



WE 013: Drive to survive

Hi everybody, it's good to be back with you. I use the word *be back with you* because today we're going to talk about comebacks. And before I start, I start the very subject, I'll tell you why I chose this very theme for this episode. Obviously everybody, I'm sure everybody who is listening to me right now they instantly know who I'm going to talk about because when I use the word *comeback* everybody knows and everybody associates this phrase with Robert Kubica, right.

Robert Kubica is presenting one of the greatest comebacks in history of sport, of motor racing, one of the greatest figures, one of the greatest sportsmen in history, but I'll tell you why I decided to talk about it today, particularly today, although we have known about his comeback for some time now and actually it was announced some time ago that he would be the driver for Williams this year 2019.

But the reason why I decided to talk about it now is that his racing, his comeback has been in the news for some time now. Mostly because his team and all the other teams who are going to compete against one another, all the other teams are getting ready for Australia. So, the tests have begun.

The second reason is that there is a book. A few weeks ago, that was the end of February I guess, the book was released. It was written by two sports journalists, great fans of Robert Kubica, people who know him very well, who have a lot of information about him, his life, his struggle to come back.

The title of the book is, well it is in Polish, but I ventured to translate the title. In English we would call it *unbreakable* and it is directly associated with Kubica's *willpower*, with his greatest strength to stay alive, of course in the very literal sense but also in the very figurative sense.

I would also use another words as translation for this book. I wouldn't say that this is the immediate translation, but I'd also use the word *invincible*. I would call Kubica invincible. If you are invincible, it means that no one can beat you and I would rather say that he represents these qualities. I would say that he is that kind of person, that no one can beat.



There is yet another reason why I decided to talk about Kubica today and this reason is the series, the series on Netflix. The series is entitled *Drive to survive*. It's going to cover Formula One drivers and I do believe that it is also going to feature Robert Kubica. The series is going to be broadcast on Netflix in March. They are going to start it March the 8th. It is no commercial on my part as I'm using the expression Netflix, it is just my advice, my recommendation to have a look at some very fine materials, very fine materials in English, and obviously this is the reason why we're meeting here, right, cause English is the true love.

But first things first, I'll try to start with the things that are most important here and I'd like to guide you through the information that I have prepared for today. But I'll start with saying something very important. I'll start by saying that I'm not an expert in the field. I mean, I'm not an expert in Formula 1. I would also call myself a rather mediocre driver. So I'm not going to talk about all the technicalities, all the very detailed information connected with Formula 1 driving and drivers. But I sort of, I have been observing, I have been watching Kubica's fight to come back, to stay on top, to survive over a man's shoulder, I have asked all sorts of questions and obviously my story, the things that I'd like to tell you today, the things I'd like to present, they are going to be presented from the perspective of the psychological experience, rather than the technical experience of driving a Formula One car which I do not know much about.

So the reason why I decided to talk about Robert Kubica, and his fight is this ability, his ability to stay on top, to try hard, never to give up. So what we're going to talk about today is how we can fight with **adversities**, of course and how we're going to describe it in English.

His story, Kubica's story, Robert Kubica's life is just ready scenario for a film. It is rather amazing what he has achieved, what he's done and his life has been this great series of unusual events.

But I'll start with him as a boy, as a teenager because we are very much excited about what he's doing right now as this F1 driver, but from what I know he had this very difficult start because it wasn't very easy for him to become the



driver. Let me just come back to his beginnings and to the information that he's the first Pole in F1. No one has ever done that before. I mean no other person than Robert Kubica. And getting to formula one is not an easy **feat**, right, it's not an easy task because this sport is particular, particular in a way that it is kind of reserved for gladiators, I would call them. I mean, this is how I would call the drivers of Formula One. They are, they have that kind of superpower, supernatural skills of driving to the limits, of staying under enormous pressure, of surviving this pressure, of thriving under enormous amounts of stress I would even even say.

Kubica got to Formula One from Poland. He trained driving as a young boy but there is something that shaped his character and there is something that made him the person that he is right now and this is his family home, his parents. He once said in one of the interviews that his father would repeat the phrase that *if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well*.

