



GLOSSARY

to rub (one's) nose in it – to remind someone that one has something that he or she doesn't have; to not let someone forget that one is better than him or her in some way

* Baudette did much better on the exam than I did, but I wish she wouldn't rub my nose in it.

left and right – at every opportunity; repeatedly, frequently and from all directions

* The company is hiring new employees left and right because its business is growing very quickly.

to gloat – to brag; to show that one is very proud and happy about something that is going well in one's life, or about something that is going poorly in another person's life

* I know that you're happy about your new job, but if you keep talking about it the other employees will think that you're gloating.

commission – the amount of money that a person receives for selling something, usually as a percentage of the total amount

* At this company, sales representatives have commissions of 20%.

to turn the tables – to change a situation completely so that what was bad for person A and good for person B is now good for person A and bad for person B

* Scott was always a better football player than Alec, but the tables were turned last year when Alec hurt his ankle.

smug – very proud, thinking that one is better than another person

* Tatiana was very smug when she got the highest grade in the class.

to flaunt – to show one's good luck, money, beauty, or success to other people to get their admiration and/or to make them envious

* Did you see how Jane was flaunting her new diamond ring in the meeting?

subtle – almost unnoticeable; not easy to notice; not easily seen; not drawing attention to oneself; hidden

* The subtle music in the elevator is supposed to help people relax.



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

to put (one) in (one's) place – to do or say something that makes another person stop being too proud or arrogant; to do or say something that makes one equal with another person in some way

* When Bernard said that his job was much harder than staying at home with the kids, his wife put him in his place by going away for two days and making him take care of the kids without her.

testosterone – a hormone (chemical) that is very strong in men and having too much testosterone can make them aggressive and ready to fight with each other

* With a husband and four teenage sons, Krista often jokes that there is too much testosterone in her home.

to duke it out – to have a fistfight to decide something; to fight by hitting another person so that the winner wins the argument

* The two men are duking it out because they are in love with the same woman.

to get (something) over with – to end something that is difficult; to finish something that is unpleasant

* You and I have been angry with each other for two weeks. Let's talk about it and get this argument over with.

friendly rivalry – competition between two friends that is not serious to see which person can do something better than the other one can

* The two cousins have a friendly rivalry to see who can make the best hamburger.

If you say so... – a phrase used to show that one doesn't really believe what another person is saying, but isn't going to argue about it

* Laurie is worried about moving to Alaska and every time her sister tells her how much she's going to like it, she just says, "If you say so..."

to get in the way – to interfere; to prevent someone from doing what he or she wants or needs to do

* When Rudy and Yvonne started arguing at the party, we didn't say anything because we didn't want to get in the way.

ego – self-importance; the feeling or opinion that one has about oneself

* Simon has a huge ego and thinks he's better than everyone else.



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Bogdan mean when he says that he’s “turning the tables”?
 - a) He’s rearranging the office furniture.
 - b) He’s no longer doing worse than Tom.
 - c) He feels bad for Tom.

 2. Which sentence describes what Bogdan thinks about Tom?
 - a) Tom is smug about his new clients.
 - b) Tom flaunts his successes.
 - c) Tom is putting Bogdan in his place
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

commission

The word “commission,” in this podcast, means the amount of money that a person receives for selling something, usually as a percentage of the total amount: “How much of a commission do you get for selling a new car?” The phrase “to work on commission” means to make money by earning commissions: “Salespeople who work on commission don’t get any money if they don’t sell anything.” As a verb, “to commission” means to ask an artist, musician, or writer to work on something: “Jacques commissioned a painting of his parents’ home in New Orleans.” A “commission” is also a group or organization that is responsible for something: “The Human Rights Commission is interested in learning about how countries use children as workers.”

to get in the way

In this podcast, the phrase “to get in the way” means to prevent someone from doing what he or she wants or needs to do: “Don’t let your job get in the way of your spending time with your family.” The phrase “to get out of the way” means to move so that one is no longer blocking someone’s path: “Please get out of the way! This box is very heavy.” The phrase “to go out of (one’s) way to do (something)” means to make an extra effort to do something nice for another person: “Terry went out of his way to make a nice dinner for you tonight.” Finally, the phrase “to get (one’s) way” means to be able to do what one wants to do even though other people don’t like it: “Why does Eddie always gets his way when the family decides where to go on vacation?”



