

Self-Discovery: The Benefits of Solo Travel



Travel Series | Episode 1

PRE-LISTENING | Warm-up

Prepare before you listen to the conversation.

Brainstorm

1. Look at the topic of this episode. Do you have any personal experiences related to this topic? If not, do you have any thoughts or opinions about it?
2. Below, write notes about what comes to your mind.

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Vocabulary

1. What vocabulary do you think will come up in this conversation? If you can't think of the English word, check it in a dictionary.
2. Write the vocabulary that you came up with in the table below.

LISTENING | Exercise

Listen to the conversation – feel free to pause any time or go back if you miss something.

In this conversation, Colin and Su discuss the benefits of solo travel. They talk about how solo travel takes you out of your comfort zone, exposes you to different cultures and challenges, and helps you develop resilience and confidence. They also highlight the ease of meeting new people when traveling alone and the value of their unique perspectives. Ultimately, they emphasize that solo travel can lead to self-discovery and personal growth.

Note-taking

Identify the key points of the conversation and add notes on some details. Try to keep it short.

Key Points	Details

Quiz

Choose the correct answer – you can check your answers at the end of this PDF.

1. What is the main topic of the conversation?
 - a. Food and culture
 - b. Benefits of solo travel
 - c. Meeting people in bars
 - d. Guidebooks and travel tips
2. Why does Su think solo travel is important for personal growth?
 - a. Because it's a comfortable experience
 - b. Because it's a great way to make money
 - c. Because it exposes you to new challenges
 - d. Because it helps you stay in your comfort zone

3. According to Colin, what does solo travel teach you about yourself?
- a. You can find solutions to problems
 - b. You can't make decisions on your own
 - c. You can't handle difficult situations
 - d. You shouldn't travel with others
4. Why is it easier to approach someone who is traveling alone, according to Su?
- a. They're more intimidating
 - b. They're not open to conversation
 - c. They may be more approachable and open to talking
 - d. They prefer to stay in groups
5. What kind of people do you usually meet when traveling alone, according to Colin?
- a. Boring and uninteresting people
 - b. People from the same country
 - c. People who are not confident
 - d. Like-minded and interesting people
6. Why does Colin mention the importance of speaking English?
- a. To highlight his own language skills
 - b. To promote English-speaking countries
 - c. To emphasize the importance of communication in travel
 - d. To discourage learning other languages
7. What does Su suggest might not be included in a guidebook?
- a. The names of all the restaurants in a town
 - b. The newest and best places to eat
 - c. A list of tourist attractions
 - d. Information about the local culture
8. According to Colin, when is the best time to embark on solo travel?
- a. When you're older and more experienced
 - b. When you have a group of friends to travel with
 - c. When you're too scared to travel with others
 - d. When you are young and are still developing

POST-LISTENING | Resources

Review the language used in the podcast

Important vocabulary

Word/Phrase	Class	Example Sentence
self-discovery	<i>noun</i>	<i>Self-discovery can be a rewarding journey as you learn more about your true passions and values.</i>
The process of learning about oneself		
comfort zone	<i>noun</i>	<i>Stepping out of your comfort zone can lead to personal growth and new opportunities.</i>
A state of familiarity and security		
resilience	<i>noun</i>	<i>Her resilience in the face of adversity is truly inspiring.</i>
The ability to recover from difficulties		
approachable	<i>adjective</i>	<i>The teacher is very approachable, and students feel comfortable asking questions.</i>
Easy to talk to or friendly		
guidebook	<i>noun</i>	<i>When traveling to a new city, a guidebook can be a helpful resource for finding interesting places to visit.</i>
A book containing information for travelers		
like-minded	<i>adjective</i>	<i>Joining a club with like-minded individuals can help you make new friends who share your interests.</i>
Having similar thoughts and interests		
intimidating	<i>adjective</i>	<i>Speaking in public can be intimidating for many people, but with practice, it gets easier.</i>
Causing fear or nervousness		
confidence	<i>noun</i>	<i>Continuous learning and skill development are crucial for career advancement.</i>
Belief in one's abilities		
development	<i>noun</i>	<i>Building self-confidence is an essential part of personal development.</i>
The process of growth and progress		

POST-LISTENING | Activities

Shadowing

Choose one part of the conversation and listen to it again. Try to repeat what you hear out loud. Make sure you copy pronunciation, pauses*, and stress*.

*Use the transcript to mark the **pauses** with a slash / and the **stress** with an underline __.

Speaking Practice

Below are two questions you can use for speaking practice.

1. Read each question and write some notes. Keep them short and only use bullet points or a mind map – these notes are just to help you organize your ideas.
2. Record yourself answering the questions. Try to speak for at least 2 minutes for each question.

Q: Have you ever travelled alone? If so, what was the most valuable lesson you learned during your solo trip? If not, would you consider taking a solo trip in the future?

Q: Imagine you're planning a solo trip to a foreign country. What factors would you consider when choosing your destination? What kind of experiences would you hope to have?

Transcript

Colin: This is episode one in our travel series, and today's topic is self-discovery: the benefits of solo travel. Hello Su.

Su: Hey.

Colin: How are you?

Su: Good. How are you?

Colin: I'm very well. Um, self-discovery. What do we discover about ourselves when we travel?

Su: I think we discover that we can be different, that we can grow up much faster than we've been growing up when we are comfortable at home.

Colin: Right. So kind of when we're at home, the place that we've always been in, we're kind of in our comfort zone. So everything around us, we understand everything, we understand how to do things. Um, and yeah, nothing's a challenge. Um, but when we start to travel, that changes.

