



ESL Podcast 383 – Mending a Broken Heart

GLOSSARY

to mope – to act in such a way that other people can see that one is sad or depressed; to walk and talk sadly because one is depressed

* Hank moped around for about a month after he lost his job.

to suffer from (something) – to be in emotional or physical pain because of something; to be saddened or hurt by something

* Eleo suffers from horrible headaches almost every day.

broken heart – the feeling of being extremely sad, usually because a romantic relationship has ended

* When Sue's husband left her, she thought she would die of a broken heart.

to break up with (someone) – to end a romantic relationship with someone; to no longer be someone's girlfriend or boyfriend

* Gil broke up with his girlfriend when he found out that she was dating two other men at the same time.

gruesome details – detailed, specific information about something that is negative, bad, sad, or disgusting

* I don't want to hear all the gruesome details about your knee surgery!

depressed – very sad, often without a reason for feeling that way

* Felicity doesn't watch the news because she gets depressed whenever she listens to reports about the war.

grief – a feeling of deep loss and sadness, especially when someone dies

* At the funeral, many people expressed their grief by crying.

vulnerable – easy to hurt; able to be hurt easily; not able to resist negative influences

* People with AIDS are very vulnerable to the flu.

to jump the gun – to do something prematurely; to do something too early, or before one should

* Don't you think they're jumping the gun by getting married when they've known each other for only two months?



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to bounce back – to recover; to become normal again; to end a negative situation and return to normal

* How long did it take Kim to bounce back after losing all of her money in the stock market?

to backfire – to do the opposite of what one wants something to do; to have the opposite effect of what one intended

* They tried to teach their kids to be responsible with money by giving them a few dollars each week, but their idea backfired when their kids spent all the money on candy and toys.

fling – a romantic and/or sexual relationship that lasts for only a short period of time and is not serious

* Some college students want to have a fling during their spring break.

rejection – denial; refusal; the act of being told no; the act of being denied something that one wants; the act of being told that one is not good enough for something

* Yvonne got a rejection letter from Stanford University, but acceptance letters from Harvard and Princeton.

to distract (someone) – to do something so that another person stops thinking about one thing and starts thinking about something else; to do something that makes another person change what he or she is thinking about

* Doesn't that loud music distract you when you are trying to study?

misery – a strong feeling of being very sad, miserable, lonely, misunderstood, and/or in pain

* Freddy was in misery when he tried to stop smoking cigarettes without any help.

to tread carefully – to be careful about what one does in a difficult situation

* The teenager had to tread very carefully when telling his parents he wrecked their car, because he knew that he was in big trouble.

master – expert; someone who is very good at doing something or who knows a lot about something

* Janice is a master in handling difficult people.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. If someone is moping, how does he or she feel?
 - a) Depressed.
 - b) Happy.
 - c) Distracted.

2. How is Eli going to cheer up Joyce?
 - a) By dating her.
 - b) By jumping the gun.
 - c) By having a fling.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

fling

The word “fling,” in this podcast, means a romantic and/or sexual relationship that lasts for only a short period of time and is not serious: “Is this a serious relationship, or is it only a fling?” As a verb, “to fling” means to throw something quickly, without paying very much attention to where it goes: “He quickly flung the papers onto his desk and rushed to his next meeting.” The phrase “to fling (something) off” means to remove or take off a piece of clothing very quickly: “As soon as she got home from work, she flung off her coat onto the couch and laid down to take a nap.” Finally, the phrase “to fling (something) at (someone)” means to say something to someone angrily: “The siblings flung angry words at each other while they were fighting.”

tread

In this podcast, the verb “to tread” means to be very careful about what one does in a difficult situation: “The company is going to fire 100 employees, so everyone is treading carefully at work.” The verb “to tread” also means to take a step and put one’s foot down on something: “Please don’t tread on the grass. Stay on the sidewalk.” When swimming, the phrase “to tread water” means to float by moving one’s legs to stay above the water, without moving forward or backward: “She doesn’t know how to swim, but she can tread water.” As a noun, “tread” is the pattern or design on a tire or on the bottom of one’s shoe, which helps the tire or shoe avoid sliding and slipping: “If the tread is thin on your car’s tires, it’s time to buy new tires.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In American life and “pop culture” (popular culture; things that most people are interested in), the heart (♥) is an important “symbol” (a drawing that represents an idea). Heart “imagery” (the use of a symbol, drawing, or image to mean something) is “prevalent” (very common and easily found) in American culture.

Heart imagery is most prevalent in early February, because February 14th is Valentine’s Day, a day when Americans celebrate the love that they feel for their husbands, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, and “to a lesser extent” (not as much) friends. People give their “loved ones” (the people whom one loves) heart-shaped cards, heart-shaped candies, and chocolates packaged in heart-shaped boxes.

The heart symbol is also used in written messages in place of the verb “to like” or “to love.” For example, in New York City, many tourists buy t-shirts that say “I ♥ NY,” which means “I love New York.” Similar phrases are found on many “bumper stickers” (stickers that have a printed message and are put on the back of one’s car).

The phrase “to have heart” means to have courage or to be brave and not be afraid of something. For example, if someone is worried about an exam, you might tell him or her, “You’re going to do great! Just study and have heart.” This is a way to “encourage” (help someone who wants to do something) him or her to study and do well on the exam.

Finally, children often use the phrase “to cross your heart” to mean to promise to do something, especially to promise to tell the truth. If an uncle promises to take a child to the park, the child might ask, “Cross your heart?” The child is asking whether the uncle is making a serious promise.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 383: Mending a Broken Heart.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 383. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. You can also take look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has additional special courses in both business and daily English I think you may enjoy.

