

Activities to do **BEFORE** you listen to the podcast

A Match the words and their definitions:

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|----------------|---|
| 1. Promenade | a. A place regarded as the centre of an activity or interest. |
| 2. Boardwalk | b. The combination of characteristics or qualities that form someone's character. |
| 3. Personality | c. A wooden walkway |
| 4. Mecca | d. A test of the potential of someone or something |
| 5. Try-out | e. Relating to or characteristic of young people; youthful. |
| 6. Pissed | f. A walkway along the riverside |
| 7. Juvenile | g. Being able to be seen |
| 8. Visibility | h. Angry (slang) |

Activities to do **WHILE** you listen to the podcast

B Based on the information from the podcast episode, decide if the following sentences are true or false:

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|--|--|
| 1. Massimo and Laura live in Slovakia. | 6. Massimo and Laura plan to retire from dancing soon. |
| 2. Massimo and Laura compete in Latin American dance styles. | 7. They enjoy travelling and exploring new places. |
| 3. They have known each other for nine years. | 8. Massimo and Laura have won several international dance championships. |
| 4. Massimo and Laura have a dance studio in Bratislava. | 9. They have a strong bond both on and off the dance floor. |
| 5. Massimo and Laura have never travelled outside of Europe. | |

Activities to do **AFTER** you listen to the podcast

C Summarize what you have just listen to using the words in exercise A.

KEY

A: 1-f, 2-c, 3-b, 4-a, 5-d, 6-h, 7-e, 8-g

B: 1-false (They are based in Hong Kong), 2-true, 3-true, 4-false (even more), 5-false (not specifically in Bratislava), 6-false (they have competed and taught in Asia), 7-false (they are still actively competing and have ambitions to climb the ranks in their dance career), 8-true, 9-true



Transcript

Your favorite place in Slovakia? Bratislava. **Do you have like a favorite spot within Bratislava?** Depends on - for what? For food or for... **For whatever!** Actually, I like all the riverside. But like Eurovea... Yeah, let's say yeah. The walk in there, the green... **The promenade.** Or even... **Boardwalk.** Eat on the boat, nice. **Okay, so the riverside. Favorite Slovak meal?** Uh... Okay, now this I have to say. Because Laura teaches me, so I have to say. My favorite is Čučoriedky. Čučoriedky! No, that... **That could be...** Just because I know the word. **Yes.** Halušky I like. **You do?** Yeah, I like (it). I like with more... Because sometimes the cheese is quite strong. **Yes, it is.** I like strong cheese, but... Sometimes it's a little bit too much. But I like it, actually. **Favourite Slovak drink?** Tatra(tea). **Really?** Yes. I have to say. **Which one?** Black or purple. **So that's like 52 or even higher?** 60-something, yeah. **Okay, Tatratea. I see a point.** That actually was the first drink I tried when I came here. **Okay, favourite Slovak song?** Yes, we had one. I mean, I have one that actually we also dance on it. **Okay.** But I don't remember the title. **Can you sing a little maybe? The melody?** **No, nothing? Nothing?** No. No idea. **Never mind.** And probably how I sing it will look (like) something else. **Never mind. Okay, now you can say the word you learned. Because my question is what's your favourite Slovak word? By the way, your pronunciation is very nice.** Thank you. **You do it well. Favourite Slovak personalcity?** I just love sports, so I will say Hamšík. **Okay.** I love football, of course. **Of course, of course. He was in Neapol.** Yes. **Naples. Napoli. Napoli. And this is not usual one, but your favourite dance? Not Slovak, because obviously...** Jive. Jive. **Okay, so from those five, Jive is your most favourite.** I have another one, but I think Jive is the one I like the most.

