



ESL Podcast 348 – Showing Disapproval and Sympathy

GLOSSARY

long face – an expression of sadness, depression, and/or disappointment

* Heidi had a long face for weeks after her dog died.

that's awful – that's too bad; a phrase used to show that one sympathizes with another person and agrees that something is sad or unfortunate

* I just heard that you may be losing your job. That's awful!

what a rotten thing – what a shame; a phrase used to show that one thinks something is horrible, terrible, very sad, or very bad

* Did you hear that Rehman called Nancy a fat pig? What a rotten thing to say!

I'm so sorry to hear that – a phrase used to show that one sympathizes with another person's situation and feels sad that something has happened to that person

* I'm so sorry to hear that your uncle passed away. Please let me know if there's anything I can do to help.

Who do they think they are? – a phrase used to show that one is angry and upset about something that someone said or did, and that one thinks that person didn't have the right to do it or shouldn't have done it

* Did you hear that the city council raised the price of parking again? Who do they think they are?

that's really too bad – what a shame; a phrase used to show that one thinks something is horrible, terrible, very sad, or very bad

* Even though they waited in line for three hours, they weren't able to get tickets to the show. That's really too bad.

dead set against – strongly opposed to something; strongly believing that something is wrong and should be changed

* Helen was dead set against using disposable diapers until she found out how difficult it was to wash cloth diapers.

to pull together – to work together; to cooperate; to work as a group

* At difficult times like this, we need to pull together and support each other.

the time has come – it is time to do something; it is time for something; something should be done now

* Don't you think the time has come to tell Harry that we don't have enough money to pay for his college education?



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to put (something) on the line – to risk losing something; to do something that puts something in danger of being lost or taken away

* As a firefighter, he puts his life on the line every day.

to take a dim view – to view something negatively; to not approve of something; to think that something is a bad idea

* As a very religious family, they take a dim view of people who do not go to church.

to speak out – to state one's opinion against what other people believe; to state something that one strongly believes in, especially when other people don't agree

* Amnesty International speaks out against the way that many countries treat their prisoners.

to lay low – to not draw attention to oneself; to act calmly and quietly so that other people do not notice oneself

* The criminal decided to lay low in jail and quietly look for an opportunity to escape.

to take (something) lying down – to accept something that one doesn't agree with without fighting against it

* Your landlord just doubled your rent? You're not going to take that lying down, are you? You have to fight against it!

to take it – to accept something without fighting for something better; to accept whatever other people do to oneself or give to oneself

* The company just cut our vacation time, but we have to take it, because if we complain then we'll probably lose our jobs.

to have got another thing coming – to be surprised by something bad in the future; to have something happen that will be unexpected and unwanted

* If she thinks she can act that way without any consequences, she's got another thing coming.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Maggie feel about management's decision?
 - a) She thinks it was inappropriate.
 - b) She thinks it was sad, but necessary.
 - c) She thinks jobs should be put on the line.
 2. What does Maggie mean by saying, "I'm not going to take this lying down"?
 - a) She's going to sit down.
 - b) She's going to fight against management.
 - c) She's going to stop laying low.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to speak out

The phrase "to speak out," in this podcast, means to state something that one strongly believes in, especially when other people don't agree: "The students are speaking out against the teacher's decision." The phrase "to speak out of turn" means to speak when one isn't supposed to, usually because it is someone else's turn to speak: "Don't speak out of turn. If you have something to say, raise your hand first." The phrase "to speak up" means to speak more loudly: "Could you please speak up? I can't hear what you're saying." The phrase "to speak up for (someone or something)" means to say something in support of another person or thing: "When everyone else was saying bad things about Charlie, Hank spoke up for him and told everyone that he thought Charlie was a wonderful person."

to take it

In this podcast, the phrase "to take it" means to accept something without fighting for something better: "I can't take it anymore! I have to ask my neighbor to stop making so much noise." The phrase "to take it (that)" means to assume, suppose, or understand: "I take it that you won't be calling Charlotte anymore, since you two broke up. Is that right?" The phrase "to take it out of (someone)" means to make someone very tired: "Working a 12-hour shift at the hospital can really take it out of you!" Finally, the phrase "to take it from (someone)" means to believe what someone has to say, and it is used to emphasize that what a person is going to say is true: "Take it from me – studying abroad will be one of the best experiences of your life."



