



ESL Podcast 776 – Getting Praise and Recognition

GLOSSARY

golden boy – someone who is very successful, gifted, talented, and admired by many people

* Jorge is the golden boy of our town, who did well in school and went on to earn a Nobel Prize.

to recognize (someone) – to publicly talk about someone’s actions or accomplishments, praising them and drawing others’ attention to them

* The mayor recognized the firefighters for their bravery.

commendation – praise; an award or honor recognizing someone’s accomplishment; a certificate of appreciation and gratitude

* When Maggie retired, she received the CEO’s commendation for her 30 years of contributions to the company.

to bask in (someone’s) reflected glory – to be pleased to be around someone who is very successful and admired, often used sarcastically to show one’s dislike for someone or to make fun of someone

* Growing up, it was hard for Chelsea to bask in her older brother’s reflected glory as he made world records as a swimmer.

honor – recognition and praise received from a powerful person or from an organization

* Receiving a Pulitzer Prize is an honor for any journalist.

glory hound – a person who wants and tries to get a lot of awards, honors, and recognitions

* Jun is such a glory hound, always applying for awards and telling everyone about his accomplishments.

galling – annoying and irritating, especially when something seems unfair

* It was so galling when Janice received the promotion instead of me. I’ve worked here much longer than she has.

praise – compliments; nice things people say about another person or thing because they like it and admire it very much

* The newest version of the software has received a lot of praise from early users.



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as much as the next guy – a phrase used to emphasize that one’s feelings, opinions, or desires are normal and common, not unusual

* Brian wants to be rich as much as the next guy, but there’s no way he’d ever steal to get more money.

limelight – spotlight; with a lot of attention from other people and/or the media

* When Lisee saved that little boy’s life, she was in the limelight for a few weeks.

exceptional – extraordinary; very good; superior to others

* Pilar is an exceptional singer who has performed in the best theaters in the world.

modest – humble; not talking about one’s talents or accomplishments; not wanting to receive attention for one’s skills and abilities from other people

* Shanaia is so modest that she starts blushing when people thank her for what she has done.

mere mortal – an ordinary person, not someone with special powers or abilities, often used sarcastically to contrast with someone who is acting superior

* Does the boss really expect us to be able to finish all this work within one week? Doesn’t she realize we’re mere mortals?

to leave (someone) in the dust – to beat another person in a competition or race; to be superior to someone in some way; to win

* Wendy is the best student in physics class. Her performance on tests leaves all the other students in the dust.

to give (someone) a hard time – to criticize someone, often in a teasing or joking way, especially to make that person feel bad about something he or she has done

* I can’t believe you’re still giving me a hard time about crashing your car. That was years ago!

to give as good as (one) gets – to reciprocate; to tease someone as much as that person is teasing oneself; to take revenge in a joking way

* Yes, you really tricked me. But remember that I give as good as I get, so watch out!

long memory – the ability to remember things for a long time, especially when talking about how one has been treated by other people in the past

* Francisco has a long memory and never forgets what other people have said about him.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Rene giving Bruno a hard time?
 - a) Because she's envious of Bruno's honors.
 - b) Because she doesn't think Bruno earned the commendation.
 - c) Because she thinks she works harder than Bruno does.

2. What does Bruno mean when he says, "I give as good as I get"?
 - a) He'll treat Rene the same way Rene is treating him.
 - b) He'll share the awards and honors with Rene.
 - c) He has worked hard to earn the commendation.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

praise

The word "praise," in this podcast, means compliments, or nice things people say about another person or thing because they like it and admire it very much: "Be sure to give praise to the students who do well." The phrase "to have nothing but praise" means to say only good things about someone: "Caroline had nothing but praise for her employees." The phrase "to give praise to the Lord" means to worship and thank God: "Each Sunday, they gather at church to give praise to the Lord." Finally, the phrase "to sing (someone's) praises" means to say a lot of good things about someone: "This newspaper is always singing the mayor's praises, even when he hasn't really done anything worth talking about."

in the dust

In this podcast, the phrase "to leave (someone) in the dust" means to beat another person in a competition or race, to be superior, or to win: "Chad solved the puzzle really quickly and left the rest of us in the dust." The phrase "to wait for the dust to settle" means to wait and see what happens before making a decision or determining what has happened: "Let's wait a few days for the dust to settle before we figure out what to do next." The phrase "to bite the dust" means to fail or to lose badly, or even to die: "They bit the dust in this year's competition, but they're already planning how to improve so they can do better next year."



