



ESL Podcast 333 – Quitting Smoking

GLOSSARY

smoke break – a short period of time during the workday when one stops working and goes outside to smoke a cigarette

* My co-worker takes up to six smoke breaks a day! I don't know how she gets any work done.

to bum (something) off (someone) – to ask someone to give one something for free

* Can I bum \$0.50 off you to make a phone call?

pack – a small box or package of something

* How much does this pack of gum cost?

cigarette – a piece of paper rolled around tobacco where one end is lit with fire and the other end is placed in one's mouth to breathe in the smoke

* Some teenagers smoke cigarettes to fit in with their friends.

lighter – a small plastic or metal tool that is filled with gas, so that one presses a button to get a small fire, usually used to light a cigarette

* Do you prefer to use a lighter or matches?

incentive – something that one gives to another person to encourage him or her to do something; something that makes someone want to do something

* Some parents pay their children as an incentive to get better grades.

to quit – to stop doing something; to no longer do something

* How old were you when you quit eating meat?

to go cold turkey – to stop doing something addictive (especially smoking or drinking) all at once, without gradually decreasing the amount

* Mathias tried to go cold turkey to stop drinking, but he found that he needed professional help.

doomed – destined in a bad way; expecting to suffer in the future

* We are all doomed to pay taxes until we die.

ashtray – a small square or round glass or plastic plate with raised sides, used to collect the small pieces that fall from a cigarette

* All the tables in the smoking section of restaurant have small, white ashtrays.



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stained – with a colored mark that is difficult or impossible to remove

* Gunther's shirt is stained where he spilled red wine on it.

to butt heads – to argue or fight with someone; to disagree about something

* Simpur and his wife are always butting heads about how they should spend their time off from work.

to each his own – a phrase used to mean that each person should be able to decide what he or she wants to do, or that each person likes different things

* I hate the taste of olives, but Dennis loves them. To each his own.

bonus – money received in addition to one's regular payment; extra money received, often for good performance or for completing a special project

* If the company does well this year, all of the employees will get an end-of-the-year bonus.

nicotine patch – a small sticker that is placed on one's body and gives one the addictive chemical nicotine, to help one stop smoking

* Yelena used a combination of nicotine patches and nicotine gum to stop smoking.

lost cause – something that is hopeless; something that cannot be done or fixed

* Trying to lose weight while working in an ice cream store is a lost cause. I always want to eat while I work!

willpower – the ability to do what one believe is right, even though it is difficult; the ability to control one's actions or thoughts and meet one's goals

* It must have taken a lot of willpower for Raquel to ride her bicycle eight miles to work every day instead of driving her car.

no pain, no gain – a phrase used to show that one must suffer to get something, often used with exercise

* Rick's legs were very tired after running 10 miles, but no pain, no gain.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a smoke break?
 - a) A time when one stops smoking.
 - b) A time when one takes a break from smoking.
 - c) A time when one takes a break from work to smoke.

2. What does Paul mean by saying, “I tried to go cold turkey once”?
 - a) He tried to start smoking fewer cigarettes.
 - b) He tried to stop smoking by eating only cold turkey.
 - c) He tried to stop smoking all at once.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

pack

The word “pack,” in this podcast, means a small box or package of something: “Could you please buy a pack of matches for me?” As a verb, “to pack” means to put clothing and other things into a bag to take them on a trip: “Don’t forget to pack a sweater because it’s cold in Canada in winter!” The verb “to pack” can also mean to put things into a box or bag so that they can be sold or moved more easily: “Please pack the wine glasses carefully so that they don’t break while I’m taking them home.” The word “packed” means crowded, or with a lot of people or things: “The train station was packed and it was hard to find our cousin, Jenny.” Or, “His kitchen cupboards are packed with cereal and canned soup.”

lighter

In this podcast, the word “lighter” means a small plastic or metal tool that is filled with gas, so that one presses a button to get a small fire, usually used to light a cigarette: “It would be easier to start the campfire if we had a lighter.” The word “lighter” also means less heavy, or weighing less: “At only 97 pounds, Michaela is much lighter than her husband is.” The word “lighter” also means with more light, or with less darkness: “Shane woke up at 3:45, but decided to stay in bed until it got lighter outside.” Finally, the word “lighter” can mean gentler, or more softly: “Try to use a lighter touch when you play the piano, to make the music more beautiful and calming.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, packages for cigarettes, “chewing tobacco” (tobacco that is placed between one’s teeth and cheek), and other “tobacco products” (things made with tobacco) must have health “warnings” (statements about something bad that will happen). In America, these warnings come from the “Surgeon General,” the “head” (leader) of the nation’s public health service.

The United States was one of the first countries to require that health warnings be printed on cigarette packages, but today its warnings are some of the smallest and least “prominent” (easily seen) in the world. The warnings also aren’t as “dire” (very serious and bad) as those of many other countries.

Consider the most common warnings on U.S. cigarette packages. The first warning, in 1966, said “Caution: Cigarette Smoking May be ‘Hazardous’ (dangerous) to Your Health.” Three years later, this was changed to “The Surgeon General Has ‘Determined’ (decided) that Cigarette Smoking is Dangerous to Your Health.”

Today, one of the following Surgeon General's Warnings are found on tobacco products:

- Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, and May “Complicate” (make something more difficult) Pregnancy.
- Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.
- Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.
- Cigarette Smoke Contains “Carbon Monoxide” (CO, a dangerous gas).

The reason for putting these warnings on tobacco products is so that people will read them before buying the products. Hopefully this will help them learn or remember that smoking is bad for their health.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 333: Quitting Smoking.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode three-three-three (333). I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. How are you today?

