



ESL Podcast 100 – Making Unkind Comments

GLOSSARY

ex-colleague – someone with whom one worked in the past but does not work with now; an employee of a company or business whom one used to work with
* Elizabeth and Franklin worked at the same company last year, but when Franklin got a job at a different company, the two became ex-colleagues.

quite frankly – honestly; a phrase used before giving an opinion that is not polite or not expected
* Kimberly wanted to cook dinner, but quite frankly, she does not cook well and no one wanted her to make dinner.

big mouth – a person who has a habit of saying too much; a person who has a habit of saying things that he or she should not say
* Alberto has a big mouth and usually says something that upsets everyone.

to bump into – to meet with someone unexpectedly
* Cassandra was happy when she went to the store and bumped into a friend she had not talked to in months.

to bad mouth – to say mean, rude, or bad things about someone else; to say negative things about someone who is not there
* Jack was angry when he learned that his friend was bad mouthing him and telling people things that were not true.

Long time, no see. – It has been a long time since the last time I saw you.; a phrase one uses to greet someone whom one has not seen in a long time
* When Therese saw her old friend, she greeted him by saying, “Long time, no see. The last time I saw you was more than three months ago.”

an ego – too much pride in oneself; having an opinion of oneself that is too high
* Roland was very prideful, and many people said that he had a large house and an even bigger ego.

to match – for two things to work well together; for two things to be the same level or degree
* Tian really wants to become a professional singer and he has the talent to match those big plans.



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It takes one to know one. – You are the same.; a phrase one uses to say that someone has the same qualities that he or she is saying someone else has, usually used to talk about something negative

* When Nakisha called her brother a liar, he told her, “It takes one to know one. You lied to our parents about why you were late yesterday.”

to talk behind (someone's) back – to say something bad about someone when that person is unable to argue or defend himself or herself; to say something bad about someone without that person knowing

* As soon as Cedric left, Mariah started talking behind his back about all the bad things she claimed he said to her.

falling out – a fight or a difference in opinion that causes two people who were friendly in the past to stop being friendly with each other

* Mason had a falling out with his best friend over a woman, and now the two no longer speak to each other.

to care for – to like; to have a good opinion of

* Something about the new co-worker's personality bothered Janet, so she didn't care for him much.

backstabber – someone who betrays another person; someone who does something bad to another person who trusted him or her in the past

* Rosaline called her friend a backstabber after her friend kissed Rosaline's boyfriend.

to outdo – to do more or better things than someone else; to do something better than someone else so that one feels more important than the other person

* Frances always tried to outdo his sister to impress their friends and family.

to make (one's) exit – to leave; to walk away from a person or situation that is unpleasant

* Xiao thought the conversation was very boring, so she made her exit as soon as she found an excuse to leave.

to hit the road – to leave; to get going

* It was late at night, so Shawn decided to hit the road and make the long trip back home.

take care – stay well; a phrase one uses as one leaves someone else

* As Phyllis left, she told her friend, “Take care.”



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to gripe – to complain; to talk about things that one finds annoying or upsetting

* The teacher's students griped about having too much homework, even though the homework was meant to help them understand the lesson.

CULTURE NOTE

The World's Meanest Mom

In the news in early 2008 was a story of a mother who sold her son's car after he didn't follow her rules. This is what happened:

A mother bought her 18-year-old son a car and told him that she had two simple rules: 1) no "booze" (informal word for alcohol) in the car and 2) keep the car locked. One day, the mother decides to check to see if her son had followed her rules. She finds that the car is unlocked and there is a bottle of alcohol under the front seat. He was "busted" (discovered doing something bad)!

What did she do? She placed the following "classified ad" (advertisement) in the *Des Moines Register*, a major newspaper in the State of Iowa where they live:

OLDS 1999 Intrigue (the make and model of the car). Totally "uncool" parents who "obviously" don't love teenage son, selling his car. Only driven for three weeks before "snoopy" mom who needs "to get a life" found booze under front seat. \$3,700/offer. Call "meanest" mom on the planet.

