



ESL Podcast 457 – Apologizing for a Bad Date

GLOSSARY

to blow (something) – to fail; to not be able to do something; to do something very poorly

* She blew the interview and now there's no way she'll get the job offer.

to walk out on (someone) – to leave another person, especially at a place where the two people went together, because one is angry with the other person

* Did you hear that Gavin walked out on his wife and now he wants a divorce?

to make a good impression – to make another person think that one is good, intelligent, successful, or attractive, especially when one meets him or her for the first time

* Cody is wearing his best suit because he wants to make a good impression when he walks into the bank to ask for a loan.

to flounder – to not know what to do or say; to do or say all the wrong things

* He started floundering when his girlfriend's father asked him about their plans for marriage.

to liven (something) up – to make something more exciting, interesting, or entertaining

* Let's turn on some music and liven up this party!

carried away – doing too much of something so that it becomes a bad thing; taking something to an extreme or doing something in excess

* Last week we went shopping and got carried away, spending much more money than we had planned.

to hang up – to put part of a telephone into its holder to end a phone call

* Too many of our customers hang up while waiting for our sales representatives to speak with them.

atrocious – very bad; horrible; awful; terrible

* This food is atrocious! I'll never come to this restaurant again.

hold on one second – a phrase used to ask someone to wait, pause, or stop doing something for a short period of time

* Can you hold on one second so that I can look something up on my computer?

to start in on (something) – to begin to do or use something

* Let's start in on the appetizers while we're waiting for our friends to arrive.



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lush – a drunkard; a person who drinks too much alcohol; a person who cannot control his or her drinking

* Last night he drank five beers, two glasses of wine, and a lot of vodka. Is he always such a lush?

to loosen (someone) up – to make someone feel more relaxed, friendly, outgoing, and sociable

* Normally she's very shy, but going dancing always loosens her up.

to grope – to touch someone in a sexual way when that person does not want one to do it

* She decided to quit her job when her supervisor tried to grope her in the elevator.

blur – something that is unclear and difficult to see and/or understand

* Everything after the accident was a blur until I woke up in the hospital a few hours later.

to make it up to (someone) – to do something nice for someone as an apology for a bad thing that one had done to that person earlier

* Jake ruined his wife's favorite sweater, but he made it up to her by buying her a new one.

to sleep on it – to think about something overnight and then have an answer the next day

* When they offered Coquito the job, he said he wanted to sleep on it before giving them an answer.

glimmer – a glimpse; a short sight of something; the possibility of something

* Most of the book is pretty silly, but there's a glimmer of genius in chapter seven.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Rob drink a lot on the date?
 - a) Because he thought it would make him feel more relaxed.
 - b) Because he is a lush and an alcoholic.
 - c) Because he was worried about the goodnight kiss.
 2. Is Fatima going to date him again?
 - a) She'll give him her decision tomorrow.
 - b) Yes, but only if he doesn't drink or touch her.
 - c) No, because he is too much of a lush.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to blow it

The phrase “to blow it,” in this podcast, means to fail and not be able to do something, or to do something very poorly: “That test was really difficult and I blew it by not studying enough.” The phrase “to blow (something) off” means to decide not to do something because one thinks it is not important: “Half of the conference’s participants blew off the afternoon lecture.” The phrase “to blow (someone) off” means to treat someone as unimportant and not meet him or her as one had planned to: “He blew me off and never even called to apologize for not picking me up for our date.” Finally, the phrase “to blow off some steam” means to do something to become less angry or mad: “When he gets really stressed out and angry at work, he goes to the gym to blow off some steam.”

to hang up

In this podcast, the phrase “to hang up” means to put part of a telephone into its holder to end a phone call: “If I ever hung up on my mother like that, she would never forgive me.” The phrase “to hang by a thread” means to be in a very dangerous situation where something may or may not continue to happen: “After the accident, the doctors said that his life was hanging by a thread and they were doing everything they could to help him.” The phrase “to hang in there” is used to encourage someone and tell him or her to keep trying and not give up: “You’ve had a difficult month, but hang in there – I’m sure things will get better soon.”



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CULTURE NOTE

When you're on a bad date, you might want to walk out on your date – or run out of the room screaming. But another option is to try to “turn things around,” or do things to make your bad date become a good date.

If your date had a “rocky beginning,” or a difficult beginning, you might want to ask your date if you can have a “fresh start,” or an opportunity to pretend that the bad things never happened and start all over again. You might even start by “pretending” (acting out something that isn't really true) to introduce yourself for the first time.

