

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Inner Circle S1 #12

December 2014: The Power of Rewards For Smashing Your Cantonese Learning Goals

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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: Listeners, this is it! We've reached the end of the year.

Peter: That's right, and in this final Inner Circle, we're talking about how you can maintain motivation over a long period of time...

Becky: ...And finally reach your language goal.

Peter: We're talking about the Power of Rewarding yourself.

Becky: And how you can STILL reach your overall goal if you miss a monthly goal!

BODY

Becky: Welcome back to the Inner Circle, Listeners.

Peter: Becky, this is the final Inner Circle of the year....

Becky: ...which means we get to find out how your yearly goal went!

Peter: Slow down a little, Becky. We'll get to it in a moment.

Becky: Oh no... I hope you didn't miss your goal!

Peter: We'll find out in a minute Becky. But first, listeners, back in January, I promised a goal for the year of 30 minutes of Italian conversation.

Becky: Right. And you used small, measurable, and actionable goals for every month to build up to the final yearly

goal.

Peter: So, if you've been following along, I've introduced many language learning tactics that I'm still using to this day...

Becky: We're hoping that you're using them too, listeners.

Peter: So back to your question, Becky. On Sunday, December 14th, I can finally say... I finally hit the 30 minute mark!

Becky: Oh, wow. That's great! So, how comfortably can you talk in Italian?

Peter: Well, I can't get into politics or economics but I can hold down most conversations and steer them my way...

Becky: Like towards talking about your own interests?

Peter: Exactly. There are still words and idioms I don't know, but I can always ask "Che cosa significa?" or "Che cosa significa questa parola?" - meaning "What does that mean?" or "What does that word mean?"

Becky: Wow. You know, it sounded tough when you set the goal in January...

Peter: It did, Becky, I'm not going to lie, but in hindsight, it's very doable and very possible.

Becky: What do you mean?

Peter: Well, when I first started, I was only hitting like 2 or 3 minutes of Italian conversation.

Becky: And they were chats about the basics like.... "How are you today?" and "What are your plans?"

Peter:

Exactly.

Becky: ...But 30 minutes seemed very far off back then, right?

Peter: Right. But once I was hitting decent times like 10 minutes, I wasn't too worried about my yearly goal. I just focused on reaching the next monthly goal.

Becky: You weren't worried?

Peter: No, I mean, I was making progress, so I wanted more. The only next step for me was to focus on the next monthly goal. Not the long term goal of 30 minutes.

Becky: Ah, I see.

Peter: And once I started hitting 20 minutes, 25 minutes...

Becky: ...I bet 30 minutes seemed a lot more realistic.

Peter: Exactly. So, now, in hindsight, this was very doable and realistic.

Becky: So tell more about the lesson on December 14th.

Peter: Ah, the lesson. Well it's kind of interesting. You get busy during the holidays, right?

Becky: Yeah, too busy.

Peter: Too busy. So I actually thought I had 2 more weeks to prepare for the goal but my Italian teacher notified me that she would be on vacation for the last 2 weeks of the year.

Becky: That makes sense. A lot of people go away.

Peter: I wasn't planning for that so the last lesson of the year became December 14th. So, the week before the lesson, what do you think I did,

Becky?

Becky: Reviewed all the tips throughout the year and thought of some topics to get yourself prepared?

Peter: Nice try, but no!

Becky: What! What then?

Peter: I took 5 days off.

Becky: Ah, kind of like when you train for a marathon. You're not supposed to run very much at all the last week.

Peter: Exactly, right?

Becky: Yeah.

Peter: I guess for the marathon, why do you do that?

Becky: To get your muscles ready and relaxed to be primed to run the longest distance they have to.

Peter: So, that was the approach I took. I stopped studying. I kind of took a leap of faith in the knowledge I accumulated over the year and it worked. During the lesson, my teacher commented "today you're so talkative." I made mistakes, sure, but there wasn't anything I couldn't fix with the tactics we went over through the year. Using Italian phrases to learn more about the Italian language and things like this. And I blew through the 30 minutes.

Becky: Did you have a timer next to you? Were you tracking how much more you had to go? Or does she track that?

Peter: Oh yes. Well, yes, the lesson is usually an hour, so this time, we made it well past the 30 minute mark well past in

Italian.

Becky: Wow, that's impressive.

Peter: And I just used the Skype timer as the timer. And of course there was English sprinkled in, and again, we're not talking politics or economics here.

Becky: Did she stop you at 30 minutes and she said "Peter, you've done it! You've reached your goal!" Or did you stop her?

Peter: And because I've taken the time off, I was so excited to speak Italian, I didn't have the mindset to "okay I'm almost there." We were just talking freely.

Becky: That's fantastic. I'm still surprised that you hit your goal. Did you do anything new?

Peter: Becky, you should have more faith in me!

Becky: But it's you Peter!

Peter: Fair enough Becky. There's one thing I've been using this past year that I didn't get to talk about yet.

Becky: Wait, you've been having a secret technique throughout the year? What is it?

Peter: That's right. It's using rewards.

Becky: So listeners, in today's Inner Circle we will cover....

Peter: 1) How I Kept Going.. or The Power of Rewards for Long-Term Motivation

Becky: and 2) How You Can Miss A Monthly Goal And Still Reach Your Yearly Goal

Peter: So, the first topic is the Power of Rewards.

Becky: What do you mean by that? Have you been buying yourself gifts after every

month or binging on late night chocolate?

Peter: (laughs) Well, not exactly. But you're not too far off.

Becky: I mean, that's what I would do.

Becky: Rewards are important for two things:

Becky: Is motivation one of those things?

