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**ESL Podcast 823 – Dealing with a Bothersome Person**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to get in (one's) face** – to bother or annoy someone; to challenge someone and make him or her feel upset or angry

\* Teenagers don't like it when their parents get in their face and question their actions and decisions.

**to sense** – to perceive; to feel and understand; to use one's vision, hearing, taste, touch, and/or smell to reach some conclusion

\* We could sense everyone's excitement as soon as we walked into the room.

**serious** – significant; not minor or unimportant; major

\* He ate four sandwiches, three oranges, a large bag of chips, and a package of cookies. That's a serious lunch!

**sexual tension** – the slightly uncomfortable feelings when two people are attracted to each other romantically

\* You can't build a long-term relationship on sexual tension alone. Do you guys have any common interests?

**out of (one's) mind** – crazy; irrational; not thinking clearly; saying and doing things that do not make sense

\* Why did you drive into that car? Are you out of your mind?

**to give (someone) a hard time** – to make things difficult for someone; to tease, bother, or annoy someone

\* Stop giving your sister a hard time about those photos. You did some stupid things when you were young, too.

**to show off** – to try to get attention from other people, especially by demonstrating how well one can do something

\* Adam is very smart, but it's annoying when he shows off by speaking in other languages and trying to make himself seem better than everyone else.

**to stand out** – to be very noticeable and get others' attention, especially among a group of similar people or things

\* Cheryl is trying to make her application stand out among all the other applications the medical school will review.

**admirer** – someone who likes and respects something or someone

\* A secret admirer sent Crystal flowers and a box of chocolates, but she doesn't know who it is.



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**miserable** – very unhappy and unpleasant, with many negative emotions (feelings)

\* If you're miserable in your job, why don't you quit and find something else to do?

**to throw (someone) a bone** – to give someone a little bit of help or encouragement; to give someone a small reward

\* When management increased the hourly rate by \$0.25, they were just throwing a bone to make people stop complaining about wanting a raise.

**antics** – silly, strange, and unusual behavior, usually to get attention from others

\* Parents have to learn to ignore their children's antics.

**certifiable** – crazy; insane

\* Did you see how that woman was talking to the trees? She's certifiable!

**to pester** – to annoy or bother someone repeatedly

\* We'll keep pestering the insurance company until we receive the check.

**repulsive** – very disgusting and unattractive, making one want to be as far away as possible

\* How can you eat that when it smells so bad? It's repulsive!

**laughingstock** – someone who is ridiculed and laughed at by many people, usually for having done something foolish or for having been tricked

\* If I wear those clothes, I'll be the laughingstock of the entire school!

**to backfire** – for some action or plan to have the opposite results or outcome of what one had intended and hoped for

\* They thought that praising their son would increase his self-confidence, but their plan backfired and he just became arrogant.

**deep down** – related to one's secret, inner feelings; how one truly thinks or feels about something, but does not share with other people and may not even be aware of

\* They've been dating for years, but deep down she isn't even sure if she loves him.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Melissa ask Conan, “Are you out of your mind?”
  - a) Because he’s saying things that don’t make sense.
  - b) Because he’s being very rude.
  - c) Because he’s being very funny.
2. Why does Conan suggest that Melissa “throw him a bone”?
  - a) Because he wants her to cook a meal for Reuben.
  - b) Because he wants her to show Reuben she’s interested in him.
  - c) Because he wants her to hit Reuben.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### to sense

The verb “to sense,” in this podcast, means to perceive or to use one’s vision, hearing, taste, touch, and/or smell to reach some conclusion: “We sensed a lot of anger, so we decided to leave their home early.” The phrase “with a sense of (something)” means with a particular feeling: “Justina looked back on her years at the university with a sense of accomplishment.” The phrase “a sense of humor” refers to one’s ability to understand and appreciate funny things: “That was a joke and you’re supposed to laugh! I forgot that you don’t have a sense of humor.” Finally, the phrase “to make sense of something” means to be able to understand something that is very complex: “How long did it take before you could make sense of the Cyrillic alphabet?”

#### to stand out

In this podcast, the phrase “to stand out” means to be very noticeable and get others’ attention, especially among a group of similar people or things: “This home stands out for its unusual architecture.” The phrase “to stand still” means to not change over time: “Everyone became quiet and it felt like time was standing still.” The phrase “to stand guard” means to protect and watch over someone or something: “The criminals asked their friend to stand guard while they robbed the bank.” The phrase “to stand by” means to not do anything while something bad is happening: “How could so many people just stand by and watch while that woman was robbed?” Finally, the phrase “to stand tall” means to feel very proud of one’s accomplishments: “Dimitry has been standing tall ever since he finished that deal.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

**Common Pesticide Warnings**

Sometimes people pester each other, but the bigger “pests” are “insects” (bugs) and “rodents” (small animals with “fur” (hair), pointed noses and long tails). Many “pesticides” (chemicals that hurt or kill insects or rodents) can be “purchased” (bought) and “applied” (used on a surface or in an area) to “deter” (make something stay away) or kill pests. Because these pesticides are dangerous or “deadly” (causing death) to pests, they can also be “hazardous” (dangerous) to humans.

