



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

GLOSSARY

to forget – to not remember something; to have no memory of something

* Was your wife mad when you forgot her birthday?

etched in my brain – memorized; permanently “written down” in one’s mind so that one cannot forget something

* The joy I felt when my son was born will always be etched in my brain.

to slip (one’s) mind – to forget something; to not remember something; to have no memory of something

* Davy forgot to do the homework assignment and told the teacher it had just slipped his mind.

preoccupied – worried or thinking about something else; distracted

* Lately Shaun has been preoccupied with his mother’s health, and his performance at work is suffering as a result.

to remind – to help someone remember something, especially to remember to do something

* Cristian wrote himself a note to remind himself to pick up milk at the grocery store on his way home from work.

to be wrapped up in (something) – to be busy with something; to be very involved in a project or task

* The children were so wrapped up in watching the movie that they didn’t hear their parents calling for them.

absentminded – forgetful and easily distracted; not able to remember things

* He’s so absentminded that he’d forget his own head if it weren’t attached to his neck!

to jog (one’s) memory – to remind someone of something; to help someone remember something

* Seeing photos of old friends sometimes jogs our memory and helps us remember things that happened long ago.

committed to memory – memorized; known so well that one can repeat the details without looking at written notes

* Do you have any favorite poems committed to memory?



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

a repeat of – a recurrence; something that happens again just like it did before
* Last night, I had a repeat of that scary dream where I'm running away from a purple monster with sharp teeth.

to show up – to arrive at a particular place at a particular time; to come, especially if one is expected to be there
* Please show up for your medical appointment 15 minutes early so you'll have enough time to fill out all the insurance paperwork.

amnesia – a medical condition in which one cannot remember what happened during a certain period of time, usually because one was hit on the head or had a very traumatic and frightening experience
* After the car accident, Lorenzo had amnesia and couldn't remember what had happened.

incident – event; something that has happened
* Please describe the key incidents that led to the beginning of World War I.

to throw in (someone's) face – to remind someone of something, especially when it is something that he or she would rather forget
* Yes, I know I failed my driving test, but you don't have to throw it in my face. I already feel bad enough.

to give (someone) a hard time – to tease someone; to do and say things that make another person feel uncomfortable or sad
* Why do all the kids at school give Fabio a hard time?

scatterbrained – easily distracted and unable to concentrate or focus
* Roxana is so scatterbrained that she forgets to pick up her kids from school unless they call to remind her.



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Pete mean when he says that he was wrapped up in work last week?
 - a) He has new and unfamiliar duties at work.
 - b) It was his first week in a new job.
 - c) He was very busy with work last week.

2. Which of these phrases means “etched in my brain”?
 - a) Slipped my mind.
 - b) Committed to memory.
 - c) Absentminded.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to be wrapped up in

The phrase “to be wrapped up in (something),” in this podcast, means to be busy with something, or to be very involved in a project or task: “Every year at this time, they’re really wrapped up in preparing for the holidays.” The phrase “to wrap (something) up” means to package something, or to fold a piece of colored paper around something to give it away as a present: “Could you please wrap up three steaks for me?” Or, “You did a beautiful job wrapping up Uncle Bernardo’s birthday gift.” The phrase “that’s a wrap” means that something is finished, and is often used in Hollywood: “That’s a wrap! Good work, actors. I think we have everything we need on tape.”

to show up

In this podcast, the phrase “to show up” means to come or arrive at a particular place at a particular time: “What time did Santiago show up at the office?” The phrase “to show (someone) up” means to do something better than another person, or to make another person look worse or less important than oneself: “Gwen showed us all up, wearing her most beautiful dress and most elegant jewelry to the dinner party.” Finally, the phrase “to show off” means to draw attention to something, especially if it is something that other people don’t have, but would like to have: “Did you see the way Mandy was showing off her



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

expensive engagement ring, practically putting her finger in front of our eyes all evening?”

CULTURE NOTE

There are many popular children’s card games, and some of them require a good memory. “Concentration” is a popular children’s card game with many “pairs” (groups of two) cards that have an image on one side. The cards are placed “face down” (with the image hidden) in a “grid” (with straight rows and columns). The children take turns “flipping” (turning) over two cards at a time, looking for a “match” (two cards with the same image). The player with the most matching pairs at the end of the game is the winner.

“Crazy Eights” is another popular game, but it is played with a “standard” (normal) “deck of cards” (set of 52 playing cards). Each child begins with eight cards. One card is flipped over so everyone can see it, and the children take turns laying down a card that has either the same number or the same “suit” (hearts, diamonds, spades, or clubs). The child can also play an eight and announce which new suit is now “in play” (being played). If a child doesn’t have an appropriate card to lay down, he or she must “draw cards” (adding cards to one’s hand from the pile) until he or she can. The winner is the child who “runs out of cards” (has no cards left in his or her hand) first.

