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**ESL Podcast 47 – Teamwork**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to sound okay** – to seem acceptable; to seem like a good idea

\* Katherine explained her ideas for the project to the rest of her group, and they all agreed that her ideas sounded okay.

**preoccupied** – distracted; focused on another thought; thinking about something else while doing something

\* Douglas was unable to focus on the teacher's lesson because he was preoccupied with the argument he had with his friend earlier in the day.

**to work as a team** – to do work together with a group of people; to work on a task with other people

\* There was too much work for one person to do, so Aiko and Silas worked as a team to finish it all.

**to deal with** – to be able to handle something or someone; to be able to work with someone or something

\* The stressful situation was too much for Chantal to deal with alone, so she asked for help.

**to put other people down** – to criticize other people; to insult other people by talking as though they are not as good as one

\* Earl is very talented, but he often put other people down just to make himself look better.

**immature** – juvenile or childish; showing behavior that one would expect from a child but not from an adult

\* Virginia is very immature and often teases her sister like she used to do when they were younger.

**diplomatic** – sensitive or polite; able to talk with people in a way that keeps everyone happy

\* Todd had a very diplomatic way of speaking and almost never got into any arguments.

**to get the better of** – to win against; to cause someone to behave in a way that he or she does not want to, but can't help but behave

\* Mrs. Lerch tried not to get angry, but her employees got the better of her and she yelled at them during a meeting.



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**fed up** – tired of; feeling too annoyed or bothered to allow a situation to continue  
\* Leonel was fed up with his cousin’s bad attitude, so he stopped talking to her for a few days until he could calm down.

**to run interference** – to calm down the people on both sides of an argument; to talk to a difficult person so that other people do not need to  
\* Susie’s best friend and boyfriend do not like each other, so Susie has to run interference between them whenever they met at parties.

**heated** – intense or severe; when a discussion or argument involves strong emotions because the people involved are too upset or emotional  
\* The debate got very heated and the two opposing sides started yelling insults at each other.

**to feel really sorry for** – to feel pity for; to feel upset for someone because of a situation that person is in  
\* Oliver’s neighbor was having a bad day, and Oliver felt really sorry for her.

**to put up with** – to tolerate; to accept someone or something without being happy about it  
\* Even though Florence thought her husband’s brother was annoying, she put up with him because they were now related through marriage.



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**CULTURE NOTE**

**Adding an “ ‘s ” at the End of Business Names**

Sometimes, when Americans say they are going to a place, such as a friend's house or a restaurant, they will attach an “ ‘s “, like this:

- ”I’m going to Juan’s to watch a movie.”
- ”Let’s go to Starbucks’ to buy some coffee.” (There is no pronunciation difference between “Starbucks” and “Starbucks’ “.)

When the “ ‘s ” is used without a noun after it, we are implying that what follows should be “house,” “place,” “store,” “business,” or some other place. So in the examples above, what we really mean to say are:

- ”I’m going to Juan’s [home/house/apartment] to watch a movie.”
- ”Let’s go to Starbucks’ [cafe/coffee house/restaurant] to buy some coffee.”

Because of this “convention” (way of doing things), many American businesses, especially stores, restaurants, and bars have names with an apostrophe “s,” such as “Tony’s” (the name of several restaurants around the country) or “Molly Malone’s” (a bar in Los Angeles). Because we use this convention mainly in conversation, naming a business this way gives the business a friendly and informal “tone” (atmosphere; feeling).

Keep in mind that while this is very common, it is fine not to use the “ ‘s ” convention, too. Both of these mean the same thing and you will hear both versions in daily conversation:

- ”Did you buy that sweater at Kmart’s?”
- ”Did you buy that sweater at Kmart?”



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 47 – Teamwork.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 47. 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 getting along with people, whether at work or at school. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Jeff: So, does that sound okay with you?

Lucy: What? Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't hear what you said.

Jeff: You seem preoccupied today. What's up?

Lucy: Oh, it's this guy I know from this class I'm taking. His name is Richard. I think I've mentioned him before.

Jeff: Yeah, sure, the guy you're working on a project with, right?

Lucy: Yeah, that's him. The four of us are supposed to be working as a team on this project, and I'm having a lot of trouble dealing with him.

Jeff: What do you mean?

Lucy: Well, he doesn't know how to express his opinion without putting other people down. And, he always has to be right.

Jeff: He sounds a little immature.

Lucy: Yeah, I think it's partly that. He doesn't know how to be diplomatic with people.

Jeff: He doesn't know how, or he doesn't want to?

Lucy: I don't know, but I do know that sometimes he really gets the better of me.



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Jeff: Well, he sounds pretty hard to get along with. Are the other people in your group feeling the same way?

Lucy: Yeah, in fact, they're fed up with him. I keep having to run interference when our discussions get too heated. Actually, I feel really sorry for the guy. He doesn't seem to have too many friends, and he always seems so unhappy.

Jeff: Well, I think you're helping just by putting up with him.

Lucy: Thanks for trying to make me feel better. Ok, now what were you saying?

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with me saying to Lucy, “So, does that sound okay with you?” The expression “to sound (sound) okay with someone” or “to someone” means “Does it seem like a good idea?” Do you think this is acceptable? Does it sound okay? Lucy says, “What? Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't hear what you said.” Lucy, of course, is not paying attention to what I am saying. This happens all the time.

