



ESL Podcast 620 – Making Quick and Slow Decisions

GLOSSARY

vendor – a company that sells products or services to another company; supplier

* We could simplify our accounts payable if we reduced the number of vendors we work with. For example, we could order all our office supplies from just one company instead of from five different ones.

to go with – to choose to use a particular product or a particular service provider; to choose to have or use a certain thing

* We decided to go with orange paint for painting the dining room.

hesitant – pausing and delaying to do or decide something because one isn't sure

* After everything you just told me about that company, I'm hesitant to accept the job.

to ponder – to consider; to think about something very seriously for a long period of time

* How often do we stop and take time to ponder the meaning of life?

rash – done or decided very quickly, often so quickly that a mistake is made

* They made a rash decision to get married, only knowing each other for a few weeks.

to sit on (something) – to spend a lot of time thinking about something before one makes a decision

* When they make the job offer, don't respond right away. Sit on it for a few days and try to figure out whether it's what you really want.

of two minds – undecided; able to see the advantages and disadvantages of doing two different things, but unable to decide which one would be better

* Sandra is of two minds as to whether she should specialize in mechanical or electrical engineering.

to switch – to change from one thing to another; to stop using or doing one thing so that one can use or do another thing

* Why did you decide to switch from drinking coffee in the mornings to drinking tea?

sound – logical, rational, and well-thought-out

* Our school needs a sound policy on how to handle fights between students.



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split-second decision – a decision made very quickly, without having enough time to think about it

* When the car in front of him suddenly stopped, Jake made a split-second decision to turn to the right, and it probably saved his life.

debatable – open for discussion; something that people can have more than one opinion about and therefore should be discussed

* Scientists are now able to modify human genes, but whether or not that's a good thing is debatable.

ifs, ands, or buts – excuses; any reasons for not doing something

* Clean up your room right now! I don't want to hear any ifs, ands, or buts.

tentative – possible; uncertain; something that may be changed later; not yet finalized

* Here's a tentative budget for the project, but it might still change depending on the salaries negotiated for the new staff members.

set in stone – finalized; clearly determined and agreed upon; not able to be changed anymore

* Once we submit the grant proposal, everything is set in stone. There's no way to make changes after we send it in.

to revisit – to reconsider something after a period of time; to analyze or discuss something again at a future time

* After a few years of marriage, Corrine told her husband it was time for them to revisit how household chores were being shared.

to work out – to be successful or unsuccessful; to achieve particular results or solutions

* So, I hear you've been living with Gregory for the past few months. How's that working out?

to live with (something) – to be able to tolerate or handle a situation or arrangement, especially if it isn't one's preference; to accept a difficult or challenging situation

* I don't really like my new office, but I guess I can live with it.

raise – an increase in the amount of money someone earns by working in a particular job

* After one year in the position, Dennis decided to ask his boss for a raise.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Courteney mean when she says there are “sound reasons” for switching vendors?
 - a) The reasons have already been discussed in a large meeting.
 - b) The reasons for switching are loud and clear.
 - c) The reasons for making the change are clear and logical.
 2. Does Dante believe switching vendors can save money for the company?
 - a) Yes, he believes it will save money.
 - b) No, he believes it will cost more money.
 - c) He believes it might or might not save money.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

rash

The word “rash,” in this podcast, means done or decided very quickly, often so quickly that a mistake is made: “If we make a rash decision to sell our business, we’ll probably regret it later.” A “rash” is also a group of small red marks on one’s skin, especially if they are itchy: “Have you ever gotten a rash from touching poison oak?” Or, “Your baby will probably get diaper rash if you don’t start changing his diaper more frequently.” Finally, the phrase “a rash of (something)” refers to a large number of things that happen in a short period of time, especially if they are negative, unwanted things: “Police are concerned about the recent rash of violent attacks in the downtown area.”