In “Go Fish,” the cards are “divided evenly,” so that each player has the same number of cards. Any matching pairs (for example, two red threes) are put down on the table. The players take turns asking each other, “Do you have any twos?” or “Do you have any kings?” If the answer is no, the player says “Go fish,” and the asker has to draw a card. If the answer is yes, the player must give away those cards that match the request. Any matching pairs are put down on the table. The child who runs out of cards first is the winner.

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



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 561: Being Forgetful.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 561. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at eslpod.com. Download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster. You can also take look at our ESL Podcast Store with additional courses in English, and our ESL Podcast Blog.

This episode is called...uh...I forgot...oh yeah, "Being Forgetful." Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Charlize: You won't forget that we're going over to the Wong's for dinner tomorrow night, will you?

Pete: It's etched in my brain. I won't forget.

Charlize: It slipped your mind last week that we were meeting Donna at the movies, remember?

Pete: I was preoccupied last week, but I won't forget about tomorrow night.

Charlize: I'm reminding you because the week before that, you forgot to cash that check at the bank. Remember that?

Pete: I didn't forget. I was just a little wrapped up in work that week. I'm not usually absentminded, you know.

Charlize: Right. Do you want me to send you an email tomorrow morning to jog your memory?

Pete: That won't be necessary. I have the day, time, and even their address committed to memory. Do you want to test me?



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

Charlize: No, I don't, but I just want to make sure we don't have a repeat of what happened last month. You were supposed to meet me at the Donnelly's at 8:00 and you never showed up. Remember that?

Pete: No, I don't. I have amnesia. I won't remember any other incident you want to throw in my face. I thought last week you said you would stop giving me a hard time about my bad memory. Remember that?

Charlize: Uh, no, I don't.

Pete: I guess I'm not the only one who's scatterbrained!

[end of dialogue]

Charlize begins our dialogue – I think this is the famous actress Charlize Theron, I'm not sure – by saying, "You won't forget that we're going over to the Wong's for dinner tomorrow night, will you?" "To forget" means not to remember something, to have no memory of something. Charlize is using one of the many ways to ask a question in English, using something called a "tag" question: "You won't forget that we're going over to the Wong's for dinner tomorrow night, will you?"

Pete says, "It's etched in my brain." Something that is "etched (etched) in your brain" means that you have memorized it, you have permanently written it down in your mind so that you cannot possibly forget it. Sometimes we use that expression for very happy things, sometimes for very sad things. Pete says, "I won't forget." Charlize responds, "It slipped your mind last week that we were meeting Donna at the movies, remember?" "To slip (slip) your mind" means to forget something, not to remember something: John said, "I was supposed to get married this afternoon but it slipped my mind, just forgot all about it!"

Pete says, "I was preoccupied last week, but I won't forget about tomorrow night." "To be preoccupied" means to be worried about something else, to be thinking about something else; we might also say "to be distracted." Charlize says, "I'm reminding you because the week before that (meaning two weeks ago), you forgot to cash that check at the bank." "To remind (someone)" means to help someone remember something, to remember to do something by telling them, perhaps over and over, or sending them an email: don't forget to do this. Charlize is reminding Pete because he forgot to cash a check at the bank. "To



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

cash a check” means to go into a bank with a piece of paper called a “check,” give it to the person working at the bank, and in exchange they give you back money.

Charlize mentions how Pete forgot to cash this check two weeks ago, and then asks him, “Remember that (do you remember)?” Pete says, “I didn’t forget. I was just a little wrapped up in work that week.” “To be wrapped (wrapped) up in (something)” means to be very busy with something, to be very involved in a certain task – a certain thing that you are doing. The word “wrap” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more information. Pete says, “I’m not usually absentminded, you know.” “To be absentminded” (one word) means to be forgetful, to be easily distracted, not to be able to remember things. There’s an old expression about the absentminded professor, the idea is that university professors are so busy with their intellectual tasks that they forget to do basic things like get their car washed or buy food to make dinner. That would be an absentminded professor.

Well, here Pete is saying that he is not absentminded. Actually, he says, “I’m not usually absentminded, you know.” Charlize says, “Right.” She says, “Right,” which would normally mean I agree with you, but when you say it a certain way it means the opposite: I don’t believe you, I don’t agree with you. Often people will say, “Yeah, right,” that means I don’t believe you. So Charlize says, “Right,” she doesn’t believe him, then asks him, “Do you want me to send you an email tomorrow morning to jog (jog) your memory?” “To jog (someone’s) memory” means to remind someone of something, to help someone remember something. If you are going out early tomorrow morning and you don’t want to forget your lunch, you may put a little note on the door that says “bring lunch.” That note will jog your memory; it will remind you of what you are supposed to do.