Most pesticides are “labeled” (with stickers or writing on a container) with many “warnings” (statements of bad things that might happen) and special “handling instructions” (directions for how something should be used). The labels also include information about what people should do if they are “exposed to” (come into contact with) the pesticides in dangerous ways, such as if it “splashes” (a liquid moves) into one’s eyes or mouth.

“Use protective eyewear” is a common warning. It means that people should wear special “goggles” (like glasses, but larger) to protect their eyes from the pesticide. Other warnings might “advise” (tell) people to use “gloves” (plastic or rubber materials worn over one’s hands) when handling the pesticide.

Pesticide bottles often have labels warning of the dangers. They might say, “May cause cancer and birth defects,” where “birth defects” are problems with the body of a newborn baby. They might also say “Avoid contact with eyes” or “For external use only,” meaning it should not be used inside one’s body.

Because of the dangers, pesticide makers warn that they should always be stored away from children. Many bottles are labeled “Keep out of reach of children” (put where children cannot reach) and have a “safety cap” (the top of a bottle designed to be very difficult to open).

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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 823: Dealing with a Bothersome Person.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 823. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from beautiful Los Angeles, California – oh, and the Center for Educational Development.

This episode, like all of our episodes, has a Learning Guide. I strongly recommend you take a look at the Learning Guide; it contains a lot of good information that will help you improve your English. Go to [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) to download the one for this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Melissa and Conan about someone who is bothering one of them, someone who is making problems for one of them. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Melissa: I hate that guy Reuben. He's always getting in my face.

Conan: Ooh, I sense some serious sexual tension between the two of you.

Melissa: Sexual tension? Are you out of your mind? He does nothing but give me a hard time.

Conan: That's because he's trying to get your attention.

Melissa: If he likes me, why doesn't he try to get my attention by showing off, like every other guy?

Conan: Maybe he's trying to stand out among your many admirers.

Melissa: Don't be stupid. I don't have a lot of admirers and I don't want one who makes my life miserable!

Conan: Maybe if you throw him a bone, then he'll stop his antics.

Melissa: What kind of a bone?

Conan: Ask him to the movies Saturday night.



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Melissa: Me, ask him out? You're certifiable!

Conan: I'm telling you that if you ask him out, he'll stop pestering you.

Melissa: Putting aside the fact that I find him repulsive, if I ask him out, he'll make me the laughingstock of this place.

Conan: I don't think so. He'll get what he wants and he'll stop pestering you.

Melissa: What if it backfires and he bothers me even more?

Conan: Then you'll get what you want – deep down!

[end of dialogue]

Melissa begins by saying, "I hate that guy Reuben," meaning I hate that guy named Reuben – Reuben is his name. Reuben is also a kind of sandwich, but I don't think she's talking about a sandwich. No, she's talking about that guy, Reuben. Melissa says, "He's always getting in my face." "To get in (someone's) face" means to bother them, to annoy them. It could also mean to challenge them, to disagree with them in order to make them angry. "He was getting in my face," we might say more informally, "he was getting up all in my face," it's the same thing.

Conan says, "Ooh, I sense some serious sexual tension between the two of you." "To sense" (sense) means to perceive, to feel, to understand. "I sense there is something wrong here" means I think there is something wrong, I don't know for sure but from what I am seeing and hearing that's, we might say, my impression – that's my sense of what is going on. Conan says that he senses some sexual tension. "Sexual tension" would be when two people are attracted to each other romantically, which in a strange way causes some uncomfortable feelings between the two people. The use of the word "serious" here (serious) doesn't mean serious in the sense of not funny or serious in the sense of something that is very important. Instead, it's used here to mean a lot; it's a word used for emphasis. You might think of it as meaning a lot of.

Melissa says, "Sexual tension? Are you out of your mind?" "To be out of your mind" means to be crazy, to be irrational, not to be thinking properly or correctly. Melissa says, "He (Reuben) does nothing but give me a hard time." The construction "he does nothing but" really means the only thing he does is to give me a hard time. "To give (someone) a hard time" means to either make it difficult



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for that person to do something, or perhaps simply to make fun of that person. Here, it means the first meaning, to make difficult for someone else. Conan says, “That’s because he’s trying to get your attention.” Conan says that Reuben is giving Melissa a hard time because he wants Melissa’s attention. He wants Melissa to pay attention to him, to notice him, and of course, ultimately, to like him.

