



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

GLOSSARY

to get (someone) back – to convince or persuade someone to resume a romantic relationship that has been broken off; to begin dating someone again after he or she has tried to end the romantic relationship

* Toyoshi tried to get his ex-girlfriend back by playing guitar and singing outside her bedroom window late at night.

lost cause – something that will be impossible to do, so one shouldn't even try

* After the lasagna burned and the dessert spilled on the floor, eating dinner at home was a lost cause, so they decided to go to a restaurant instead.

to break up – to end a romantic relationship; to indicate that one no longer wants to date another person

* Tomas and Laurel decided to break up because he wants to have kids, but she doesn't.

to take (someone) back – to agree to give someone a second chance in a romantic relationship; to decide to begin dating someone again after one has broken up with that person

* There's nothing that would make me take you back, now that I know you cheated on me!

to prove (someone) wrong – to demonstrate that someone is incorrect

* Shelly thinks she's smarter than Geraldo, but he's going to prove her wrong by studying hard and getting 100% on the next test.

to let bygones be bygones – to ignore or forget about bad things that have happened in the past, especially when they are hurtful or painful things that another person did to oneself

* What you said really hurt my feelings, but I've decided to let bygones be bygones. Let's be friends again.

to dupe – to fool someone; to trick someone; to make someone believe something that isn't true

* How did you get duped into buying that fake diamond ring?

empty promise – something one says one will do, but without really meaning to do it

* The kids said that if we got a dog, they'd feed it, wash it, and take it for walks, but those were just empty promises, so now we have to do all the work.



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

within reason – with moderation; without reaching extremes; without a very small or very large amount of something; as long as something remains reasonable

* Her parents have offered to help them out financially within reason, but they probably won't be able to loan them more than a few hundred dollars.

to rake up the past – to talk about things that happened previously, making other people remember things that might otherwise have been forgotten or ignored

* A lot of things happened when we were young, but sometimes it's best not to rake up the past and instead just focus on the future.

sincere – genuine; truthful and honest; really meaning what one is saying or doing

* If you give her a sincere apology, I'm sure she'll forgive you.

to be crazy about (someone) – to like or love someone very much; to have very strong feelings of affection and romantic attraction to another person

* I've been crazy about you since the first moment I saw you. Will you marry me?

to make the effort – to try very hard to do something, even if it isn't successful

* Our boss said he really appreciated the way we made the effort to increase sales, even though we weren't successful.

pride comes before a fall – a phrase meaning that if one is too confident in one's abilities to do something, one will fail, because one isn't really that good or talented

* Joerg seems really confident that his new restaurant will be a success, but pride comes before a fall. We'll see what happens.

to beg (someone) for (something) – to desperately ask someone to do or give something, especially when it is very unlikely and that other person has all the power to make the decision about it

* Noemi begged her boss for a raise, but there just isn't enough money in the company's budget this year.

mercy – compassion and forgiveness; a willingness to be kind to another person when he or she doesn't really deserve it

* The general showed mercy to the prisoner, refusing to kill him.



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Yuji mean when he says he's going to get April back?
 - a) He's looking forward to the spring.
 - b) He wants to start dating his girlfriend again.
 - c) He's going to get revenge for what April did to him.
2. What does Grace mean when she says, "Pride comes before a fall"?
 - a) April broke up with Yuji because he was too proud.
 - b) Yuji became very proud in the late summer.
 - c) Yuji shouldn't be as confident as he is.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

cause

The phrase "lost cause," in this podcast, means something that will be impossible to do, so one shouldn't even try: "Some people believe that trying to discover the true meaning is a lost cause." The phrase "root cause" or "underlying cause" is used to talk about the real reason why something happens: "The root cause of poverty is a lack of education." The phrase "to further the cause" means to help other people fight against an important social problem: "She dedicated her life to furthering the cause, helping women get the right to vote." Finally, the phrase "with good cause" means justified, or with one's feelings or actions being reasonable: "In this economy, everyone is worried about losing their job, with good cause."

within reason

In this podcast, the phrase "within reason" means with moderation and without reaching extremes, or as long as something remains reasonable: "The doctor says that it's okay to eat cookies and candy within reason, but don't eat too much of that kind of food." The phrase "no reason" is sometimes used to answer a question when one doesn't want to tell the other person the real answer: "A: Why didn't you come to class this morning? B: No reason." The phrase "no rhyme or reason" means without any organization or logic: "The books were shelved with no rhyme or reason, making it very hard to find what you're looking for." Finally, the phrase "it stands to reason" is used to talk about something that is very logical and should be understood rationally: "It stands to reason that inflation will rise if the government prints too much money."