Su: It does, because when you are not with the people that you always are with, uh, you're not in the culture or, you know, the food is different, you have to face different situations, uh, that you might feel uncomfortable with and you have to deal with that.

Colin: Yeah. And a new situation, if it's food or something different about the culture, um, you realize that you can get through those difficult situations. Yeah. Maybe this food is not what you're used to eating, or maybe this transport system is different to what you use at home. Um, you realize that quickly you can learn how to do this thing or how to get through this situation and everything's fine. You survive and you move on. Um, and this teaches you something really important about yourself, which is that you can get through difficult situations. You develop this kind of resilience to difficult situations.

Su: Yeah, because you are, you might, uh, face, uh, problems that you don't face at home. Uh, you can plan a lot, uh, and try to avoid problems, but they always come and when these problems come, I think that's exactly the point where you grow, that's the self-growth. Without them, uh, it's difficult to grow.

Colin: Yeah, I think traveling is a really interesting opportunity to test yourself. Like, what, what am I like when I, I'm in a difficult situation or a different situation? Um, and also because you're traveling by yourself, alone, you don't have people with you to help you through difficult situations. Um, you realize that you can make decisions, you can come up with solutions to problems and that gives you a lot of confidence. So when you come back from your travels, you're a different person because you know that you can get through difficult situations, and that's really powerful. It's something that I noticed, uh, when I came back from my first bit of solo travel was that all those things in my home country that I thought were difficult or made me nervous were nothing to worry about compared to my experience traveling. When I was traveling I experienced lots of, you know, difficult situations, but I could get through them. Um,

and I came back a different person. Um, do you think traveling by yourself changes you as a person?

Su: It does because it gives you confidence about your ability to do things. If there's a problem and there's no one that is going to solve it for you, you have to find a way and you have to talk to people and try to find somebody that, you know, can, can help you fix the problem, right? Uh, if it's a train delay that you don't know that it's happening, you can talk to somebody next to you. That's confidence.

Colin: I think, yeah, it's kind of, you, you have to become a leader. So that many people are followers, you know, we like other people to make decisions for us, but when you travel by yourself, you have to be the leader. There's nobody else. It's just you. Um, so giving yourself time in those situations as a leader, you come back to your home country and now you have this idea that I can be a leader. I can make decisions. I can find solutions to, to problems. So yeah, definitely you come back a very different person. I think another point about traveling by yourself, um, is the opportunities you have to meet new people on your travels? Um, do you think it's easier to meet people when you're traveling?

Su: I think it is. I think when you travel on your own, um, You're more approachable to others.

Colin: What do you mean approachable? Why are you more approachable if you're by yourself?

Su: Um, because you're not that scary to talk to. You might be more open to talk to others. Uh, and many times others are traveling on their own. And I think that's when, you know, you can connect. Like, we are in the same situation. Right. Uh, hi. Hello.

Colin: Yeah. Are you by yourself? Uh, yeah, it could be just having a, a drink at a bar or just you're sitting on a beach by yourself. People generally enjoy talking to other people. Um, but if you're traveling with a group of people, say even just one other person or, you know, there's a group of three, four people, it's quite difficult for people to approach you, to come to you, uh, and start a conversation because it's a little bit scary, intimidating to approach a group and just start a conversation. But if somebody's by themselves, you kind of think, well, maybe they would like a chat because, you know, I feel like, you know, I've been by myself all day. I'd like to have a chat with somebody. Um, maybe this person would also like a chat. Um, and the kind of people you meet when traveling, you're going to meet kind of like-minded people, people who have the same way of thinking, the same mentality as you. If they're confident enough to go off and travel by themselves, they're going to be interesting people to talk to. Um, and you know, these are people from all over the world, you know, different countries.

Su: They might have, uh, stories about the place you're visiting. They might have tips to give you like, Oh, this is cheaper. Or they might just, you know, tell you about this incredible place to eat that is not in your, um, guide.

Colin: Your guidebook, right. Yeah, so it's, it's getting this kind of traveler's knowledge. You can read the guidebook, you can study the guidebook, but when you get to the place, there's always things that are not written in the guidebook. Uh, you know, you might. have a

guidebook and it says there are five restaurants or five places to eat in this town or whatever. I guarantee there are more options and maybe the guidebook is a little bit old and you know, the newest, um, nicest, cheapest place has just opened, um, and it's not in the guidebook. Um, and the kind of, as I said, you know, the, the kind of people you're meeting, these could be important people in your future. You make really interesting connections. Because maybe you've never met somebody from Brazil before. Or you've never met somebody from, I don't know, Uruguay or, I don't know, Thailand or whatever. And you have a chance to, to sit and have a conversation with these people. Um, and especially if you can speak English, it's a good way to... um, communicate with people from other countries, you know, English is this common language that can really help communication between people from, um, different countries.

Um, so yeah, there's, there's definitely major benefits to, to traveling by yourself. Um, and I think it's something that everybody should do at least once in your life, uh, especially when you're younger, um, because that's such an important period of kind of development, and if you can travel and get this confidence at a young age, I think it really helps you, um, as you get older. Um, and yeah, meet other people, you realize we're not so different, you know, we're all kind of have the same things that we want, um, same things that we're scared of, you know, I might be from a different country to you, but at the end of the day, we're all pretty similar.

ANSWERS – Multiple-Choice Questions

1. b 2. c 3. a 4. C
5. d 6. c 7. b 8. d