

cooper: Hi, you guys. It's August 13th, and it's me again, Dr. Cooper, and I wanted to talk about a new subject. Today, the subject we're talking about is thinking for yourself, [Portuguese 00:00:16]. When we say, in English, "I think for myself," it means I don't accept other people's opinions. I come to my own conclusions about life. It's a very important subject for me, because in my life I think, there's some qualities, or let's say, there's some characteristics that I have that have been most important in me becoming who I am. Even in me having this business right now. And the most important I think is, having an independent mind, being what you would call in America, in English, a free thinker. And thinking for myself and being rebellious, [Portuguese 00:01:08], that's true. I have to admit I am rebellious.

cooper: Now, when I grew up I think I had a similar situation to a lot of people. I was a very friendly person, and I was friends with everybody. I liked everybody, really. And when I got to be about nine years old, something changed. And I wonder if you guys can relate to this because, what happened was the kids in school started to be different. They started to all start acting the same, start saying the same things, liking the same music. You know, when you're a kid, when you're a little kid, everybody is different. Everybody is special, everybody is unique. And I think that's really ... If you meet animals, like dogs, they're also all unique. What we can say is they're genuine, they're [Portuguese 00:01:58].

cooper: And that's the great thing about being a kid and about meeting kids, because they don't try to be what they're not. They act like themselves, they act like ... And since everybody's unique, it's fun to be around different people, for me at least. And I think that, that's why I loved everybody until I was eight. But maybe, I was somebody who thought a lot and examined the world a lot, and when people got to be older, around nine years old, I noticed that everybody started thinking for themselves.

cooper: So for example, I remember that all the girls, all the little girls, bought the same [Portuguese 00:02:51]. And I used to think, "Why? Why do they all want to have the same handbag?" You know, even though they were nine years old, they had the handbag. I said, "Why do they want to have the same handbag? Don't they want to be different? Don't they have their own taste?" I didn't understand it.

cooper: This is the first thing that I remember, you know, all the little boys, all the kids in the class, they used to always start liking the same movies, and they would all talk about the same movies, and they seemed to gain something from it, by being like others. That was my first experience, and it really changed me. I started to be more alone. I was still friendly, a friendly person, but I started to look for people who were different. And I think my whole life, I did. And I never understand it. To me, trying to be like other people is like ... you know Bob Marley, and he has the song, "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our mind." Like, to me it's mental slavery, if you are trying to be like others, instead of just doing what you think is right, and what comes naturally to you, and relying on yourself. Relying on yourself, [Portuguese 00:04:27]. Okay, counting on yourself, relying on yourself. And I always did.

cooper: And so something strange happened in my life, which is, people always started calling me crazy. People still call me crazy. It's a funny thing. But they liked me, but they called me crazy. And when people first started calling me crazy, I thought ... Sometimes, you know, the kids would say, "You're trying to be different. You're trying to be different." But I wasn't. I don't think I was trying to be different. But I thought, "Maybe I am." I started to believe them. "Maybe the problem is with me. Maybe I should be like everybody else, and I'm just trying not to be. Maybe everybody is the same." That's what I thought.

cooper: But as I've gotten older, I've realized that I don't have to [Portuguese 00:05:25], I don't have to be the center of attention. But whenever I talk, whenever I teach, whenever I do anything, it's unique. It's unique. Now, I'm not bragging. [Portuguese 00:05:42] about this, really, I'm not. Because, you know, I don't think it's easy to be different. Some people won't like you, if you're different. And I'm not bragging about it at all, I'm just saying it's true.

cooper: Now, most of you, I guess, and most people in general, really have pressure on them to conform, to be like the other people, and I'm gonna say this, in the United States, it's the most pressure I've ever seen, except for Korea. In Asia, people all try to be part of the group. They don't want to stand out. They don't want to look different. But I believe, in the United States, there's also a big pressure. And so what happens, one of the reasons I don't feel comfortable in the United States is because people don't enjoy eccentric people. People tend to make fun of eccentric people, and when I meet Americans, they always ... not always, at all, but some of them seem to dislike me.

cooper: Sometimes I wonder why. What's their hostility towards me, and I think it is because ... And this, again, maybe I'm wrong. But I think sometimes people are hostile towards me because they think they have made a sacrifice in life. They have tried to be like other people. Maybe they had to be like other people, they feel. So they get upset, when somebody comes along saying whatever he feels, having unique opinions, having a unique way of behavior. It bothers them. It threatens them.

cooper: This is what I think, and this is why I think I have so much trouble with Americans. In Brazil, it's different. People enjoy unique people. So even if they maybe don't have the strength to be different than others, they like to meet people who are different than others. They enjoy them. That's why the word [Portuguese 00:07:55] in Portuguese is such a ... I think it's a very positive word. [Portuguese 00:07:59], right? "He's a character," you would say in English. The only problem is, being a character in America these days isn't really such a great thing. In England, it's much better. People respect you more.

cooper: Anyway, so let me change the subject a little. When you are learning or doing ... This really has to do with what I think is my success in life. So I think I've achieved a lot. [Portuguese 00:08:32] I think I've achieved a lot. And I think that most of my achievements come not from any [Portuguese 00:08:45] I think that my success comes from being able to see things for myself.

cooper: So what's this mean? Well, first of all, if we talk about linguistics, if you study and you go to university, these days they try to teach you to think like everybody else. I never did that. So when I went to university, and when I did my PhD, I always tried to discover things by myself, because I had ambition. My ambition was to be unique, to see things that other people didn't see. This is a goal of mine, to see things that other people can't see. And that's how I discovered a lot of things in terms of Brazilians learning English, and in terms of learning English in general.

cooper: And it has helped me to have my own company, to work for myself, to become well-known and to be able to get my ideas to other people, because I'm unique. It's helped me in that way. It's helped me, I think, be attractive. For example, I have a beautiful young wife. I think what makes her like me so much is because there's nobody else like me. In fact, she tells me. Great. You know, in terms of my other work, and the things I do, even in terms of working out, how did I become so good at working out? I became good at working out because I discovered how to do things for myself. Obviously everybody has their own way that's best for them. But if you're trying too much to do what other people tell you to do, you never discover your own way. I never had trouble with that. I always discovered my own way, and I think that helps me a lot.

cooper: Now, in terms of learning English, all of you guys, unfortunately, when you go to school in Brazil, or in America, or in England, or in Australia, you learn from teachers who have been taught to do the same things as other teachers. There's not a variety of ideas in the field of linguistics, so that people can really figure out the best way to teach. Everybody says the same thing, because they're too scared to say anything different. They're afraid they won't get a job, they're afraid they won't pass the course. So what happens? The same, in my opinion, very incorrect methodology if teaching English comes and comes. And what happens to you students? You don't learn the best way.

cooper: Now, luckily, you're my students now, and you're getting to see my methodology, which I think is the best methodology for Brazilians. Why? Because I figured it out myself! Not only did I figure it out myself, but I could see things through my own eyes, not the eyes of other people. Now, you, learning English, have to do the same thing. You have to practice English in your own way. You have to discover the words in your own way. You can't be dependent on what the books tell you is right, for example, for grammar rules. No. Look. If you're already good at English, use English. Listen to English. Listen to my advice, okay, but then use it. The more you use it, the more you'll figure it out for yourself. Keep your mind free.

cooper: If you keep your mind free, and you learn English freely, freely, you will soon discover how to speak better. You'll discover how to use language, better, without even trying, just by being yourself. And you'll discover how to like English, in your own way. You'll have your own, personal, individual, unique relationship with English. That's my diary for today. I hope you liked it, and I'll talk to you later.