"uncool" = not nice; not sympathetic

"obviously" = clearly

"snoopy" = looking around secretly to find information

"to get a life" = to not worry about unimportant things

"mean/meanest" = unkind/the most unkind

Many people thought this ad was very funny because the mother used some of the common words and phrases angry teenagers might use. Someone who doesn't share a teenager's views is "uncool" and someone who "pries" (tries to find out other people's private information) is a "snoop" or is "snoopy." A teenager might tell you "to get a life" and to stop bother them. If parents force a teenager to do something they don't like, they might call those parents "mean."

The ad got a lot of attention in the media. Many people said that this mother was not only "clever" (smart and funny) to use her son's words and point of view in the ad, but that she was right "to enforce" (to force someone to follow) her rules.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 100.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 100. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today we are going to talk about saying unkind or not nice things about another person and how we react to that. Let's get started!

[start of story]

Yesterday, I was talking to an ex-colleague of mine who, frankly, has something of a big mouth. I bumped into him at the beach, where he was walking his dog. Anyway, as I was saying, he's the kind of guy that's always bad mouthing his co-workers. So he came up to me and said, "Hey, Jeff. Long time, no see. What've you been up to?" "Ah, not much," I said. "Well, guess who I saw yesterday? John Robeson, the guy from accounting at Firth Industries. You remember him, the guy with big ears and an ego to match." "It takes one to know one," I thought, but I kept it to myself. "Oh, really? How interesting," I replied.

"Yeah, well, I hate to talk behind someone's back, but ever since he and I had that falling out last year, I've never really cared for the guy." "How come?" I asked. "Well, he's a bit of a backstabber, always trying to outdo the other guy." "I know what you mean," I said. I knew at this point it was time to make my exit, otherwise, this guy would go on about John Robeson for the next 10 minutes.

"What time do you have?" I asked him. "It's quarter after five." "Geez, already? Man, I've got to hit the road. I'm supposed to meet my brother at the pier in a few minutes. But, hey, it was sure good to see you again. You take care!" With that, I made my exit. I've got better things to do than to listen to him gripe all day.

[end of story]

In my story, I said that "I was talking to an ex-colleague of mine," and "colleague" is someone usually that you work with or that is in the same profession or the same occupation as you are. An "ex-colleague" here would mean someone that I use to work with. I said that "Quite frankly, he has something of a big mouth." "Quite frankly" means quite honestly – to be very honest. "To be frank" means to be honest. I said he had a "big mouth." To say someone has a "big mouth" is



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something of an insult. It means that they talk too much, that they're always telling things to other people, that they should not. I said I "bumped into him at the beach." "To bump into" means to meet someone that you were not expecting to meet. It is similar to "I ran into." "I ran into my friend at the supermarket." I wasn't expecting or planning to see him there but there he was.

My friend was "walking his dog." "To walk your dog" of course, means to take your dog outside so the dog can well, do his business, let's say. I said that "my friend is the kind of guy who is always bad mouthing his co-workers." "To bad mouth" means to say bad things about another person. "Don't bad mouth your friend" meaning – means don't say unkind or un-nice things about your friend.

"Co-workers" is the same as colleagues, someone that you work with. I said that my friend "comes up" to me. He comes up to me and says – to "come up to someone" means to approach someone – he says to me, "Long time, no see." This is a common expression that we often use. It's an informal expression which means "it's been a long time since I have seen you." "Long time no see" – you say that to someone you have not seen in a long time. He told me that he saw a mutual - or someone that we both know – friend, John Robeson, and he said, insulting John, that he had "big ears and an ego to match." Well, an "ego" – your ego is, of course, your pride. Your ego is how you feel about yourself. When someone has a "big ego," they think they're very important. To say someone has an "ego to match" – "to match" means the same as, the same size as or the same amount as. He said – my friend said that "the guy has big ears and an ego to match" meaning his ego is also big.

