



ESL Podcast 94 – Nervous at an Interview I

GLOSSARY

traffic – the cars, trucks, and other vehicles driving on a road

* Sylvie was happy to see that there was not much traffic because she liked driving on empty roads.

in the nick of time – without any available extra time; at the last moment possible without being late

* Geraldo was running late, but he was just in the nick of time to catch the bus before it drove away.

lobby – the first room one steps into upon entering an office building; the room everyone must walk through before going to the room or office one wants to go to

* The lobby was always full of people walking in and out of the building.

directory – a list of people or businesses, along with how to contact them or where to find them

* The directory said that Dr. Hernandez's office was on the fifth floor and even listed the telephone number to the doctor's office.

penthouse – the top floor of a tall building; a space that is usually fancier than the other spaces in a building, located on the top level

* The business had a luxurious office with a great view, which was located on the penthouse level of the building.

floor – a story; a level in building with multiple levels

* Odette was on the first floor of the building, but she needed to take an elevator and ride up to the eighth floor.

to tell you the truth – to be honest with you; a phrase used when telling someone a fact that one does not want to admit

* I hate to admit it, but to tell you the truth, I did not do very well on the exam.

monster – a scary creature; a dangerous or cruel beast

* The young child was afraid that a hairy monster with sharp teeth lived under her bed.

palm – the inner part of a hand, connected to the fingers

* The palm of Donnie's hand got burned when he accidentally grabbed the hot metal pan.



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sweaty – covered in sweat; covered by moisture made by the body that comes out through the skin when one is hot or anxious

* The sun was very bright, causing Portia to feel hot and sweaty.

for teeth to chatter – for the mouth to vibrate or shake rapidly, causing one's teeth to click together; noise made when teeth rapidly click together because one is cold or nervous

* Thadeus was so nervous about speaking in front of the large audience that you could hear his teeth chattering.

in one piece – without getting hurt or damaged; without having to suffer

* Even though Lia was in a car accident, the crash was fairly minor and she walked away unhurt and in one piece.

to pour (one's) heart out – to confess secrets; to tell someone thoughts that one had been keeping secret or hidden

* Adam felt guilty about breaking his promise to Annika, but instead of keeping it a secret any longer, he poured his heart out and told her how sorry he was.

perfect stranger – someone completely unknown to one; someone whom one has never met and whose name one does not know

* The man on the subway was a perfect stranger to Quinn, but she started a conversation with him because he was reading her favorite book.

to chill out – to relax; to calm down

* After a stressful day at work, Marco just wanted to go home and chill out.

reception desk – a desk or counter in an office that a visitor goes to before being guided to the person one wants to meet with in the office

* There was a line of people who needed to talk with the company director waiting at the reception desk.



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CULTURE NOTE

What the Kids are Thinking

Each year, the University of California, Los Angeles (known as “UCLA”) does a “poll” or survey of college students about many different topics, trying to understand their opinions and habits. In 2009, UCLA interviewed more than 240,000 freshman students from 340 colleges and universities. A “freshman” is someone in his or her first year of college, usually age 18 or 19. Below are the percentages of students who said they “agree strongly” or “somewhat” with the following “statements” (sentences), according to a story about the survey in the *New York Times*. To agree strongly means to agree very much, to agree completely; to agree somewhat means that you agree, but are perhaps not 100% in agreement.

- 79%: Through hard work, anyone can succeed in American society.
- 67%: Only volunteers should “serve” (be soldiers) in the “military” (army, navy, armed forces).
- 60%: The “wealthy” (rich) should pay a larger “share” (percentage; amount) of taxes than they do now.
- 20%: “Racial discrimination” (negative treatment of people of different races and ethnicities) is no longer a major problem in America.

Most of these results are not too surprising. Young Americans still believe in the “American Dream” – that anyone can be successful if they work hard enough. They don’t want to be forced into the army but prefer volunteers to be part of the armed services instead. They believe in taxing the wealthy and a large “majority” (percentage; group) does not think that the U.S. is “over” (past) its racial problems.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 94: Nervous at an Interview part I.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 94. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is about being nervous at an interview and this is the first of two parts to this podcast. Let's get started!

[start of dialogue]

I was on my way to an interview and there was a lot of traffic on the road. I got to the office in the nick of time for my appointment. I walked into the lobby of the building and looked at the directory. I saw that Casey Enterprises was on the penthouse floor and headed to the elevator. The door was just closing.

David: Could you hold the elevator, please? Thanks a lot.

Woman: No problem. What floor?

David: I'm headed to the 18th floor, the top floor.

Woman: Oh, so am I.

David: Do you work there? I have an interview today with Dale Mendoza. Do you know her?

Woman: Yeah, I know her pretty well.

David: To tell you the truth, I'm really nervous. I had a dream last night that I was being interviewed by a three-headed monster that kept trying to bite my head off. Oh, wow, my palms are sweaty just thinking about it. I just hope Ms. Mendoza won't be able to hear my teeth chattering. I just hope I get through this in one piece.

The elevator doors opened just then and we both walked out. I don't know why I poured my heart out to a perfect stranger, but it actually seemed to help me chill out a bit. I didn't feel quite as nervous.



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We were in the reception area and I headed to the reception desk. The woman started walking in the other direction. She turned and called back, "Good luck," with a smile.