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CULTURE NOTE

Many people have written and spoken about sympathy, and many of their phrases have become well known “quotes” (phrases that one person said or wrote, and now many people repeat).

Paul Eipper, a German painter and writer, wrote that “Sympathy is a virtue unknown in nature.” A “virtue” is a very good quality and something that one admires in a person. This quote means that only humans show sympathy toward each other, but animals do not. Many people think that this is one of the main differences between humans and other creatures.

Another quote, “Next to love, sympathy is the divinest passion of the human heart,” is “attributed to” (credited, or shown to have been created by another person) Edmund Burke, an Irish author. Something that is “divine” is holy or God-like, so he means that sympathy is one of the highest “emotions” (feelings) that humans can have.

Oscar Wilde, an Irish poet, once said, “If there was less sympathy in the world, there would be less trouble in the world.” He took a more negative view of sympathy, believing that sometimes sympathy causes too much trouble. Without sympathy, people would “mind their own business” (pay attention to only those things that affect them) and not “interfere” (do things to try to change a situation) with other people’s lives or countries’ affairs.

Wilde also said, “I can sympathize with everything, except suffering.” This quote seems to show that he believes that sympathy isn’t enough when one sees other people “suffering” (having emotional or physical pain). Unlike Eipper and Burke, who believe that sympathy is the best thing humans can offer, Wilde seems to believe that it is more important to fight against “injustice” (unfairness) than to simply feel bad about another person’s situation.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 348: Showing Disapproval and Sympathy.

This is ESL Podcast episode 348. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com to download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, comprehension questions, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of this episode. This 8 to 10 page guide is available for each new episode of our podcast.

This podcast is called "Showing Disapproval and Sympathy." It's a dialogue between Maggie and Joe about someone who is going to lose their job. They're going to use a lot of vocabulary we might use when you don't like something – "to disapprove," as well as to show sympathy to someone. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Maggie: Why the long face?

Joe: I just heard that I won't be rehired for next year.

Maggie: That's awful! What a rotten thing for the management to do.

Joe: I'll be okay, but Monica is losing her job, too.

Maggie: Oh no, not Monica, too. I'm so sorry to hear that. Who do they think they are? How can they treat us this way?

Joe: They're management and they can do whatever they want to. Monica just bought a new house and I'm sure she's going to have to sell it.

Maggie: That's really too bad. Listen, I know you'll be dead set against the rest of us pulling together to talk to the management, but I think the time has come.

Joe: I won't let you or anyone else around here put your jobs on the line to try to save ours. The management will definitely take a dim view of us workers trying to speak out. Just lay low and hope that you won't lose your job, too.



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Maggie: I don't know what the others think, but I'm not going to take this lying down. If they think we're just going to sit here and take it, then they've got another thing coming!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Maggie saying to Joe, "Why the long face," meaning why do you have a long face. The expression "long face" means that you're sad, or depressed, or perhaps disappointed. "She had a long face for a week after her dog died" – she was sad.

So, Maggie says, "Why the long face?" Joe says, "I just heard that I won't be rehired for next year," meaning the company is not going to continue to "employ" him, to have him work there. Maggie says, "That's awful!" The expression "that's awful" means that's too bad, that's unfortunate. When someone says something that is bad news and you want to "show sympathy" to that person, you want to show that person that you understand their pain or sadness, you may say, "that's awful." "What a rotten thing for the management to do," Maggie says. A "rotten (rotten) thing" is a bad thing. Maggie's saying what a bad thing for the company to do – "what a rotten thing."

Joe says, "I'll be okay, but Monica (another employee) is losing her job, too." Maggie says, "Oh no, not Monica, too. I'm so sorry to hear that." When someone tells you bad news, and you want, once again, to show your sympathy toward them – to show that you feel badly for them, that you are sorry for something that has happened to them – not something you did, but someone else – you can say, "I'm so sorry to hear that." For example, if someone dies, perhaps the father or mother of a friend of yours, you may say, "I'm so sorry to hear that your father has died." We might not even say the word "die" here; we might use the expression "pass away." When someone dies, we say, "he passed away." It's a nicer way of saying that: "I'm so sorry to hear that your uncle passed away." That's "I'm so sorry to hear that."

