



ESL Podcast 41 – Understanding Men and Women

GLOSSARY

wedding anniversary – the month and day that two people were married on, which is celebrated every year after the wedding

* Aggie and Jacob have been married for three years and celebrate their wedding anniversary on April 27.

vacuum cleaner – a machine that sucks dirt off the floor; a machine that cleans the floor by using suction to pull dirt away from it

* The vacuum cleaner broke and we can't vacuum the dirty carpet until it's fixed.

point – message; the important fact or part that one is supposed to focus on

* The student did not understand the point of the book and misunderstood what the writer was trying to say.

upset – unhappy; feeling anger and sadness

* When the concert Cordelia wanted to go to was suddenly cancelled, she felt very upset.

romantic – passionate; showing love through kindness, emotion, and special actions

* Terrance was very romantic and enjoyed surprising his girlfriend with handwritten love notes, poems, and bouquets of flowers.

to let (someone) down – to disappoint someone; to fail at doing something that someone else expects or wants one to do

* When Lavonne forgot to go to her son's piano recital after promising to be there, she really let him down.

the mark of – the sign of; evidence that one can see which suggests the existence of something

* Being able to share one's secrets and dreams with someone else is the mark of a close friendship.

in my book – in my opinion; by my definition

* People may not agree with me, but in my book, it's rude to not say "thank you" after receiving a gift.

idealized – expecting something to be perfect; thinking of the perfect way something could be instead of how that thing actually is

* The story Omar told his family was an idealized version of how he and his girlfriend met.



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chick flick – movies appealing to women, which often include ideal or perfect versions of romance

* Eva went with her two best friends to see the new chick flick because her husband did not like watching romance movies.

romance novel – books about ideal or perfect romance, usually read by women; books with fictional (not true) stories about love

* Tricia did not know much about real romance because she was too focused on the relationships she read about in romance novels.

to get into the head of – to know what someone else is thinking or feeling

* Ferdinand tried to get into the head of his best friend to determine why his friend was so angry.

Men are from Mars and women are from Venus. – a saying used to describes how men and women are very different, with different ways of thinking, behaving, and feeling

* After Marcie and Lawrence could not agree on who was right, they agreed to disagree, saying that the misunderstanding could not be avoided because men are from Mars and women are from Venus.



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CULTURE NOTE

What a Guy Wants in His Future Wife

In 2012, the *New York Times* published a list of the 18 “traits” (characteristics) that men most want in a woman they’d like to marry. What’s interesting is how this list of 18 things compares to a similar list from more than 70 years ago, 1939. Some things are the same, but a few things are very different now compared to earlier “generations” (time periods).

Here’s the list from 2008, and in parentheses, is where this trait “ranked” (appeared on the list) in 1939:

- “Mutual attraction” (each person likes the other) and love (#4)
- “Dependable character” (reliable personality) (#1)
- “Emotional stability” (behaves reasonably) and “maturity” (acts like an adult, not a child) (#2)
- Education, intelligence (#11)
- “Pleasing disposition” (good personality; nice) (#3)
- “Sociability” (easy to talk to; relates well to others) (#12)
- Good health (#5)
- “Good looks” (physically attractive) (#14)
- Desire for home, children (#6)
- “Ambition, industriousness” (wants to achieve good things and works hard) (#9)
- “Refinement, neatness” (sophistication and not messy) (#7)
- “Good financial prospect” (can make a lot of money) (#17)
- Good cook, housekeeper (takes care of the home) (#8)
- Similar education background (#15)
- Favorable “social status” (from a “good” family or well-respected group) (#16)
- Similar religious background (#13)
- Similar political background (#18)
- “Chastity” (not sexually active prior to marriage) (#10)

Four of the top five qualities are the same in 2008 as they were in 1939, although they have changed somewhat in importance. A man still wants a woman who is mature, stable, dependable, and who loves him as much as he loves her.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 41 – Understanding Men and Women.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 41. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss relationships. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Lucy: Jeff, here's a question. I was just talking to Dawn. You know, they had their first wedding anniversary last week. Guess what her husband gave her as a present.

Jeff: I don't know. What?

Lucy: He gave her a vacuum cleaner.

Jeff: Didn't she want a vacuum cleaner?

Lucy: Yes, the old one was broken, but that's not the point! It was their wedding anniversary, their first one. Dawn was really upset that he wasn't more romantic. He really let her down.

Jeff: Oh, great. Women are always saying that men aren't romantic. But we are! Just not in the way that women want.

Lucy: What do you mean?

Jeff: It's a man's job to protect his wife and family. When something goes wrong, they want to fix it. That's the mark of a good husband.

Lucy: I can see that, but that's not romantic in my book.

Jeff: That's because you women have this idealized view of romance that you get from a lifetime of watching chick flicks and reading romance novels. Even if a man wanted to, he could never get into the head of a woman and guess what she wanted. That's why women have to just tell us what they want.



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Lucy: That's the problem. We women think men should just know what we want, without us having to tell them; that is, if the man really loved and understood us. That's why we don't want to tell you. But I see your point, too.

Jeff: So, I guess it's really true. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.

Lucy: Yeah, that's what makes life interesting, right?

[end of dialogue]

In this episode, Lucy and I talked about men and women and how they understand or misunderstand each other – that is, not understand each other. Lucy began by saying, “Jeff, here's a question.” That expression “Here's a question” means “I want to ask you a question.” It's a way of introducing – we might say “prefacing” – a question. It's letting the other person know that you are going to ask them a question. Lucy said that she “was just talking to Dawn.” She was recently talking to Dawn. When we say we are “just doing” something, we were recently, or right before this, doing something.