Charlize is offering to send Pete an email to jog his memory about their dinner at the Wong’s tomorrow night. Pete says, “That won’t be necessary (no, you do not need to do that). I have the day, time, and even their address committed to memory.” When we say something is “committed to memory,” it’s similar to the previous expression “etched in my brain.” It means you’ve memorized it, you know it so well you can repeat it without even looking at it. Most Americans have committed to memory, for example, certain patriotic songs. Because they’ve heard them so often, they know them, we would say, “by heart,” they have the memorized. Pete then asks Charlize, “Do you want to test me (do you want me to answer questions so that I can prove that I know)?”



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

Charlize says, “No, I don’t, but I just want to make sure we don’t have a repeat of what happened last month.” A “repeat of (something)” is when something happens again, just like it did before. We would also use the word “recurrence.” It “occurs,” or it happens, again. Charlize says, “You were supposed to meet me at the Donnelly’s at 8:00 and you never showed up.” Pete was supposed to meet Charlize at the Donnelly’s. Notice if we’re talking about someone’s house, especially a family in a house, we’ll often use the form “the” and the name of the person with an “s” at the end: “We’re going over to the McQuillan’s.” We’re going over to the McQuillan house, the house that belongs to the family named McQuillan. There is an apostrophe before the “s,” so it would be “McQuillan’ (apostrophe),” which is like a little comma, but up above the word, and then the “s.” It indicates possession; we’re really saying the McQuillan’s house.

Pete was supposed to show up, but didn’t. He never showed up. “To show up” is a phrasal verb meaning to arrive at a particular place at a particular time, to go somewhere when you are expected. “My friend told me that we would meet at the café at 3:00, but I waited for an hour and she never showed up.” “Show” has many different meanings, including other phrasal verbs. You can get more information in this episode’s Learning Guide.

Charlize says, “Remember that?” Pete says, “No, I don’t. I have amnesia (amnesia).” “Amnesia” is a medical condition where you can’t remember what happened during a certain period of time. Usually this is because you were hit on the head or had a very frightening experience. You might forget everything; you might even forget who you are and where you live. That would be a serious case of amnesia. Pete says, “I don’t remember because I have amnesia.” He’s probably joking, of course. He then says, “I won’t remember any other incident (any other event, anything else that happened) you want to throw in my face.” “I won’t remember any other (any additional) incident you want to throw in my face (or that you will throw in my face).” “To throw (something) in (someone’s) face” means to remind someone of something, especially if it’s something that the person wants to forget but you keep reminding them. Usually it’s something bad that happened or something that someone did wrong. They made a mistake, and you keep throwing that mistake in their face; you keep reminding them. That’s what Pete thinks Charlize is doing; he says, “I thought last week you (Charlize) said you would stop giving me a hard time about my bad memory.” “To give (someone) a hard time” means to do or say things that make the other person feel uncomfortable, to make a joke about them. We would also use the verb, here, “to tease” (tease), to make jokes about something that someone did wrong.



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

Pete says, “Remember that (remember when you said you weren’t going to give me a hard time)?” Charlize says, “Uh, no, I don’t.” Pete then says, “I guess I’m not the only one who’s scatterbrained!” “To be scatterbrained” is similar to “to be absentminded,” you’re unable to focus, you’re easily distracted, you are constantly forgetting things. That would be someone who is scatterbrained.

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

[start of dialogue]

Charlize: You won’t forget that we’re going over to the Wong’s for dinner tomorrow night, will you?

Pete: It’s etched in my brain. I won’t forget.

Charlize: It slipped your mind last week that we were meeting Donna at the movies, remember?

Pete: I was preoccupied last week, but I won’t forget about tomorrow night.

Charlize: I’m reminding you because the week before that, you forgot to cash that check at the bank. Remember that?

Pete: I didn’t forget. I was just a little wrapped up in work that week. I’m not usually absentminded, you know.

Charlize: Right. Do you want me to send you an email tomorrow morning to jog your memory?

Pete: That won’t be necessary. I have the day, time, and even their address committed to memory. Do you want to test me?

Charlize: No, I don’t, but I just want to make sure we don’t have a repeat of what happened last month. You were supposed to meet me at the Donnelly’s at 8:00 and you never showed up. Remember that?

Pete: No, I don’t. I have amnesia. I won’t remember any other incident you want to throw in my face. I thought last week you said you would stop giving me a hard time about my bad memory. Remember that?



ESL Podcast 561 – Being Forgetful

Charlize: Uh, no, I don't.

Pete: I guess I'm not the only one who's scatterbrained!

[end of dialogue]

If you listen to our podcast regularly you should know who the scriptwriter was, it should be etched in your mind by now. It's Dr. Lucy Tse, in case it slipped your mind.

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

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