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CULTURE NOTE

Employee Recognition

Many American employers have special “employee recognition” or “employee appreciation” programs in which they try to recognize their best employees for their contributions to the company.

Many companies “name” (recognize someone as) an Employee of the Month. They might have a “plaque” (a piece of wood hung on a wall to display small pieces of metal with written text) where they list all the Employees of the Month with their name and date, and possibly a photograph.

Some employee recognition programs offer awards. For example, an Employee of the Month might receive a small “monetary award” (money), a hat with the “company logo” (a small image that represents the company), or a “gift certificate” (a card or piece of paper that allows someone to spend a certain amount of money at a particular store or restaurant). Other companies might let their Employee of the Month use a special parking space close to the front door.

Other companies prefer to recognize employees for specific accomplishments. For example, a sales department might recognize the salesperson with the highest sales over a certain period of time. Other companies might “solicit” (request) “cost-reduction” (ways to lower the company’s expenses) suggestions from their employees and “issue” (make; create; give) a special award for employees whose suggestions are “implemented” or used, and save the company money.

Employee recognition programs can be a good way to “motivate” (make someone want to do something more or better) employees, but they can “backfire” (do the opposite of what they were intended to do) if employees “perceive” (believe; get the impression that) the awards are awarded unfairly.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 776: Getting Praise and Recognition.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 776. 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. Support this podcast, become a member, get a Learning Guide, and improve your English as fast as possible.

This episode is a dialogue between Rene and Bruno about getting praise, when people say good things about you. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Rene: Hey, look who's here. It's the company's golden boy.

Bruno: Very funny.

Rene: I'm not joking. First, you're recognized at the annual meeting for your work in the company, and then you get a commendation from the city for your volunteer work. I'm basking in your reflected glory.

Bruno: I didn't ask for either honor, as you well know. I'm not a glory hound.

Rene: Yes, and that's what makes it even more galling. You don't have to go seeking your glory; it comes to you.

Bruno: Knock it off! I like praise as much as the next guy, but I'd rather not be in the limelight.

Rene: I know. You're exceptional and you're modest about it. You're the perfect guy. You leave us mere mortals in the dust.

Bruno: I'm leaving. I know you love giving me a hard time, but remember this: I give as good as I get – and I have a long memory!

[end of dialogue]



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Our dialogue begins with Rene saying, “Hey, look who’s here.” What happens here is that Bruno is walking into the room, and Rene is talking about Bruno. She’s saying, “Hey, look who’s here.” Look at who has just come into the room. “It’s the company’s golden boy.” The expression “golden boy” refers to someone who’s very successful or gifted or talented that other people admire. Rene is being funny; she’s being sarcastic here; however, she isn’t really praising or saying nice things about Bruno. Bruno understands that; he says, “Very funny,” meaning he knows it’s not funny. Rene says, “I’m not joking. First, you’re recognized at the annual meeting for your work in the company.” “To be recognized” here means that someone says something nice about you, someone compliments you – praises you in public, usually in front of a group of people or in some newspaper or official publication. That’s to be recognized. “To recognize” can also mean that you see someone or something and you remember what it is because you’ve seen it before. But here, it just means to be praised, to be complimented on something.

Rene says, “First, you are recognized at the annual meeting (that is, a meeting for the whole company that happens once a year), then you get a commendation from the city for your volunteer work.” A “commendation” is an official often certificate or a letter that is given someone to thank them for their work. It’s an award that an organization or a government agency or a government organization might give someone for the work that they have done – the good work that they have done. In this case, Bruno has done volunteer work; he has worked without being paid for some group.