Maggie then says, "Who do they think they are?" Here, she's angry; she's saying what are these people at the company doing, they don't have a right to do that, that is the wrong thing for them to do: "Who do they think they are?" You're showing that you're angry about something that someone has said or done, and you think the person shouldn't have done it. For example, you city decides to raise taxes, and you say, "Who do they think they are?" You're angry at them, they don't have a right to do that, you think.



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Joe says, “They’re management (meaning they’re the bosses) and they can do whatever they want to. Monica just bought a new house and I’m sure she’s going to have to sell it.” Maggie then uses another expression to express sympathy, she says, “That’s really too bad.” It means the same as “what a shame,” to show how you think something is very bad or sad.

Maggie then says, “Listen, I know you’ll be dead set against the rest of us pulling together to talk to the management, but I think the time has come.” Three expressions here of interest. First, “to be dead set against something” means to be strongly opposed to something – to believe something is wrong, and to be against it. Maggie is saying that Joe will probably be dead set against she and the other members of the company – the other employees of the company – pulling together to talk to the management. To “pull together” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to work together, to cooperate, to work as a group. “Let’s pull together” means let’s work together; let’s try to cooperate.

Maggie wants to talk to the other employees, the ones that weren’t fired, and talk to the bosses. She thinks that Joe will be against this, that’s why she says, “I know you’ll be dead set against” this action. At the end she says, “I think the time has come it.” When someone says, “the time has come,” they mean it’s time to do something; we’ve waited long enough, something needs to be done right now. The time has come for ESL Podcast to give Jeff McQuillan a big, brand new car, don’t you think?

Joe then says, “I won’t let you or anyone else around here put your jobs on the line to try to save ours.” To “put something on the line” means to do something that might cause you to lose something, or to have something taken away. It’s to risk losing something. “I’m going to put my reputation on the line for you” – my “reputation” is what other people think, so I’m going to do something that could hurt me. It’s a way of expressing that you’re going to do something dangerous or risky.

Joe says, “I won’t let you (Maggie) or anyone else to put your jobs on the line” – to risk your own jobs in order to try to save my job. That’s what Joe is saying. “The management will definitely take a dim view of us workers trying to speak out.” “To take a dim (dim) view of something” means to have a negative opinion about something – to think something is a bad idea – not to approve of something. “The management,” the bosses will not like, “will take a dim view of” the workers “trying to speak out.” To “speak out” is a two-word phrasal verb to meaning to express or to say your opinion that is against what other people think; to say something that you believe in, even if other people disagree with you. To



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“speak out” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Joe says, “Just lay low and hope that you won’t lose your job, too.” To “lay low” means to not draw attention to yourself. It’s a two-word phrasal verb meaning to act calmly, quietly, so that one notices you; you don’t want other people to know what you are doing or where you are. Joe is telling Maggie that she should not try to cause problems – she should not “speak out,” she should protect her own job.

Maggie says, “I don’t know what the others think (the other employees), but I’m not going to take this lying down.” “To take something lying down” means to accept something that you don’t agree with, without fighting against it. You don’t like it, but you say, “Well, too bad. I have to accept it.” That’s “to take things lying down.”

Maggie says, “If they think we’re just going to sit here and take it, then they’ve got another thing coming!” “To take it” means to accept it. That expression has a couple of different meanings; once again, take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanation. Maggie says we’re not going to just accept this, if they think we are just going to take it, “they have got another thing coming!” The expression “to have got another thing coming” means they are going to be surprised by something bad in the future, something that we are going to do, in this case. “He’s got another thing coming” means something bad is to happen to him because of what he did. This bad thing will be a surprise to this person; they don’t realize that it is coming, that it is in their future.

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

[start of dialogue]

Maggie: Why the long face?

Joe: I just heard that I won’t be rehired for next year.

Maggie: That’s awful! What a rotten thing for the management to do.

Joe: I’ll be okay, but Monica is losing her job, too.

Maggie: Oh no, not Monica, too. I’m so sorry to hear that. Who do they think they are? How can they treat us this way?



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Joe: I won't let you or anyone else around here put your jobs on the line to try to save ours. The management will definitely take a dim view of us workers trying to speak out. Just lay low and hope that you won't lose your job, too.

Maggie: I don't know what the others think, but I'm not going to take this lying down. If they think we're just going to sit here and take it, then they've got another thing coming!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse, who never has a long face!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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