Hi, Massimo. Hi, nice to meet you. **Nice to meet you. I'm very happy that you found the time in your busy life and that you came, because I think this is going to be an incredible chat, because you have an incredible life.** Yeah, we can say that, yeah. **We can say that.** And thank you very much to invite me here. **No problem. You're Italian.** Yes. **Though I am okay with your first name, not sure about how to spell your or how to pronounce your...** **Surname. Surname. I don't want to make a fool of myself.** Arcolin. I wasn't sure if it's C or K. No, no, Arco. Arco. Because it's O, so C-O. **Oh, okay. Okay, so always when in Italian there is O after C, it's always pronounced Co.** Yeah. **Okay, okay, good to know.** Let me think about it, but yeah, I think so, yeah. **But we're not here to talk about Italian grammar, though it might be helpful for people. All right, you are a professional dancer. Correct. And the reason why you are here right now or in Slovakia in general is because your dance partner, but also your life partner...** Exactly. **...is a beautiful Slavic woman.** Of course. That's true. **Her name is Laura?** Yeah. **Where is she from, by the way? Bratislava. Directly Bratislava.** She is (from) Bratislava. **Okay, so when you stay in Slovakia, you stay here in Bratislava.** In Bratislava, yeah. **All right, you've known each other for quite some time. Nine years?** For longer, even more. No, actually, we are together for nine years already, dancing together, but we know each other for much longer time because, of course, she was competing before with other partner. I was competing, so we are almost around the same age. **Okay. Let's don't talk about the age, but... Come on, are you ashamed of your age?** No, not at all. **You are still young.** I don't want to say her age. **Oh, okay.** So we are around the same age, few years different, just like two or three. **Okay, all right.** No more. **So, actually, you've noticed each other, I mean, before you became dance partners, right?** Yep, and also before, because we were living, I mean, before we started to dance together, we were living both in Hong Kong already. **Okay.** So if we talk about when we were very young, like juvenile, junior, maybe we didn't really know each other so close. **Okay.** But we could see each other in the competition. **Yes.** We didn't speak so much together, but she moved, actually, in Hong Kong before me. **Okay.** When I arrived in Hong Kong, I knew her already. And, of course, there we started to know each other because Hong Kong is very small. **Is it?!** and the dancing... Yeah, and the dancing, let's say, group is very small. The circles. And we all know each other, yeah. **And it never occurred to you then, or have you ever thought about, like, having Laura as your dance partner?** I mean, back in the day. Before, no, because you never think you're going to split with your partner. **Okay.** Because usually I always wanted to stay with the partner I was at that time. And I changed a few partners, okay, but I never thought about we're going to split. **Oh, okay.** All right. **So, of course... So it's never the plan.** Yeah. But maybe somebody, because, I don't know, the result is not going well, so the last period I heard about somebody maybe already thinking about maybe the change of it, and they are already looking maybe. Maybe they don't do the move to change until they are sure that they can dance with that person. **Oh, okay. And to be able to dance with somebody, you have to do...**

