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The English We Speak

Talk the talk



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me, Feifei...

Neil

...and me, Neil.

Feifei

In this programme, we have an expression you can use to describe someone who talks confidently about a topic, but might not actually know that much about it.

Neil

Which reminds me, Feifei. Did I tell you that I've started a new evening course?

Feifei

No. What's it in?

Neil

Well, see if you can guess... My lords, ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed an immense honour and privilege to stand here before you on this great occasion and humbly offer my thoughts...

Feifei

Er... Neil. What are you going on about?

Neil

Public speaking! It's my new course.

Feifei

Right. Well, you can certainly talk the talk.

Neil

Oh good – that's the whole point.

Feifei

Hmm. That's not really a compliment. When we say someone can talk the talk, it means they

talk a lot about a subject, but they might not really know that much about it – even if they sound confident.

Neil

How dare you! Well, let's hear some examples of this expression in action.

Examples

Oh no, not another meeting chaired by Binh. He can certainly talk the talk but he actually knows nothing!

OK, go in there, talk the talk, and get out before they realise we don't have a clue about marketing!

It's one thing talking the talk, but we need action. We need someone who can walk the walk.

Feifei

You're listening to The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. In this programme, we're looking at the expression 'talk the talk'. It refers to people who talk confidently on a topic without necessarily knowing much about it.

Neil

That's right, Feifei. You know, you're really quite knowledgeable about the English language, aren't you?

Feifei

Thanks.

Neil

I mean, you don't just talk the talk – you can walk the walk too.

Feifei

Absolutely! As you heard in the earlier example, and just then from Neil, the opposite of 'talk the talk' is 'walk the walk'.

Neil

That refers to someone who shows their abilities through action – not just talking.

Feifei

Like you, Neil.

Neil

You know what? I think I'll give up that public speaking course and join a hiking club – to learn how to walk the walk.

Feifei
Ha! Good idea.

Both
Bye!