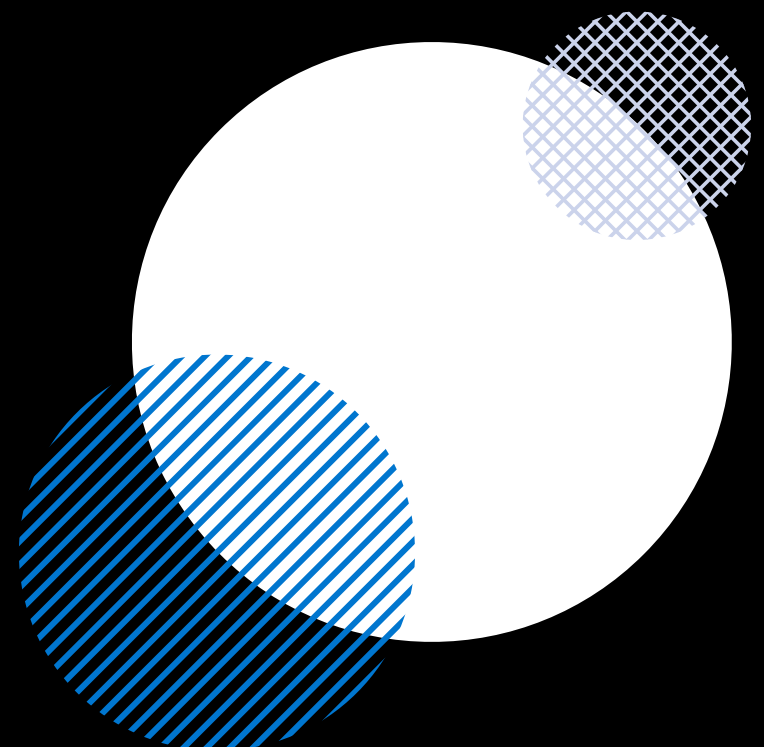
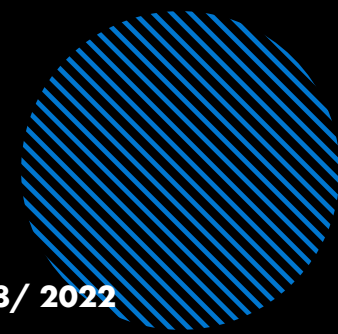




INNER CIRCLE AUGUST



#8/ 2022

This month

How to Break Your Routine &
Master a Language Anyway

innovative LANGUAGE.COM

WELCOME BACK TO THE INNER CIRCLE

Last time you learned about the easiest way to speak more, by learning to talk about new topics and using our 1-minute cheat sheets.

But honestly, last month, the stars didn't align. It was impossible for me to stick with my routine. I've been pretty consistent these past few months, but I didn't hit my goal.

My goal was eight minutes, but I took a trip to Israel. I was traveling in Israel, trying to remember my Hebrew, while speaking with my family in English and Chinese. I was also calling back to Tokyo and speaking in Japanese for work. I was juggling and trying to remember four different languages, so something had to give. That was Hindi.

I didn't come close to reaching my goal last month. I took a little time off. And there's a powerful lesson in that. So that's what we're going to be talking about in today's Inner Circle.



THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A BREAK

If I were going to tell you what happened this past month, it's more like what didn't happen this past month! Flights and hotels and getting back into traveling, all of it was quite an experience.

But, let's take a step back and look at the bigger picture. There's a reason why many cultures rest for one or two days in a week, why people go on vacation, and why we take days off. People need time to recharge their batteries.

Language learning, while fun, is honestly work. A lot of work.

It's dedication to one goal, and it's just one of many goals in our lives, because we have things constantly going on. Bills. Relationships. Careers. Kids.

So first and foremost, it's work. Life is work and language learning is work. And sometimes you need to rest.

With that in mind, up until now I hit my goals by sticking to my routine for months. I was tired. Life was getting in the way. I thought I could stick with my Hindi routine but when you go to another country, you get pulled out of your routine and you're trying to find a way to get back into your routine in a new environment. It's tough, and many people end up quitting.