How do you call it? Like a trial or something? We call it try-out. **Try-out. Oh, okay.** But basically it's the same. It's actually the same, yeah. And, yeah, actually our try-out, for me, was like five minutes long to choose. Because after five minutes, I'm okay. It's okay. **So you knew in five minutes...** For me. Laura took a month. To confirm. She felt good straight away, but she said, yeah, I want to still... Because she didn't change partner many times. **Okay.** I think that was the second time she split with an ex-partner. **Okay.** She wanted to be sure 100%, because she knew it was probably the last partner for the end of the career. **Oh, that's right.** I was like, why? **But that's right, because dancers don't have long, right?** It's like football players around the same age. **Okay.** Maybe a little bit longer. **Damn. That's kind of sad. I mean, you know, you do something you love and you can't imagine your life without it.** That's true, but in a way, you're still going to continue because you continue teaching. **Uh-huh.** You continue travelling for judging. Actually, in a way, we will earn more later because we are not paying to go to competition. We're not paying for everything like we are doing when you compete. And after, if you go to judge, they will invite you to judge, so they will pay. If you go to teach, it's the same, even the expenses for the travel in a way. So, it's a little bit opposite than the other sports that they get paid when you are still active, let's say. For us, it's opposite. **I never thought about it like that. That's true. Hey, we have to say, what kind of dancing is that?** So... Latin American. Exactly. **I mean, I knew that. They didn't know that. So what kind of dances are out there?** We have five dances. Uh-huh. Competitive because somebody, when we talk about Latin American dance, they think salsa, that for us they are Caribbean dances. **Yes, okay.** And they have salsa, mambo, bachata, all this, merengue. And we have the other for competition, samba, cha-cha-cha, rumba, pasodoble, jive. **These five?** These five. All the time, only this. **Okay, but the overall score is just one for all the five dances, right?** No, each dance. **Each dance.** We have each dance, the overall of the marks from the judge. So, the total of the marks of the judge, you have the overall of that dance. **Okay.** Usually, let's say, if you win three dances, you already win the comp. Because it's the majority of the dance. **Okay. So, when you said that you are third in all dances. Actually, this year, right? This year you finished third.** One week ago. Yeah, it's very fresh. **By the way, congratulations.** Thank you. **Come on, to be the third best in the world must feel incredible.** That's true. Yes, that's true. **I mean, that's a life achievement, right?** I never expected. When I was young, I always wanted to do a final with a previous partner. When I was an amateur, I never got into the final, not even into the semi-final. **Oh, okay.** And so, at that time, I was like, okay, I hope I'm going to make it, but I don't know. Because also, you check what age you are at that moment and how many years you still have and which position you have in the world in that moment. I was like, I hope when I turn to pro, maybe I can change a little bit. So, but after, when I started with Laura and I saw that year after year was going higher and higher, we got the semi-final, it was already, the first semi-final was already crying. And Laura was already pissed because, sorry, I don't know if I can say. **No, no, no, come on. It's a podcast. You can say whatever you want.** She looked at me like, we danced the semi-final so bad. I don't want that to happen again. Never. For the next competition, we need to be ready. Even if we do the semi-final, we need to be ready, not be just happy and dance how it comes. And she turned to me, I was crying. I was like, okay, maybe, maybe I'm too hard today. **Okay.** And after, of course, we work, we work until we get into the, it took maybe a few years to get into the finals. But now we are there and now we are trying to step up a little bit. **Climb the ladder.** And let's see. **Do you think you can make it to the top? Like the very top? Because I think you can.** It's possible, but that is also, of course, we always try to improve ourselves with our dancing. But that can change all the time. Can change that maybe next year, the first two couple retire. Of course, I can say yes. So that is the easy one. When somebody retires in front, you have kind of open space. **Advantage, yes.** Maybe one retires, you can try to beat one couple instead of two. That can also be possible. **But if they don't retire,** you need to fight more, in a way. And you need to improve in a way that everybody see that change. Because they don't give you straight away. **Okay.** It takes a little bit of time. You have to prove it a little bit. **Yeah, I can understand that. But still, it's like a dream come true, right?** That for me already, yes. I said when I entered the finals, I said, okay, I'm done in a way. In my head, I'm done. Now everything come. More than that, it's a plus. If I can get the title, happy to get it. Of course, I will fight for it because I'm very competitive. We are very competitive. **You look like a competitive couple.** But of course, you never know. I can see you on the top. **And you look like you really are putting in the hard work.** I have to say yes. It changed. Actually, I have to say that with Laura changed quite a lot the way of practicing. Because I think that is the most important part is the training and the practice.

