

# Smart English Grammar



Listening to Real English

by Maureen Bouey & Dahlia Miller

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## 7 Secrets to Fluent English



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### Secret #7

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by Maurenn Bouey

Well, here we are at Secret #7 - the final in this series of lessons on how to speak English fluently. This last secret is extremely important – possibly the most important of all. Without this, you could easily become quite discouraged and feel that you just aren't progressing. You might even be tempted to give up. Well, we certainly don't want that to happen so...

#### **SECRET #7: is BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!**

In this final article, we'll talk about believing in yourself (and some obstacles to believing in yourself) and then we'll discuss why Learning Styles are important.

*"Whether you think you can or you can't, you're right".*

Henry Ford

This quote from Henry Ford is one of my favourites. I like it because he is so right. You must believe in yourself. You have to believe that you CAN do it (anything!); that if you really do the work, practice and persevere; you WILL achieve your goal.

You need this belief in yourself because as you move along the path toward your goal, there will be both good and bad moments. In some of these bad moments, you will experience doubt, anxiety and frustration. Sometimes you will feel as though you are not improving – that you are just staying the same.

And then sometimes, other people will voice THEIR doubts about you. This doesn't feel very good, and sometimes this can come from people who are very close to you – perhaps even the people who love you the most (like friends, classmates, parents and other family members).

Now, usually these people don't mean to be unkind; they may be worried for you – for your future – or, they may just not be aware of how difficult it is to learn to speak a new language. If these "doubters"

are your parents, they may feel a sense of anxiety; after all, parents usually want their children to be successful, and sometimes they want it so much, they become frustrated and worried.

So even though people don't intend to be unkind or unsupportive, sometimes they ARE a little bit anyway. And, whether they intend it or not, we can feel their frustration and anxiety – and it just doesn't help much, does it? In fact, all it really does is to make US feel anxious and frustrated too. Sometimes (if it's our parents, or someone else we really care about) we even start to feel responsible for trying to make them feel better, or happier. Then, this makes us a) anxious (a bad mindset for learning anything) and; b) feel a bit responsible for their happiness and peace of mind. This is NOT healthy, and it is not really possible!)

If you are one of the lucky ones who are surrounded by people who support you 100% of the time, that's fantastic! It really is, and I hope you know how lucky you are. However, it doesn't describe everyone. If it the people around you are not always supportive of you, that's ok. You can still be the one who believes in and supports him/herself.

Another critical thing for us to do is to be kind and forgiving with OURSELVES – as kind and forgiving as we would be to a small child we loved and were taking care of. Do you remember before when we talked about when you were first learning to talk or walk? How did you learn? That's right; you learned slowly and gradually but, you got it. Eventually, you got it – in your own way and in your own time.

This is SUCH an important point. You learn in your own way – in your own time. We are all unique and we all learn things in our own specific and unique ways.

Each person has his or her own learning style. Some of us need to 'see' information in order to understand it; some of us need to 'hear' information and some of us need to 'do' it before we can really understand. Which one are you? Well, let's 'see'.

Think for a moment about when you are learning something new (anything – it can be a new language, a new computer game or some new other new subject). What is the best way for you to learn? Does the information make the most sense to you if: a) the teacher writes the information on the board?; b) the teacher just lectures, and verbally explains the information? or, c) you actually DO it yourself? Probably you learn - at least somewhat - by using a combination of these methods. But chances are, you'll have a preference for one of them. One of them probably makes it easier for you to learn new information.

Now, if you said that you prefer to 'see' information, then you are a VISUAL learner; seeing information helps you understand. However, if you said that you prefer to 'hear' information, then you are an auditory learner – your main way of learning is to 'hear' it. And, if you said that you need to 'do' or experience something in order to understand it, then you are a kinesthetic learner.

When we look at learning in this way, we are looking at what your "learning style" is. Knowing

what your learning style is (and working with it) is SO important. Once you understand what your learning style is, you can learn any new information in the way that best suits YOU. For example, if you are primarily a visual learner, then you will know you need to ‘see’ the information somehow. If you are an auditory learner, you recognize that you need to ‘hear’ information. And if you are a kinesthetic learner, you will know that you need to actually ‘experience’ something before you can understand it.

So, you know that it takes time and practice to learn a new language. You know that each person learns in an individual and unique way. You must be patient with yourself, and remember: while there is no shortcut to fluency, you CAN get there. You did it once; you already speak your own language fluently. Sure it’s easier to learn a new language when you’re a baby – but it’s also completely possible to do it now too!

Believe in yourself and you can do anything!

*“Man is what he believes.”*

Anton Chekhov (Russian playwright)

We hope that you have found this e-course helpful. Please practice the suggestions that we have made. If you do, your English will improve steadily. Remember, each day you must choose to study.

Good luck!

Maureen Bouey is an ESL teacher and author living in Victoria, BC, Canada. She is the co-author of Smart English Grammar – Real English Listening – Intermediate with Dahlia Miller.

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