A great thing to remember, something that shapes the character, a great phrase in English also. I hope you'll remember it now. If we say that if a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well it means that whatever you do, whatever you want to achieve, you always have to do it 100%. So there are no other means, it is just you and the goal and you have to do it, you have to try very hard, and you have to work to the fullest in order to achieve it. And this is what Robert has done and this explains why he is where he is, why he is the person that he has become

We all know that the reason why his life has been so amazing is not only the skill that he possesses that he is such a great driver, but also what happened a few years ago. I mean the accident that he had and the accident had actually broke his career. Everybody thought, well, not everybody because I'm sure his fans, including myself, we all thought that he would manage, yes, we all believed and prayed for his comeback. But there were of course voices and there were other people who doubted it because the injuries that he suffered, the accident that he had, these things almost made it impossible for him to be a driver, any kind of driver again. And he became this driver once again, not only for a regular car, but for a Formula



One car, which is this very special type of car and you need these super skills in order to drive a car like that.

The thing that is repeated by Robert Kubica himself and the thing that he pays attention to is that the accident that he had, he repeated that on many occasions, the accident that he had, it is a great lesson for him. He's learnt his lesson so much but the amazing thing here is that the injuries that he had, they were, like they could go both ways, they could have gone both ways. So, a few centimeters to the right and nothing would have happened, a few centimeters to the left and he could have died. So yes, he learnt his lesson and yes, he **went to great lengths** to come back, not to give up, to kind of understand what happened and to understand why he had to undergo such difficult situations in order to be this F1 driver once again.

When I use the expression *go to great great lengths* it means that you try very hard yes, so if you go to great lengths, you do whatever you can to achieve a given goal. We can also say that you **take pains** to do so, so Robert Kubica went to great lengths and he took pains, he took great pains to come back to Formula One, but not only to come back, but just to survive because the accident, at the very beginning, it was after the accident, it was super difficult for him just to live a normal life. The injuries that he suffered, the injuries to his hand made it impossible for him to, just to function in normal life. But he did not give up. He tried very hard. He put his heart to it, and right now he is this Formula One driver.

When you want to achieve something very much, you **do your utmost** to do it. *To do your utmost* is like an equivalent to the phrase *to do your best*. And yes, Robert Kubica did his utmost to come back to the top.

We all **encounter** difficulties in our lives and Kubica showed us how to face them. When we encounter difficulties, it means that we meet these difficulties, right? So there are the difficulties, us and unfortunately we meet somewhere there in life. He encountered enormous difficulties, but he showed us that he did not give up, that he fought them, that he said ok, I have to survive. I cannot make it happen like that that the injury just destroyed my life and so he did not give up.



Williams, the team that is his team, that he is driving in, has got this very special history, I would say and this history, the history of the team seems to be so much connected with Robert Kubica's life. So, the team has had a long tradition of driving. It's a British racing team. One of the greatest teams in history of Formula One.

But they also know, I mean they like the owners and the founders of the team, they know what it means and what it's like to **overcome** difficulties because Frank Williams, who is the founder of Williams Racing Team, he has been on wheelchair since his car accident. So in a way the injuries are not something uncommon for the team, but his daughter Claire Williams said, in one of the many interviews that she's given, that when she looks at Robert Kubica, she does not see the injuries. She just sees the skills in him and possibly it could be connected with what she has experienced, what she's been through with her own father because she's seen, she's observed her own father who's been **struggling** with disabilities and the disability is nothing new for her but what she values in people, and that's something that she repeated on many occasions, it is how they fight, how they don't give up and this is exactly what Robert Kubica did, he did not give up, he showed that he can shine through even with some problems, let's call them, difficulties, but he wouldn't call himself disabled and I guess that people do not **perceive** him to be one, to be a disabled person, but just a great great person, a great driver.

