



## *Jane Morgan - Living in 'bubbles'*

Jon Right, Jane, so you've got interesting things to say about bubbles. Now just remind me, how did you get thinking about bubbles in the first place?

Jane Uh, many years ago, I happened to hear a French person explaining why she thought it was a good idea to, to ask English people to host French children for language immersion, rather than them going all the way over to England, or the States, or an English-speaking country, with all the British people here in their bubbles, linguistically, culturally, comfort-wise – that there was no need, that it all existed in France with the English ex-pat community, who existed in their satellite-fed, centrally-heated stone houses, in the middle of Brittany.

Jon Living in bubbles.

Jane Living in their bubbles. Yeah.

Jon But do you think sometimes a bubble is a very comfortable, easy existence? Do we need to live outside the bubble?

Jane Well I think we should, yeah. I think it's a dangerous place to be, in a bubble, because it s..., it smacks of complacency, lack of effort ... and lack of effort leads to going nowhere. That's my view, that in order to embrace life and to grow from one's surroundings and experiences we need to push, push out the barriers. Pop the bubble, I say.

Jon And one way of doing that, of course, where living in France is to learn French.

Jane Absolutely. Get out there, or even, within the bubble, cut the..., cut the cord to the English satellite dish, rig up a French one, or just plug in to your Live Box. French tv is available through ... digitally through your Live Box, watching the same ... because the same kind of quizzes exist. Most of the programmes are dubbed versions of British or American programmes, so we know the formula, we know what the dialogue is likely to be, and s..., all we have to do is just listen to it phonetically until it just washes ... I mean I remember, at first I used to drive along with RMN, with the radio, on, which is only music, and a lot of that is English, American, Anglophone music, lyrics, but there'd be the news bulletin, and I would think, 'God, one word, that's all I understand'. But then, a month down the line it would be three words, and then I'd keep hearing the same phrase when I was out or..... Fortunately, I have had exposure to French people because I have been a parent, plus when my son was in hospital, having to understand the lingo. Also as a host for B&B guests of which coming up for 90% have been French, cooking for them, having dialogue and exchange over the table at a meal is the fantastic way to, to communicate. But if one doesn't have any of that, if is one, if one is retired, and feels that one isn't exposed in everyday life, then just perhaps go to a bar. And if you go regularly, you'll get, uh, you'll get talking to the people behind the bar – they're happy with just seeing you make some kind of effort. They won't usually correct you, and you can make the most ridiculous mistakes, but they don't laugh, they don't take the mickey, and as a rule they're not in any way racist. So just seize the day and get out there. But I'm ready to do lessons for anyone who's ... who um you know, that's one of my project ideas, that I



want to offer first steps in French. It's not frightening. You will never speak it as a native – we will always be seen as British, but people have told me that, well I'm told by French men that they very much like French spoken with an English accent. Apparently, it's equally as sexy as ... English women like to hear English being spoken by French men with a French accent, and so the, the reverse applies. And eh, I've had many comments in my visitor's book about being 'so British', and, you know, charming, charmante.

Jon Do you think most British people try to integrate enough when they're over here living in Brittany?

Jane No, no unfortunately I don't. It's something that ... many has been the time that I've been somewhere and a French person has said, 'Wow! You speak French?' And they say, because, and they cite, so-and-so we know people who've been here ten years and they don't speak a word. Well, I feel quite ashamed of that really. Why? Why have they come over here if they're not in any way ... you know, it's simply for cheap property, cheap wine, what else? You're not offering anything. Surely life is an exchange. Surely, we are out here ... you know, we are, we're born to communicate and to connect. If we rest in isolation, then we do it at our peril.

Jon So burst the bubble. That's your motto?

Jane Eh, yeah. Yes, I mean I guess ... I don't know if bubbles can be of any use. I actually think they serve to, uh, to put barriers between us.

Jon Jane, thank you very much for your words of wisdom.