



ESL Podcast 539 – Spending Time with Family

GLOSSARY

loved one – a person whom one loves, usually a close relative

* While traveling overseas, Marcus wrote to his loved ones at least once a week.

to report (someone) missing – to officially say that one does not know where another person is; to tell the police or another authority that nobody knows where someone is, and that he or she might be in trouble

* Maggie called the police to report her son missing, but the police said they couldn't do anything until at least 24 hours had passed.

busy season – a time of year when there is a lot of work to do, and much more work than at other times of the year

* A tax preparer's busy season is in March and early April, before the April 15th tax deadline.

to stop to smell the roses – to relax and take time to do things that are unimportant but very pleasant

* Once we finish remodeling the house, we hope to have time to stop and smell the roses again.

to come out of (one's) ears – to be too much of something; to overwhelm a person with a large quantity

* They have three huge apple trees in their backyard, so each fall, they have apples coming out of their ears!

wrapped up – absorbed; very involved in something; thinking about something so much that one forgets almost everything else

* Tania is wrapped up in her new baby and doesn't seem to have time for any of her old friends.

to miss out on – to not be able to enjoy something; to lose or waste an opportunity

* We were out of town last weekend, so we missed out on the music festival. Hopefully we can go next year.

to take it from (someone) – to listen to someone's advice; to learn from another person's experience

* I dropped out of school when I was 15, and it was almost impossible to find a job. Take it from me: stay in school.



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to take (something or someone) for granted – to not appreciate something; to think that one will always have something or someone in one's life and stop making an effort to keep it, him, or her

* Xavier always took his good health for granted and never exercised, but when he got older he started to get heavier and have trouble walking up the stairs.

quality time – a period of time when one truly focuses on another person, trying to get as much enjoyment as possible from being together and trying to build a strong relationship

* Lucille usually watches TV with her husband in the evenings, but she'd like to have some more quality time with him.

to slip by – to pass almost unnoticeably; to happen without one noticing

* Philona always thought she'd be married by the time she was 30, but time slipped by and now she's in her late-30s with no plans to get married.

to work (one's) butt off – to work very hard; to put a lot of effort into doing something

* Gunter worked his butt off to become vice-president, and he doesn't respect employees who aren't willing to do the same

at what cost? – a phrase used to talk about something that one was able to achieve, but with a lot of negative consequences

* Some athletes use steroids to become champions, but at what cost? They destroy their health and die young.

stranger – a person whom one does not know; a person whom one has not met

* American children are taught that they shouldn't talk to strangers.

to end up – to become

* If you don't start exercising and eating healthier foods, you're going to end up like your neighbor who weighs 300 pounds.

cautionary tale – a story about something sad or dangerous that happened to another person, and that makes one want to change one's behavior so that the same thing doesn't happen to oneself

* When Ingrid's parents lost all their money in the stock market, she took it as a cautionary tale and decided to never invest her money that way.

to consider – to think about something in a certain way

* Stanley always considered himself to be a fast typist, but he can't keep up with the new receptionist.



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public service announcement – an advertisement on the radio or television that is not for a money-making product or service, but instead tries to change people’s behavior to make society better in some way

* Have you seen the new public service announcement that describes things we can do at home to save water?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Claus think Marcia should spend less time at work?
 - a) Because she needs to spend more time with her family.
 - b) Because she’s getting too tired to think clearly.
 - c) Because she isn’t a very efficient worker.

2. According to Claus, what happened when he worked too much?
 - a) He lost track of the time.
 - b) He grew distant from his family.
 - c) He spent too much money.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

wrapped up

The phrase “wrapped up,” in this podcast, means very involved in something and thinking about something so much that one forgets almost everything else: “I’ve been so wrapped up in this special project that I haven’t been doing my regular work.” The phrase “to wrap (something) up” means to fold paper or cloth around something else, usually to carry it or to give it to someone else: “They wrapped up our purchase in plain brown paper.” Or, “The gift was wrapped up in beautiful gold ribbons.” The phrase “to wrap (something) up” also means to finish a meeting, discussion, or project: “Let’s work really hard and try to wrap this work up before we leave the office tonight.” Finally, the phrase “to wrap (a body part) around (something)” means to hold something with that body part: “He wrapped his fingers around the keys and wouldn’t let go.”

to slip by

In this podcast, the phrase “to slip by” means to pass almost unnoticeably, or to happen without one noticing: “I’m sorry I came home late, but time just slipped by and I didn’t realize how late it was.” Normally the verb “to slip” means to fall or



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almost fall: “Be careful not to slip on the icy sidewalk!” The phrase “to slip away” means to leave a place very quietly or secretly, so that nobody notices: “Why did you slip away from the party so early last night?” Finally, the phrase “to slip through (one’s) fingers” means to lose an opportunity or to choose not to do something that would have been a good opportunity: “This is a great opportunity for your career! Don’t let it slip through your fingers.”