Melissa says, “If he likes me, why doesn’t he try to get my attention by showing off, like every other guy?” “To show off” means to try to get attention from other people by showing or saying how good you are: “Oh, I have such a nice car. Have you seen my new car? It’s really nice.” That would be showing off. Usually, showing off is something that you actually do. For example, “Did I tell you I can speak in Swahili, Italian, and Chinese?” And then you start speaking in those languages; that would be showing off. You’re trying to impress other people. This is something, of course, that men do with women to try to get their attention. When they’re interested in a woman they may try to show off, and that’s what Melissa means when she says why doesn’t Reuben try to get my attention by showing off, like every other guy – like every other man. So I could say to a woman, “You know, I’m a podcaster.” And yeah, that – that’ll impress a lot of women. Yes it will! I don’t need to impress women because I’m married, but if I weren’t I could tell a woman, “Hey, heh, I’m a podcaster. Yeah.” Yeah, that’s impressive. I’m just kidding, of course!

Conan says, “Maybe he’s trying to stand out among your many admirers.” Conan is answering Melissa’s question about why Reuben doesn’t show off like other guys. He says that Reuben is trying to stand out. “To stand out” means to be different from the people around you, to be very noticeable, to have other people pay attention to you and not pay attention to the people around you. That’s to stand out. “To stand” has several different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some of those. So, Conan thinks Reuben is trying to stand out among Melissa’s many admirers. “To admire” (admire) means to like someone, to believe that person is a very good person, to want to be like that person. An “admirer,” with an “r” at the end, is someone who admires. Often we use this term in a romantic sense, when a woman has several men who are interested in her – who admire her. We have another expression: “a secret admirer.” Somebody sends a woman a flower and they don’t say what their name is. They may say “your secret admirer,” someone who likes you but doesn’t want to give his name.

Melissa says, however, “Don’t be stupid,” meaning that’s stupid. You’re being unintelligent. You’re saying things that don’t make any sense. “Don’t be stupid” is definitely an insulting thing to say to someone. Melissa says, “I don’t have a lot



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of admirers and I don't want one who makes my life miserable!" "Miserable" (miserable) means terrible, horrible. Melissa doesn't want anyone who's going to make her life terrible or miserable.

Conan says, "Maybe if you throw him a bone, then he'll stop his antics." "To throw (someone) a bone" (bone) means to give someone a little encouragement, or to give someone a little reward for something good they have done. The expression probably comes from giving the bones of the meat that you eat to your dog. Dogs like bones, I guess. So, "to throw (somebody) a bone" means to give them a small reward, something like a little gift. Conan is suggesting that Melissa do something nice for Reuben, and then maybe Reuben will stop his antics. "Antics" (antics) are silly, strange, unusual behavior. We often associate this word with children who are acting or behaving strangely, often to get the attention of their parents.

Melissa says, "What kind of a bone?" meaning how should I reward him. Conan says, "Ask him to the movies Saturday night," ask him to go to a movie with you. Melissa says, "Me, ask him out?" "To ask someone out" means to ask them to go on a date. Traditionally, the man asks the woman to go on a date. So Melissa can't believe what Conan is suggesting. In fact, she says to Conan, "You're certifiable!" When you call someone "certifiable" (certifiable) it here means crazy, insane, nuts. Conan says, "I'm telling you that if you ask him out, he'll stop pestering you." "To pester" (pester) means to bother or annoy someone. If you say "stop pestering me," you mean stop bothering me, stop annoying me.

Melissa says, "Putting aside the fact that I find him repulsive," meaning if we don't even consider the fact that I find this person repulsive – and "repulsive" (repulsive) means unattractive, very disgusting, something you don't want even to be close to. Melissa says, "Putting aside the fact I find him repulsive, if I ask him out, he'll make me the laughingstock of this place." Someone who is the "laughingstock" (one word) is someone that everyone laughs at, that everyone makes fun of.

Conan says, "I don't think so. He'll get what he wants and he'll stop pestering you." Melissa asks, "What if it backfires and he bothers me even more?" For something "to backfire" (backfire – one word) is to have the opposite results of what you expect. So you tell your friend, "Oh, that's a very good job you did," and your friend gets angry at you; your friend yells at you. We would say that your compliment – the nice thing you said – backfired; somehow it had the opposite result that you wanted it or expected it to have. Melissa says what if me asking Reuben out on a date backfires; in other words, instead of liking Melissa,



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Reuben will start bothering her and pestering her even more. Conan says, “Then you’ll get what you want – deep down!” The phrase “deep down” means related to your very secret, inner feelings, how you really think about something but you don’t want to tell anyone else. So what Conan is saying here is that really Melissa likes the fact that Reuben bothers her. So when Melissa says well, what if he bothers me even more, Conan says well, then you’ll get what you really want, because that’s what you really want deep down. He’s saying that Melissa is also attracted to or romantically interested in Reuben.

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

[start of dialogue]

Melissa: I hate that guy Reuben. He’s always getting in my face.

Conan: Ooh, I sense some serious sexual tension between the two of you.

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Conan: Then you'll get what you want – deep down!

[end of dialogue]

Our scriptwriter has a lot of admirers for her wonderful scripts. That's the wonderful – did I mention wonderful? – Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm the not very wonderful Jeff McQuillan, thanking you for listening, and asking you to come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.

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