



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

GLOSSARY

to wake up – to awaken; to stop sleeping

* If I didn't use an alarm clock, I probably wouldn't wake up before noon.

out of it – unaware of what is happening around oneself, often because one is thinking about something else

* You'll probably feel out of it for a few hours after the surgery until the anesthesia wears off.

to sleep on the job – to sleep at work; to sleep while one is being paid to work

* We've caught Jorge sleeping on the job a few times since his son was born. Apparently the baby is keeping him awake at night.

literally – with the actual meaning of the words, not just a figurative (symbolic) meaning

* Were you literally working on your essay all night, or is that just your way of saying that you spent a lot of time on it?

So what? – an informal phrase meaning "I don't care" or to show that one thinks whatever another person has said is very unimportant or irrelevant

* - I can't believe Julius died his hair green. It looks horrible!
- So what? It's only hair, and it will grow back.

sluggish – slow and without energy, often because one is very tired

* Lyndon is always sluggish in the morning until he drinks a cup of coffee.

to fall down on the job – to not meet expectations; to do poorly; to not do all the things one is supposed to do

* Seboyeta used to be a good employee, but lately she has been falling down on the job, not meeting deadlines and forgetting to call her clients.

hyper – overly excited, with a lot of energy and enthusiasm

* When kids eat too much sugar, they get hyper and start misbehaving.

hard-working – trying very hard to do something well; making one's best effort

* Aziza doesn't have a lot of experience, but he's very hard-working, so he's one of our most valued employees.



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

as (something) as the next guy – a phrase used to compare people, showing that someone is normal and likes or has something at least as much as other people do

* Dennis likes hot weather as much as the next guy, but after three weeks of 100-degree weather, he was ready for summer to end.

to jump through hoops – to work very hard to make a good impression and make someone else happy

* Aledo is tired of jumping through hoops to make a fancy dinner for his family every evening, so from now on he's just going to make simple meals.

don't make me laugh – a rude, informal phrase used when one doesn't believe what another person has said and thinks it is ridiculous

* You think you can win the beauty contest? Don't make me laugh! Have you seen a picture of yourself recently?

slacker – a person who is very lazy, doesn't do anything without being asked, and doesn't have clear goals

* That boy is a slacker and will never have a good job! Why don't you date someone who knows what he wants to be when he grows up?

to learn by (one's) example – to learn how to do something by watching another person do it; to learn through observation

* Our children will learn by our example, so we have to be careful about what we say and do in front of them.

energetic – with a lot of energy; without becoming tired

* Dawson felt really energetic when he woke up on Saturday, so he spent the entire day cleaning the garage, mowing the lawn, and fixing the roof.

productive – getting a lot of work done in a short period of time; using one's time efficiently to produce desired results

* Ripley is a very productive worker who can assemble our products twice as quickly as any of our other employees.

a pain in the neck – someone who is very annoying and irritating

* Krissy's new boss is a pain in the neck who insists on everything being done perfectly.



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Elias mean when he says, “I can be a little out of it”?
 - a) It’s okay if he’s behind schedule today.
 - b) It’s okay if he doesn’t work all 8 hours today.
 - c) It’s okay if he doesn’t concentrate well today.
 2. What does Elias mean when he asks, “Why are you so hyper?”
 - a) Why are you so full of energy?
 - b) Why are you so critical?
 - c) Why are you so negative?
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

out of it

The phrase “out of it,” in this podcast, means unaware of what is happening around oneself, often because one is thinking about something else: “Betty seemed out of it during the interview.” The phrase “out of (something)” means without anything left because it has all been used: “We’re out of mustard and bananas. Please add them to the grocery shopping list.” The phrase “out of order” means not working properly when a machine is broken: “Three of the four toilets are out of order.” The phrase “out of sight” describes something one cannot see because it is too far away or hidden: “They watched the boat pull away until it was out of sight.” Finally, the phrase “out of sight, out of mind,” means that something is forgotten if it isn’t seen: “If you don’t have cookies in your kitchen, you won’t want to eat them. Out of sight, out of mind.”

so what

In this podcast, the informal phrase “so what?” is used to show that one thinks whatever another person has said is very unimportant or irrelevant: “Misty was really worried about the stain on her dress, but her boyfriend said, ‘So what? You can always buy another one.’” The informal phrase “so long” is used to say goodbye: “I’m leaving now. So long!” The phrase “like so” is used when one is showing someone how to do something: “Cut the carrot into small sticks, like so.” Finally, the phrase “and so on” means et cetera, and is used at the end of a list to show that other things could be added, too: “You’ll need to pack shirts, shorts, underwear, sandals, pajamas, and so on.”