Rene says, “I’m basking in your reflected glory.” “To bask” (bask) usually means to sit in the sun so that you can get a tan, or simply for the pleasure of feeling the warmth of the sun. But it’s often used, this verb “to bask,” with the word “glory” to mean to enjoy all of the good things that are happening to you, the praise, the compliments that people are giving you. “I’m going to bask in the glory of my victory.” Everyone is thanking me or congratulating me, looking at me, saying nice things about me. I’m going to bask in that; I’m going to enjoy it. What Rene is saying, however, is a little different. She’s saying, “I’m basking in your reflected glory.” When light hits a mirror, it’s reflected, it goes off of the mirror and back out again. What Rene is saying is that she doesn’t have any glory of her own, no one is praising her, but people are praising Bruno and so she’s enjoying the praise that is reflected from Bruno to her because all of the wonderful things that Bruno has done and has been recognized for. Once again, she’s making a joke here.

Bruno says, “I didn’t ask for either honor, as you well know.” An “honor” (honor) is recognition or praise that you receive, usually from a powerful organization or



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person. The president may give you an honor, such as giving you an award for something. Bruno says that he didn't ask for these honors; he didn't try to get these honors. He says, "I'm not a glory hound." A "glory hound" (hound) is someone who is always looking for praise, someone who always wants to be recognized, who wants everyone to say nice things about them. Rene says, "Yes," she understands that Bruno is not a glory hound, "and that's what makes it even more galling." Something that is "galling" (galling) is something that is annoying or irritating because it seems unfair. Rene says, "You don't have to go seeking your glory; it comes to you."

Bruno says, "Knock it off!" "Knock it off" means stop it; it's an informal expression that means stop doing what you're doing. You don't like it, you want the other person to stop it. A child may be screaming or talking loudly or crying, and the mother may say, "Knock it off," meaning stop doing that. Bruno says, "Knock it off. I like praise as much as the next guy." "Praise" is something nice that someone says about you. The expression "as much as the next guy" is used to emphasize that you are normal, that you are just like everyone else, that you are no different than everyone else. He says, "I like praise (I like to be complimented) as much as the next guy (just like everyone else), but I'd rather not be in the limelight." The "limelight" (limelight – one word) means to have a lot of attention, when everyone is looking on you. It could mean that your picture is in the newspaper, and the television news is talking about you; that's to be in the limelight

Rene says, "I know. You're exceptional and you're modest about it." "Exceptional" means very good at something, better than anyone else, "extraordinary" we might say. Rene says that Bruno is exceptional and he's modest about it. "To be modest" (modest) means to be humble, not to talk to other people about it. Here, "to be modest" means to be good, but not to talk about it to everyone else. Rene says, "You're the perfect guy. You leave us mere mortals in the dust." A "mortal" (mortal) is someone who will die, all of us human beings are mortal, but the expression "mere mortals" means ordinary people, people who aren't extraordinary, who are not exceptional. "To leave (someone) in the dust" means to beat another person in a competition, to be superior to someone else, to win in such a way that the other person is not even close to you. Rene says to Bruno that he leaves mere mortals – us mere mortals the dust, he is much better than the rest of us.

Bruno says, "I'm leaving. I know you love giving me a hard time." "To give (someone) a hard time" means to criticize someone, usually by making fun of them. Bruno says, "remember this: I give as good as I get." The expression "to give as good as you get" means I can criticize jokingly, I can tease (tease) you



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just as much as you tease me – as you make fun of me, as you criticize me. “And,” Bruno says, “I have a long memory!” “To have a long memory” means that you will remember things for a long time. Wives have very long memories, they will remember things that you said and did years and years ago. All husbands know this!

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

I like to praise our exceptional scriptwriter, because she is so good. Thank you, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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



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