This episode is called “Mending (or fixing) a Broken Heart.” A “broken heart” is when someone feels sad usually because a romantic relationship has ended. I know how this feels – many, many times I have felt it! We'll hear a dialogue between David and Victoria about someone who has a broken heart. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

David: Why has Joyce been moping around all week? What's wrong with her?

Victoria: She's suffering from a broken heart. Her boyfriend broke up with her over the weekend. They had been together for two years.

David: Did she tell you the gruesome details?

Victoria: Not really. She just said that she's feeling depressed and she didn't want to talk about it, but you can see the grief all over her face.

David: I can think of a way to cheer her up. I've always wanted to go out with Joyce. Maybe I'll ask her out.

Victoria: Wait a second. I think she's feeling pretty vulnerable right now, and there's no way she's ready to date yet. I think you're jumping the gun.

David: There's nothing better to help someone bounce back from a failed relationship than the promise of a new one.



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Victoria: Maybe, but I think it might backfire. If you just want a fling, she might not be able to recover from rejection – twice.

David: Don't worry. I know what I'm doing. I'll just distract her from her misery for a while until she starts to recover.

Victoria: Just tread carefully.

David: Leave it to the master.

[end of dialogue]

David begins by saying to Victoria, "Why has Joyce been moping around all week? What's wrong with her?" "To mope" (mope) is to act in such a way that other people know that you're sad or depressed. You walk and you talk as if you were sad and you kind of want other people to know it; that's to mope. Teenagers like to mope when they don't get their way when their parents tell them they can't do something.

Victoria says Joyce is "suffering from a broken heart." "To suffer from something" is a phrasal verb meaning to be in emotional or physical pain because of something. Often, we talk about suffering from a certain disease: "He suffers from malaria," or "polio." Well, Joyce suffers from a broken heart, this extremely sad feeling because a romantic relationship has ended. Victoria says Joyce's "boyfriend broke up with her over the weekend." "To break up with someone" means to end a romantic relationship: "My girlfriend broke up with me again." I think it was like the ninth time – but I was young!

Victoria says that Joyce and her boyfriend "had been together for two years." David says, "Did she tell you the gruesome details?" "Gruesome" means very negative, sad, in this case, perhaps even disgusting, things you don't like very much. "Gruesome" is often a word used to describe, for example, the scene of a murder, when there is a lot of blood. Here, it's used someone jokingly to refer to the specific detailed information about something that was very negative or sad, in this case, the breakup between Joyce and her boyfriend.

Victoria says no, "Not really (she didn't tell me the gruesome details). She just said that she's feeling depressed (very sad) and she didn't want to talk about it, but you can see the grief all over her face." "Grief" (grief) is a feeling of very deep sadness, of deep loss. Usually we use expression when someone dies; we say that his family has a lot of grief – they are suffering, they are sad.



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David, seeing an opportunity, says, “I can think of a way to cheer her up (to make her happy). I’ve always wanted to go out with Joyce (meaning to go on a date or be in a romantic relationship with this person). Maybe I’ll ask her out.” “To ask someone out” means to ask them if they would go on a date with you, usually the first date.

Victoria says, “Wait a second. I think she’s feeling pretty vulnerable right now.” “Vulnerable” means that you are easy to hurt; you are able to be hurt easily. Joyce just ended this relationship, and now she’s feeling vulnerable, like she can be hurt again. Victoria says, “there’s no way she’s ready to date yet (to go out on dates with other men). I think you’re jumping the gun.” The expression “to jump the gun” means to do something too early, before you should. To do something, we would say, “prematurely,” before it’s time, before it’s a good time to do something. So, David wants to ask Joyce on a date right after she breaks up with her boyfriend.

David disagrees. He says, “There’s nothing better to help someone bounce back from a failed relationship than the promise of a new one.” “To bounce back” means to recover, to become normal again, to end a negative situation. Sometimes we refer to people who date right after they break up in a romantic relationship as being “on the rebound,” meaning they have just ended a relationship and are now looking for another relationship to help them get over the suffering from the break up. There’s an expression I learned in Mexico, “One nail knocks out another nail,” and that is the general idea here. David wants to help Joyce with her relationship by going on a date with her.

Victoria says, “Maybe, but I think (your idea) might backfire.” “To backfire” means to do the opposite of what you want to happen, to have the opposite effect of what you intended. For example, parents give their children some money to teach them about how they should be responsible with their money, to save their money for example. But the kids take the money and they go buy a bunch of video games. That was a case where the plan backfired; it didn’t result the way the parents wanted it to.

Victoria says, “If you just want a fling, she might not be able to recover from rejection – twice.” A “fling” (fling) is a romantic relationship that only lasts for a very short period of time and is not very serious. “Rejection” is denial, refusal, when someone says no to you. Victoria is worried that Joyce will not be able to “recover from,” to get better, after another rejection if David breaks up with Joyce.

David says, “Don’t worry. I know what I’m doing.” This is what all men think, of course! “I’ll just distract her from her misery for a while until she starts to



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recover.” “To distract someone” means to make them think about something else, to get them to stop thinking about a certain topic. “Misery” is a very strong feeling of being sad, lonely, or in pain. So, David is going to distract Joyce from her misery, get her to think about something else for a while until she starts to recover – starts to get better.

Victoria warns David, “Just tread carefully.” “To tread” means to walk or to move. “To tread carefully” means to be very careful about a difficult situation that you are in, a situation that could easily cause more problems if you don’t be careful.

David says to Victoria, “Leave it to the master.” “Leave it to” means let me take care of this situation. “To leave it to the master” means to let an expert, like me, take care of this situation. David thinks he’s an expert when it comes to “mending,” or fixing, a broken heart.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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David: Leave it to the master.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by a true master, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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