

Transcription:

Curtis: This is The Real English Conversations podcast.

Amy: Where you will find the lessons and advice you need to be able to confidently use your English in the real world.

Amy: Hi everybody, this is Amy from Real English Conversations and I'm here with Curtis.

Curtis: Hi everybody!

Amy: And today, we are going to tell you all about how you can predict your future or tell fortunes.

So there's four main or common ways that people tell fortunes in American culture. What are they?

Curtis: They are palm reading, tarot cards, tea leaves and astrology.

Amy: Alright. And there are some less known ways which I found today when I was on Wikipedia learning a little bit about fortune telling. And I thought that I would talk about them. So, the first one is roosters pecking grain which I imagine is just a plate maybe in front of the rooster and he eats his food and then after there is a pattern and it's interpreted somehow. Another one, a little bit more gruesome, is reading the livers of sacrificed animals.

Curtis: Oooh, yeah. That sounds like something from the medieval days.

Amy: Yeah, definitely. And the last one which is the most disgusting of all, is reading animal poop.

Curtis: Eeew.

Amy: I don't know whose animal poop they are reading or how you become an expert in that, but it's definitely not a profession that I want.

Curtis: Sounds gross.

Amy: So why don't you tell us a little bit about palm reading?

Curtis: Okay, palm reading is a way of telling your future or your past depending on the lines and designs in the palm of your hand. And there's¹ many of them. There's a life line, a love line, so many of them I can't remember all of them but yeah, based on the length or

the size or the shape of these patterns that would explain what has happened in your past or what could be happening in your future.

Amy: And the next one is tarot cards. So with tarot card reading, what happens is, if you are having your fortune being told, you have the deck of cards and you shuffle them and mix them up a bit and then you put the deck together, cut the deck at whatever point you want which is just separating the deck into two and then you hand it to the person who is reading your cards. They lay out the cards in some sort of order and they are based on the symbols or the characters that are on these cards. They are going to determine your future or your fortune.

Curtis: Based on the different images.

Amy: That's right and I think the next one is really good for Curtis to explain because it is about tea leaf reading. And this is something that I can remember his mom doing during special occasions like Christmas or Thanksgiving after dinner when we were drinking tea. So how does it go?

Curtis: Well it is a special way of preparing tea. Obviously it's loose leaf tea. So it's not from a tea bag.

Amy: The tea leaves are floating around in the pot. Because you want to make sure that they get into the cup, right?

Curtis: Right. So when it is poured, the leaves² will fall into the cup and you normally leave a bit of tea in the bottom of your cup and swirl it around and then you turn it over and after you turn it over, you turn it three times in a certain direction.

Amy: Like on the saucer.

Curtis: On the saucer.

Amy: Turning it with the cup upside down, going one, two, three for turns.

Curtis: And then you turn back the cup up back over again so it's right side up.

Amy: And then our famous tea leaf reader, Marilyn...

Curtis: Yeah, she even had a book.

Amy: Yeah, to be able to identify the different shapes and she knew... I can't remember what it was but I think if it's close to the rim of the cup, it was happening sooner.

Curtis: Or if it was close to the handle of the cup. Yeah you look into the cup and you'll see different patterns and you know, like, I think she saw a rooster or tree or maybe...

Amy: Or maybe a heart, I don't know.

Curtis: Yeah, your future or things, once again that have happened in your past are revealed through those patterns.

Amy: I think the patterns are for the future though.

Curtis: Most of them.

Amy: Because we're talking about....No, all of them, we're talking about predicting your future, not the past.

Curtis: True, True.

Amy: So anyway, that's about tea leaf reading.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: And what is astrology about?

Curtis: Okay. Astrology is about different signs that are based on the planets and the stars, the sun, the moon and your birthday as well.

Amy: Alright and depending on your birthday particularly. There's something that you'll see, it's called a horoscope. And they are published often in newspapers. And depending on what your zodiac sign is, you have a horoscope which is a prediction of how your day is going to go.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: So what are the twelve zodiac signs?

Curtis: There are twelve zodiac signs and they are: Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius and Capricorn.