I thought to myself, "it takes one to know one." "It takes one to know one" is another expression just like "Long time, no see" – very common in American English. "It takes one to know one" means when someone says something unkind - not nice – about another person, we sometimes say, if that same person has those same negative or unkind qualities, "it takes one to know one" – for example, someone who has a big ego who complains about another person with a big ego. "Well, it takes one to know one." You have to be something in order to recognize it in someone else.

My friend said that he "hated to talk behind someone's back." "To talk behind someone's back" means to say un-nice, again unkind things, not nice things about someone when they are not present – when they are not there.

He, my former colleague, my ex-colleague said that he and Jon Robeson had a "falling out" last year. A "falling out" means an argument – a fight, not necessarily a physical fight, but when you have a disagreement with someone and that



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disagreement causes you to not talk to each other. “My friend and I had a falling out over who was going to pay for dinner last night.” You often – we often say we have a “falling out” over some problem.

My friend says that he “never really cared for John Robeson.” “To care for someone,” of course, means to like someone in this case. “To care for” also means “to help,” “to assist,” but here it just means to like. “How come?” I asked, meaning “why?” “How come, why?” - it’s an informal way of asking why. Well, my friend said “He’s a bit of a back stabber.” A “back stabber” – “to stab” means to take usually a knife and put it into something. “To stab someone” means to take a knife and put it into them. A “back stabber” would be somebody who attacks you without you having a chance to defend yourself. It’s very closely related to the expression “to talk behind someone’s back.” A “back stabber” is someone who does something not nice, something unkind to you behind your back, meaning without you knowing.

According to my ex-colleague, John Robeson was always trying to “outdo” the other guy. “To outdo” means to do better than the other person. I said “At this point, I needed to make my exit.” “To exit,” of course, means to leave. “To make your exit” means to leave. It means the same as exit – to make my exit. It comes – the expression probably comes from the theater, from someone on a play – in a play rather, making their exit – meaning they leave the stage, the leave off where people can see them.

I said my ex-colleague would “go on about John for the next ten minutes.” “To go on about something or someone” means to talk too much. “I was talking to my brother yesterday and he went on and on about his new car,” meaning he talked for a long time – too long of the time. I used a couple of expressions in responding to my ex-colleague. I asked him, “What time do you have?” This is the same as asking someone “What time is it?” It’s a little bit more polite. If you come up to a stranger or someone that you do not know and you say, “Excuse me, what time is it?” - that’s okay but a little more polite way would be to say, “Excuse me, can you tell me what time you have?” Here I just said, “What time do you have?” meaning could you tell me the time. After I was told the time, I said “Geez, already?” “Geez” (geez) is an informal way of saying, “Wow!” I also said, “Man I’ve got to hit the road.” “Man” here is again informal. It just is an expression of excitement or it means the same as – sometimes we say, “Boy!” “Boy! I’ve got to hit the road.” It just emphasizes that you have to do that particular thing. The thing I had to do was “to hit the road.” “To hit the road” means to leave, to go somewhere. “What time are we going to hit the road?” “Well, we’ll probably leave at 7pm.” The pier – I said I was meeting my brother at



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the “pier.” The “pier” – a pier is (pier) something that goes out into the ocean from the beach. It’s usually made of wood and people can walk out onto the pier.

I told my ex colleague that it was “sure good” to see him again. This is a common way of saying goodbye to someone after or someone that we haven’t seen in a long time. “It’s sure good to see you again,” means it’s nice to see you again. I told him to “take care” – that is “to take care” of himself. Again, a very common expression – “You take care!” means I hope that everything goes well for you, that you take care of yourself. I wanted to leave because I didn’t want to hear my friend “gripe” all day. “To gripe” (gripe) means to complain. It’s a somewhat informal expression meaning, “to complain.”

Now let’s listen to the dialog, this time at a normal rate of speech.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

That’s going to do it for today’s English as a Second Language Podcast. From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. We’ll see you next time on ESL Podcast.



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