Peter: It is! Rewards are important for For 1) building good habits and 2) maintaining motivation, like you said.

Becky: Ah, I see.

Peter: So in order to keep going with my monthly goals, I needed to get into the habit of sitting down and studying.

Becky: That makes sense.

Peter: And to create that habit you need a cue, a routine, and a reward.

Becky: The cue, in your case, is the time you set aside to learn Italian?

Peter: Exactly. So, there are weeknights at 9PM like we talked about earlier. There's the morning commute where I study with the App.

Becky: And the Friday nights Skype lessons and Saturday in-person tutor lessons.

Peter: You got it. That cue prompts me to start the routine - or start learning, whether I'm with a tutor or by myself.

Becky: And then... you reward yourself?

Peter: The reward - which could be anything you enjoy - is necessary to help your brain remember this cue, routine, reward loop for the

future.

Becky: Got it. So how do you usually reward yourself?

Peter: For the last several months where I've reached my goal, there is an extremely expensive cappuccino place that I go to, the day after I succeed in reaching the goal.

Becky: The truth comes out.

Becky: I see how that works now. And you've been doing this for quite a while. How about for motivation?

Peter: In terms of motivation and how I kept going for so long, every time I reached a monthly goal, I'd get a reward.

Becky: And how about for long term motivation? What did you do to reach that goal?

Peter: This is a tricky question. I want to say I took out that piece of paper. I wrote down my original goal on it and had it framed, or something sentimental. But Becky, I can be a tad materialistic.

Becky: Oh, I know. Listeners you don't see him in this office but, yes, it's true. So what'd you do?

Peter: Well let's see if I can justify my materialism.

Becky: Sounds like a Madonna song. Justify your love, material girl.

Peter: So, um, for the year goal, I went out and I bought an extremely expensive pair of Italian designer jeans.

Becky: Are you speaking on the level of the regular listener, Peter? Are you recommending we all go out and buy expensive designer jeans? That's the only way we can achieve these goals?

Peter: Well, again, they're ITALIAN designer jeans. Do you see the

connection?

Becky: Hmm, I think I can make that leap, yeah.

Peter: But let me try and justify this. I'm not saying that things have to be expensive but I think it is important to get something that is related to your goal. In my case, I chose this after much debate and, yes, the jeans are very expensive, but Becky, everytime i wear these jeans, what do you think i'm going to think of?

Becky: Your teacher. The fact that you achieved this goal in 2014.

Peter: So if i wear twice a month for the next year, not only will it give me a good memory and positive reinforcement, it will help me with other goals in life.

Becky: Right. If i did this, I can do anything. Like achieve my next goal.

Peter: Exactly. And if someone comments on "Wow what a nice pair of jeans." What story do you think they're going to get?

Becky: I learned Italian, i could speak for 30 minutes after studying for a year. You can too.

Peter: So see its not about the jeans so much. Because there is that building. Eh, maybe went a little overboard but I think it was OK to indulge myself.

Becky: Have you ever had the cappuccino while wearing the jeans?

Peter: That is scheduled for January, next year. As soon as the cappuccino place opens back up. New jeans at the place.

Becky: Wait, a second pair of jeans?

Peter: No, just the one.

Becky: OK, OK,

alright.

Peter: But I think that does help if you do get something to reward yourself that you get to see it again and again, to again reinforce, and again, its a great story. Many people are going to hear the story - not about the jeans but how i took a year to learn Italian.

Becky: It does make for a really great story and its definitely a great reward. Listeners, do you reward yourselves when you reach a goal?

Peter: Be sure to let us know!

Becky: Now, I'm pretty sure you didn't reach all of your monthly goals, Peter.

Peter: Just can't let that go, can you Becky?

Becky: (laughs) Of course not!

Peter: Well, that brings us to our second topic.

Becky: 2) You Can Miss A Monthly Goal And Still Reach Your Yearly Goal

Peter: Alright, tell us Becky, out of the twelve months... how many did I miss?

Becky: I've got that right here Peter. You missed August, September and October.

Peter: That's 3 out of 12 months that I failed.

Becky: And 9 months where you hit your Italian monthly goals.

Peter: But despite those 3 months, I hit my overall yearly goal...

Becky: You did... and I'm still in shock about it and very proud of you at the same time.

Peter: Thank you Becky. Well, here's the important point: just because you miss a small monthly goal, it doesn't mean you will fail the big picture

goal.

Becky: Why is that?

Peter: First, it means that the initial goal was too unrealistic and should be adjusted. It's no reason to fail and give up. You can always adjust.

Becky: So that's why adjusting routines was a recurring theme this year, huh?

Peter: Exactly. Second, as long as you keep going and stay motivated...

Becky: ...by rewarding yourself...

Peter: ...as long as you persist, your goal is guaranteed to come.

Becky: So even if you miss a monthly goal, you're still making progress.

Peter: Exactly Becky. For some of these months, I did make progress, I just didn't reach my promised total.

Becky: So, if you promised to get to 25 minutes from 20 minutes...

Peter: ...and if I only reached 22, I've still made some progress.

Becky: And it's not like you stopped learning.

Peter: That sums it up perfectly. I never stopped.

Becky: Listeners, remember - it's okay to miss your goal. As long as you're learning...

Peter: ...you're making progress, and you'll get there!

Becky: So listeners, did you reach your yearly goal? Be sure to let us know.

Peter: And if you didn't, don't worry too much. It may only be an extra month or two

away.

Becky: The important thing is that you don't stop learning. So, Peter, do you have any plans for next year? What's the next goal?

Peter: You'll have to wait until the next Inner Circle to hear about it. January 2015.

Becky: Oh, I'll be waiting!

OUTRO

Becky: 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.