Another way to turn things around on a bad date is to go to a different “setting” (place or environment). “Changing the subject” (starting to talk about a new topic) can also be helpful, as can asking your date a lot of questions about himself or herself. Once you find a topic that your date likes, he or she will probably “open up” (become more friendly and talkative).

Finally, if you are getting really worried about being on a bad date, “take a deep breath” (slowly fill one's lungs with air) and try to “relax” (become calm). Ask yourself why you are trying so hard. If you are nervous about trying to make a good impression, understand that it's a “two-way street” (something that is true both ways, or for both people), and your date needs to be making a good impression on you, too.

If none of these things work, then you are truly on a bad date, and it might be a good idea to end it as soon as possible.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 457: Apologizing for a Bad Date.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 457. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Apologizing for a Bad Date," a bad romantic outing or event. This episode is a continuation of the story that we started in ESL Podcast 455, so if you haven't listened to 455, "Ending a Bad Date," you might want to listen to it to understand this one a little better. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

I really blew it last night. I finally asked my neighbor, Fatima, out on a date and she walked out on me in the middle of it.

I didn't blame her. I wanted to make a good impression on her, but I felt I was floundering a half an hour into the date. I decided to liven things up a bit with a few drinks. I got carried away and got stinking drunk. What an idiot! I had to call her to apologize.

Fatima: Hello.

Rob: Uh, hi, Fatima. This is Rob calling.

Fatima: Oh.

Rob: Please don't hang up. I need to apologize for my atrocious behavior last night. I was a real jerk and I'm really, really sorry.

Fatima: I appreciate the apology. Thanks, but I have to go now.

Rob: Hold on one second, please! I want to explain. I thought I was boring you at the beginning of the date and that's why I started in on the drinks. I'm not normally a lush, really! I was nervous and worried that things weren't going well, and I thought a couple of drinks would loosen me up.



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Fatima: Okay, I understand that, but that doesn't excuse the groping.

Rob: Groping? What groping?

Fatima: You don't remember? You insisted on a goodnight kiss.

Rob: I did? It's all a blur. I don't remember anything after you called me a creep.

Fatima: You tried to kiss me and I walked out. Can you blame me?

Rob: No, I can't. I deserved much worse. After that, I can also understand why you'd never want to speak to me again. Is there any way I can make it up to you?

Fatima: I really don't know...

Rob: I promise not to have a drop of alcohol.

Fatima: I'll have to think about it.

Rob: And I'll have both of my hands tied behind my back the entire time.

Fatima: Maybe. Let me sleep on it.

At least it wasn't a "no." There's a glimmer of hope for a second chance!

[end of dialogue]

Our story continues with Rob saying, "I really blew it last night." The expression "I blew it," or "don't blow it," means don't make a mistake, don't screw it up. If you say, "I blew it," you're saying I made a mistake, I did something very poorly, very badly. Rob says, "I finally asked my neighbor, Fatima, out on a date." To "ask someone out on a date" means to ask them to go on a date, often dinner, with you. Rob asked his neighbor, Fatima, out on a date, "and she walked out on me in the middle of it." To "walk out on someone" is a phrasal verb meaning to leave someone, usually two people who are together, because you are angry or upset at them. If you are having a meeting and the salesperson walks out on the rest of you, that means that she was angry and she left the meeting – she left you because she wasn't happy.



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Well, Fatima was not happy about the date, and she walked out on Rob in the middle of the date, while they were still eating. Rob says, “I don’t blame her (I don’t fault her). I wanted to make a good impression on her,” he says. To “make a good impression” is to make another person think that you are a good person, that you are intelligent, successful, attractive, perhaps have a lot of money – all the things that I am not! That’s making a good impression. Usually you make a good impression the first time you meet someone or the first time you are in a certain situation. Rob felt, however, that he was floundering a half an hour into the date. So, 30 minutes after they started the date, Rob thought he was floundering. To “flounder” (flounder) means not to know what to do or say, or to do or say the wrong things. Someone who is floundering is not doing very well, making mistakes.

Rob says he’s decided to liven things up a bit with a few drinks. To “liven (liven) something up” is a phrasal verb meaning to make something more exciting or more interesting. Rob thought he was boring, so he wanted to liven things up by getting himself a few drinks. Of course, drinking alcohol often changes one’s behavior, sometimes for the worse. Rob says he got carried away and got stinking drunk. To “get carried away” at doing something means to do too much of something, so much so that it becomes a bad thing, taking something to the extreme. Everything in moderation, as the Greeks said. That is, don’t have too much or too little of anything. Rob clearly had too much to drink.

