



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

GLOSSARY

intense – serious or severe; very emotional

* Lawana had an intense argument with her parents about her new boyfriend, and she and her mother were both crying by the end.

to appreciate – to be thankful for something; to be happy about something

* Mikhail appreciated how welcoming his new neighbors were after he moved to a new apartment.

insensitive – unaware of other people's feelings; uncaring about how one's actions or words affect the feelings of other people

* Angelique scolded her brother for being insensitive about his wife's feelings when he forgot about their wedding anniversary.

to be raised – to be brought up; to grow from childhood to adulthood with guidance from parents or guardians

* Lloyd was raised on a rural farm until he was eight years old, and then his family moved to the city and he was raised there until he became an adult.

generation – a group of people whose ages are close together; a group of people who share the same status or level within a family because they were born during the same stage of that family's development

* Bao and her cousins were part of the same generation and thought alike, but they often had trouble understanding the ideas of their parents' generation.

in their eyes – in their opinion; from the way they see the situation

* Even though the group of teenagers spread bad gossip, in their eyes, they were not doing anything wrong

racist – someone who judges other people based on their race or ethnicity; someone who treats people differently based on their race

* Eduardo was often confronted by racists who judged him by the color of his skin before they got to know him.

to stand – to put up with; to be able to handle or accept

* The weather was very pleasant, and Vanessa could not stand being stuck indoors on such a nice day.



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

ignorance – a lack of knowledge or understanding; a constant or consistent lack of understanding, especially about a specific topic

* Even though Benjamin meant well, he lacked experience and his ignorance of the situation caused him to make matters worse.

malice – cruelty; the desire to be mean or hurtful

* Sari had no malice toward Douglas, but Douglas still found it difficult to accept her criticism.

puzzled – confused; unable to understand

* When Mel got angry with his wife, she felt puzzled because she did not know what she did to upset him.

to get it – to understand; to realize the meaning of something that one did not previously know

* Angelo could not figure out the correct answer to the math problem on his own, but when his older sister explained it, he finally got it.

to get the message – to get the point; to understand what someone is trying to say, especially when he or she does not directly state the meaning

* Sophia never told Darin that she was mad at him, but when she stopped talking to him and started to avoid him, he got the message.

hilarious – very funny; very amusing

* The joke was so hilarious that even Roy, who was known for being serious, started laughing when he heard it.

it's all good – everything is fine; there are no problems

* When Jyn forgot that she was supposed to visit her friend's house, her friend told her, "It's all good. I actually forgot, too, so I'm not upset."



CULTURE NOTE

How Mirrors Stopped People from Complaining about Elevators

After World War II, the American economy “rebounded” (recovered; got better), leading to a “boom” (sudden increase) in the construction of tall office buildings and “high-rises” (tall apartment buildings). With tall buildings came the “proliferation” (rapid spreading or increase) of “elevators” (machines that move people up and down between floors in a building). You would think that a time-saving, convenient machine like an elevator would have made people happier, since now they did not have to walk up the stairs. But that’s not what happened.

Instead, building owners started getting “complaints” (expressions of dissatisfaction or disappointment about something), and lots of them. The problem? People didn’t like having to wait for the elevator to arrive at their “floor” (level in a building). So building owners began installing “mirrors” (a surface that allows one to see oneself) next to the elevators. And almost immediately, people stopped complaining.

Why did the mirrors stop people from complaining? Well, when you give people a mirror, they will naturally look at themselves and the people around them. Instead of just waiting for the elevator, people now have something “mildly” (somewhat) interesting to do.

This shows a basic “principle” (idea) of “queuing” or waiting in line: “occupied” (busy) time seems shorter, or to pass more quickly, than unoccupied time. Even if you have to wait the same amount of time, it doesn’t seem as long when you have something to do.



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 93: Diversity at Work.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 93. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is called Diversity at Work. Let's get started!

[start of dialogue]

Jeff: What were you and Richard talking about earlier? It looked intense.

Lucy: Yeah, Richard said something to me that I didn't appreciate.

Jeff: Oh, no. I know how insensitive he can be. What has he done now?

Lucy: He asked me how long it took me to learn English.

Jeff: But you were born and raised in California!

Lucy: Yeah, but I get that sometimes. It doesn't matter how many generations my family has lived in the U.S., we'll always be foreigners in their eyes.

Jeff: What a racist! How can you stand working with the guy?

Lucy: You know, Richard isn't such a bad guy. He made the comment out of ignorance, not malice.

Jeff: So, what did you say when he asked you how long it took you to learn English?

Lucy: I told him 28 years, and he knows I'm 28 years old since I just celebrated my birthday last week. He was puzzled for a minute and then he got it.

Jeff: Are you sure he really got the message?

Lucy: Yeah, I'm pretty sure since I then asked him how long it took him to learn English.



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

Jeff: That's hilarious! What did he say?

