

# Lesson 29 – Worrying, Reassuring, Cheering Up, & Encouraging

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## Conversation #1 – Worrying, Reassuring, & Cheering Up

*Robin and Kate are sisters. Kate is 17 years old and she is getting ready to take her final exams in high school. Robin is 24 and she has already graduated from college.*

**Robin:** Hey Kate. Whatcha thinkin about?

**Kate:** I'm really worried about my final exams next week. What if I fail?

**Robin:** There's no need to worry - just study what you've learned, and you'll be fine!

**Kate:** I hate to think what would happen if I got bad grades. Then I wouldn't be able to get into a good college, and mom and dad would be so disappointed.

**Robin:** Hey - don't focus on the worst-case scenario. Just do your best.

**Kate:** But these tests are really hard - especially my history test. I'm so sick of studying, and I'm afraid that I'll forget everything on the day of the exam.

**Robin:** Hang in there. Just think - by this time next week, you'll be done - so there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

*(later)*

**Robin:** So how'd you do on your finals?

**Kate:** Well, I got As and Bs in everything, except history. I got a C-.

**Robin:** Must've been a tough test.

**Kate:** Yeah but I made some stupid mistakes on things I should've known.

**Robin:** Hey - chin up! It's not the end of the world.

**Kate:** But I've never gotten a grade that bad!

**Robin:** Try to keep things in perspective - the rest of your grades are all really good.

**Kate:** But I can't stop thinking about that C-. Now I probably won't get any scholarships.

**Robin:** Listen, there's nothing to worry about. I'm sure it'll turn out all right.

## Conversation Vocabulary and Phrases

Kate uses a few different phrases to talk about her worries:

- **"I'm (really) worried about..."**
- **"I'm (very) concerned about..."** (more formal)
- **"I'm worried sick about..."**  
*This expression is used to express extreme worry - it doesn't mean that you are literally sick*
- **"I'm afraid that..." / "I'm scared to death that..."**  
*Complete this phrase with the possible future event that you are worried about*
- **"I can't help thinking..." / "I can't stop thinking..."**  
*Use these phrases for thoughts that are constantly in your mind, even though you try not to think about them*
- **"It's been keeping me up at night."**  
*Use this phrase when you are so worried about something that you can't sleep.*
- **"What if...?"**  
*Use this phrase to express imaginary bad situations that you are worried about (they can be in the past, present, or future)*

Robin reassures her younger sister by using a few of these phrases:

- **"Don't worry about it." / "There's no need to worry." / "Try not to worry."**
- **"You'll be fine." / "It'll be fine." / "It'll turn out all right."**

For more formal situations, you can use these phrases:

- **"Rest assured (that)..."**
  - "Rest assured that the documents will be delivered on time."
  - "Thank you for lending me your car for the weekend. Rest assured, I will take good care of it!"

- **“I can assure you that...”**
  - "I can assure you that we will fix the problem as soon as possible."
  - "I can assure you that we sell only the highest-quality products."

Now let's look at expressions for cheering someone up – that means helping someone feel happier when they are sad or upset.

- **“Cheer up!” / “Chin up!”**  
*These are pretty informal. They can be used if someone's in a bad mood – but not if someone has experienced a tragedy or is in serious depression.*
- **“Hang in there.”**  
*Say this when someone is currently experiencing a difficult situation, which will continue, and you want to encourage them to stay strong*
- **“It's not so bad.”**
- **“It's not the end of the world.”**  
*Use this phrase if the other person is worrying excessively about a relatively small problem*
- **“Try to keep things in perspective.” / “It could be worse.”**  
*Use these phrases to show the person that their problem is not terrible, when you consider the “big picture” – the general situation*
- **“Look on the bright side.”**  
*Use this phrase to encourage the person to focus on the positive aspects of the situation. It's often followed by explaining the positive side.*
- **“There's light at the end of the tunnel.”**  
*Say this when the difficult period or problem will soon be finished.*
- **“There's no use crying over spilled milk.”**  
*This idiom can be used after someone makes a mistake, and then is upset about it.*
- **“These things happen.”**  
*Say this when someone is upset about a common mistake or problem, like getting a speeding ticket or losing their wallet.*

English also has a few very informal phrases which are used when you want to tell someone very directly to stop worrying/being sad. These phrases are rather insensitive, so you should only use them with close friends with whom you have a good relationship!

- **“Suck it up.” / “Deal with it.”**  
*You’re telling the person to face the difficult situation without complaining*
- **“Get over it.”**  
*You’re telling the person to stop obsessing about a past mistake/event*
- **“Pull yourself together!” / “Snap out of it!”**  
*Use this phrase when the other person is so agitated that he/she can’t function; you’re telling them to get back into a normal condition*

## Conversation #2 – Encouraging & Complimenting

*Ann and Jason are college classmates. They’ve just finished giving a presentation in an English literature class.*

**Ann:** Nice job, Jason! I was really impressed!

**Jason:** Thanks! Your presentation was great, too.

**Ann:** Eh, I felt like it was really disorganized.

**Jason:** Well, it was a bit hard to follow in a couple places, but I definitely understood your main points. And I loved the illustrations you used – they were perfect.

