, you just slept in bed and if the doorbell rang, you answered the door. Okay, that was quite nice. So, I just worked two or three hours every day and I got somewhere to sleep I got some food. So, that was quite nice.

But it was five weeks and, again, it wasn't paying so I couldn't do it long term.

But, in that five weeks, I found some work at a summer camp in Italy, okay? So, my job was going to be go to Italy and teach these kids, you know, play games

with them in English, teach them some songs, and make some acting show with them, okay? And again, that pulled on my experience of acting. Again, I really like to act.

So, I took that, and I realized very quickly that, you know, actually I really like teaching. I may have done my degree in film and television but actually that's not
13:00 what I want to do. I realized that, actually, I like teaching English.

So, I decided what I needed to do was actually get some good qualifications, so I found this company in Austria and they will help you get the qualifications, they will teach you, they will test you, they will monitor your classes, give you feedback, and so on.

In return you need to volunteer teaching hours to high schools around Austria, okay? A few kindergartens, a few primary schools, but mostly, it was high schools.

So, that's what I did for six months. I taught in Austria, all over Austria actually. Plenty of different cities, I couldn't even count them, for six months.

So, in the evenings, I would be taught myself. So, I was teaching in the day, and going to teacher training in the evenings.

And I had to do so much to get this qualification. I had to learn a bit of Japanese
14:00 so I could see what it's like from a student perspective and analyse what it's like and the different methods used and things like that. I had to have my lessons observed, I had to observe others, and it was so hard. Six months of ridiculously

hard work, many short nights of sleep. But in the end, I got it. And what I got is called a Trinity CertTESOL, okay?

That's one of the highly sought-after English teaching qualifications. It's called a Trinity CertTESOL, okay? Like I say, that took me six months and a lot of hard work, so there's a big difference between that and a simple TEFL certificate.

But while I was there, I also got something called the CELT-P, okay? It's a bit like the CELTA, if you've heard of that, but it focuses more on children. And that's a certification from Cambridge University.

15:00 And then, I also got a certificate from my college in Austria to certify that I had studied for- studied and worked for 500 hours, okay? So, it's a big difference. So, yes, finally I had a good qualification, and I was certified by Cambridge University, and I had a little bit of experience under my belt. So, what was I going to do next?

Well, by this point I had no money. Like I say, it was six months of volunteering, you know, I really had no money by the end of that. So, again, I had to move back home which for some cultures might be fine. In my culture, it can feel a little bit like a step backwards because we're always told, you know, eighteen, you should be moving out. Start your own life.

But guys this is the 2010s, and now the 2020s, and it just can't happen like that
16:00 much anymore. I'm sure a lot of you know how difficult it is these days.

So, I moved back home, like I say, and I got some work online. So, I became an online English teacher for a company.

Now, this was fine. I enjoyed it. But the money was very difficult to predict. You're not paid monthly, you're not paid weekly, you are paid per hour worked. And they can't guarantee you hours. You work if the student shows up. They will book you; they'll give you 24 hours' notice.

So, it's good for a start but you can't plan with something like that.

But after a couple of months, I saved up enough money that I could move somewhere and pay for my expenses for one month which is all I needed.

17:00 So, I found a job in Bulgaria where I became an English teacher at a summer school. Now, a summer school is very different to a summer camp. At a summer school, you are actually teaching like, uh, like the rest of the year. It's not fun and games every day, it is actual lessons. You know, grammar, vocab, reading, writing. So, that was my most, maybe my most professional experience at that time. And I had my own class, I ran my own course, planned my own curriculum, okay? So, as I say, that was a summer school.

So, once that ended, I needed another job. So, I moved to Thailand which is where I live now. And in Thailand, I came here with no job offer, nowhere to live, I just booked an Airbnb for one week and I thought "I'm gonna see, what can I do?". And you know what? I must admit I got it quite quickly. I did very well. I found a place to live within three days and I found a job by the end of the week. I nearly became a headteacher for a kindergarten-level language centre, but, in
18:00 the end, I ended up working as a regular EFL teacher, English as a foreign language teacher, in a language centre for adults and I stayed for one year.