She said that Dawn and her husband were having their first “wedding anniversary.” “Wedding” (wedding) is, of course, when people get married, and “anniversary” is when you celebrate every year, usually on that same day. So, if you get married on May first, you celebrate each anniversary on May first in the following years. My parents were married on May first. Lucy explained that Dawn's husband gave her a vacuum cleaner for their first wedding anniversary. A “vacuum (vacuum) cleaner” is what you use to get dirt out of a carpet or a rug. Usually, it's electric. The vacuum cleaner, Lucy thought, is not a good gift for a wedding anniversary. Hmm, that's funny.

I asked Lucy if Dawn wanted one, and Lucy responded, or said in reply to me, “That's not the point.” “That's not the point” means that's not what's important. That's not what she meant. That wasn't what I was thinking of. The “point” (point) of something is either the reason for something or the meaning of something. We often say, “The point is, I want you to do something,” such as go to the store, meaning “What I'm really trying to say is” or “What I really mean is this.”

Lucy said that her friend Dawn “was really upset.” “To be upset” (upset) means to be angry, to be mad, to be bothered by something. She was upset because her husband “wasn't more romantic.” “To be romantic” (romantic) means to be loving of your husband, wife, girlfriend, or boyfriend. “Romance” refers to a love between two people. I, for example, am very romantic with my wife, but just don't ask her about that.



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Anyway, Lucy said that Dawn's husband “really let her down.” “To let someone down” is a phrasal verb that means to disappoint them, to do something that they didn't or don't like. They were expecting one thing and you did something else. For example, I was supposed to meet my friend last night at 6:00 p.m., but I forgot about it. I let down my friend, or I let my friend down. In either case, it means I didn't do what I was supposed to do or what he expected me to do.

I then used the expression, “Oh, great.” “To be great” usually means to be very good, to be wonderful, to be the best. But when we use an expression with that sort of intonation, with that sort of sound in our voice – “Oh, great” – we're really saying, “That's terrible. That's bad.” It's just the opposite of what you would think the meaning of great would be in this case.

In a way, we're using it sarcastically. We are trying to use it in a different way from the way it is normally used in order to either be funny or to communicate a different message to the person, to say something different. Somebody says, “Oh, great. My car broke down.” This person doesn't actually mean they're happy that the car doesn't work. They mean the opposite. They mean it's bad news. It all depends on the way you say it. “Oh great” means something bad. “Oh, great!” means something good.

I said to Lucy that men are romantic, but they're not romantic in a way that women want. Lucy asked me what I meant, and I tried to explain that many men see their job in the family as protecting or taking care of the wife and the family, and that this was a mark of a good husband. The expression “a mark” or “the mark” (mark) of a good husband means that it's a sign of a good husband. It's an indication of a good husband. You can use this expression, “the mark of” something, with lots of different situations. You could say, “The mark of a good actor is that he can remember all of his dialogue,” or his “lines” as we call them in a movie or in a play. “The mark of,” then, means the quality or characteristic of something.

Lucy said that she could understand my point – that is, my meaning – but that what I was calling romantic was not romantic in her book. The expression “in my book” or “in your book” or “in her book” does not mean a book that you own and read. We're not talking about that kind of book. Instead, we're talking about my way of seeing the world, according to my way of thinking, the way I see things, or the way I view things. For example, “In my book, it's better to exercise early in the morning so that you have time to do it before you go to work.” “In my book” here means in my opinion, in my view – the way I view things.



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I said to Lucy that women have an “idealized view of romance.” “Idealized” (idealized) would be the perfect situation. Something that is idealized would be something in the best possible situation. Usually we use it, however, to mean unrealistic or impossible to actually do or achieve. When someone says to you, “Well, that’s an idealized view of” something, they mean that that particular way of looking at things would only be possible in a perfect world. It can’t really be possible for the average person, say.

I then used the expression “chick flicks” and “romance novels.” A “chick (chick) flick (flick)” is an informal expression. It refers to the kinds of movies that women like, often romantic movies. The word “chick” refers to a woman or a girl. However, it’s not a very nice word. Many women and girls might not like it if you use that word with them. So, it’s probably one you should not use. A “flick” is a movie. So, a “chick flick” would be a movie for women and girls.

A “romance novel” is a novel that is about a romantic relationship between two people who love each other. However, the term “romance novel” refers to a specific kind of book that is popular mostly with women, about the romantic relationship of the main characters. There’s usually a very beautiful woman and a very handsome or good-looking man in the story. I said to Lucy that “a man could never get into the head of a woman.” “To get into someone’s head” means to understand her point of view, to understand her opinion, to understand how she views the world.

Lucy says, however, that if men really loved women and really understood them, women would not have to tell men what they want. She uses the expression “that is.” She says, “That is, if the man really loved and understood us.” The expression “that is” is very common in conversation. It means I’m going to give you more of an explanation. I’m going to tell you a little bit more about what I just said. I’m going to try to make it clear. For example, I could say to someone, “Podcasting involves RSS syndication; that is, it’s a network that goes out over the Internet.” “That is” is used to say, “Let me explain a little more” or “I will say it in a different way, perhaps a way that you’ll understand better.”

I end the dialogue by saying, “Men are from Mars and women are from Venus.” That’s actually the title of a very popular book about men and women and relationships. It was very popular, at least, in the 1990s: Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus. The idea is that they basically come from different planets. They see everything very differently, and that’s why they don’t understand each other. I actually read part of the book. I think he was right about a lot of things, the author. Of course, it was written by a man. Remember that



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opinions in these dialogues are not necessarily the opinions of the people who are speaking the lines.

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

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Lucy: Yeah, that's what makes life interesting, right?

[end of dialogue]

Thanks to our amazing script writer, Dr. Lucy Tse, for all of her hard work, and thanks to you for listening.

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

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