



**ESL Podcast 611 – Having an Overbearing Father**

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**GLOSSARY**

**grown** – adult; grown-up; no longer a child

\* His aunt said to him: “You’re a grown man! Shouldn’t you act like it and get a job, instead of letting your parents pay for everything?”

**overbearing** – too strong, opinionated, and controlling; trying to control what other people say and do

\* Martin’s boss is really overbearing, trying to control every little thing he does at work.

**the third degree** – asking someone many questions, often about things that he or she would like to hide or keep secret

\* When we applied for a loan, the bank’s loan officer gave us the third degree, asking about our employment history, savings, debt, spending habits, and more.

**under (one’s) roof** – in one’s home, especially living in one’s home

\* As long as you’re living under our roof, you have to keep your room clean and help around the house. Once you move out on your own, you can do whatever you want.

**to live by** – to comply with; to follow certain rules or ideas

\* Imagine how nice the world would be if everyone lived by the same rules.

**to hang out** – to spend time doing something unimportant, having fun, especially with friends

\* Many teenage girls like to hang out at the mall on the weekends.

**curfew** – the time when one must be home in the evening; the latest one is allowed to be out

\* Normally, Tara has an 11:00 curfew on weekends, but for special events, her parents let her stay out until 12:30.

**not good enough** – inferior; not as good as someone or something else; not worth something

\* Ever since Harper got a good-paying job, he has been acting like his old friends aren’t good enough for him anymore.



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**troublemaker** – a person who creates many problems and isn't productive or helpful

\* Every classroom seems to have at least one troublemaker who takes up most of the teacher's time.

**to mark (one's) words** – to listen carefully to what a person is saying and remember it later, especially when he or she is making a prediction about what will happen in the future

\* Mark my words: The next World War will be about water rights.

**to go nowhere fast** – to not have any hope of having a happy, productive, or successful future; to be a loser

\* Your career is going nowhere fast. It's time to find a better job where you can use your knowledge and skills.

**supervision** – being observed by someone who makes sure that everyone is following the rules and doing what they are supposed to do

\* Do you prefer to work in an office with a lot of close supervision, or do you prefer to work independently?

**What is this world coming to?** – a phrase used when one is upset about how things are changing over time, and thinks that things were better in the past

\* How can gasoline cost \$4 per gallon? What is this world coming to?

**chaperon** – a person who stays with two other people, making sure that their behavior is acceptable and that they don't do anything wrong, especially when they are on a date

\* Quinn's parents said she can start dating, but only if her brother is the chaperon.

**to tag along** – to go somewhere with someone, especially when that person does not want one to be there

\* Elliot's little sister always tags along, following him everywhere he goes.

**humiliating** – very embarrassing, uncomfortable, and upsetting; making one feel ashamed

\* That soccer game was humiliating! I can't believe we lost to the weakest team in the league.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Eva mean when she says, “You give me the third degree every time I leave the house”?
  - a) She dislikes answering so many personal questions.
  - b) She wishes her father wouldn’t change the thermometer settings.
  - c) She doesn’t like getting three kisses before she leaves the house.
  
2. Why doesn’t Dad like Damien?
  - a) Because he drives slowly and gets lost easily.
  - b) Because he isn’t as good as Eva is.
  - c) Because he doesn’t live in a very nice house.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **grown**

The word “grown,” in this podcast, is used to talk about adults or people who are no longer children: “You’ll understand all of this better once you’re grown.” Or, “Does it make you uncomfortable to see a grown man cry?” People also use the word “grown” to talk about their adult children: “Lex has two grown daughters, but neither one is married yet.” An animal or plant that is “full-grown” has reached its maximum size and will not get any bigger: “Many people think her tiny dog is a puppy, but they don’t realize it’s already full-grown.” The phrase “grown-up” is used by children to talk about adults: “Why do grown-ups spend so much time talking about politics?” Finally, the word “grown” can also mean increased: “Why have sales grown so much in the past two years?”

#### **to live by**

In this podcast, the phrase “to live by” means to comply with, or to follow certain rules or ideas: “Everyone in our church lives by a strict code of behavior.” The phrase “to live through (someone)” means to take too much interest in another person’s life, taking pride in his or her accomplishments and activities: “Shawn lives through his son, always pushing him to become a doctor, learn to ski, and date more women.” The phrase “to live for (something)” means to enjoy something very much: “He lives for fine food and good wine.” Finally, the phrase “to live a lie” means to act in a way that isn’t consistent with one’s true beliefs or opinions: “Rick pretended to be heterosexual for years before he finally decided that he didn’t want to continue living a lie.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Most American teenagers have “significant” (a lot of) “freedom” (the ability to do what one wants) to choose how they spend their time, and with whom. Although the “level” (amount) of freedom “varies” (is different) among families, most teenagers are allowed to spend time with their “peers” (people of the same age), separate from their family being present.

