



GLOSSARY

to put (someone) down – to say something that makes another person seem or feel less important or less self-confident; to say something mean to or about another person

* Why does Emil always put other people down, saying they're too boring, stupid, or fat?

superior – better than someone or something else; the opposite of inferior

* This new model of computer is superior to the old model, because it's smaller, faster, and less expensive.

to not mean anything by it – a phrase used when one has said something hurtful or mean without thinking about it very much first, emphasizing that one didn't mean to hurt anyone's feelings

* Yes, I said that I didn't like the book, but I didn't mean anything by it. How was I supposed to know he was the author?

to banter – to have a friendly conversation with many jokes, especially about the other people in the conversation

* It was a fun party where everyone bantered with each other, laughing and making friends.

to one-up (someone) – to do or say something to show that one has done or can do something better than another person; to outperform another person, winning or beating that person

* No matter how hard I study, Amir always one-ups me. Even if I get 100% on a test, he does the extra credit to get 105%. I can't ever beat him!

inferior – worse than someone or something else; not as good as someone or something else; the opposite of superior

* This is an inferior wine, but we don't have enough money to buy the really good stuff right now.

catty – saying mean, unkind things about other people when they are not there to defend themselves, especially when one says very nice things when that person is nearby

* Marliiss is so catty! This morning she told Joan that she loved her new blouse, but then, after Joan had left, she started talking about how ugly it was.



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to talk behind (someone's) back – to say bad things about another person when he or she cannot hear and does not know what one is saying; to say something about a person without that person's knowledge

* Our manager said: "Don't talk behind your co-workers' backs. If you don't like something about the way they do their work, have the courage to tell them so or to talk to me directly."

to make fun of – to make jokes about another person's appearance, words, or actions, often in a mean way

* When Anne was growing up, people always made fun of her red hair, so one day she tried to dye it brown.

good-natured – good-humored; in a nice, kind, helpful, and friendly way

* Tania is so good-natured, always smiling at everyone and offering to help people if they seem lost.

to give as good as (one) gets – to reciprocate; to do to another person whatever he or she has done to oneself

* Craig punched Kirk, but Kirk always gives as good as he gets, so he turned around and punched Craig. Now they're both in pain.

to play a trick on (someone) – to fool or deceive someone; to do something that surprises someone and makes that person look foolish, silly, or stupid

* Vic played a trick on his cousin by hiding her car keys.

vicious cycle – a situation where action A causes action B, which causes action A again, so that the series of events continues

* An economic recession is a vicious cycle where people start buying less, so stores have to close, which means fewer people have jobs and as a result, people buy even less.

prank – a trick; something that one does to make another person seem foolish, silly, or stupid

* Reiko played a prank on her sister, pretending she couldn't remember her name.

to bond – to develop a closer relationship with someone

* If I want to bond with my son, I need to stop watching TV so much and instead go outside and do a fun activity together with him.



to torture – to do something to cause emotional or physical pain, usually to try to get another person to do or say something

* Do you think it's okay to torture terrorists to get them to share information?

to stick to – to continue doing, using, or having something, without changing

* Toby wanted to quit playing baseball because he wasn't very good at it, but his coach told him that if stuck to it, he would likely improve.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Lauren mean when she says, "I didn't mean anything by it"?

- a) She thinks Quentin misunderstood her statement.
- b) She didn't want to hurt Stephanie's feelings.
- c) She said it to be mean, because she doesn't like Stephanie.

2. According to Quentin, how do men bond?

- a) By playing sports together.
- b) By talking behind each other's backs.
- c) By doing funny things to each other.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

bond

The verb "to bond," in this podcast, means to develop a close relationship with someone: "They bonded as roommates in college, and they've been friends ever since." The verb "to bond" also means for two things to stick together very strongly, often with glue: "After applying the glue, wait about 24 hours for the two pieces of wood to bond firmly." As a noun, a "bond" is a tie or a connection between two people or things, or a feeling of closeness: "Do mothers have special bonds with their children?" Finally, in finance, a "bond" is a document in which a company or organization promises to pay back the money it has borrowed, with interest: "Is most of your money invested in stocks, bonds, or real estate?"

to stick to

In this podcast, the phrase "to stick to" means to continue doing, using, or having something, without changing: "Moshe thought about changing his major, but then he decided to stick to philosophy." The phrase "to make (something) stick"



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means to make something be remembered, or to make something permanent so that it doesn't change: "The students have been studying state history all year, but the teacher can't seem to find a way to make the information stick." Or, "How are we going to make the changes stick this time?" The phrase "to stick in (one's) mind/head" means to remember something, or to not be able to forget or stop thinking about something: "That song has been stuck in my head all morning."

