



ESL Podcast 18 – Seeing Old Friends

GLOSSARY

old – from the past; having existed for many years

* Cassidy and Jacob are old friends who met 14 years ago but haven't seen each other in over three years.

in ages – since many years ago; for a long time ago

* Shu had not watched her favorite movie in ages, and she had forgotten many of the details.

buddy – a close friend; a friend with whom one often socializes

* Maurice did not have a large group of friends, but he did have a few good buddies.

to swing by – to stop at one location on the way to another; to visit someone or someplace briefly when traveling somewhere else

* Anika swung by her brother's school to pick him up on her way home.

to make time – to find time to do something when one is busy; to plan on doing something specific, usually when one is already busy doing other things

* Benton was very busy, but he still made time to meet his friends at a restaurant for lunch.

to keep in touch – to stay in contact; to continue communicating

* After graduating from college, Jamie kept in touch with her friends by calling them on the phone and exchanging emails.

what with this and that – with everything going on; because of how busy life is

* Pedro planned to go to the concert, but what with this and that at work, he couldn't make it in time to meet his friends.

to fall out of touch with – to slowly stop communicating with; to have no contact with any longer

* Even though Melina and Rodger were good friends as children, they fell out of touch after Melina moved to a different city.

to pick up where (one) left off – to return to how a relationship was before after many years have passed

* June had not seen her best friend in many years, but when they finally met again, they were able to pick up where they left off after just a few minutes of chatting.



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phase – an amount of time during one’s life that is different from other points of one’s life because of one’s behaviors, way of thinking, or circumstances

* Do all teenagers go through a phase when they question their parents’ opinions?

fast lane – a very busy or stressful way of life; a lifestyle in which many events happen very quickly

* Scarlett had difficulty adjusting to life in the fast lane working in the big city and was often tired and overwhelmed.

to make ends meet – to barely have enough money to pay one’s bills and other expenses; to have just enough money to survive

* Mr. Stoughton and his family were able to make ends meet, but they did not have any extra money for vacations or other fun activities.

to touch base – to contact someone to find out what is happening; to check in with someone briefly

* Dr. Holmen allowed her student to work on the project alone, but the student needed to touch base occasionally to let Dr. Holmen know how things were progressing.

pal – friend; a close friend with whom one can be casual

* Latricia and Stanley were close pals who had known each other since they were kids.

to catch up – to learn about the events of someone’s life after not seeing that person in a long time

* Miles had not been in contact with his cousin for several years, but he was happy when he had a chance to catch up with her and find out how her life had been going.

to age – to become older; to allow more time to pass

* When we’re children, we want to age quickly, but when we’re adults, we don’t want the years to go by too quickly.



CULTURE NOTE

New York City’s High Line Park

We’ve all heard of “recycling,” the using of old things for new purposes. But what if you’re a large city with old “railroad tracks” (metal lines or rails that trains travel on)? What if they’re “elevated” (above the ground) and not easy to “get rid of” (throw away; made to disappear)? New York City came up with a great idea for one section of its old train tracks.

The High Line Park in the middle of New York city is a one-mile (1.61-kilometer) park located on top of a “stretch” (section) of old “freight” (carrying goods, not people) train tracks. Originally, the High Line was a train that brought “raw” (not processed) and “manufactured” (made by people or machines) goods across the city, as well as milk, meat, “produce” (fruits and vegetables). The High Line opened in 1934 and ended its service in 1980.

With the “urging” (encouragement) of people who lived in the neighborhood, “construction” (building) on the new park began in 2006 and opened in 2009. The park includes walkways where people can “stroll” (walk slowly for enjoyment) and “jog” (run for health). It has many “benches” (long seats made with wood, stone, or concrete) where people can sit and enjoy the nice views.

The park is also a place to enjoy nature. It includes 210 “species” (types) of plants and flowers. High Line Park is an excellent example of “repurposing” (making for a new use) an old “eyesore” (something ugly) into something useful and beautiful.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 18 – Seeing Old Friends.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 18. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, Lucy is going to tell us about some old friends that she saw recently. Let's get started.

[start of story]

This has been a month for seeing old friends. I got an email a couple of weeks ago from an old friend from college. She and her family are visiting L.A. for a week. They plan to see family and to visit old friends. Since she moved away, I hadn't seen her in ages. I'm looking forward to meeting her new kids and seeing her again.

Another old friend called this week. She and I were buddies when we were young. She plans to swing by L.A. on her way to San Francisco. We've made plans to have lunch. She works in Washington D.C. and is normally very busy. I'm glad she could make time for us to get together.

When we say good-bye to our friends, we always hope to keep in touch. But, what with this and that, it's sometimes hard to do. With friends that I've fallen out of touch with, it's sometimes hard to meet again and pick up where we left off. We've both moved on to a different phase in our lives. Some of my old friends have become very successful, and are living lives in the fast lane. Other friends are having a more difficult time and are just making ends meet. But, no matter how they're doing, it's always nice to touch base again.

I'm really looking forward to seeing these old pals and catching up after all this time. We just won't mention how much we've aged.

[end of story]

Lucy begins her story by saying that “this has been a month for seeing old friends.” The word “old” here can mean two different things. It can mean friends who are advanced in age; someone who is 90 years old might be called your “old friend,” versus your “young friend.” Here, Lucy using it in a different meaning, to



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mean the opposite of “new.” An “old friend” would be a friend whom you have known for many years or many decades, even.