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

CULTURE NOTE

When Americans are “expecting a child” (pregnant and waiting for the birth), they spend a lot of time “picking” (choosing) names. Some people pick “family names” (names of relatives); others use “baby name books,” which are like dictionaries of names that they can read through until they find ones they like.

Sometimes the names of months are used for girls’ names, as in this episode of ESL Podcast. For example, you might meet girls and women named April, May, and June, although you probably won’t meet many people named after other months of the year. Usually these girls are born in the month they’re named after, but not always.

The “popularity” (how much something is liked and used or chosen) of names changes over time. In 2008, these were the 10 most popular names for American girls and boys, based on data from the Social Security Administration:

Rank	Boys	Girls
1	Jacob	Emma
2	Michael	Isabella
3	Ethan	Emily
4	Joshua	Madison
5	Daniel	Ava
6	Alexander	Olivia
7	Anthony	Sophia
8	William	Abigail
9	Christopher	Elizabeth
10	Matthew	Chloe

Boys’ names that end in the “an” or “en” sounds are becoming increasingly popular. For example, many boys are being named Aiden, Jackson, Landon, Braden, Gavin, Owen, etc. Among girls’ names, Neveah is interesting because it has become “quite” (very) popular over a short period of time. Neveah is “heaven” (paradise; where God lives and where good people go after death) spelled backwards.

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



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 586: Getting a Girlfriend or Boyfriend Back.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 586. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode that will contain lots of good information to help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is a dialogue between Grace and Yuji. It's called "Getting a Girlfriend or Boyfriend Back," meaning after you have separated – broken up, split up, you no longer are boyfriend and girlfriend – and then you want to get that person back into a relationship. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Grace: What are you doing?

Yuji: I'm working on a plan to get April back.

Grace: I think that's a lost cause. You guys broke up three months ago. There's no way she'll take you back.

Yuji: Watch me prove you wrong. When I tell April about all of the ways I'm going to change and to make her happy, she'll let bygones be bygones.

Grace: You're dreaming. She won't be duped by a bunch of empty promises.

Yuji: They're not empty promises. I really am going to change, within reason.

Grace: Do you really think April is going to forget all of the things you've done to her in the past?

Yuji: I'm not going to rake up the past. I'm going to show her the new me, and she'll know I'm sincere. After all, she used to be crazy about me. I'm sure it's just a matter of me making the effort.



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

Grace: Pride comes before a fall, you know. I think you'd have a better chance if you got down on your knees and begged her for mercy!

[end of dialogue]

Grace begins by asking Yuji, "What are you doing?" Yuji says, "I'm working on a plan to get April back." April was his girlfriend. "To get (someone) back" means to convince or persuade someone to continue a romantic relationship that you had stopped or the other person had stopped.

Grace says, "I think that's a lost cause." A "cause" (cause), as a noun, can be something that you are fighting for, something that you want to change about the world. Your cause could be world peace or ending world hunger. That would be a cause. The expression "a lost cause" means that you will never be able to accomplish that; it's impossible for you to do. We use this in daily conversation when we see someone trying to do something and we want to tell them that it would be impossible to do that; we might say, "That's a lost cause." Grace thinks that trying to get April back is a lost cause. She says, "You guys (meaning you two) broke up three months ago." "To break up" means to end a romantic relationship. It's a phrasal verb meaning you no longer want to be with this other person. "There's no way," Grace says, "April will take you back." "To take (someone) back" is the opposite of "to get (someone) back" in that you are the one who agrees to resume the relationship. So if I want to get my girlfriend back she would have to take me back; that is, accept that we will continue the relationship.

Yuji doesn't think this is a lost cause. He says, "Watch me prove you wrong," meaning observe me, watch as I prove you wrong. "To prove someone wrong" means to demonstrate that the other person is incorrect – is not right about something. Yuji says, "When I tell April about all the ways I'm going to change and to make her happy, she'll let bygones be bygones." So, Yuji's plan is to tell April, his ex-girlfriend, how he's going to change. This, of course, is something that men often promise to women: "I'll change; I'll be a different person; I'll make you happy." If this happens, Yuji says, if he tells her this, then April will let bygones be bygones. "To let bygones (bygones) be bygones" means to ignore or forget about the bad things that have happened in the past, especially if they are painful things that someone did to you. So for example, you may send a poem to your girlfriend, and your girlfriend says, "Oh, thank you for the poem. Luis also wrote me a nice poem yesterday." Well, that could be something that would be very damaging – something that would hurt you very much. It hurt me – but this is just an example, okay?



