

Lesson 23: Getting a Raise

Vance and Aaron are co-workers who have the same boss, Mr. Brown. Listen to Aaron give Vance advice on getting a raise, and answer these comprehension questions:

Listening Comprehension

- 1. Vance wants a raise because...**
 - a. he wants to go on vacation
 - b. he's going to get married
 - c. his wife wants to buy a house
- 2. He's been working for the company for...**
 - a. ten years
 - b. twelve years
 - c. twenty years
- 3. Mr. Brown can best be described as...**
 - a. arrogant
 - b. perfectionistic
 - c. strict
- 4. How does Aaron recommend approaching Mr. Brown?**
 - a. by giving him lots of compliments
 - b. carefully and indirectly
 - c. with clarity and confidence
- 5. Aaron asked for a raise because...**
 - a. another company offered him a better salary
 - b. his kids were going into university
 - c. he had worked there longer than anyone else
- 6. Vance is especially worried about getting fired because...**
 - a. he has a lot of student loans to pay off
 - b. he'll have difficulty getting another job
 - c. his wife is going to have a baby
- 7. What does he decide to do at the end of the dialogue?**
 - a. invite Mr. Brown to his house
 - b. talk to Mr. Brown today
 - c. send Mr. Brown an e-mail

Conversation Text

Vance: I really, really, need a raise. Melinda isn't **saying it to my face**, but she wants this house we looked at on Snowy Lane. She knows we **can't afford** it unless I get a raise.

Aaron: So talk to Mr. Brown and ask for one. You've been with this company for a decade now, and you've got **a great track record**. You're honest. You put in **overtime** when needed. You deserve a raise.

Vance: I know, I know. It's just that Mr. Brown is always **fussing** about how we need to cut costs around here. He's not exactly the type of boss that hands out raises like candy.

Aaron: Mr. Brown definitely doesn't tolerate any nonsense. But sometimes that's for the best.

Vance: How so?

Aaron: Mr. Brown respects men who are **upfront** and straightforward. He doesn't like **weaklings**. If you go into his office **hanging your head** and **beating around the bush** he's just gonna **kick you out**.

Vocabulary

saying it to my face = saying it directly to me

can't afford = won't have enough money to buy

a great track record = a great history of performance

overtime = working more than normal hours

fussing = complaining

upfront = direct

weakling = an informal word for someone who is weak

hanging your head = having your head down, as if ashamed

beating around the bush = saying words that are somewhat related, but not saying the main point

kick you out = expel, put you out by force

march = walk confidently

You have to march into that man's office with your chin up, look him in the eye, and ask with confidence. That's what I did.

Vance: And Mr. Brown gave you a raise?

Aaron: Not right away. At first he yelled at me and then he threw a lot of financial numbers around **and so on**. But **I held my ground**. My twins were about to go to college, with a double tuition bill **to boot**. So I let him know that unless I got a raise I would have to leave and find a job that would support my family better.

Vance: I can't believe you **pulled that off**.

Aaron: Look, Mr. Brown **isn't blind**. He knows the cost of living is going up. He also knows we **give it our all**. If you go in there asking for a raise to buy a new boat, then you don't have a chance. But if you explain that you want to buy a new home for your pregnant wife, I'm sure he'll understand.

Vance: The apartment Melinda and I are living in is pretty small – and when the baby arrives, space will be very **tight**.

Aaron: Then **march** into Mr. Brown's office and tell him just that. I promise you, he's a reasonable man. Sure he might **bark at** you, but **don't back down**.

Vocabulary

and so on = and more of this type of thing

I held my ground = I maintained my position and didn't give up

to boot = informal way to say "in addition"

pulled that off = managed to succeed in doing something difficult

isn't blind = is not unaware of what's happening

give it our all = give our best effort and energy

tight = in this context it means small and uncomfortable

bark at = speak harshly to someone

don't back down = don't change your position or belief

Vance: Hope I don't catch him on a bad day. I can just **picture** getting fired with a baby on the way.

Aaron: You're *not* going to get fired. Now go see Mr. Brown before he leaves for the day.

Vance: Well... **here goes**. Raise or no raise, I have to try. Melinda – and the baby – deserve it.

Aaron: That's the spirit! And don't be surprised if Mr. Brown **melts** a little and buys you **a housewarming present**.

Vocabulary

picture = imagine

here goes = an expression when the speaker is about to perform a bold, risky, or difficult action

melts = in this context, it refers to becoming less "hard" and showing more emotion

a housewarming present = a gift to celebrate moving into a new house

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Three words are not used.

backed down	give it your all	melting	to boot
beat around the bush	hanging their heads	picturing	track record
blind	held their ground	pulled it off	weaklings
can't afford	kicked out	say it to your face	

1. He doesn't have a good academic _____ - he's failed several classes and excelled in none.
2. Living in a small town is actually quite different from what I'd been _____.
3. Look, I'm not _____ to his faults - I just choose to accept him the way he is.
4. My manager has a hard time giving criticism; she prefers to _____ so she doesn't offend anyone.
5. People go on welfare when they _____ the basics for survival.
6. She leads the most intense aerobics class I've ever taken. It's not for _____, that's for sure.
7. He's been trying to publish a book for a long time, and this year he finally _____.
8. The kids, _____, confessed that they had done something wrong.
9. The winner of the contest will get an all-expenses-paid trip to Europe - and stay in five-star hotels, _____.
10. We tried to renegotiate the deal, but the other guys _____ and refused to compromise.
11. You shouldn't expect to succeed if you're not willing to _____.
12. She was _____ of college after drugs were found in her dorm room.

Speaking Task

Talk about a time when you did something with confidence, and describe another situation when you lacked confidence. What are some things or experiences that have helped you become more confident?

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. c
2. a
3. c
4. c
5. b
6. c
7. b

Vocabulary Quiz

1. track record
2. picturing
3. blind
4. beat around the bush
5. can't afford
6. weaklings
7. pulled it off
8. hanging their heads
9. to boot
10. held their ground
11. give it your all
12. kicked out