You can easily not go back to the routine when you return. That's why if you're not hitting your routine, or life gets in the way, you should take a break. And that's what I did. I broke my language learning routine and I just went on vacation.

It was so great to travel again. New places, new people. New foods. There was so much going on that if I let the fact that I wasn't reaching my goals or sticking with my language learning routine really play in my head, I couldn't have enjoyed being there in the moment with my family, with the new people and these new experiences.

So again, just flip the switch and step out of the routine, but know that you have to pick back up eventually because that's the really hard part. It's so easy to shut it off and never turn it on again.

Now, even on vacation I tried to expose myself to some Hindi.

Several times, I took the time to go to eat Indian food at Indian restaurants.

And while I was there, I would listen to the people working there and try to speak with them a bit in the language. It kept the language around me even though

it was impossible to fit it into my routine. There are certain languages that you can find anywhere you go in the world.

For me, it was something different. And if you need to break your old, tiring routine and keep yourself exposed to the language, you can do little bits of something different and fun. For example, if you like reading and want to keep focusing on reading, then put the textbook down and try a novel or a comic book. If you're learning Japanese, watch some anime. It keeps the skill fresh.

The big takeaway here is, you break away from your routine and relax with something more enjoyable. When you only focus on reaching goals, you can lose sight of what actually brings you the most joy.

Some people might say that if you're having fun, you're not really learning the language. Surely watching TV can't be productive? So let's get into the second part.



HOW TO MAKE LANGUAGE PROGRESS WHILE HAVING FUN

INNER CIRCLE 5

I have a story for you. I knew this one person who was learning Japanese. And the person had just started learning intensively, so his Japanese wasn't at the highest level. In fact, it was nowhere near the novel he started to carry around. My Japanese was at a very, very high level at that time and I couldn't really understand what he was doing with the novel. To be honest, I had never read a novel in Japanese. So I asked him: "Why are you carrying around the novel?" And he told me he was reading it to learn Japanese.

So, in my mind, I'm thinking that there are easier ways, good luck to him. But he said that he liked to read. He always read in English, his native language, so he applied that to Japanese. Fast forward half a year. The first time I met him it took him maybe a day to do a page, and six months later he was doing ten pages a day. I was shocked. He wanted to read. Instead of drilling

flashcards and learning the basics, he started at the top of the mountain. He learned to read through the novel.

He took what he liked to do in his native language, and he went all-in in another language. His target language. So, yes, you can learn, but you have to ask yourself two things. First, what's your goal or the reason for really learning? And second, what brings you the most amount of pleasure?

Then work backward from there.

Whatever your goal is, start applying some of your time to that goal right away. If your goal is to speak with a significant other, try it today – speak. Don't set a plan for someday. If your goal is to watch TV, watch it. Even if you don't understand all of it. If you like books, read a book.

You may have read that story and thought that my friend, a Japanese beginner, would struggle a lot with reading that novel and have to look up a ton of words on every page. It might not sound fun. But if I have learned one thing in my many years on this planet - everybody has things that they find fun that other people don't.

For me it's speaking. My thing is talking at a restaurant about good food, or talking with a barista about coffee. Some people enjoy reading novels. Some people enjoy memorizing grammar in a textbook. All methods can work to a degree, but all require work... to "make it work.". I'm sure my friend spent a lot of time looking up words, but if you enjoy it you'll be much more likely to stick with it. If you like reading grammar from a textbook, you're probably going to do really well focusing on that. If you like reading novels, watching Netflix, or talking about restaurants, you'll make progress as long as you put the time in. And you'll get to actually enjoy the learning process.

Let's get back to goals. The reason you're supposed to take these days off and take a rest is so you come back refreshed and you can do even more work. So let's see if the theory holds. I had a lot of rest, so now I should be able to come back twice as strong. Last time I wanted to do eight minutes, but I have to get back into Hindi, so let's make it ten by September 30th.

How long do you take when you take a break, and do you ever switch up your learning to make it fun? Let us know, and tell us your goals at:

inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com.

Stay tuned for the next Inner Circle.