Lucy: He said, "36 years," and we both laughed about it. He apologized and now it's all good.

Jeff: I'm glad. I bet he won't make that mistake again.

[end of dialogue]

We're talking in this podcast about "diversity at work" and the word "diversity," when used in business or in schools in the United States, means people – talking about people from different backgrounds, perhaps, different cultures and to be "diverse" is to have people represented from different backgrounds and different cultures. In the discussion today, we're talking about the assumption that some people make that if you look different, if you're not, for example, Caucasian or white-looking, that you don't speak English as a native speaker here in the United States. And that assumption is made by some people and that's the problem that happens in today's podcast. The podcast begins with me asking Lucy what she and Richard were talking about and I say, "It looked intense." "Intense" (intense), here, means something that was very serious or very difficult. Something that involves a very strong emotion would be "intense."

Lucy says that "Yeah. Richard said something to me that I didn't appreciate." "Yeah" (yeah) is the same as yes – informal way of saying yes. When Lucy says she "didn't appreciate it" – "I didn't appreciate," she says, means, "I didn't like it. It's something that I didn't want to hear." I say to Lucy that Richard is "insensitive." "To be insensitive" means that you do not understand or respect other people's feelings or emotions. To say something that would hurt someone or to make someone mad or upset, that would be someone who is "insensitive." I then asked Lucy, "What has he – Richard – done now?" The expression "What has he done now?" doesn't mean, "What did he do this very moment?" but we use that expression, particularly the word, "now," to mean he's done something bad in the past and now he's done something again so you would say that about someone who has already done something wrong in the past. "What have you done now?" meaning you've done things wrong in the past about this topic.

Lucy explains that Richard asked how long it took her to learn English and I say, "But you were born and raised in California," meaning she was born here and she was "raised" – she grew up here is what "raised" means. And if you are "born and raised" in California or any other part of an English speaking area, you would be a native speaker of English. Lucy says, "Yeah, but I get that sometimes." The



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

expression, “I get that,” refers to that kind of comment or that kind of question. And she goes on to say that “no matter how many generations” her family has lived in the U.S, they will always be foreigners “in their eyes.” “Generations” means – different parts of a family have different “generations.” Your grandfather is one “generation” and your father is – or mother – is a second “generation,” – another “generation” and you are another “generation.” So, we talk about “generations,” we mean that part of the family that is of the same line, we might say. To say something will be “in their eyes” means in their opinion. It means they see everything in a certain way.

I respond by saying, “What a racist!” meaning Richard is a racist. “To be a racist” (racist) means you are someone who judges people based upon their physical appearance, the color of their skin. Then I asked Lucy, “How can you stand working with the guy?” “How can you stand” means how can you tolerate, how can you put up with, how can you – how are you able to work with him even though he causes problems. Lucy says that “Richard isn’t such a bad guy,” that he “made the comment out of ignorance not malice.” A couple of expressions there. “To make a comment out of” means the reason I made that comment. Here she says that Richard made the comment “out of ignorance.” “To be ignorant” means that you don’t know and so, if you make a comment “out of ignorance,” you mean the person didn’t know. He made the comment out of ignorance not “malice.” “Malice” (malice) means to have a bad or evil intention.

So, I ask Lucy what she said to Richard and Lucy says she told him it took her 28 years to learn English. And, of course, she’s 28 years old, meaning she’s learned English from the time she was a baby. “Richard was puzzled for a minute but then he got it.” “To be puzzled” (puzzled) is a verb. “To puzzle” or “to be puzzled” means to be confused, not to know what the answer is. As a noun, a “puzzle” (puzzle) is a game or a problem that you have to solve. The expression, “He got it,” means he understood it, so Richard “got it.” I then asked Lucy, “Are you sure he really got the message?” “To say, “Do you get the message?” means do you understand the main point, the main idea that I am trying to communicate or tell you. “He didn’t get the message” means he didn’t understand. We often use this for when we are telling someone something that maybe they don’t want to hear or that may be difficult for them and when you say, “I got the message,” means “Okay, I understand. You don’t need to tell me anymore.”

Lucy then asked Richard how long it took him to learn English and I said that that’s “hilarious.” “Hilarious” (hilarious) means very funny, or extremely funny. Lucy said that Richard apologized and now “it’s all good.” The expression, “It’s all good,” is an informal expression, which means everything is fine; there are no problems. We say that probably a younger – the younger generation would say



ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

that – younger people. “It’s all good,” meaning no problems. You could also say that when life is going well for you and everything seems to be successful for you. You could say, “It’s all good.”

Now let’s listen to the dialogue this time at native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

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ESL Podcast 93 – Diversity at Work

Jeff: I'm glad. I bet he won't make that mistake again.

[end of dialogue]

That's going to do it for today. I want to thank you for listening. From Los Angeles, California, we'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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