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

CULTURE NOTE

One character in American literature is famous for his “laziness” (lack of energy and motivation, not wanting to do anything): Rip Van Winkle. American author Washington Irving wrote a short story called Rip Van Winkle about a man “of the same name” (with the same name as the title of the book) who was very lazy.

Rip Van Winkle lived in a “village” (small town) where everyone liked him, except his wife. She “nagged” (repeatedly ask someone to do something) him all the time. He was a “henpecked husband” (a man who is treated badly by his demanding wife). One day, to get away from the nagging, he walked into the mountains. He met some “ghosts” (the spirits of people who have died) and they offered him some “liquor” (alcohol). When he drank it, he fell asleep. When he woke up, he walked back to the village, but then found out that twenty years had “gone by” (passed). His wife had “passed away” (died) and his friends had died or left the village. One person, his daughter, recognizes him and he spends the rest of his life with her, “as lazy as ever” (as lazy as he has always been). Other henpecked husbands in the village wish they could be as lucky as Rip Van Winkle and find a way to “be free of” (not have) a nagging wife.

Sometimes Americans use the phrase “to be a Rip Van Winkle” to describe someone who suddenly wakes up and discovers that things have changed a lot. For example, someone who spends 80 hours working each week might be a Rip Van Winkle if he suddenly realizes that his children are almost fully grown and he hardly knows them because he has spent so much time away from them.

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



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 636: Being Lazy and Energetic.

This is ESL Podcast episode 636. 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 that contains a complete transcript of this episode. The Guide will help you learn English faster – and give you bigger muscles!

This episode is a dialogue between Carmen and Elias. It uses a lot of vocabulary related to the ideas of laziness and being energetic. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Carmen: Wake up! You're supposed to be working.

Elias: Shhh, I'm trying to sleep. The boss is out of the office today, so I consider it a holiday. Today, I can be a little out of it if I want to be.

Carmen: Out of it? You're sleeping on the job – literally!

Elias: So what? Aren't you feeling a little tired on a Monday morning?

Carmen: I admit I'm a little sluggish, but that's no reason to fall down on the job. We both have work to get done and I'm doing it.

Elias: What's wrong with you? Why are you so hyper? I'm as hard working as the next guy, but I'm not going to jump through hoops when the boss is away.

Carmen: You, hard working? Don't make me laugh! You'd better get back to work or when the boss gets back, he'll call you a slacker again.

Elias: Okay, I'm learning by your example. I'm now as energetic and productive as you are.

Carmen: Yeah? Doing what?

Elias: Telling my co-worker she's a pain in the neck!



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

[end of dialogue]

Carmen begins by saying, “Wake up! You’re supposed to be working.” “Wake up” means stop sleeping; awaken. Elias says, “Shhh, I’m trying to sleep.” “Shhh” means, of course, stop making noise. Elias says he’s trying to sleep. “The boss is out of the office today (meaning his boss is not there), so I consider it a holiday. Today, I can be a little out of it if I want to be.” “To be out of it” means that you are not aware of what is happening around you; you’re thinking of something else. You may be talking to your wife or your husband or your child and the other person doesn’t seem to be paying attention; they’re thinking about something else. You ask them a question and they said, “Oh, I’m sorry. I was out of it. I wasn’t paying attention.” There are some other meanings for this expression, and those can be found in the Learning Guide.

Elias says he’s a little out of it. Carmen says, “Out of it? You’re sleeping on the job – literally!” The expression “to sleep on the job” means that you are sleeping instead of working; that’s the most obvious or literal meaning – the actual meaning of the words is the meaning of “literally.” But also we use this expression to mean someone isn’t doing what they’re supposed be doing at work; they’re not doing their job; they’re not paying attention.