I say, “You seem preoccupied today. What's up?” “To be preoccupied” (preoccupied) means to be distracted, not to be focused on what you are doing – thinking about something else instead of what you should be thinking about. That's being “preoccupied.” The word “occupied” means to be busy. “To be preoccupied” means to be busy in your mind, thinking of lots of different things, too busy to focus on what you should be doing. Jeff then says – and that's me – “What's up?” meaning “What's going on?”

Lucy says, “Oh, it's this guy I know from this class I'm taking.” Now, we learned that Lucy is a student and she's thinking about a guy – a man – in this case from her class that she is taking, that she is studying in. She says, “His name is Richard. I think I've mentioned him before.” I say, “Yeah sure, the guy you're working on a project with, right?” – the person that you are working on some sort of project for the class with. Lucy says, “Yeah, that's him. The four of us are supposed to be working as a team on this project, and I'm having a lot of trouble dealing with him.”

So, there are four people in this group that are supposed to be working on a project together, perhaps writing a paper – writing an essay or something similar. She says that she's “having a lot of trouble dealing with” Richard. “To deal with” someone is a phrasal verb meaning to handle someone, to manage someone, to be able to get along with and work with someone or some problem. We will



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sometimes say, “I need to deal with this problem right now.” That means “I need to work on this problem – manage it, solve it.”

I then say to Lucy, “What do you mean?” What are you trying to tell me, Lucy? Lucy says, “Well, he doesn't know how to express his opinion without putting other people down.” “To put other people down” or “to put down other people” means to criticize them, to insult them by talking as though they weren't as good as you. When you “put someone down,” you are saying they are not as good as you. You are saying something mean or critical about that person. Don't confuse this with “putting down” an animal. “To put down” an animal means to kill the animal. We're not talking about killing anyone here. Not yet.

Lucy says that Richard “always has to be right.” Someone who “always has to be right” always has to be the person who is correct in any situation or any discussion. So, if you are married or have a girlfriend, for example, you learn very quickly that your wife or girlfriend is always right. If you don't learn that quickly, you won't have a wife or girlfriend for a very long time. Well, back to the story. I say that Richard “sounds a little immature.” “To be immature” (immature) is to be not mature. “To be mature” means to be grown-up, to be an adult, to act responsibly like an adult, like a person who is older. “To be immature” means to act like a child – not to do things that you would expect from someone over the age of 18 or 21.

Lucy says, “Yeah, I think it's partly that.” That's part of the reason. She says, “He doesn't know how to be diplomatic with people.” “To be diplomatic” (diplomatic) means to be polite, to be nice, to be sensitive, to be able to talk to people in a way that everyone is happy – in a way that doesn't anger anyone. That's to be diplomatic. The adjective comes from the noun “diplomat,” who is a person who goes, usually, to another country, representing his or her own country. An “ambassador” would be an example of a diplomat.

Well, unfortunately, Richard is not very diplomatic, according to Lucy. I say, “He doesn't know how, or he doesn't want to?” What I'm saying here is that, is it the case that Richard doesn't know how to be diplomatic, or that he knows how but he doesn't want to be diplomatic?

Lucy says, “I don't know, but I do know that sometimes he really gets the better of me.” “To get the better (better) of” someone means to defeat them, to win against them. That would be “to get the better of someone.” A situation could get the better of you. This heat is getting the better of me. It's making me tired and hot and angry. Well, not angry. Sometimes heat makes people angry, though – at least, it doesn't help. Cold can also make people angry.



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I continue by saying, “Well, he sounds pretty hard to get along with.” I'm saying that Richard appears to be a person who is difficult to get along with, to be friends with, to work with. I then ask, “Are the other people in your group feeling the same way?” Do they have the same opinion? Lucy says, “Yeah,” which is an informal way of saying yes. “In fact, they're fed up with him.” “To be fed (fed) up with” someone is a phrasal verb meaning to be tired of someone – to be bothered or annoyed by a person or situation. You don't want to tolerate it anymore. You can't take it anymore, we might say.

Lucy says the other people in her group are “fed up with Richard.” She says, “I keep having to run interference when our discussions get too heated.” “To run interference” means to try to prevent people from fighting, to calm people down who are arguing about something, especially people who may be difficult to deal with. When we say a discussion gets “heated” (heated), we mean it becomes intense. It becomes an argument with strong emotions that people begin to express – maybe people are yelling at each other, shouting at each other.

Lucy says, “Actually, I feel really sorry for the guy.” “To feel sorry for” someone means to feel upset for someone because of the situation that person is in. If I feel sorry for you, I am empathetic. I am thinking about you and understanding that you are going through a difficult situation. Lucy says, “Richard doesn't seem to have too many friends” – that is, very many friends. I say, “Well, I think you're helping just by putting up with him.” “To put up with” someone or some situation means to tolerate – to accept – a situation even though you're not very happy about it.

At the end of the dialogue, Lucy then thanks me. She says, “Thanks for trying to make me feel better. Okay, now what were you saying?” She's asking me to repeat what I was saying to her at the beginning of the dialogue.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

Thanks to our great scriptwriter, 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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