It's not mainly the comp. That is already done in a way. You are already done when you arrive there to compete. **How many hours a week or a day? I don't know how you count it.** Okay. Now that we just did the comp, we are a little bit in a rest. **Okay. You deserve that.** Yeah. And also, we found out actually before we were practicing in the beginning because we wanted to make it straight away and push it straight away. We were practicing every day for even five hours. Okay, not maybe all in a row. Yeah, with breaks, of course. But still, it's kind of like, okay. But no day off. Not even Sunday. **Oh, shit.** And after we found out, it was like, maybe it's a little bit too much. And now also we felt that our body needed. And of course, because we find out that by the time we arrive at the end of the week, we wanted to kill each other. **Okay, you mentioned Hong Kong. How much are you there and how much are you here?** Okay, let's say our base residence is Hong Kong. We are Hong Kong resident also. **Already?** Yeah. **Like permanent address and everything.** Permanent because we are more than seven years. I just got it last year. **Wow.** And Laura, I think a few years before. So let's say that is our home. If we want to call it like this. **All right.** But of course, it depends also where we have the competition. If they are all in Asia, Yes. The competition. **And everything that's happening like all over here.** Yeah. **In this part of the world.** We stay a little bit longer because so we take a chance maybe to go to Italy to my family or to stay here with Laura's family or even to do our stuff here. **Where in Italy are you from?** Padova. Close to Venice. **And how often do you, you know, see your family like this?** At least once a year? Actually, because we have these three top competitions in London, in England, let's say. At least these three times. At least. Or before or after the comp. Or they come here. Or we go there. So, plus Christmas usually. And maybe one more time during the year, maybe four or five. **By the way, why Hong Kong? Is it like a mecca of Latin American dance or something?** Let's say that as an active dancer, usually the best place to also be able to work, they are America and Hong Kong. **So like, you mean like a background, like a good base camp for...** Because, no, let's say America because it's full of competition. Every week you have maybe two competitions, the same weekend even, or more. **Okay, but it's a big country.** Yeah, of course. And if we think about Hong Kong is a good strategic point because it's for all Asia. **Okay.** So you can go to teach all Asia. **So it's the location that counts.** Yeah. **All right.** And of course, now a lot of our teacher also, ex-world champion before, they also come to Hong Kong. So for us, it's even easy to get our lesson. They usually, maybe we need to go to London to have it before the comp. We can have it already in Hong Kong. **Okay.** Because also they come to judge competition in Asia. So for them also, Hong Kong is nice city. So they have this stopover also for them. So easy to combine. **I didn't know that you also, except for, you know, practicing for the comps competitions and competing at these competitions, you also give lessons, right?** Yes. Now as a professional, it's more easy again because as a professional, you can also judge sometimes, even if you're an active competitor. Of course, if you do the competition, you cannot judge the same comp. **Yeah, of course. But do you have time for that? Or is it like part of your job?** No, if we have time, in Hong Kong is more easy. We can, let's say, schedule better our day. Here in Slovakia is okay because usually when we are in Slovakia, we just have our practice and lesson to teach. That's all. We don't have so many things. In Hong Kong is more busy. Let's say the day in Hong Kong is more busy. It's much faster. Everything is going. And here... **Asian way of life is...** Yeah. In Europe, feel like, okay, we have so much time, even if we don't have it in a way, you feel like it goes slower. **So, to your Italian culture, heritage and so on and so on and your personality, Slovakia is definitely closer than Hong Kong.** Actually, yes. And I was surprised that I'm very, when I don't dance, when I'm not in the competitive mood, let's say, I'm very chill. **Yes.** Very relaxed person, like Italian. I have to say, maybe it's not the best, but... And with Laura, we combine it very well because she's very active, opposite. And so, we calm down each other or we activate each other. But I have to say, when I arrived in Hong Kong and after a few years that I was living in Hong Kong, when I was coming back to Italy, I was like, here they are very slow. And I was complaining about Italian being slow. And I really like it usually. **Oh my God.** Like, okay, I'm becoming a little bit... **A bit strange. It feels weird.** Yeah. **All right. So you probably have a flat, a house, I don't know, in Hong Kong. You also have somewhere to stay here in Bratislava?** Which part? We go... Now you ask me. **Oh, you don't know?** Wait, wait. Come on. I know. I think Dúbravka. Dúbravka. **That's kind of far away. But yeah, with a tram, it's like half an hour.** We like it. In Italy, I also live more on the hillside. So not very city centre. So I'm kind of used to. And in Hong Kong, it's completely city. So yeah, we like it. **No hillsides in Hong Kong.** We like it also with more relax. **So living in Dubrovka, you have like, you rent a studio somewhere or something like that?** Actually, we practice or we teach where Laura started, actually. The same studio, let's say. All right. **So, you do that and except for that, what, you lead a normal life here, right?** Yeah. **Oh, normal.** Okay. Yeah. **Life of a dancer, of course.** Exactly. **But still, you know, you go out, you go for dinner, you go to the movies or something.** Yeah. Okay. Let's say, if we can, we go sometimes, but usually because we are not often in Europe. **Mm-hmm.** So, the same when we are in Italy, we try to stay more with family. So instead of maybe going out, if we go out for dinner, we go

