

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Inner Circle S1 #09

September 2014: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back. Losing Cantonese Progress

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INTRO

Becky: Welcome to a special Inner Circle Audio Lesson! I'm Becky and I'll be your host. My co-host today is the founder of Innovative Language... Peter Galante!

Peter: Hi everyone! Peter here.

Becky: Ever take a break from language learning, lose your progress,

Peter: ...and then, find it hard to get back into your learning routine?

Becky: Today, we're talking two steps forward, one step back, when it comes to language.

Peter: In other words, making progress, taking a break from language, then losing your progress or some of it...

Becky: ...and how you can make a comeback.

BODY

Becky: Welcome back to the Inner Circle listeners...

Peter: We are now in September...

Becky: ...And last month, Peter, you came back from your trip to Italy.

Peter: That's right.

Becky: And you set a goal of 30 minutes of Italian. Did you reach it?

Peter: I knew you were going to ask that first. The answer is no. I actually dropped to 20 minutes.

Becky: Really. You lost

progress?!

Peter: I'm sorry, Becky. The Italy vacation ended up being a "two steps forward, one step back" type of thing.

Becky: I thought it was "one step forward, two steps back." What do you mean?

Peter: Yeah I actually changed the idiom just a bit. I made a lot of progress hence the "two steps forward" but I lost a little bit, so that's why the "one step back".

Becky: Oh ok, well you're a pretty positive guy then!

Peter: Of course you have to stay positive! But, remember how I prepared and prepared for the trip?

Becky: Yeah, and you learned you could never be prepared.

Peter: Right. So up until the vacation, I was up to 25 minutes of Italian conversation.

Becky: And you dropped to 20. I would expect that being in Italy would make your Italian progress faster.

Peter: You would think so right Becky? But that break from my lessons actually set me back quite a bit!

Becky: So listeners, in this Inner Circle Lesson, we're talking about "two steps forward, one step back"

Peter: And we're going to cover these 3 points:

Becky: 1) Why you lose progress when you take a break from language

Peter: 2) Why it's hard to get back into routine after the break

Becky: and 3) How you can make a

comeback...

Peter: ...despite these setbacks that even top language learners face.

Becky: I'm still finding it strange that your Italian took a step back while you were actually IN Italy.

Peter: I know it sounds a bit crazy, you're not wrong in thinking that. I thought that being in Italy would be enough too.

Becky: So, what went wrong?

Peter: Well, remember, with my Italian tutors, I'm constantly learning new grammar and words and putting them to use.

Becky: And maximizing your conversation time.

Peter: Exactly. Italy was completely different. I wasn't thinking about maximizing my speaking time.

Becky: Right, like you said, you couldn't be prepared.

Peter: So I was learning on the spot, making mistakes, and adjusting.

Becky: You were learning how to order food properly from local shops and... soliciting honest pizza workers.

Peter: You're not going to let that go are you? That pizza one was an honest mistake, Becky!

Becky: I'm sorry, I couldn't forget that one.

Peter: But, back to your point, while I did learn new phrases for ordering food and such...

Becky: ...you weren't expanding your grammar and overall vocabulary as you would

with your tutors.

Peter: You nailed it, Becky. I took a break from my old learning routines.

Becky: But how exactly did you lose progress? You're still learning regardless, no?

Peter: Great question. So, because learning with tutors and being in Italy are different situations...

Becky: ...you're learning in different ways?

Peter: You got it! They're different and one routine really doesn't translate well into the other.

Becky: Ah, I know what you mean. I jog so I think I'm pretty fit. But then I tagged along with my friend to the gym...

Peter: ...and it didn't work out as well as you hoped?

Becky: Right! I can run, but I can't lift heavy weights with my legs. Running isn't the same as building muscle.

Peter: That's a great example Becky. In fact, listeners, think of your learning routines as building muscle.

Becky: So, this brings us to our first point.

Peter: Why you lose progress you've made when you take a break from language.

Becky: So, with the tutors, you're exercising conversation, and learning new grammar and vocabulary.

Peter: And that muscle was not being used at the time while I was in Italy. So, what happens when you stop exercising it?

Becky: It gets

weaker.

Peter: Exactly. In Italy, I was in pick-up mode. Picking up what I needed for real life situations and using it.

Becky: Ah, I see.

Peter: For example, instead of continuing to grow my grammar and vocabulary, I'd review the phrases I'd need for the bakery shop or the pizza parlor.

Becky: And that's a whole different muscle or learning routine.

Peter: Exactly, now, the learning routines I had with my tutors...

Becky: ...They were pretty much unused, huh?

Peter: ...yep, and like a muscle, they got weaker.

Becky: As did most everything you learned before you went on vacation.

Peter: And that's why, it's "two steps forward, one step back" after taking a break. I forgot quite a bit of grammar and vocabulary I learned a few months ago and used every week with my tutor.

Becky: Your tutors are probably pretty disappointed in you.

Peter: To be honest it was shocking, my tutor thought that we'd have a better conversation but, it was actually worse.

Becky: Uh no...

Peter: In addition when I got back I was quite busy and I actually missed the first 2 lessons.

Becky: You know, maybe you should've been maintaining your old

routines.

Peter: I should have. Maintaining a routine is in fact the best solution.

Becky: I can understand Italy, but you've been back for a whole month. Why weren't you maintaining your learning routines this month?

Peter: Well mum, let's get into the second point:

Becky: Why it's hard to get back into routine after the break.

Peter: Listeners, have you ever taken a break from language learning

Becky:... and found it hard to bounce back? Why does this happen?

Peter: Three reasons. The first one is something we just talked about.

Becky: Comparing your language learning routine to muscles?