CULTURE NOTE

In most American families, both parents have to work. This “limits” (restricts) the number of hours they can spend with their children, so they focus on the “quality” (how good something is) instead of “quantity” (how much of something there is) of the time spent together. Quality time is time when the child is the main or only focus of the parent’s attention. Watching television with a child isn’t an example of quality time, because the parent is mostly watching TV. Helping a child plant a flower is an example of quality time.

Some parents try to spend quality time with their children by having dinner together each evening, making sure the TV is turned off. While eating, they use their time to talk about what each person did during the day. Other parents try to play card games or “board games” (games played at a table with small pieces and maybe dice) with their children in the evening. Telling stories or reading books together is another way Americans spend quality time with children.

Outside of the home, parents try to spend quality time with their children by taking them to the park, library, zoo, or a museum. They might try to play a sport together or ride bicycles together.

Normally sitting in the car wouldn’t be “considered” (thought of as) quality time, but some parents are very good at “engaging” (getting someone involved) their children in conversation while driving. They might play word games or sing silly songs while in the car on the way to and from school. All these things are common ways American parents try to show the children that their parents are interested in them and love them.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 539: Spending Time with Family.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 539. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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This episode is called "Spending Time with Family." It's a dialogue between Claus and Marcia about spending a lot of time with your family, something that can be a good thing, although sometimes it can be a difficult thing. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Claus: Go home. You need to spend more time with your loved ones before they report you missing.

Marcia: This is the busy season. Do you think I have time to stop to smell the roses when I have work coming out of my ears?

Claus: It's true we're busy, but you get too wrapped up in your work. How old are your daughters?

Marcia: They're six and nine.

Claus: Right. Before you know it, they'll be grown and you'll have missed out on their childhood. Take it from someone who knows. Don't take your family for granted.

Marcia: I know you're right. I need to spend more quality time with them – just as soon as the busy season is over.

Claus: Time slips by while you're not paying attention. Look at me. I worked my butt off to get where I am now, but at what cost? My wife and I are practically strangers and I barely know my children. You don't want to end up like me.



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Marcia: So I should see you as a cautionary tale?

Claus: Yup. Consider this a public service announcement.

[end of dialogue]

We're at work with Claus and Marcia. Claus says to Marcia, "Go home. You need to spend more time with your loved ones before they report you missing." "Your loved ones" are the people you love, usually your close relatives, your family. "To report (someone) missing" means to go usually to the police to officially say that you don't know where this other person is, so the police may start looking for that person. Claus is joking here; he's saying that Marcia has been away from her family so much that they will think she has disappeared.

Marcia says, "This is a busy season." A "busy season" is a time of the year when there is a lot of work to do, more work than normal. Marcia says, "Do you think I have time to stop to smell the roses when I have work coming out of my ears?" "To stop to smell the roses," or "to stop and smell the roses" means to relax, to take time to do things that are perhaps not very important but that are very pleasant. There was actually a song, I think in the 1970s:

You gotta stop and smell the roses.

That's all I remember, just that line. I think that was Mac Davis, remember him? No, me neither! Marcia says, "I have work coming out of my ears." The expression "to have (something) come out of your ears" means that you have too much of something; you're overwhelmed by all the things that you have or things that you have to do. In this case, Marcia has too many things to do.

