

Lesson 4 – Relationships

Conversation #1 – Talking about Meeting, Dating, & Getting Married

Listen to Laura and Sharon's conversation about how Laura met and fell in love with her husband, Joe.

Laura: Joe and I are celebrating our 10th anniversary this month.

Sharon: Congratulations! I'm curious – how'd you two meet?

Laura: It was in college. I was actually going out with someone else at the time...

Sharon: Oh really? Who?

Laura: This guy named Mike. He was captain of the basketball team and all the girls had a crush on him, so I was thrilled when he asked me out. We started dating, but we really didn't have much in common.

Sharon: So that's when Joe showed up and swept you off your feet?
(swept you off your feet = made you fall in love)

Laura: No, actually, it wasn't love at first sight. We became friends, and sometimes it seemed like he was flirting with me – but I wasn't really attracted to him. I thought he wasn't my type. But over time I realized I was falling in love with him.

Sharon: Well, you two are a match made in heaven. How'd he pop the question?

Laura: Believe it or not, he never officially proposed. When things started getting serious, we moved in together, and a couple years later we decided to get married and make it official.

Sharon: Are you doing anything special for your anniversary?

Laura: Yeah – so, our wedding was really low-key and we never had a honeymoon, so he surprised me by planning a two-week romantic getaway in Costa Rica!

(low-key = simple, relaxed, not very fancy or elaborate)

(honeymoon = the trip many couples take together immediately after the wedding)

Sharon: That's so sweet! I hope you have a wonderful time.

Conversation Vocabulary & Phrases

In this dialogue, we have phrases for beginning a relationship, being in a relationship, and getting engaged and married. When Laura first met Joe, she wasn't instantly attracted to him. Here are some phrases for describing a lack of attraction to someone:

First Impressions – Not So Great

- **"We're just friends."**
- **"He/she's not my type."**
This means that the other person's appearance/personality is not similar to the type of person you usually date
- **"We don't have much in common."**
- **"I'm not really attracted to him/her."**
- **"I don't know what you see in him/her."**
This is a comment you can make to a friend, if your friend is dating a person who you think is NOT interesting/attractive AT ALL. But be careful – your friend might take offense!

Sometimes two people meet and form an instant romantic connection. Here are some expressions for that:

First Impressions – Instant Connection

- **"We really hit it off."**
"hit it off" can be used for both romantic and non-romantic social connections
- **"We had great chemistry."**
- **"We just 'clicked.'"**
- **"It was love at first sight."**

When Mike started his relationship with Laura, he asked her out – invited her to go on a date (dinner, a movie, dancing, etc.) Practice these phrases for the beginning of a relationship:

Starting a Relationship

- **"I have a crush on him/her."**
This means you are very attracted to someone, but you are not yet dating. The other person may or may not know about your feelings.
- **"He/she was flirting with me."**
flirting = demonstrating romantic interest through comments, gestures, etc.
- **"He/she asked me out."**

- **“She was playing hard to get.”**
this means a person is pretending not to be interested in dating, but secretly she is interested – she just wants the guy to be persistent!
- **“We fell in love.”**
- **“We hooked up.”**
this means having a sexual experience together

There are a few different ways in English to say that two people are currently in a romantic relationship. Here are the most common phrases:

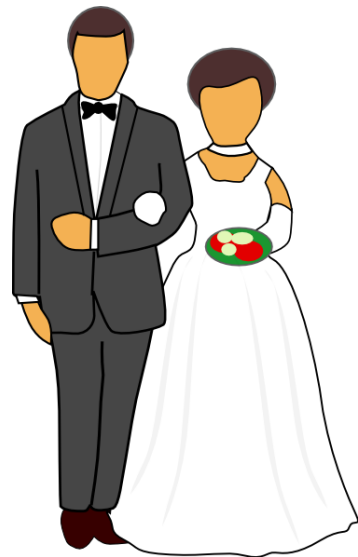
Being in a Relationship

- **“They’re dating.”**
- **“They’re an item.”** *(informal)*
- **“He’s going out with... / He’s seeing...”**
- **“It’s getting serious.”**
- **“My boyfriend/girlfriend/partner/significant other/better half...”**
*the word “partner” is often used for gay or lesbian couples
“significant other” and “better half” can be used for men or women.
“My better half” is an affectionate way to refer to your romantic companion ☺*

When two people have been dating for a long time, they might want to take the next step and make their relationship official:

Making it Official

- **“We moved in together.”**
when two people begin to live together in the same apartment/house
- **“He proposed.” / “He popped the question.”**
*Both of these phrases mean “asked her to marry him.”
The second phrase is much more informal.*
- **“We’re engaged.”**
This means that two people are definitely planning to get married. In this situation, the man is called the fiancé and the woman the fiancée
- **“We’re getting married next month.”**
*Some informal expressions for “getting married” are:
“getting hitched,” “tying the knot,” and “saying ‘I do’”
At a wedding, the woman is called the **bride** and the man is called the **groom**.*



- **“They’re newlyweds.”**
This phrase describes a couple who recently got married.
- **“It was a match made in heaven.” / “They’re perfect for each other.”**
Both of these phrases describe two people who are great together
- **“We’ve been married for... [10 years].”**

Conversation #2 – Ending a Relationship & Looking for Love Again

Gary and Jill are acquaintances who haven’t seen each other in several years. One day, they run into each other in a café. Let’s listen in on their conversation:

Gary: Hey Jill! Long time no see!

Jill: Gary, hi! How’ve you been?

Gary: Pretty good... I’m still working at the Boston Bank, but now I’m a manager.

Jill: That’s great! How’s Rachel doing?

Gary: Um... actually, we’re no longer together.

Jill: Ah... I’m sorry to hear that.

Gary: It’s OK. I mean, it was mutual... you know... we were always fighting, and we both needed some space, so we decided to take a break.

Jill: Yeah... it happens.

Gary: How about you? I heard through the grapevine that you were seeing some rich Italian businessman...?

(heard through the grapevine = heard indirectly, through other people)

Jill: Oh, no, that was just a fling; nothing serious. I’ve been single pretty much ever since I dumped Peter.

Gary: If you don’t mind my asking... what happened between you guys? I always thought you made the perfect couple.

Jill: We had great chemistry, but he was really jealous. Every time I smiled at another guy, he thought I was cheating on him.

Gary: Sounds awful.

Jill: Yeah, I was glad to be out of that relationship. Now I’m looking for someone who really shares my values... and has a sense of humor!

Conversation Vocabulary & Phrases

Jill discovers that Gary has separated from his ex-girlfriend, Rachel. Gary says “we’re no longer together,” which is a polite and diplomatic way to talk about a separation without saying anything bad about the other person. Here are some additional phrases:

Ending a relationship:

- **“We’re no longer together.”**
- **“We broke up.” / “We split up.”**
- **“The breakup was mutual.”**
this means that both people agreed to separate
- **“He/she dumped me.”**
this means that one person decided to end the relationship, but the other person didn’t want to
- **“Their marriage is on the rocks.” / “Their marriage is in trouble.”**
use these phrases to say when a marriage is having difficulties, and may end soon
- **“They got back together.”**
use this phrase when two people ended their relationship, but then re-started it



Why do relationships end? There are a number of common reasons. Gary mentions two of them: “we were always fighting” and “we needed some space” – meaning, we needed to be apart in order to preserve our emotional health. Here are some other common reasons for breakups:

Reasons for breaking up:

- **“We fell out of love.”**
This is the opposite of “falling in love” – it describes when two people naturally lose their romantic feelings for each other over time.
- **“He/she cheated on me.”**
when one person in the relationship has sex with someone else
- **“He/she had an affair.”**
when a married person has a prolonged sexual relationship with another person (who is not their husband/wife)
- **“We were always fighting.”**
- **“He was too jealous.”**
- **“She was too needy/clingy.”**
- **“I needed some space.”**

- **“It was a long-distance relationship, and it just didn't work out.”**
You can use the phrase “it just didn’t work out” to provide a general reason for the end of the relationship, without explaining any details.

Gary asks Jill about her relationship with a rich Italian businessman, but Jill says it was just a “fling,” which means a temporary relationship that is not very serious.

Describing non-serious relationships:

- **“It was just a fling.”**
- **“It was just a one-night stand.”**
This means you had sex with the person for one night only. (A fling can be longer, for example, a few days, weeks, or months)
- **“They're friends with benefits.”**
This describes two people who are friends and who have sex because they enjoy it, but who do not consider themselves to be in a real romantic relationship

At the end of the conversation, Jill talks about what she’s looking for in a man. You can say:

“I'm looking for someone...”

- **with a great sense of humor.**
- **with a sense of adventure.**
- **from a similar background.**
- **who shares my values.**
- **who's financially stable.**
- **who's open-minded, easygoing, intelligent, patient, caring, etc.**

Today’s speaking challenge is to tell me about a previous romantic relationship – how did you meet? When did you fall in love? What happened with the relationship – did you stay together, or did you break up? [Click here](http://www.espressoenglish.net) to leave a message, and I’ll send you tips and corrections.