By the end of the year, you know, I was so set on my future. I needed to take it to the next level, get the next level qualification. So, for me, that meant a master's degree.

So, I moved all the way back to the UK and I moved in with my best friend in Manchester, and I went to university in Manchester to get my master's degree. Now, we're talking 2019 that I moved there, and we all know what happened at the end of 2019, right?

So, I'm a normal student, I'm doing very well in my classes, I'm making friends, and then we get to around February, March, and things are getting really serious in the UK. You know, that's when it really hit us. I started to realize that things are about to change.

19:00 And what's funny is at this time, in February, actually I started dating my now partner, and I thought that I was going to go to Thailand that March, the next month. But it never happened. Instead, I moved back home again. We didn't know much about this pandemic at that time, and we didn't know how deadly, how serious, how, uh, well really we had no information at all. So, we're all so scared, so- especially my mother, she can be quite dramatic. So, she asked me to come home, which is fair enough. So, I did. And I didn't know what would happen, I thought it'd be a couple of months and this silly thing will be finished but it didn't. And it took me another, what? Nine, ten months to finally leave.

20:00 So, my plan was always to come to Thailand to see my partner, but it just wasn't possible, so we ended up being long distance for the first eleven months of the

relationship. It was so difficult. But, before that, I found out that I had passed my master's degree. And not just passed, I was top of my class, I passed with a distinction, okay? So, at master's level, you've got pass, merit, distinction. So, distinction is the top mark, and I was so happy to receive that. I felt so lucky, so fortunate, you know? I worked hard but I didn't know that I could hit that level, but I did.

So, okay, I moved to Thailand and, of course, the pandemic is still ravaging the world, especially this part of the world. So, we're stuck inside. I don't want to get a job in a language centre again because I don't feel safe. So, I started working online again for another company.

21:00 And so, that actually had to come to an end at some point. So, the company was based in China, and they changed a bunch of laws to do with extracurricular activities for children okay and I was teaching children at that time. So, suddenly I went from about 30 hours work a week to about three.

So, I didn't know what to do. My partner was pushing me and pushing me to start my own work, uh, working for myself but it sounded so scary. I don't know anybody in my country who has their own business. It's just not really a big thing to do. Everybody works for someone else. I had no idea what to do, it was so intimidating.

But, when China changed their laws, I felt like I had to. You know, it was my only chance to stay an English teacher, stay living in Thailand, and, you know, make something bigger of my future.

22:00 So, I started taking on a few students and I started to get into it. I started to get my confidence.

You know, my partner- you may not know this, but she films, and she edits all the videos that go on social media. So, everything you've watched, she has been behind the camera, she's been on the computer, she is so responsible for a lot of this. She's responsible for pushing me, uh, and I wouldn't do it- couldn't have done it without her.

And so, over time, English with Rhys has gotten bigger and bigger and bigger, especially on social media. We've been very, very lucky that each channel, most of them, they have pushed us to become popular on these websites. So, that has been fantastic. I've gotten more students for my one-on-one classes, and now I'm expanding things with my podcast, I'm writing a book, and, uh, well, who knows what the future will be? But I think what we do know is that it will be exciting.

IN CONCLUSION

23:00 So, I hope you got a lot out of that story, not just English-wise, but getting to know me a little bit. Because, if you're going to stick with the podcast, we're gonna get to know each other a lot better.

So, let's talk about some of the key phrases that we heard in that story.

Well, I heard this phrase a lot, 'here's the thing', okay? 'Here's the thing'. And I used that to bring your attention in. I'm about to tell you something very interesting or very surprising. 'Here's the thing'.

I also said that I was a theatre kid. Okay, maybe you were a football kid, maybe you were a chess kid, we were all a something kid, okay?

Another one would be 'highly sought-after'. I talked about my qualification, the CertTESOL, and I said it's a highly sought-after qualification. What that means is a lot of companies, or a lot of people want it, okay? Or they want people with it.

24:00 'Highly sought-after'.

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