out maybe for dinner, not just by ourselves, but maybe with the family or Laura's mother or cousin or brother. **Yeah, I understand.** The same with my family. Yeah. So sometimes we have also days just for us. **So, you haven't like really travelled Slovakia or something?** Depends where, for teaching or sometimes, we had two, three days kind of holiday in Tatras. High Tatras. **Okay.** Actually, I really like it. **It's beautiful. It's a beautiful place. Yes, I love it.** We went a few times. Otherwise, sometimes they, it's outside Bratislava, they ask us to go to another studio to teach, but to really stay and visit, not so much. **So, once you decide that, okay, we're going to settle down, I mean, can you imagine this kind of life like forever? I mean, non-stop travelling, non-stop commuting, non-stop... You know what I'm talking about?** Like, to have one place, to be in one place. I think we... I don't want to say now because maybe I'm going to do completely opposite, but I think maybe we can still slow it down a little bit or we can still have more control on it than now. Now, a little bit less because you want to compete as much as possible to show yourself as much as possible to get that result you want. Yeah. So, you have more visibility. After, in a way, yes, you are doing almost the same, but you are more in the background. So, you can still say, okay, this year I go, maybe you will go to watch and to follow your couple, the couple that we teach. But you can also say, okay, you know what? This comp, I don't go. Sometimes we are already talking about where we're going to live as a main place because we were even talking about maybe we will have a house in Spain. Because we both like Spain. I say, yes, when? The problem was always when? Because, of course, we want family and kids and, of course, it will slow down a little bit, but in a way, I think because we are used to this kind of life. **Well, right now, but in a couple of years, maybe you'll, you know, be fed up with it.** I hope we will be okay and say, okay, now we can kind of really not stop it, but **slow it down.** Slow it more down, let's say. Because, of course, we both like kids. To have kids, but we said we will try to get the result and, because we know we still don't have so many years. And you still have a chance. Maybe just a few. We said we could not see each other having kids during active performance. **No, I understand. Yeah, exactly.** Because, of course, we want to stay. If we have kids, we want to stay with kids. **Sure.** We don't want to, okay, give to family and that's the way we want to raise our child, let's say. **Well, I think it's a wise decision.** I mean, we know you can't have it all. That's why we went straight with the same idea. When we started to talk about this, we went with the same idea. **Career first, then kids.** Because, as I said, you can't have it all. **Yeah, also.** Yeah, of course, why not? Okay, so probably I don't want to say what and where. I know, I know. But let's say we both like Spain. **Yeah, but don't forget about, you know.** And maybe in the end we're going to stay in Hong Kong. I don't know. **Maybe. Yeah, but, you know, grandparents might be a great help when raising kids and so on and so on.** So, you maybe want to be closer. But we have parents that like also to travel, so... **Good for you!** So, we are lucky also with that maybe. **So, like, dancing partners are also together as, you know, like partners. How come? I mean, is it expected or?** I know people that are not together in life and they dance together. I, with the previous partner, I was not together. And, with Laura, we are, we are together. And of course, we're going to marry and we're going to live together. But let's say it's not a must. Let's say that you have to. But, usually, why happen? Because in a way, if, when you are apart. You spend a lot of time together. Yes, like 24 hours. 24 hours. Because you practice, I mean, at that level, how we practice and how we do stuff for dancing and traveling. Yeah, it's almost 24 hours a day. So, it depends also on character. Like, like everything, but I think there is more chance because you spend so much time. **Yes, definitely. And of course, when there is chemistry and stuff like that and I guess you had chemistry straight, straight from the beginning, right?** That, that is true. **Funny.** I have to say, yes, but I always, I never had actually really problem even with the other partner before. Of course, different age. So, maybe just with one was a bit difficult, but also the, the relation was a bit difficult. Like, to talk with her, to do something together was like, difficult. Like, she wanted just to practice and go home. I say, okay, maybe we can go out with the friends and we were not together. But already as a person, I felt it a little bit cold. So, I was like, I don't need that. Even if something passed in my mind, I want to stay with her. I was like, no way. **Where is the fun? Yeah. So, I'm happy that you found Laura then. So, it's, it's a, it's a, you know, good combination.** I think it's a very good combination. **Yeah, I'm very happy for you too. All right, Massimo, thank you very much.** Thank you. Thank you very much. **For joining me here today and good luck with getting to the very, very top because I know that you can get there.** I know. I will do my best. **And after that, I'll call you in again.** Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. **Thank you so much.**