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

CULTURE NOTE

One of the most famous American “rivalries” (when two people or groups of people try to be better than the other) is the Hatfield-McCoy “feud” (a very long argument between two people or groups of people).

The Hatfield and McCoy families were early “pioneers” (the first people to begin living in an unfamiliar place) on opposite sides of a river dividing West Virginia and Kentucky in the United States. Both families owned a lot of land, but the Hatfields were richer than the McCoys.

The feud began because the Hatfields were angry that one of the McCoys had joined the “Union Army” (the northern army in the U.S. Civil War). McCoy was murdered on January 7, 1865, a few days after he had returned from the army.

Then, in 1873, the two families started arguing about a pig. They couldn’t decide which family owned the pig, because they couldn’t agree on the families’ “property lines” (where one family’s land ended and another family’s land began). The McCoys lost the argument in court. The man who had “testified” (spoken the truth in the court) was killed by the McCoys.

The feud “escalated” (got bigger) when a McCoy woman decided to live with her Hatfield lover. From then on, McCoys and Hatfields begin to attack and kill each other more frequently.

The Hatfield-McCoy feud became a national news story and the state “governors,” or political leaders, used the state soldiers to try to end the feud. Eventually, the “U.S. Supreme Court,” the most important court in the country, became involved. In 1891, the families agreed to stop fighting.

The Hatfield-McCoy feud became very well known and even became the subject of jokes, books, and movies. Today the “Hatfield-McCoy feud” is used to refer to family rivalries in general.

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



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 284: A Friendly Rivalry.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 284. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com. If you click on the name of this episode, you can see the script for the dialogue in this episode. If you want a complete transcript, with all of the definitions, sample sentences, cultural notes, additional definitions, and a complete transcript of everything we say on the podcast, you can download one of our Learning Guides.

This episode is called “A Friendly Rivalry.” A “rivalry” is like a competition between two people. And we're going to listen to a dialogue between Veronica and Bogdan about a rivalry at work. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Veronica: I'm finishing up for the day. Do you want to walk out together?

Bogdan: Yeah, that would be great, if you don't mind waiting until I've finished sending this email. I'm letting Tom know that I got another account. That makes four new customers this week.

Veronica: Congratulations, but isn't that rubbing Tom's nose in it?

Bogdan: Don't worry about Tom. He's been getting new clients left and right. For the past six months, he's been gloating about his big commissions. I'm just turning the tables, that's all.

Veronica: Tom doesn't seem like the type to be smug about his successes.

Bogdan: He doesn't flaunt it, but he lets people know in subtle ways. Don't worry. I'm going to put him in his place.

Veronica: This is just too much testosterone for me. Why don't you guys just go outside, duke it out, and get it over with.



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

Bogdan: What would be the fun in that? This is just a little friendly rivalry. Nobody takes it seriously.

Veronica: If you say so. I know not to get in the way when there are big egos involved.

Bogdan: You just don't understand guys.

Veronica: You got that right.

[end of story]

You listened to a dialogue between Veronica and Bogdan. Veronica says, "I'm finishing up for the day," meaning "I'm completing the work that I need so I can leave." They're at work, and this conversation is probably at the end of the day, in the late afternoon. Veronica then asks Bogdan, "Do you want to walk out together," meaning leave the building and go to their cars.

Bogdan says, "Yeah, that would be great, if you don't mind waiting until I've finished sending this email." "If you don't mind" is a polite way of saying "if you would please." "I'm letting Tom know that I got another account. That makes four new customers this week."

Veronica says, "Congratulations, but isn't that rubbing Tom's nose in it?" The expression "to rub (rub) someone's nose in something" means to remind someone that you have done something or have something that the other person doesn't. It's to not let someone forget that you are better than him or her in some way; that would be "rubbing someone's nose in it." Saying to someone, who just lost a game to you, "Oh, you didn't play very well," that would be "rubbing their nose in it" – reminding them that they lost.

Bogdan says, "Don't worry about Tom. He's been getting new clients left and right." "Clients" are customers. The expression "left and right" here means repeatedly; frequently; at every opportunity. It's sort of an interesting expression; for example, you could say, "The company is hiring new employees left and right because it needs more workers" – they're hiring a lot; very frequently; repeatedly.

Bogdan goes on to say, "For the past six months," Tom has "been gloating about his big commissions." "To gloat" (gloat) means to brag; "to brag" means to show other people that you are very proud and happy about something, but you're doing it in a way that offends or bothers the other person. You are really trying to tell everybody how great you are. So, "to gloat" is usually a negative thing.