CULTURE NOTE

Friends was a very popular American "sitcom" (situation comedy; a funny TV program where the same characters have different experiences in each episode). New episodes were "aired" (were shown on TV) from 1994 to 2004, and more than 52 million Americans watched the "series finale" (the last show in a series).

The show "revolves around" (is about) a group of six friends: Chandler, Joey, Monica, Phoebe, Rachel, and Ross. They live in New York City and the show is about their daily lives and their relationships with each other. Most of them have jobs, at least most of the time, but very little of the show is about their work. Instead, most of the scenes are in their apartments, where some of them live with each other as roommates. Other scenes are at the Central Perk "coffee house" (café), where they spend a lot of time drinking coffee and talking with each other.

The characters often fall in love with each other and with other "guest actors" (people who appear on only one or a few episodes in a TV series). Ross and Rachel have an "off-and-on relationship" (a relationship where the man and woman repeatedly break up and get back together again), getting married and divorced, and having a child together "out of wedlock" (while not married). Chandler and Monica also eventually fall in love on the series and get married, adopting children.

The show is "humorous" (funny), showing the characters doing funny things and often getting into trouble for doing certain things or for making mistakes in their lives. Although there were "trials" (difficult times), the one thing that never changed was the close friendships among these six characters.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 550: Differences in Male and Female Friendships.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 550. 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 for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Differences in Male and Female Friendships." It's a dialogue between Lauren and Quentin, and talks about how men and women are different when it comes to their friends, using a lot of vocabulary you might use when talking about friendship. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Lauren: Did you see what Stephanie was wearing? She looked like a wet dog!

Quentin: Why do women do that?

Lauren: Do what?

Quentin: Why do women put other women down? Is it to make themselves feel superior?

Lauren: It was only a joke. I didn't mean anything by it.

Quentin: Do you really think she would find it funny if she had heard you?

Lauren: What about you men? You guys are always bantering and trying to one-up each other. Aren't you guys trying to see who's superior and who's inferior?

Quentin: Women are catty and talk behind each other's backs. We men make fun of each other in a good-natured way while we're together. That's the difference: You women are laughing at each other and we men are laughing with each other.



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Lauren: Oh yeah? Was Tim laughing with you guys when you threw him into the lake last weekend?

Quentin: That was very funny, and yes, he thought it was funny, too. What you women don't understand is that we give as good as we get. Next time, Tim will play a trick on someone else.

Lauren: So it's a vicious cycle of pranks.

Quentin: Yeah, you could say that. That's how men bond. That's something you women don't seem to understand.

Lauren: We understand, all right. You take turns torturing each other and call it male bonding.

Quentin: See what I mean? You women stick to your ways and we'll stick to ours.

[end of dialogue]

Lauren begins by asking Quentin, "Did you see what Stephanie was wearing? She looked like a wet dog!" A "wet dog" I guess is an insulting term; a wet dog would not look very good, I guess is the idea. Quentin says, "Why do women do that?" Lauren says, "Do what?" meaning I don't understand what you're talking about. Quentin says, "Why do women put other women down?" "To put (someone) down" is a phrasal verb meaning to say something that makes another person seem or feel less important; to say something mean, something not nice about someone else is to put them down. Quentin is asking Lauren why women put other women down, why they insult other women. Quentin says, "Is it to make themselves feel superior?" "Superior" means better than someone else. The opposite of "superior" is "inferior."

So, Quentin is asking Lauren if women insult each other – say bad things about each other – to make themselves feel superior, like they're better than the other women. Lauren says, "It was only a joke. I didn't mean anything by it." When someone says they "don't mean anything by it," they mean that they know that they said something that was not kind – that was mean, but they didn't really want to hurt anyone's feelings. Usually we say this when we say something bad but we aren't thinking about it very clearly before we say it, and after we say it we regret it. We think, "Oh, I should not have done that," and so we say "Oh, I didn't mean anything by it." I didn't mean – I didn't intend to hurt her.