Amy: And which sign are you?

Curtis: I am a Virgo. But I am on what is called the cusp. So my birthday falls on the last day of Virgo but the next day of Libra is the day after my birthday.

Amy: So sometimes, Curtis's horoscope is more accurate for Libra, and sometimes, it's more accurate to Virgo. Because you could imagine if you were born on September 22nd at 11PM at night, you are only one hour away from the next zodiac sign which is Libra. So, in theory you should have personality tendencies or your luck, if you pay attention to these things and believe it, would be more of a Libra influence.

Curtis: And you are a Gemini.

Amy: I am a Gemini which is supposed to be the dual personality so I don't know. I think I'm really, really nice most of the time but I can definitely be mean and evil from time to time.

Curtis: Really?

Amy: Curtis pretends he never sees it. Anyway, how about you read our forecast or our horoscope for today?

Curtis: Okay, I'm going to start with yours. And yours is, let me just bring this up. Here we go. Brainstorming with other people could lead to incredible solutions. And if you are a Gemini who is a business person, that requires a lot of creative energy, it will blossom today.

Amy: That sounds like a good day for me to do some business work and hopefully be successful and talk to some people. And what's your horoscope?

Curtis: Mine for today?

Amy: Is this Virgo or Libra?

Curtis: This is Virgo.

Amy: Okay, so your real horoscope.

Curtis: Yeah, my real, actual horoscope, yeah. An intense emotional dream could move you so powerfully that you wake with the odd sense that the dream was real. Write it down, Virgo! Efforts to overcome obstacles and advance yourself in your career could finally be paying off.

Amy: Wow. That's actually interesting because in that list of ways of predicting the future, there was one that was based on dreams. So maybe you should write down whatever your dream was last night and then we should find a dream reader and then you'll know even more about your future.

Curtis: That's exciting.

Amy: Yeah. So, astrology I actually had a period of time where I was really interested in astrology and I had this book which was, I think it was called, "The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need" and it was pretty thorough. It was like a textbook with 300 pages or something.

Curtis: Yeah, it was huge, I remember. It was a really, big book.

Amy: Yes. And it factored all of the aspects of astrology down to the time that you were born. So if you were born at 11 o'clock on this day, and this year, I guess the sun was in this position and the moon was in that position, and some planet was flying around the universe. It had different influences on you. And after you had calculated everything, you read a couple of different pages, and it described in detail about your character, your personality, your tendencies, the habits that you have, the things that you like or you don't like. Really in a lot of detail. And the first time that I seen³ this book was actually a friend of mine and I was blown away with its accuracy. I thought it was probably 90% accurate but not vague like these horoscopes. These could be applicable for anybody. Like you could have a powerful brainstorming day.

Curtis: I could.

Amy: And I could have had a strange dream.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: That I should write down.

Curtis: But this book that you are talking about, it was more accurate. It was like almost like you wrote about it.

Amy: Yeah, wrote about myself and if you were to...if I gave my horoscope to you and said, 'this is yours, and just change the title at the top', you'd be like, "Well, this isn't like me at all." But his was actually really, really accurate as well. Especially because he was on the cusp. It was more of a proper horoscope instead of the blend or having to read one and then read the other one because it was down to the day. It was very accurate. So that's where my opinion changed a little bit about astrology. I don't think that I would be willing to base my life decisions on it.

Curtis: You weren't skeptical.

Amy: Well I'm still, I think it's interesting, I think it's insanely accurate. I don't know how. It's a little bit of a mystery. But what would be really cool is if you could leave us a comment below, telling us what your zodiac sign is. If you don't know, just type in to Google zodiac sign and it will have a set of dates and you just need to determine which day your birthday falls on.

Curtis: Yeah.

Amy: And then you will know what your zodiac sign is. And maybe you can do some English reading practice.

Curtis: Exactly.

Amy: And learn what your future has in store.

Curtis: And this is the English Conversation tip.

Amy: Today's Real English tip has to do with speaking. And, I want to address a common concern that people have. Out of the areas of English that people practice...

Curtis: Right.

Amy: For example, reading, listening, maybe grammar, vocabulary acquisition. Speaking is neglected.