Elias says, “So what?” “So what?” is an informal phrase meaning I don’t care, or it’s used to show that you think whatever the other person is talking about is not very important. Elias says, “So what? Aren’t you feeling a little tired on a Monday morning?” Carmen says, “I admit I’m a little sluggish.” “To be sluggish” (sluggish) means to be moving very slowly, without a lot of energy. She says, “that’s no reason to fall down on the job.” The expression “to fall down on the job” means to do poorly, not to do what you are expected to do. Carmen says, “We both have work to get done and I’m doing it.” So, Elias is obviously the lazy one in this dialogue and Carmen is the energetic one. She has lots of energy; she works hard even on a Monday morning.

Elias then says, “What’s wrong with you? Why are you so hyper?” “To be hyper” (hyper) means that you are very excited, overly excited we might say, too excited. You have lots of energy, lots of enthusiasm, but it’s almost too much. We often say that about, for example, young children, but it could also be said about an adult. Not about me, I am never overly energetic – trust me! Elias says, “I’m as hard working as the next guy, but I’m not going to jump through hoops when the boss is away.” The expression “to be hard working” means that you work hard; you are very serious about your job, you make sure you do the best job that you can do. Elias says he is as hard working as the next guy. This



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

expression, “to be as (something – in this case hard working) as the next guy,” or “to be as lazy as the next guy,” is used to compare people, showing that you are normal – you are like other people; you don’t have anything less about that quality than other people do, you might even have more of it. So, when Elias says he is as hard working as the next guy, he means that he works just as hard as everyone else. “But,” he says, “I’m not going to jump through hoops when the boss is away.” The expression “to jump through hoops” (hoops) means to work very hard to make someone, usually your boss, happy. The word “hoop” refers to something that is basically a big circle with a hole in it. In basketball, for example, the hoop is what you put the ball into and through. Sometimes we’d say that we’re going to go play hoops, or play some hoops; that means we’re going to play some basketball. And when I say “we,” I mean other people because I don’t really play basketball. Although, I was on my seventh grade basketball team in junior high school, so if the Los Angeles Lakers, our professional basketball team here, ever needs some help, I’m there to help them!

Elias is saying that he’s not going to jump through hoops. This expression actually refers to a different kind of hoop. You may have heard of Hula Hoops, where you have a round circle of plastic that you put and you move your hips very quickly, and the circle – the hoop goes around your body. We also use those kind of hoops, for example, in animal shows, especially dog shows. You would make the dog jump through the hoop. Well, that’s what Elias says he’s not willing to do; he’s not willing to put on a show – he’s not willing to perform for anyone if the boss isn’t there, because there’s no one to perform for.

Carmen says, “You, hard working? Don’t make me laugh!” When someone says “don’t make me laugh” they’re saying that they don’t believe you. It’s a rude, informal phrase that is used to indicate that the other person is being ridiculous, that they are saying something stupid that you don’t believe. Carmen says, “You’d better get back to work (you better start working again) or when the boss gets back, he’ll call you a slacker again.” A “slacker” (slacker) is a lazy person, someone who doesn’t do anything unless you tell them or ask them, someone who doesn’t really have a clear goal in his life, someone who doesn’t work hard. It’s an insulting term to use about someone.

Elias says, “Okay, I’m learning by example,” meaning I’m observing you; I’m learning by your example and I am getting that information and it is changing the way I think or what I do – I’m learning by your example. What is he learning? Well, he says he’s now as energetic and productive as Carmen is. “To be energetic” means to not become tired, to have lots of energy. “Productive” means you get a lot of things done in a very short amount of time – a short period



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

of time; you use your time very effectively. We all want to be productive when we're at work – or at least we should want to be productive!

Carmen says, "Yeah? Doing what?" meaning how are you being productive. Elias says, "Telling my co-worker she's a pain in the neck!" His "co-worker" is someone that he works with, in other words Carmen, and he's being productive by telling Carmen that she's a pain in the neck. "A pain in the neck" is someone who is very annoying, very irritating, someone who bothers you. It could also be a thing; you could say "This class I'm taking is a pain in the neck." It's difficult; it bothers me; I don't like it. So, Elias ends our dialogue by insulting Carmen, saying that she is a pain in the neck.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]



ESL Podcast 636 – Being Lazy and Energetic

The script for this episode was written by the energetic, productive, never a slacker, 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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