"Words let us say things we want to say and also things we would be better off not having said. They let us know the things we need to know, and also things we wish we hadn't. Language is a window into human nature, but it is also a fistula, an open wound through which we're exposed to an infectious world."

* Steven Pinker

This quote coming from “Words Don’t Mean What They Mean”, describes to the audience the overall fidelity and power that language holds. Saying that language is “a window into human nature”, meaning it exhibits and can convey a variety of significance, having multiple interpretations, entendres, etc. Yet, this sort of “power” that words have also can leave people confused and misunderstanding what the words may have meant, this can not only confuse whoever is processing the words but, can also offend them, demoralize them, and create a totally unintended negative response, as said by the above quote, it is “an open wound.” There are many words and phrases within the English language that are misinterpreted/misused on a constant basis and this issue can be the cause of problems both great and minor.

One such misuse of a word that is continuous, is one that causes fairly insignificant complications but, is consistently a nuisance in our culture. That is our misuse of “literally”. It’s actual definition is as follows:

**lit·er·al·ly** - *adverb* in a literal manner or sense; exactly.

And this definition is rarely how we as a society utilize this word, more often we use it as an intensifier, a means to emphasize upon the point, likely used in place of figuratively which, in any case, would be the *literal* opposite of what the word’s meaning is meant to be. The word becomes a paradox in and of itself , with the ability to *literally* convey either end of it’s own spectrum, making it into a confusing expression that may not lead to the total obliteration of a relationship but, act as a frustrating annoyance nonetheless.