to work out

In this podcast, the phrase “to work out” means to be successful or unsuccessful, or to achieve particular results or solutions: “Why didn’t your relationship with Bobbi work out? Everyone thought the two of you would get married and live happily ever after.” The phrase “to work out” also means to exercise, especially at the gym: “She tries to work out at the gym after work at least four days a week.” The phrase “to work out” can also mean to find the solution to something: “I tried and tried, but I just couldn’t work out the solution to the math problems our teacher assigned.” Or, “It won’t be easy to pay all our bills on just one salary, but I’m sure we’ll be able to work it out.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In many parts of the United States, anyone who sells “merchandise” (products), “vehicles” (cars, trucks), or other “property” (things that can be owned) must have a “seller’s permit,” or permission from the government to sell things. The seller can apply for a “temporary” (for a short period of time) seller’s permit if he or she will be selling for only a short period of time, or a “regular” (basic; normal) seller’s permit if he or she “anticipates” (believes that he or she will have) “ongoing” (continuing over time) sales. People and businesses who sell things in more than one place must “display” (show to other people) a seller’s permit at each “site” (location).

A seller’s permit is especially important in states that charge a “sales tax” (money collected by the government as a percentage of the sales price of most products and/or services). A seller’s permit allows the “holder” (the person or business with the permit) to buy goods “for resale” (with the intention of reselling them) without paying sales tax. It also helps the government “keep track of” (monitor; observe) which sellers should be collecting sales tax from customers and then sending that money to the government.

To “apply for” (request; ask for) a seller’s permit, the “applicant” (the person who is requesting the permit) must fill out an application “form” (a document with blank spaces where one can provide information) with basic information about the business and the type(s) of “goods” (products) that will be sold. The applicant may need to attach some personal identification or the “business license” (a document showing that the business has been registered with the government) so that the permit reviewers can “verify” (determine whether something is true or correct) the information on the application.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 620: Making Quick and Slow Decisions.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 620. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com. Download a Learning Guide for this episode that contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, comprehension questions, culture notes, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is called "Making Quick and Slow Decisions." It's a dialogue between Courteney and Dante; they're going to be talking about some business decisions that they need to make. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Courteney: Which of these vendors do you think we should go with?

Dante: I'm really hesitant to make a decision until we've pondered the options a little longer. We don't want to make any rash decisions.

Courteney: We've sat on this for long enough, don't you think? I know you're of two minds about whether we should be switching vendors in the middle of the year, but I think it's the right move. We had sound reasons for doing this, remember?

Dante: Yes, yes, I know that it wasn't a split-second decision, but whether it'll really save us money is debatable.

Courteney: I have to disagree with you there. We've both seen the reports and I don't think there are any ifs, ands, or buts about it. We're going to save money.

Dante: Okay, I'm willing to make a tentative decision to go with GreatDeal Corp. as our new vendor, as long as that decision isn't set in stone. We'll revisit this decision in six months to see if they're working out.

Courteney: I can live with that. Now, can we discuss my raise?



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Dante: Raise? That's definitely something I'll need to ponder a lot more.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Courteney asking Dante, "Which of these vendors do you think we should go with?" A "vendor" (vəndər) is a company that sells things to other companies instead of directly to you, the consumer. So if you are a business and you need to buy paper, you would buy paper from another company that makes paper. So, that's when a vendor is. At the end of Courteney's question she says, "Which of these vendors do you think we should go with?" This is an interesting, two-word phrasal expression; "to go with" means to choose a particular a particular product or a particular service, to choose to have or use this thing. You can use this for almost any case where there is a choice between two or more things. Someone says, "Do you like the chicken or the beef?" and you say, "Oh, I'll go with the beef." That is what I am selecting.

So, Courteney wants to know which vendor they are selecting. Dante says, "I'm really hesitant to make a decision until we've pondered the options a little longer." "I'm really hesitant" means that I don't want to do something. I don't want to make this decision because I'm not sure; I need to think about it some more. "Hesitant" comes from the verb "to hesitate" (hɪˈzɪtət) which means the same thing, not to do something. There's an expression: "He who hesitates is lost," meaning if you hesitate often you will lose the opportunity to do something. This is especially true when it comes to romance and trying to find a romantic partner. If you see a beautiful woman across the room and you hesitate, well, someone else may get to her first. Unless, of course, she's married; in that case you should find another room!

Dante is hesitant to make a decision until we've pondered the options. "To ponder" (ˈpɒndər) is another way of saying to think about something very seriously, to consider something. He wants to ponder the options a little longer – a little more time. He says, "We don't want to make any rash decisions." Something that is "rash" (ræʃ) is something that is done or decided very quickly, so quickly that you may easily make a mistake. That's "rash" as an adjective. "Rash" has some other meanings in English, and those you can find in this episode's Learning Guide.