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Quentin says, “Do you really think she would find it funny if she had heard you?” What Quentin is saying here is that Lauren’s comment was not a joke, it was not funny, and Stephanie would not think it funny if she heard it. Lauren says, “What about you men? You guys are always bantering and trying to one-up each other.” “To banter” (banter) means to have a friendly conversation with lots of jokes, especially jokes about other people in the conversation. So when people banter, they’re making jokes and some of those jokes are about the people in that group. Lauren says, “You guys (you men) are always bantering and trying to one-up each other.” “To one-up (someone)” means to do or say something to show that you can do something better than the other person; you are superior to the other person; you can beat them. Lauren is saying that men are always trying to one-up each other, to be better – to seem better than the other. “Aren’t you guys trying to see who’s superior and who’s inferior?” Remember, “inferior” is the opposite of “superior,” it means worse than someone or something else.

Quentin says, “Women are catty and talk behind each other’s backs.” “To be catty” (catty) means that you say nice things about someone when they are there – when they are next to you or in front of you, but then when they leave – when they are not there you say mean things or unkind things about them. So you could say to someone, “Oh, that’s a beautiful dress you have on Maria,” and Maria walks away and you say to your friend, “That is the ugliest dress I have ever seen!” That would be catty. Quentin is saying that women are catty. I’m not saying women are catty – Quentin is saying that; I want to make that very clear! Quentin also says that women talk behind each other’s back. “To talk behind (someone’s) back” means to say bad things about another person when he or she can’t hear them, doesn’t know what you are saying. You tell everyone that you think the boss is a terrible manager, but when the boss is there in the room you don’t say anything. That’s talking behind someone’s back. Quentin says, “We men make fun of each other in a good-natured way while we’re together.” “To make fun of (someone or something)” means to make jokes about that thing or that person. To make fun of someone is usually considered mean – not nice, but Quentin says that when men do it they are doing in a good-natured way. “Good-natured” means in a friendly way. You’re not really being mean; you’re not really being unkind. Quentin says, “That’s the difference: You women are laughing at each other and we men are laughing with each other.”

Lauren says, “Oh yeah (meaning she doesn’t believe what Quentin is saying)? Was Tim laughing with you guys when you threw him into the lake last weekend?” Apparently Quentin and his friends threw Tim, another friend, into a lake – I’m not sure why – as a joke. In fact, Quentin says, “That was very funny,



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and yes, he thought (Tim thought) it was funny, too. What you women don't understand is that we give as good as we get." "To give as good as you get" is an expression that means we do to another person whatever he or she has done to us; usually it's in a negative way. So you, as a man, may make a joke about another friend – another man, but that friend will also make a joke about you, so you give as good as you get. "Next time," Quentin says, "Tim will play a trick on someone else." "To play a trick on (someone)" means to fool or deceive someone, to do something that surprises someone and makes that person look silly or stupid.

Lauren says, "So it's a vicious cycle of pranks." A "vicious (vicious) cycle" is a situation where A causes B, which causes C, which causes A, which causes B, and so forth; that one thing causes another thing that causes another thing that causes the first thing, and the cycle repeats. Things go around and around. A vicious cycle is usually a cycle or a situation where things are getting worse and worse. When the economy is bad, people lose their jobs, and when they lose their jobs they don't have money to buy things at the store. And when they don't have money to buy things at the store, the people in the store lose their jobs and they have less money to spend, and that causes more people to lose their jobs. So it's a vicious cycle. A "prank" (prank) is some sort of trick – some sort of joke, but it's usually something you do. When I was young in school one popular prank was to go to someone's house that you didn't like and throw toilet paper all over the trees. I never did this, honestly! But that was a prank that some other people did – I won't name any names!

Quentin says, "You could say that (meaning yes, it's a vicious cycle of pranks). That's how men bond" (bond). "Bond" means to develop a close relationship with someone. It is no relation to Bond – James Bond, the famous British spy, 007. This is a different kind of bond. Here it's a verb, and it means to have a close connection or relationship with someone. Quentin says, "That's something you women don't seem to understand."

Lauren says, "We understand, all right (meaning yes, in fact, we do understand). You take turns torturing each other and call it male bonding." "To torture (someone)" means to cause pain, either physical or psychological, usually because you are trying to get someone to do something, to give you information perhaps. Quentin says, "See what I mean (now do you understand)? You women stick to your ways and we'll stick to ours (we men will stick to ours)." "To stick to" is a phrasal verb meaning continue doing something, continue using something without changing. I'm going to stick to recording podcasts because I'm not very good at anything else. That's pretty much true!



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

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Quentin: See what I mean? You women stick to your ways and we'll stick to ours.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by the always good-natured 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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