Peter: Right. If you stop exercising a muscle...

Becky: ...it becomes weaker over time.

Peter: And you know, staying in a routine, is also, essentially working on consistency or routine muscle.

Becky: When you stop doing it, it becomes harder to come back and stick with it.

Peter: Your routine muscle gets weak. Which is why I couldn't really get back into this month.

Becky: And the second reason?

Peter: The second reason is a personal one but I bet every listener can relate.

Becky: Oh, what is

it?

Peter: I simply had no time. Life happened.

Becky: Listeners, every language learner comes across this issue.

Peter: Have you ever had to take a break simply because you had no time? Let us know in the comments.

Becky: Time is always an issue when it comes to long term goals like language learning.

Peter: Especially right after vacation. I came back. kids start school. Work has been piling up. There's just not enough time.

Becky: All at once hey? It's like a perfect storm that sank your Italian learning ship.

Peter: That's a great way of putting it Becky, my battleship was sunk and because there was work piled up and new challenges.

Becky: So what do you mean?

Peter: Well remember when I first set my routine? I said location is a very important part of routine. Becky we moved, as in we moved our house.

Becky: Really? And then?

Peter: Well I used to study in my living room from 9pm in the old house.

Becky: Ah, yes, I remember you created that routine earlier this year.

Peter: So, now we live in a new place, the rooms are different, the environment is different. My computer is different. Everything is different.

Becky: And you're not used to

it?

Peter: This also broke my old routine.

Becky: Listeners, while it may sound minor, set routines are often based on time and location.

Peter: Like, if it's 10PM and you're home, you automatically go and brush your teeth.

Becky: Simply because it's 10PM and it's just one of those things you do at that time.

Peter: And when one of these changes, the whole routine can fall apart.

Becky: And the third reason?

Peter: Now the third one is that new routines get in the way of old routines.

Becky: Wait, what do you mean?

Peter: Well, now that the kids are in school, I've started helping them with homework.

Becky: In the evening, right?

Peter: Do you have kids too? Because yep, right, around 8PM. And this is when I'd usually review for my 9PM lessons.

Becky: So, no time to review. Okay, so clearly it's important to maintain your routines.

Peter: And this month has been an absolute disaster. But, I've made a plan...

Becky: ...about how to get back and maintain your learning routine?

Peter: You got it. So, let's get into the 3rd point.

Becky: How you can make a comeback and maintain your learning

routines.

Peter: Now, coming back isn't very easy. I had a pretty heavy learning routine.

Becky: I remember. You studied with the Innovative Language 101 App on your morning commutes.

Peter: Then I had Skype lessons with my tutor on weekday nights.

Becky: And then you added in-person tutor sessions. So that was a heavy load already.

Peter: Becky, it was and that's why it was so hard to come back after taking a break.

Becky: Right, It's like taking a break from anything, you lose progress...

Peter: Same thing with gym. If you come back from a break, you literally won't be able to lift as much as you did before...

Becky: ...so you have to start off light.

Peter: That's my plan actually with Italian.

Becky: So what's the plan?

Peter: I'll keep my Italian tutors. My skype tutor sessions are on Friday and my in-person sessions are on Saturdays.

Becky: So both of those are for 1 hour?

Peter: The in-person one, yes. Remember, I doubled the Skype sessions to two hours. I'll scale that down to 1 hour on Friday nights.

Becky: Excellent.

Peter: And I'll keep my morning commute with the Innovative Language 101

App.

Becky: How about your weekday self-study sessions? You did 1 hour for 5 days a week.

Peters: That's what I'm going easy on. Instead of 1 hour, I'll do 30 minutes a night.

Becky: 30 minutes seem really manageable.

Peter: So Monday through Friday, I'll have 30 minute self study sessions plus a 1 hour skype lesson on Fridays.

Becky: And a 1 hour in-person tutor session on Saturdays right.

Peter: And the morning commutes with the app. That's 30 minutes and an easy routine to maintain.

Becky: Great! It sounds like you're getting back on track.

Peter: Well... not exactly.

Becky: No?

Peter: I still have to maintain these new routines... which so far has been tough. You'll have to find out next month if I manage to turn it around.

Becky: Okay. But listeners, remember, to bounce back from a break...

Peter: You need to do two things. One: realize that you have to start small.

Becky: You can't just go heavy after a 2 week break of not learning language.

Peter: And two: Create new, lighter learning routines that you can actually maintain. Remember, small and easy is enough to get you back into the language.

Becky: Otherwise, if you jump from taking a break to studying 2 hours a day, you'll

probably give up.

Peter: Pretty quickly, so listeners, if you're struggling with setting and maintaining routines...

Becky: Like Peter...

Peter: Like me. Inside the Inner Circle PDF, we've provided you with a weekly plan to help you arrange your routine.

Becky: Look for the PDF on the blog page of this lesson.

Peter: And finally, be sure to set your monthly goal.

Becky: So you've been promising us 30 minutes for a while now, Peter.

Peter: I'm not going to promise it this month Becky. Since there's a lot to catch up on... lets try for 27 minutes a little above my old goal.

Becky: 27 minutes? Listeners, let us know what your monthly goal is...

Peter: Let us know, did you ever take a break from language? Why did it happen?

Becky: Did you find it hard to get back into a routine? Be sure to leave us a comment.

Peter: So over these past two months I've taken "two steps forward, and then one huge step back" in my Italian progress.

Becky: And you still need to get started on your new routine and maintain it.

Peter: I know. You'll have to wait and see how that works out in the next Inner Circle.

OUTRO

Becky: Okay, well that's going to do it for this special Inner Circle

lesson!

Peter: Bye everyone!

Becky: Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.