Claus says, "It's true we're busy, but you get too wrapped up in your work." "To be wrapped (wrapped) up" means to be very involved in something, thinking about something so much that you forget about everything else, you're absorbed. Typically, we use this when we're talking about work or some commitments. Claus says, "How old are your daughters?" Marcia says, "They're six and nine." Claus says, "Right. Before you know it (before you realize), they'll be grown and you'll have missed out on their childhood." "To miss out on (something)" is a phrasal verb meaning not to be able to enjoy something, to lose or waste an opportunity. "Don't miss out on the sale on televisions at the store," don't lose the opportunity to take advantage of it. Claus is telling Marcia not to miss out on the childhood of her children; he says, "Take it from someone who knows." This expression, "take it from someone who knows," or "take it from someone who



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(plus another verb)” means listen to my advice; learn from another person’s experience. If somebody asked me about the freeways here in Los Angeles, I would say, “Well, take it from someone who drives a lot on the freeway, they’re terrible.” Which is true! Claus says, “Don’t take your family for granted.” “To take (something or someone) for granted” means not to appreciate something or someone; to think that you’ll always have this thing or this person in your life, and so you don’t make any effort to keep it, him, or her. That’s to take something for granted, to assume that you will always have it.

Marcia says, “I know you’re right. I need to spend more quality time with them.” “Quality time” is a period of time where you’re truly focused on another person; you try to get as much enjoyment from that other person as possible. Marcia says, “just as soon as the busy season is over,” meaning I’ll spend time with them as soon as the busy season is over.

Claus says, “Time slips by while you’re not paying attention.” “To slip by” means to pass almost without noticing, to happen without you realizing it. Time goes quickly, you don’t even realize how fast it is going by; it is passing. “Slip,” as well as the word “wrap” that we talked about earlier, have a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations. So, Claus is saying to Marcia, “Time slips by while you’re not paying attention.” He says, “Look at me (consider me, for example). I worked my butt off to get where I am now.” “To work your butt (butt) off” is an informal expression meaning to work very hard, to put a lot of effort into doing something. Claus says, “I worked my butt off to get where I am now (to get to my current position in the company), but at what cost?” This is a phrase we use to talk about something that we were able to achieve but it had a lot of negative consequences. Some athletes use drugs (steroids) to become champions, but at what cost? They could be hurting their body.

Claus says, “My wife and I are practically strangers and I barely know my children.” A “stranger” is someone you don’t know or someone you’ve never met before. He, of course, is exaggerating; they’re not strangers, they know each other; they’re married to each other. But because he has spent so much time away from her, they don’t know each other as well; they’re not as close anymore. He says, “I barely know my children,” meaning I almost don’t know them or I don’t know them very well. Claus says, “You don’t want to end up like me.” “To end up” means to become, in this case; to result in after a long period of time.

Marcia says, “So I should see you as a cautionary tale?” A “cautionary tale” is a story about something sad or dangerous that has happened to another person, and it makes you want to change your own behavior. You start thinking about



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that, and you think, “Oh, I don’t want that to happen to me.” A “tale” (tale) is another word for a story. “Cautionary” comes from “caution,” meaning be careful. So, it’s a story that warns you about something bad that could happen if you’re not careful.

Claus says, “Yup,” which is an informal way of saying yes – yup. The opposite of “yup” is “nope” (nope). Those are informal ways of saying yes (yup) and no (nope). Claus says, “Yup. Consider this a public service announcement.” “Consider,” here, means think about this in a certain way, think about this statement. “Consider this (meaning his story) a public service announcement.” A “public service announcement,” sometimes abbreviated “PSA,” is an advertisement on the radio or television that is not for any product or service; it’s not somebody trying to make money. Instead, it’s from the government or from social groups that are trying to get people to change their behavior or to give them information they need to know. For example, there might be a PSA – a public service announcement about getting a flu shot; it tells you about the importance of that. Here, Claus is sort of joking, saying my story is like a public service announcement, it’s giving you information you need to know.

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

[start of dialogue]

Claus: Go home. You need to spend more time with your loved ones before they report you missing.

Marcia: This is the busy season. Do you think I have time to stop to smell the roses when I have work coming out of my ears?

Claus: It’s true we’re busy, but you get too wrapped up in your work. How old are your daughters?

Marcia: They’re six and nine.

Claus: Right. Before you know it, they’ll be grown and you’ll have missed out on their childhood. Take it from someone who knows. Don’t take your family for granted.

Marcia: I know you’re right. I need to spend more quality time with them – just as soon as the busy season is over.



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Claus: Time slips by while you're not paying attention. Look at me. I worked my butt off to get where I am now, but at what cost? My wife and I are practically strangers and I barely know my children. You don't want to end up like me.

Marcia: So I should see you as a cautionary tale?

Claus: Yup. Consider this a public service announcement.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone who works her butt off – so don't take her for granted, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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