It seems that the fate, so to say, has been playing tricks on Robert Kubica and his team and in a way they are united, united in their fight against difficulties because the team, as I said, the team is one of the greatest, has been one of the greatest teams in the history of Formula One driving, but they've been experiencing trouble recently. They came last last year and this year they are having trouble as well because these tests for Australian are not going very well and Claire said that she simply felt embarrassed, embarrassed with what happened, embarrassed with the test because they did not manage to prepare the car on time. They lost a couple of days of the test, of the training and this is a tragic thing actually because the tests are one of the most important things that happen for a driving team.



But what? They are not giving up. They are trying hard and there is yet another reason why I would invite you actually and kind of ask you to get interested in Robert Kubica and his driving and it is obviously for the linguistic reasons because we cannot forget that Robert Kubica is the driver for a British team. So all the people that surround him, they speak great English. Claire Williams, I'm in love with her English, so I do recommend watching some of her interviews cause she speaks this fantastic English and all the lovers of British English would be, will be, they wouldn't be but they will be super satisfied.

There is George Russell, who is the other driver, and also listening to his English is like listening to music. There is Paddy Lowe, he is the British engineer and right now he's a chief technical officer in Williams. So the kind of language that they are using is just amazing and all the people who would like to practice their British English, I mean, they are invited, really. Just listen to them because when I listen to them, I've got butterflies in my stomach, so to say, and that's another phrase. So when *you've got butterflies in your stomach*, it means that you are just super happy and you're kind of floating above the ground, in the air because it is just this very lovely experience listening to them.

Another thing is Netflix. I use the expression Netflix here, let me just repeat that's no commercial in any way, but we just all know Netflix and I guess we all at times watch the films and series there.

Learning Languages with Netflix, I guess it is a very fine idea because you can watch a film or watch a serious and you get the subtitles, you get them in your mother tongue, but you also get them in English. I have always been a great fan of learning English, learning languages through watching films because it is both pleasure and it gives you this information, it gives you this idea that learning a language it is not just going to school, taking your books and spending time in the classroom and revising grammar, but then you just see that the language is not an end in itself, right, it is just a means because this is what it is, right. If the language is just a means, so watching films just proves that to you. It shows that you can learn the language in a very fun way, but on the other hand, it is still



learning, right. It is still absorbing new phrases, new information. So watching films with subtitles it's a great thing. So just have a try with the plug-in and just see if it suits you.

The next linguistic reason, the next thing I'd like to draw your attention to is the series the series I've introduced *Drive to Survive*. Again, it's Formula One, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it's English. A thing worth doing in my opinion.

When we're talking about series, great series that Netflix features, I would use another title, I would use another name, not connected with Formula One this time, but I cannot just leave the series aside and the title of the series is *Black Earth Rising*. A British series, a great subject, a difficult one but in my opinion worth having a look at and a great opportunity to learn the language. It's a British series, wonderful accent or accents of the actors, wonderful dialogues. So just have a look, have a try, I do recommend.

And the last thing that I'd like to mention here is the podcast. Because Formula One has got its official podcast, it's called *Beyond the Grid*. Again, a great opportunity to listen to people, knowledgeable people, about Formula One, to listen to Robert Kubica because he has been featured there as well, to listen to Claire Williams and to have the experience of listening to a podcast. So there are all sorts of great podcasts and *Beyond the Grid* is one of them.

Right guys. I hope you will benefit from some of the ideas here, I mean linguistic ideas, be it the series, be it the plug-in, be it the podcast, *Beyond the Grid* podcast and I'm sure that Robert Kubica's fans, they've also found some interesting information for themselves.

Goodbye guys.



GLOSSARY

unbreakable - niezniszczalny/ nietłukący się

willpower - siła woli

invincible - niezwyciężony/ niepokonany

adversity - niedola/ przeciwność losu

feat - wyczyn/ osiągnięcie

(to) go to great lengths - zadać sobie dużo trudu

(to) take pains - zadać sobie dużo trudu

(to) do your utmost - zrobić coś najlepiej jak się potrafi

(to) encounter - napotykać/ napotkać

(to) struggle - borykać się/ zmagać się

(to) perceive - postrzegać

have butterflies in your stomach - mieć motyle w brzuchu

grid - (*tutaj*) ustawienie na starcie samochodów wyścigowych