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

So, Yuji hopes that April will forget about the things, probably the bad things that he did to her. Grace says, “You’re dreaming,” meaning you’re imagining something that will not happen. “She won’t be duped by a bunch of empty promises.” Grace is saying that April won’t be duped. “To dupe” (dupe) means to fool someone, to make someone believe something that isn’t true, to trick someone. When we say, “I won’t be duped,” you mean I won’t let someone else trick me. “She won’t be duped by a bunch of empty promises.” “A bunch of” means a lot of – many. A “promise” is when you say to someone I will do this in the future. An “empty promise” is something you say you will do, but you aren’t really going to do it. So in this case, poor Yuji, according to Grace, isn’t going to really do the things he says he’s going to do to change.

Yuji says, “They’re not empty promises. I’m really going to change, within reason.” The expression “within reason” means something that isn’t very small but isn’t very large, with moderation, without going to extremes. You might say, for example: “I want to help my friend who doesn’t have a job. I will help him financially, within reason,” meaning I can’t give him 100,000 dollars; I’m going to help him but there is a limit to how much I can help him. That’s really the meaning here. When someone says “within reason,” often they mean there are certain limits to what I can do. In this case, Yuji says he’s really going to change, within reason, which makes us think he really isn’t going to change very much. “Reason,” as well as the word “cause,” which we used earlier, have additional meanings in English; look at our Learning Guide for more explanations.

Grace says, “Do you really think April is going to forget all of the things you’ve done to her in the past?” Yuji says, “I’m not going to rake up the past.” “To rake (rake) up the past” means to talk about things that happened previously; to make other people remember things they might have forgotten or ignored, usually bad things that happened in the past. The verb “rake” is also used when we are collecting leaves in the autumn – in the fall. When they fall from the tree, you want to get them off of your lawn – off of your front yard, and so you use something called a rake, it’s sort of like a broom, and you rake up the leaves. Well in this case, he’s talking about raking up the past. Taking things out of the past – disturbing them, if you will, so the other person will remember them.

Yuji does not want to do this. He says, “I’m going to show her the new me, and she’ll know I’m sincere.” Boy, does Yuji not understand women! “To be sincere” (sincere) means to be honest, to be truthful, to really mean what you are saying or doing. He thinks that he can show April the new version of him. He says, “After all, she used to be crazy about me.” “To be crazy about (someone)”



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

means to like or love someone very much, usually in a romantic way. You can also be crazy about a thing. I'm crazy about baseball; I love to watch baseball. Not as much as I love being with my wife, of course, though it's close! Yuji says, "I'm sure it's just a matter of me making the effort." "It's just a matter of" means the only thing I have to do is make an effort, or make the effort. "To make the effort" means to try very hard to do something, even if you are not successful.

Grace says, "Pride comes before a fall, you know." This is an old expression. Pride, meaning someone who is very confident in themselves – who thinks that they are great, comes before, is something that happens to someone right before there is a fall, when they are unsuccessful, when they fail. It's basically a warning to people who think that they are great, who are very proud of what they do that if they aren't careful they will fail – they will have a fall. Grace says, "I think you'd have a better chance if you got down on your knees and begged her for mercy!" "To get down on your knees" means to kneel, to put both knees on the ground. Grace is saying that Yuji should kneel and beg April for mercy. "To beg (someone) for (something)" means to ask someone to do something, especially when it is unlikely that the other person will do it because the other person has all of the power. "To beg (someone)" means to ask them desperately. Well here, Grace is suggesting Yuji will have to beg April for "mercy," which here means forgiveness, compassion. To be nice to another person is mercy (mercy). Sometimes when little children – boys, I mean – are fighting, and one boy, for example grabs the arm of another boy and puts it behind his back to hurt him, the other person might say, "Mercy!" meaning be nice to me; don't keep hurting me. Grace thinks that April is going to have to have a lot of mercy in order to take Yuji back.

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

[start of dialogue]

Grace: What are you doing?

Yuji: I'm working on a plan to get April back.

Grace: I think that's a lost cause. You guys broke up three months ago. There's no way she'll take you back.

Yuji: Watch me prove you wrong. When I tell April about all of the ways I'm going to change and to make her happy, she'll let bygones be bygones.



ESL Podcast 586 – Getting a Girlfriend/Boyfriend Back

Grace: You're dreaming. She won't be duped by a bunch of empty promises.

Yuji: They're not empty promises. I really am going to change, within reason.

Grace: Do you really think April is going to forget all of the things you've done to her in the past?

Yuji: I'm not going to rake up the past. I'm going to show her the new me, and she'll know I'm sincere. After all, she used to be crazy about me. I'm sure it's just a matter of me making the effort.

Grace: Pride comes before a fall, you know. I think you'd have a better chance if you got down on your knees and begged her for mercy!

[end of dialogue]

We're all crazy about our wonderful scriptwriter here, 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.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan, copyright 2010 by the Center for Educational Development.