**Ann:** Glad you liked them. What did you think about the poem I included at the end? I actually wrote it myself, but I wasn’t sure if it was a good way to close the presentation.

**Jason:** Oh, that was great! You’re really talented. You know, I think you should enter the national poetry competition – they’re accepting entries until the end of December.

**Ann:** You think so?

**Jason:** What have you got to lose? It’s free to enter the competition, and the winning poem gets a \$1000 scholarship. Give it your best shot!

**Ann:** OK, maybe I will. Hey, I’d like to know your secret for not being nervous. I remember you had a lot of trouble with your first presentation of the semester, and now you seem so confident. You’ve really improved.

**Jason:** Thank you! I do feel like I'm making progress. The night before, I always do a practice presentation for my roommate – then on the day of the presentation, it's easier because I've already done it, so I know exactly what to say.

**Ann:** I guess practice makes perfect, right? Well, keep up the good work.

**Jason:** Yup – you too.

## Conversation Vocabulary & Phrases

Here are a few phrases for encouraging someone – they're each used in different types of situations, so pay attention to the details and explanations:

- **"Nice job!" / "Nice work!"**  
*Say these when someone has done something good. They can be used for anything – not just professional activities.*
- **"Keep up the good work!"**  
*Say this when someone is doing well, and you want them to continue*
- **"That was a nice try / good effort."**  
*Say this when someone failed, but you want to say that it was a good effort*
- **"That's a real improvement" / "You've really improved."**  
*Say this when someone is now better than they were in the past*
- **"You're on the right track." / "You've almost got it."**  
*Say this when someone has not yet succeeded, but they are close to succeeding*
- **"Don't give up!"**  
*The phrasal verb "give up" means to desist, to stop trying – so you can say "Don't give up!" to encourage a person to continue trying.*
- **"Come on, you can do it!"**  
*Use this phrase to emphasize the person's ability to succeed. You can say this to a person who has low self-esteem or has difficulty believing they can succeed.*
- **"Give it your best shot."**  
*"Your best shot" means "your best try" – so this phrase is used to encourage someone to do their best.*
- **"What have you got to lose?"**  
*This question is used to emphasize the fact that if the person doesn't succeed, there won't be any negative consequences – so they should make an effort.*

Another way to encourage someone is to give them a compliment. [Click here](#) for examples of specific compliments on a person's appearance, home, cooking, and children.

You've finished Lesson 29! Now take the quiz to practice the phrases from today's lesson.

## Quiz – Lesson 29

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- 1) I'm really \_\_\_\_\_ about my upcoming surgery.
  - A. embarrassed
  - B. sick
  - C. worried
  
- 2) I \_\_\_\_\_ thinking that I might have made the wrong decision.
  - A. can't help
  - B. don't want
  - C. won't stop
  
- 3) We've been having some financial problems. It's been \_\_\_\_\_ me up at night.
  - A. holding
  - B. keeping
  - C. staying
  
- 4) Ma'am, please \_\_\_\_\_ assured that we will give you a refund immediately.
  - A. relax
  - B. rest
  - C. sleep
  
- 5) "I can't wait until this project is finished."  
" \_\_\_\_\_ - there are only a few days left, and then we can all relax."
  - A. Cheer up
  - B. Hang in there
  - C. Snap out of it

**6)** "Oh my god! I HATE this haircut, it looks TERRIBLE!"

"Oh, calm down. It's not \_\_\_\_\_."

- A. the end of the world
- B. the final disaster
- C. the worst of the tunnel

**7)** I know you're disappointed about not winning the competition, but try to keep things in \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. balance
- B. contemplation
- C. perspective

**8)** True, we missed our flight back... but look on the \_\_\_\_\_ side, we get an extra day of vacation!

- A. bright
- B. gold
- C. shining

**9)** "I'm so annoyed that the store is sold out of the computer I wanted to buy."

"Well, \_\_\_\_\_."

- A. there's no use crying over spilled milk
- B. these things happen
- C. there's light at the end of the tunnel

**10)** "Today is the 3rd anniversary of the day Jim and I broke up..."

"Oh, \_\_\_\_\_! You need to find a new boyfriend."

- A. get over it
- B. keep it up
- C. take it out

**11)** I know you didn't score a goal, but it was a \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. good work

- B. nice try
- C. right track

**12)** You're only one semester away from graduating - don't \_\_\_\_\_ now!

- A. break out
- B. give up
- C. stop off

**13)** "Yesterday I baked an apple pie for the first time ever - it came out great!"  
" \_\_\_\_\_!"

- A. Deal with it
- B. Nice job
- C. You can do it



## **Lesson 29 Quiz – Answers**

1.C 2.A 3.B 4.B 5.B 6.A 7.C 8.A 9.B 10.A 11.B 12.B 13.B