A “typical” (common; normal) teenager is allowed to go to parties with “members of the opposite sex” (boys if one is a girl, or girls if one is a boy), although the parents usually try to make sure that there will be “parental supervision” (parents who will observe the party and make sure everyone follows the rules). The parents also usually have a curfew and expect their teenager to be home before then.

Typical teenagers are also allowed to “date” (go out to develop a romantic relationship), although some families “insist” (say that something must happen) that the teenagers only go out on “double dates” (meetings with two romantic couples spending time together) or “group dates” (meetings with many people who are interested in other people romantically).

Many “pre-teens” (ages 10-12) are allowed to “have sleepovers,” or spend the night at a friend’s house, although these are almost always “single-sex” (with only girls or only boys) parties. The parents usually want to make sure that they have met the other child’s parents first, and some want to see the home before they agree to let their child go to a sleepover. Sleepovers are less common among older teenagers, although they do happen occasionally.

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



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 611: Having an Overbearing Father.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 611. 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](http://eslpod.com). Support this podcast by either making a donation or becoming a member of ESL Podcast. You can get our Learning Guides if you become a member. These are 8- to 10-page PDF guides that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Having an Overbearing Father." Someone who is "overbearing" is very controlling. This is a dialogue between a father and his daughter, and you're going to see how the father tries to control his daughter. He thinks it's normal, she thinks it's too much. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Dad: Where are you going?

Eva: Out.

Dad: Out where?

Eva: Dad, I'm nearly a grown woman. You don't need be so overbearing. You give me the third degree every time I leave the house.

Dad: As long as you live under my roof, you'll live by my rules. Now, where are you going?

Eva: I'm going over to Damien's house to hang out. I'll be home before curfew.

Dad: I don't like that guy, Damien. He's not good enough for you. He's a troublemaker. Mark my words: That kid is going nowhere fast. Is this a date?

Eva: No, Dad, we're just going to watch a movie.

Dad: Alone? With no supervision? What is this world coming to?



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Eva: Dad, we're not kids anymore. We're both 17.

Dad: That's exactly the right age to get into the most trouble.

Eva: What are you doing?

Dad: I'm putting on my coat.

Eva: Why?

Dad: You and Damien need a chaperon.

Eva: No way, Dad! I'm not going over to Damien's with you tagging along as our chaperon. That would be humiliating.

Dad: Good, then you'll stay home. So, what movie should we watch tonight?

Eva: Huh!

[end of dialogue]

The dialogue begins with the father saying, "Where are you going?" Eva says, "Out." This is a typical thing that a teenager or young adult might say; they don't want to tell the father exactly where they're going so they say, "Oh, I'm just going out," meaning I'm leaving the house, but you don't tell them where you're going. So, the father says, "Out where?" Eva says, "Dad, I'm nearly (I'm almost) a grown woman." "Grown," here, means an adult, no longer a child. We might also say "grown up." She's a grown woman. "Grown," however, has even more meanings in English; those can be found in our Learning Guide.

Eva says to her father, "You don't need be so overbearing." "Overbearing" is when you are very controlling, you have very strong opinions about things, you try to control what other people do. You could be an overbearing husband, an overbearing wife, an overbearing mother-in-law; all of these are possible – not in my case, of course!

Well, Eva says, "You don't need to be so overbearing (Dad). You give me the third degree every time I leave the house." "To give (someone) the third degree" (degree) means to ask someone many questions, often about things that the person doesn't want to tell you. So if you say, "Oh, I'm going out," and someone



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says to you, “Where are you going?” and you say, “I’m going to the store,” and they say “Which store?” and you say, “I’m going to the grocery store,” and they say “What are you going to buy there?” They keep asking you more and more questions; that’s to give someone the third degree. You might wonder why we use this expression: “the third degree,” you might not wonder. But if you do wonder, I’ll tell you. “Degree” is sometimes used in English as a way of classifying something at different levels. If you accidentally put your hand in fire and burn it you might get a first degree burn, if it’s more serious a second degree burn, and if it’s really bad a third degree burn. Well, there was an organization – there still is – called the Masons, it’s sort of a secret organization for men. It has been around for many centuries. Here in the United States, in order to become a Mason you have to go through different levels, and the final level is called the Third Degree, and it requires that you be asked a bunch of questions – a lot of questions. That’s the origin, that’s where the expression comes from. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the police would ask people who they thought committed a crime – who did something against the law – a series of questions. They would “interrogate” them, which means to ask many questions of someone you think is a criminal. That’s what Eva is referring to here.

