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3 REASONS TO
LEARN A LANGUAGE

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The benefits of being bilingual or even trilingual seem obvious, 54% of Europeans can speak two or more languages, with 34% of people speaking English as a second language. However for those of you who were not lucky enough to be brought up this way or have not travelled enough to have been able to learn another language to a good level, learning a new language can be a daunting task because it is after all, very challenging. Not all bilinguals are what we call “balanced bilinguals”, who can use both of their languages to an equal level; this is often the case with those who learn a language at a later age. So ages should not be a barrier to those who wish to start learning. This post is going to give language learners 3 simple reasons to learn a second language:

Health

Contrary to popular belief a few decades ago, being bilingual is not an obstacle that impedes a person’s development, there are rumours that bilingual children start speaking later than monolingual ones, but this is not necessarily the case (I know my 4 year old started speaking both languages from about 10 months). Speaking more than one language has several health benefits, including the delay of the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer’s, and also an increase in the grey matter in your brain (this makes your brain more efficient by allowing it to transmit signals more effectively). According to the Critical Period Hypothesis, many linguists state that learning a language is far easier for children as the plasticity of their brain allows them to build an emotional connection with a language an adult doesn’t tend to do. In fact, it is said that adults who learn a second language are generally far more rational when thinking in their second language and therefore make better decisions. So learning a language not only improves your cognitive ability, delays diseases, but it also assists you in making more astute choices.



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Employment

We all know that speaking more than one language is a huge advantage when it comes to looking for and finding a job. Not only do you have better communication skills, but you can also work wherever you like, your language permitting of course. In fact, in many countries such as Spain or Germany, you will have a hard time finding a job unless you have a good grasp of English for example. Multi-lingual people are known to have other advantages too; we tend to be better at problem solving, multi-tasking and focussing on individual tasks without becoming distracted. This is something that no technological advance or interpreter will ever be able to replace.

Entertainment

Let's face it; speaking more than one language is cool! Being able to flick between various languages not only sounds great and makes you the envy of monolinguals, but it also offers many exciting opportunities. You will be able to travel with greater ease, especially around Europe. You will be able to watch movies and series in the original version without subtitles and you can meet new people from various places without there being a language barrier.

So if you want to be healthier, make better decisions or just have more fun, start learning a new language today. It is said that a language is the only thing worth knowing, even if you don't know it well, I think this might have hit the nail of the head!