Curtis: It is.

Amy: And what is the main reason why people say they can't practice speaking?

Curtis: The main reason is, they are depending on somebody to practice with them. A native speaker. They want to find a native speaker to practice with.

Amy: Because I know you have heard over and over again that the best way to improve your speaking is to find a native speaker. I'm going to write an entire article and probably do a video that talks about why this isn't the best way for most people. But for today, I have one concept that I want to try to help you understand to try to give you more control over your ability to practice speaking more in your study time. When you practice speaking by yourself, like having conversations to yourself, "Hi Amy, how are you? I'm fine thanks! Oh, you look good today!" Oh, I like talking to myself. Those aren't really the types of exercises that I am talking about.

Curtis: No

Amy: When I say talk to yourself. Because when you talk to yourself like that, how do you feel?

Curtis: I feel awkward.

Amy: You will feel like you're crazy.

Curtis: Yeah, I'm talking to myself.

Amy: Crazy people talk to themselves. Actually, we have one of our listeners write in when I suggested that he do some speaking practice alone. He said, "My mom thinks I'm crazy because I practice speaking to myself." I told him to carry on being crazy. But when we change the words a little bit, when you practice speaking to yourself or practice speaking by yourself, it sounds a little strange. But when we are practicing speaking, and we say what phrase?

Curtis: You're speaking out loud.

Amy: So you're practicing speaking by speaking out loud. That phrase means you can practice speaking by yourself. You don't need anyone else because all you're doing is you're practicing an answer, or trying to explain something while speaking, okay?

Curtis: Yeah but you're speaking out loud.

Amy: You have to be speaking, you don't need anyone else, you're not talking to yourself. You're just speaking out loud. So, this is what's really interesting. If you were asked a listening comprehension question and this question is designed to test your hearing or listening, and you know, you're reading the question and then you're thinking about the answer but you never say that answer out loud. There's a speaking practice opportunity right there.

Curtis: Exactly.

Amy: Okay, another one, if you're doing writing practice, trying to write about whatever, I don't know, maybe there's a website you found online that challenges you by writing about different things to practice your English speaking. Why can't you do that activity by speaking out loud?

Curtis: Right. Another speaking opportunity.

Amy: There's⁴ lots of opportunities. A common activity that I suggest is, trying to explain a video that you just watched or an interesting article that you just read. It doesn't have to be in English, like it's a little easier if you heard new words and you want to practice using them but if there's something that happened in the news around you, it's a big event and you read the article in your native language or you saw the news video, why can't you practice speaking about it in English? And if you don't know the words, just look them up.

Curtis: Tell a story about it. Summarize it.

Amy: So the second point I'm just quickly going to tell you about is a conversation I had with my friend Javier from Colombia on the weekend and we were doing a Spanish-English practice and he was talking for about half an hour in English. I told him about this speaking out loud idea and he said to me, "Amy, that sounds good but how am I going to know if I am speaking correctly if I don't get any corrections from a native speaker?" How many corrections do you think I gave him during that half an hour conversation?

Curtis: None.

Amy: None. So I said to him, "Javier, how many times have I corrected you during this conversation?" and he said, "You haven't." And I think that is a big moment for people

when they realize native speakers don't typically correct you. So this desire that you have to wait to have practice with a native speaker who's magically going to correct all of the errors that you have while you are talking, is just a dream. Stop waiting for it. It's okay to practice speaking. The more difficult part that you need to do to get over the feelings that you have of not being able to find the words quickly enough or remember how the grammar works together, that happens with practice. You don't need a partner to be able to do that practice. So the assignment for today is to explain the last conversation or audio or article that you read, and try to practice talking about it for about five minutes.

Curtis: Out loud.

Amy: Out loud. You have to practice speaking out loud.

Curtis: Okay if you liked that tip, good news you can practice doing this with this conversation by coming to our website. You'll get the full mp3 download, the transcription and some excellent speaking practice exercises where you can do what we just talked about in this speaking practice tip. So come to our website, it's all going to be free for you for the first 7 days at realenglishconversations.com