[end of dialogue]

We hear in this podcast the story of a man going to an interview and is very nervous about the interview – the job interview. The story begins by him saying that, "I was on my way to an interview." "To be on your way" means that you are traveling towards, you are moving in that direction. "I'm on my way to the store" means I am going perhaps in my car to the store. The man said there was "a lot of traffic on the road," meaning a lot of cars in the street or on the freeway, and he says he got to the office "in the nick of time" for his appointment. "To get somewhere in the nick (nick) of time" means that you get there just before it's too late. You get there right at or just before the time you are supposed to be there, so if you're appointment is at 9'oclock, and you arrive at 8:57, you got there "in the nick of time."

The man walks into a "lobby" (lobby) of the building. The lobby is when you first walk into a building before you get to the offices. There's usually an area like a welcoming area which we would call "the lobby." And the man walks over and looks at the "directory." And the "directory" for the building is a list of all of the offices, who is in what office and what floor they're on or which company is on which floor if it's a tall building. And the man finds out that the place he is going is on the "penthouse" floor. The "penthouse" (penthouse), all one word, is the top floor of a building, usually a tall building. The "penthouse" floor is often -- for example, if it were an apartment or a condominium building, a building of different living units, then the top floor is often the best floor and it is the most luxurious, but here it just means the top of the building, the very top floor.

The man goes towards the elevator and the door is "just closing," meaning it's just starting to close. And he says to the woman inside, "Could you hold the elevator please?" "To hold the elevator" means to keep the door open to stop the door from closing. We use that expression; "Could you hold the door" means could you open the door, could you make sure the door stays open. The man then uses an informal expression, "Thanks a lot!" "Thanks a lot" means thank you very much but it's more informal. And the woman responds also with an informal expression. She says, "No problem." "No problem" here means "you're welcome" but you'll find it very common in many situations that a native speaker of English will respond to someone thanking them by saying, "No problem" instead of



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“You’re welcome,” but they mean the same. “No problem” is a little – a bit more informal.

The woman says to the man, “What floor?” meaning what floor do you want to get off on. And the man says he’s going to the “top floor,” which is the same as the “penthouse floor.” The woman says, “Oh, so am I,” meaning I am also. “So am I.” That’s a correct, if you will, formal way of saying it. An informal way of saying it would be “Me too.” Even though it’s grammatically incorrect, it’s still very common to hear people say, “Me too” instead of “So am I.” The man asked the woman if she knows Dale Mendoza, and the woman says yes and then the man begins to say or talk about how nervous he is. He says, “To tell you the truth, I’m really nervous.” The expression “To tell you the truth,” or “To tell the truth” before – as a beginning of a sentence before something else usually is when you are going to say something to a person that you might not tell them in a different situation, that you’re going to be very honest. It’s often something that’s negative that you’re going to tell this person and here the man tells the woman that he’s really nervous. He talks about a dream he had last night where he was interviewed by a “three-headed monster,” which would be -- a “monster,” of course, is a fictional animal that is mean, and Frankenstein, for example, is a monster. And a “three-headed monster” would be a monster with three heads, which, of course, is ridiculous but that’s the dream that the man has.

He said that the monster “kept trying to bite my head off.” The expression “to bite your head off” here literally means that the monster puts his head in his mouth and bites it off, but we also use that expression in another situation to mean when you yell at someone, when you are angry with someone and you say very mean or very strong – with a very strong emotion. You may say, “Don’t bite my head off” – means don’t get very angry with me. But here, it actually means the monster biting his head off. Now, the man is nervous and he says his “palms are sweaty.” Your “palm” (palm) is the inside of your hand. It’s the central part, not the fingers or the thumb, but that rest of that inside of your hand is your “palm,” and if your palms are “sweaty,” meaning they’re wet, that’s often a sign that you are nervous.

The man also says that he hopes the woman who’s interviewing him won’t hear his teeth “chattering.” “To chatter,” here, means to bite down – up and down very quickly. I’m not sure I can imitate that very well but when your teeth are “chattering,” you’re either very cold or you’re very nervous about something, and here the man is clearly nervous. The man finally says, “I hope I get through this in one piece,” meaning I hope I survive this interview without any problems, without any damage. The expression, “I want to get through this in one piece,” means without any injury, without any problems taking place. The elevator doors



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then opened and the man says, “I don’t know why I poured out or poured my heart out to a perfect stranger.” “To pour your heart out” – “pour” (pour), like you would pour water into a glass – “to pour your heart out” means to tell something to someone else that’s very personal, that’s very – often emotional and it’s usually a sad thing or not a positive thing, a negative thing. The expression, a “perfect stranger,” is the same as a “complete stranger,” and the words “perfect” and “complete” here are just giving the idea of it being a “stranger,” someone you don’t know, more emphasis. You could just say, “A stranger,” and when you say “a perfect stranger” you’re just giving that fact more emphasis. It doesn’t really change the meaning of the word.

The man says that by telling this perfect stranger his story about being nervous, it helped him to “chill out a bit.” “To chill out” (chill) and then (out), two words, means to relax, to be calm. It’s an informal expression, probably more common among younger people. Someone tells you to “chill out,” they’re telling to relax, to calm down, don’t get excited. Sometimes we use the verb just “to chill.” “What are you doing?” “I’m chilling,” meaning I’m relaxing, I’m taking it easy, I’m not working. Again, that’s a very informal use of the word. “To chill” also means to make cold but here it has nothing to do with that. Finally, the man and woman go their separate ways. She walks into the office and he goes to the “reception desk,” or the desk in the front of the office where people first come. Usually, there is someone behind the desk that we would call the “receptionist.” She or he is the person working at that desk.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue this time at native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

That's all for today. Thank you for listening. From Los Angeles, California, we'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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