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

Bogdan says that Tom has been gloating about his big commissions. In business, especially in sales – when you are trying to sell some thing, a “commission” is a percentage of the price of the sale that the company gives back to the salesperson. For example, if I'm selling shoes, and I work on a ten percent commission, and I sell \$150 worth of shoes, my commission would be \$15. This is a very common way of paying people who sell things in order to motivate them to get them to sell more. The more you sell, the more money you make. “Commission” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional definitions.

Bogdan then concludes, “I’m just turning the tables, that’s all.” “To turn the tables,” or, “to turn the tables on someone,” means to change a situation completely, so that what was bad for you is now good for you, and what was good for the other person is now bad for the other person. “To turn the tables on someone” means to change the situation so that now it's good for you, and bad for the other person.

Veronica says, “Tom doesn’t seem like the type” – that is, the type of person – “to be smug about his successes.” “Smug” (smug) means very proud, thinking that you are better than anyone else. Again, it's normally a negative thing to describe someone.

Bogdan says Tom doesn’t flaunt it, but he lets people know in subtle ways. “To flaunt” (flaunt) means to show or to indicate to other people how good you are, how beautiful you are, how much good luck you've had, or how much success you've had, and you want to tell other people that so that they will like you or they will feel envious – they will want what you have. Once again, “to flaunt” is a negative way of describing someone's actions. There's a(n) old expression, “If you got it, flaunt it,” meaning if you are good at something, you should tell everyone. That's not a very popular way of making friends, by “flaunting” your success. Of course, if you're like me, you don't have anything to flaunt!

Bogdan says that Tom tries to let other people know in subtle ways. “Subtle” (subtle), notice the strange spelling, means not easy to notice, or difficult to see – hidden. “Subtle” is something that is not obvious. For example: “The museum used very subtle lighting on the painting.” You couldn't really notice it; it was there, but it was difficult to see

Bogdan says that he's going to put Tom in his place. The expression, “to put someone in their place,” means to do something that makes the other person stop being so proud; to do or say something that makes you equal, somehow,



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

with the other person. That would be “to put someone in their place”; to say something that would make them stop bragging – stop flaunting their success.

Veronica says, “This is just too much testosterone for me.” “Testosterone” (testosterone) is a hormone in your body that is very strong in men. A “hormone” is a type of chemical in the body. Some people believe that if you have a lot of testosterone as a man, it makes you more likely to fight; more aggressive; stronger. I don't know if that's true necessarily, but that's the idea. So, “testosterone” refers to, usually, a man, and how he is strong and aggressive.

Veronica says, “This is just too much testosterone for me,” meaning “you guys are acting like boys” – like aggressive men – “and I don't want to be part of it.” “Why don't you guys just go outside, duke it out, and get it over with.” “To duke (duke) it out” means to have a fight; to punch each other until you figure out who wins. “To get something over with” means to end something; to finish something, usually, that is difficult or unpleasant. “I have to go to the doctor this week” – it's true, I do – “and I don't really want to. I want to get it over with” – I want it to be over.

Bogdan responds by saying, “What would be the fun in that? This is just a little friendly rivalry.” Remember, a “rivalry” is a competition between two people, usually between two people who are friendly. It's not a serious competition. We use this expression when talking about two different schools or universities that play each other in sports. They may have a “rivalry”; they have this on-going competition. Here in Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, USC, has a rivalry with the University of California at Los Angeles, UCLA; that's a “rivalry.” Of course, we all know that USC is the better school, because that's where I went!

Veronica says, “If you say so.” That expression, “if you say so,” is used to show that you don't really believe what the other person is saying, but you're not going to argue about it. Veronica says I'm not going “to get in the way when there are big egos involved.” “To in get the way” means to interfere; to prevent someone from doing something that he or she wants to do or needs to do. “Don't get in my way” – don't interfere with me – don't stop me from doing what I want to do.

“Ego” (ego) here means the feeling or opinion that you have about yourself. Usually, when someone says, “He has a big ego,” they mean he thinks he's very important. Bogdan then says, “You just don't understand guys” – that is, men. Veronica says, “You got that right,” meaning “you're right, I don't.”

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



ESL Podcast 284 – A Friendly Rivalry

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[end of story]

The script for this podcast was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us next time here at ESL Podcast.

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