Lucy says that she “got an email a couple of weeks ago” – a few weeks ago, two, maybe three weeks ago – “from an old friend from college” – someone she went to the university with. This friend and her family “are visiting L.A.” – Los Angeles – “for a week. They plan to see family and [to] visit old friends.” “Since she moved away,” since she went to another place, “I hadn't seen her in ages.” “In ages” means for a very long time, maybe 10 years or 20 years. “A long time” is an expression that is relative, and “ages” is also relative, depending on what other time period you're talking about. But here, it definitely has been a long time. She says, “I'm looking forward to meeting her new kids and seeing her again.”

“Another [old] friend called this week,” she says. Lucy says, “She and I were buddies when we were young.” Your “buddy” (buddy) is your close friend. This is a term that we use informally. It's not quite as common anymore. We would use it especially for younger children. A young boy might have a buddy. There's even something in schools called the “buddy system.” The buddy system, which can be used not just in school but anywhere, is the idea that you have someone who is helping you and you're helping them, especially if you're going on a trip, for example.

Well, Lucy is talking about a buddy of hers – a good friend of hers when she was young. This friend “plans to swing by L.A. on her way to San Francisco.” “To swing (swing) by” somewhere means to stop at one location on the way to another location, or to visit someone briefly on your way to traveling somewhere else. “I have to go to the grocery store this afternoon, but first I'm going to swing by the coffee shop and pick up a cup of coffee” – I'm going to stop there briefly on my way to another place. That's the meaning of “to swing by” somewhere. This friend is going to “swing by L.A. on her way to San Francisco.”

“Swing by” is usually used when we're talking about a place that's relatively close. We don't usually use it in this context of talking about going to a completely different city, but that's what Lucy tells us. She says, “We've made plans to have lunch. She works in Washington, D.C.” – which is our nation's capital, on the East Coast of the United States – “and is normally very busy.” Lucy says, “I'm glad she could make time for us to get together.” “To make time for” someone, or simply “to make time,” means to find time to do something when you are busy – to plan on something for someone even though you have many other things to do.



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Lucy says, “When we say good-bye to our friends, we always hope to keep in touch.” “To keep in touch” means to stay in contact, to be continuing your communication with the person. This is something you may say to someone who’s perhaps leaving for another city, going to work in a different place: “Let’s keep in touch.” Or you could just say it to someone who perhaps you don’t plan on seeing a lot of in the near future, but you want that person to remain your friend. Lucy says, “But, what with this and that, it’s sometimes hard to do.” This expression, “what with this or that,” means “with everything else that is going on,” because life is so busy. That’s the meaning of the expression “what with this and that.”

Lucy says, “With friends that I’ve fallen out of touch with, it’s sometimes hard to meet again and pick up where we left off.” “To fall out of touch” is the opposite of “to keep in touch.” When you fall out of touch with someone, you no longer call them or email them or communicate with them very frequently. Lucy says when you do that, it’s “hard to meet again and pick up where we left off.” “To pick up where you left off” means to go back to the point where your, in this case, friendship ended and continue from that point. We can use this expression – “to pick up where you left off” – in a lot of different ways. If you were reading a book, for example, you would want to continue reading the book tomorrow at the place where you stopped reading it today. You would want to pick up where you left off. In this case, it means to continue a relationship after many years.

Lucy says, “We’ve both moved on to a different phase in our lives.” “To move on” means to progress, to leave one place and go to another. In this case, they’ve “moved on to a different phase” (phase). A “phase” is a period or a step along a certain progression. You are moving towards some goal, perhaps. You are changing your situation, or the situation is changing for you.

So, you might meet a beautiful woman and fall in love with this woman. During the first few months, you are in a phase of your relationship where everything is wonderful, and everything is fantastic, and you continue to see this woman, then eventually you get married. Now you move to a different phase where everything is terrible, and – no, I’m just kidding. Just a different phase, that’s all.

We continue our story. Lucy says, “Some of my old friends have become very successful, and are living lives in the fast lane.” The “fast lane” (lane) means a very busy, often stressful lifestyle with lots of things happening. We often use this expression for someone who is perhaps very successful in business, who’s making a lot of money and who does a lot of things. They go different places. They see different people. They’re very busy. Living life in the fast lane has the idea of something exciting – something exciting is happening in your life.



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Lucy says that other friends of hers “are having a more difficult time and are just making ends meet.” “To make ends meet” means to barely have enough money to pay for your expenses, to pay your bills. You have just enough money to survive, but not any more.

Lucy says, “No matter how they're doing, it's always nice to touch base again.” “To touch base” (base) means to contact someone to find out what is happening – “to check in” with someone, we might say. Let's say you asked someone to build a new house for you. You have a lot of money, and you ask this person to construct a new house. You would want to touch base with that person frequently – many times – to find out what's going on, to get a progress report. “To touch base” means to communicate with someone, usually for some specific purpose. It's often used in businesses or formal settings.

Lucy ends by saying, “I'm really looking forward to seeing these old pals and catching up after all this time.” A “pal” (pal) is a friend – an informal term for a close friend, like “buddy.” “To catch up” is a two-word phrasal verb which here means to learn about events of someone's life after not having seen that person for a long time. You talk to a friend you haven't talked to in 10 years. You want to find out what happened to that friend during those 10 years. You want to “catch up.”

Lucy ends by saying we just don't mention “how much we've aged.” When you see this person after a long time, you don't talk about how you have become older. “To age” means to become older.

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

[start of story]

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[end of story]

We're glad she can make time to write our wonderful scripts. Thank you, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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