The father says, “As long as you live under my roof (that is, in my home. Your ‘roof’ is the top of the house, so if you live in it you are under the roof), you’ll live by my rules.” “To live by” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning you will follow certain rules or certain ideas. We might also say you will “comply (comply) with” these rules. This is something a parent might say: “if you live under my roof, you live by my rules.” My parents certainly believe that.

The father says, “Now, where are you going?” Eva says, “I’m going over to Damien’s house to hang out.” Damien is a friend. “To hang out” is a phrasal verb meaning to spend time with someone having fun, not doing anything in particular, maybe talking, watching television, etc. It’s an informal expression: “to hang out.” Eva says, “I’ll be home before curfew.” “Curfew” (curfew) is, for children and young adults, the time when you must be back home every night; it’s the latest time that you can be outside of the house. So if you have a 15-year-old daughter, you might say to her, “Your curfew is nine p.m.” That means you must be back here at nine o’clock, that’s your rule. The government can also have curfews when there is a lot of violence. Many cities have curfews for those who are under the age of 18. So even if the parent doesn’t have a curfew, the government will sometimes have a curfew for teenagers.

Eva says she’ll be home before curfew. Dad says, “I don’t like that guy, Damien. He’s not good enough for you.” “To be not good enough” means that they are



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not as good as someone or something else; we might say they're "inferior," they're less than your level. Dad says, "He's a troublemaker." A "troublemaker" (one word) is a person who creates many problems, someone who is always causing trouble: a "troublemaker." Dad then says, "Mark my words." The expression "mark my words" is used to indicate to the person listening to you that you are going to say something important. Usually, you are making a prediction; you are making a guess as to what will happen in the future. You might say, "Mark my words. Someday, a woman will become President of the United States." You're making a prediction. The father is making a prediction that Damien is "going nowhere fast." This is kind of an odd expression. "To go nowhere" means that you're not progressing – you're not moving from where you are. How is it possible to go nowhere fast since you're not moving? Well, it isn't. But the expression means that you are a person who will never be successful, or this idea is a losing idea. So Damien is not going to be successful; he's a loser.

Dad says, "Is this a date (are you going to Damien's house on a date)?" Eva says, "No, Dad, we're just going to watch a movie." The father says, "Alone? With no supervision?" "Supervision" is when someone is watching you to make sure that you are following the rules. In this case, it would be an adult such as a parent. The father says, "What is this world coming to?" This is an old expression. "What is this world coming to?" is used to show how upset you are, how angry you are about how things are changing over time. You're saying that things used to be better in the past, but now everything is changing; the world is changing for the worse: "What is this world coming to?"

Eva says, "Dad, we're not kids anymore," meaning we don't need supervision. She says, "We're both 17 (17 years old)." Dad says, "That's exactly the right age to get into the most trouble." The father means that that's an age where you could do a lot things wrong, and therefore you do need supervision. Eva says, "What are you doing?" The father says, "I'm putting on my coat (my jacket to go outside)." Eva says, "Why?" The father says, "You and Damien need a chaperon." A "chaperon" (chaperon) is a person, usually an older person who stays with two other people, usually a man and a woman or a boy and a girl, to make sure that they don't do anything wrong, especially when they are on a romantic date that they don't do things that the parent, in this case, would not want them to do. A "chaperon" can also be just for a single person, say a young woman who was traveling. This is not common today, but many years ago a young woman traveling by herself might need a chaperon, someone such as an older sister, a mother, an aunt that would go with them to keep them out of trouble. So, the father is going to be the chaperon for this date. Do American



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parents still insist their children have chaperons on their dates when they are in high school? I would say probably not.

Eva says, “No way, Dad! I’m not going over to Damien’s with you tagging along as our chaperon.” “To tag (tag – some would pronounce it ‘tag,’ but I’m from Minnesota so I pronounce it ‘tag’) along” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to go somewhere with someone, especially when that person does not want you to go with them. Your younger brother may tag along with you to go to the movies; you don’t really want your younger brother to go with you. Well, Eva doesn’t want her father to be tagging along on her date. She says, “That would be humiliating.” Something that is “humiliating” is very embarrassing, very uncomfortable, something that makes you feel uncomfortable, even “ashamed” (ashamed), where you feel bad about what you have done.

Dad says, however, “Good, then you’ll stay home (you won’t leave). So, what movie should we watch tonight?” the father asks the daughter since she is now not going to go over to Damien’s house. The daughter, of course, is very upset, and she just says, “Huh!” She’s upset; she doesn’t want to talk to the father anymore. Was the father being overbearing, unreasonable? Well, I guess that depends on the kind of parent you are.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Dad: Good, then you'll stay home. So, what movie should we watch tonight?

Eva: Huh!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by a grown woman, Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.

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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