Well, Dante is hesitant but Courteney is not. She says, "We've sat on this for long enough, don't you think?" "To sit on (something)" here means to spend a lot of time thinking about something before you make your decision. It can also be



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used sometimes to mean to purposely not take any action to prevent something from happening. So your friend asks his mother if the two of you can go to a movie, and your friend's mother says, "Well, I need to think about it. I'll tell you tomorrow." We could say she's sitting on that decision; she's not making the decision because she really doesn't want you two to be going to the movies together.

Well, Courteney thinks they have sat on the decision about the new vendor long enough. She says, "I know you're of two minds about whether we should be switching vendors in the middle of the year." "To be of two minds" means to be undecided, to be able to see the positive things – the advantages of one option but also the advantages of another option and you can't decide. That's to be of two minds. "To switch" means to change from one thing to another, to stop using this and start using that. "I used to jog outside, and then I switched to a treadmill," which is a machine that goes around that allows you to run or walk inside. That's to switch.

Courteney says Dante is of two minds about whether they should be switching vendors (changing vendors) in the middle of the year. "But, she says, "I think it's the right move (the right decision; the correct decision). We had sound reasons for doing this," she says. When you say, as an adjective, something is "sound," you mean it's logical, it's rational, it is something that you have thought about for a long time and it makes sense, it's correct.

Dante says, "Yes, yes, I know that it wasn't a split-second decision." A "split-second decision" is a decision made very quickly, without having a lot of time to think about it. Dante is saying that this decision was not a split-second decision. But, he says, he's not sure if it will really save them money. He says, "whether it'll really save us money is debatable." Something that is "debatable" is something that you can have more than one opinion about; there isn't a definite answer, different opinions could be correct; it is something that you need to discuss more. "Debatable" comes from the verb "to debate," which is to argue or talk about something with two people having different opinions.

Courteney says, "I have to disagree with you there." The "there" here means with what you just said. "I have to disagree with you there. We've both seen the reports (the information) and I don't think there are any ifs, ands, or buts about it." This is an interesting expression: "there are no ifs, ands, or buts about it." This means that there are no reasons for not doing something, there aren't any reasons for not doing something, there're no excuses. You may be going to the store with your friends, and your husband says, "I want you home by 10:00



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tonight. No ifs, ands, or buts about it.” Of course, who listens to husbands, right?

Courteney says that they are going to save money, and there are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. Dante says, “Okay, I’m willing to make a tentative decision.” Something that is “tentative” is something that isn’t yet final; it’s still something you could change later. It’s almost like a temporary decision; you’ll make a final decision later. Dante says that they are going to go with (they are going to select) GreatDeal Corp. (GreatDeal Corporation) as our new vendor, as long as that decision isn’t set in stone. The expression “to be set (set) in stone” means to be final, to be clearly determined, clearly agreed upon. You can’t change it anymore – to be set in stone. He says, “We’ll revisit this decision in six months.” “To revisit” in this case means we will think about this decision again; we will analyze, discuss, and consider our decision again in six months. Dante wants to see if this new vendor is going to work out. “To work out” is a two-word phrasal verb that means to be successful, to do what they say they are going to do. This actually is an expression that has different meanings in English, and those are, of course, in the Learning Guide.

Courteney says, “I can live with that.” “To live with (something)” in this case means to be able to accept a situation even though it’s difficult or it’s not exactly what you want; to be able to handle a situation, we might also say to be able to tolerate to a situation. Courteney says, “I can live with that (I can live with that decision). Now, can we discuss my raise?” A “raise” (raise), as a noun, in this case means an increase in the amount of money that you make – that a company pays you to do a particular job.

Courteney wants a raise. Dante says, “Raise? That’s definitely something I’ll need to ponder a lot more,” meaning he is not going to make a decision about giving her more money until he has more time to think about it. Sounds like my boss!

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

[start of dialogue]

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Courteney: I can live with that. Now, can we discuss my raise?

Dante: Raise? That's definitely something I'll need to ponder a lot more.

[end of dialogue]

Who's the best podcast scriptwriter in the world? There are no ifs, and, or buts about it, it's Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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