He says, “What an idiot!” talking about himself. “I had to call her to apologize,” and then we hear a phone conversation between Rob and Fatima. Fatima answers by saying, “Hello.” Rob says, “Uh, hi, Fatima. This is Rob calling.” Fatima says, “Oh.” Clearly, Fatima is not too excited to talk to Rob – because, of course, he was an idiot! Rob says, “Please don’t hang up.” To “hang up” means to put part of the telephone back into the holder and end a call. More generally, it means simply to end a telephone call. “Hang” has several different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Rob is asking Fatima to continue talking to him. He says, “I need to apologize for my atrocious behavior last night.” “Atrocious” (atrocious) means very bad, awful, terrible, something that’s really bad – it’s atrocious. “I went to a restaurant yesterday and ordered some lasagna, and it was atrocious” – it was terrible. Really, it was! Well, Rob had atrocious behavior. He says he was a real “jerk,” a real idiot, and he’s really, really sorry. Of course, when men make mistakes, they have to say they’re really, really, really, really, really, really sorry – and that’s what Rob is doing!



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Fatima says, “I appreciate the apology. Thanks, but I have to go now,” meaning I don’t want to talk to you anymore – you idiot! Rob says, “Hold on one second, please!” The expression “hold on one second,” or “hold on a second,” or simply “hold on,” means that you are asking someone to wait, to stop, not to do something, at least for short period of time. Often we say this when the person is trying to walk away or end a conversation. We can also use this expression when a person is getting angry or starting to say things that aren’t true, and you want them to listen to you now.

Rob is trying to get Fatima to continue talking to him. He says, “Hold on one second, please! I want to explain.” He says he thought he was boring Fatima at the beginning of the date and that’s why he started in on the drinks. To “start in on” something means to begin to do something, to begin to use something. You may tell your daughter “It’s time for you to start in on your homework,” meaning get going, start doing your homework you lazy daughter! Rob says that he’s normally not a lush (lush). A “lush” is a person who drinks too much alcohol, a person who can’t control his or her drinking. Rob says that he was nervous and he thought a couple of drinks would loosen him up. To “loosen up” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to make someone more relaxed, more friendly; more sociable, we might say. If someone says to you, “Loosen up!” they mean relax, don’t be so nervous.

Rob was trying to loosen up. Fatima says, “Okay, I understand that, but that doesn’t excuse the groping.” To “excuse” means to give a reason why something happened. Usually, when someone says, “that doesn’t excuse this,” they mean that is not a sufficient reason – a good reason. “Groping” is when you touch someone, usually with some sort of sexual intent. If you are a man in a subway and there’s a beautiful girl standing next to you – woman, if you try to touch her in some sexual way that would be considered groping. That would also make you a creep – see podcast number 455 for a definition!

Well, Fatima says that Rob was groping her. Rob doesn’t understand, Rob doesn’t remember this. He says, “It’s all a blur.” “Blur” (blur) is something that is unclear, something that is difficult to see or understand. Rob doesn’t remember it. Fatima explains that Rob tried to kiss her, and says, “Can you blame me (for walking out – can you blame me for leaving)?” Rob says, “No, I can’t. I deserved much worse” – I should have gotten something worse, perhaps a slap on the face! Rob says, “I can also understand why you’d never want to speak to me again.” But Rob is trying to find a way to get another date with Fatima, so he says, “Is there any way I can make it up to you?” To “make it up to” someone means to do something nice for someone as an apology for something bad that you had done earlier.



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Fatima says, “I really don’t know...” Rob says, “I promise not to have a drop of alcohol.” A “drop” is a very small amount of something, usually a liquid. So, he’s saying I’m not going to drink any alcohol – except maybe a beer or two, but other than that, nothing! Fatima says, “I’ll have to think about it. Rob says, “And I’ll have both of my hands tied behind my back the entire time.” To have your hands behind your back means, of course, you cannot do any groping or something inappropriate. Fatima says, “Maybe. Let me sleep on it.” When someone tells you they want to “sleep on” something, they mean they want a chance to think about it more, at least one more day and see what they decide, to give them more time to make a decision.

Rob says, “At least it wasn’t a ‘no.’ There’s a glimmer of hope for a second chance!” “Glimmer” is a very quick or short sight of something. Here, it means there’s a possibility that Fatima will go out on another date with him. A “glimmer of hope” means a small amount of hope, but still it’s possible.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone who never flounders in her writing, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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