In this episode we're going to finally quit smoking – quit smoking cigarettes, that is. If you want to find out more about the vocabulary and the ideas we talk about in this episode, go to our website at eslpod.com and download the 8 to 10 page Learning Guide for this episode. You can also take a look at our new ESL Podcast Blog, and our additional premium courses in the ESL Podcast Store. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Vera: Hi, I thought you might be out here. Geez, it's really cold!

Paul: I know, but I really needed a smoke break after that long meeting. Can I bum one off you? I left my pack of cigarettes on my desk.

Vera: Sure. Here's my lighter. What do you think about the new incentives the company is offering to employees to quit? Have you thought about it?

Paul: Yeah, but I've smoked for 20 years. I tried going cold turkey once, but it didn't work. I'm doomed to a lifetime of ashtrays and stained fingers.

Vera: I've been butting heads with my boyfriend for years. He wants me to quit, but I say, to each his own.

Paul: The incentives are pretty good, though, I have to admit: a cash bonus and more money towards our health plans.

Vera: Yeah, I could use the cash. Have you tried one of those nicotine patches?

Paul: No, I haven't.

Vera: Well...I'll try it if you will.

Paul: Do you think it would work? I think I'm a lost cause.



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Vera: I'm not sure, but if you'll try them, I will, too.

Paul: Okay, but I'm warning you. I have no willpower.

Vera: All right, but just remember: no pain, no gain.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue between Vera and Paul begins with Vera saying, "Hi, I thought you might be out here. Geez, it's really cold!" So, Vera is obviously outside somewhere, where it's cold. Paul says, "I know, but I really needed a smoke break after that long meeting." A "smoke break" is a short period of time during the day when you stop working, go outside of your building, usually, and smoke. In the U.S., in most businesses, you can't smoke inside the building.

Paul says, "Can I bum one off you?" "To bum (bum) something off someone" is a phrasal verb meaning to ask someone to give you something for free. This is a very common expression when we're talking about one person asking for a cigarette from another person. "Can I bum a cigarette off you?" meaning will you give me a cigarette. Normally it's for small things; you wouldn't say, "Can I bum a million dollars off of you?" that might be a little too much!

Paul says, "I left my pack of cigarettes on my desk." The little box that the cigarettes come in is called a "pack" (pack). That word has a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations. A "cigarette," you probably know, is a small piece of paper rolled around tobacco. You light one end, and put the other end in your mouth, and inhale. When someone says, "a cigarette," they're referring to the cigarettes that you buy at the store. There are illegal types of drugs that you also could smoke, such as marijuana for example. If you were talking about that, you would say "a marijuana cigarette." But we're not smoking marijuana here at ESL Podcast – at least, not today! We are talking about smoking cigarettes.

Vera says, "Sure. Here's my lighter." In other words, she's giving Paul one of her cigarettes, and she gives him her lighter. A "lighter" is the small plastic or metal tool that has gas in it, and you press a little button and a small fire comes up, enough to light a cigarette. They're sometimes called a "cigarette lighter." The verb is "to light" – "to light a cigarette." There are a couple of different meanings of this word also; again, you'll find more information in the "What Else Does It Mean" section of our Learning Guide.



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Vera says, “What do you think about the new incentives the company is offering to employees to quit?” An “incentive” is something that someone gives you to encourage you to do something, to make you want to do something. In this case, the company is trying to get its employees to stop smoking. Vera uses the expression, simply, “to quit.” “To quit” means to stop doing something. Many companies do this; the reason is that smokers – people who smoke – have more health problems, and since most companies in the United States have to pay for the health insurance of their employees, it’s a good practice for them to get their employees to stop smoking.

Paul is asked by Vera if he has ever thought about quitting, and Paul says, “Yeah, but I’ve smoked for 20 years. I tried going cold turkey once, but it didn’t work.” The expression “to go cold turkey” here means to stop smoking completely, not have any more cigarettes. You’re not going to decrease the number of cigarettes every day, you’re going to stop it completely. We also use this for other types of drugs and alcohol. “To go cold turkey” – to stop completely what you are doing, in this case, some sort of what we would call “addictive behavior,” where you are addicted to something – you can’t stop yourself.

Paul says that it didn’t work the last time he tried going cold turkey, “I’m doomed to a lifetime of ashtrays and stained fingers.” “To be doomed” means that you are expected to suffer in a certain way, you are “destined,” we might also say, for something. “We are all doomed to pay taxes until we die” – we can’t avoid it. Mark Twain said, “There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes.” So, we are doomed to pay taxes!

Paul says that he’s “doomed to a lifetime of ashtrays and stained fingers.” An “ashtray” (ashtray – one word) is a place where you put your cigarette ashes. The “ashes” are what is left after the fire has burned the cigarette; they’re usually gray. These ashes are put in an ashtray so they don’t dirty up the ground or the area where you are. At least, that’s the polite thing to do, if you are a smoker, is to use an ashtray.

Paul says he has, or will have, “stained fingers.” When something is “stained” (stained), it has some sort of colored mark that is difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to remove. In this case, there are stains on the smoker’s fingers, indicating this person has smoked a lot. We also use the word “stained” in talking about your clothing. If you’re eating something and it falls on your shirt, it could “stain” your shirt – your shirt could be “stained.”

Vera says, “I’ve been butting heads with my boyfriend for years” over smoking. “To butt (butt) heads” means to argue or fight about something. So, Vera and



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her boyfriend have been fighting about her smoking, they've been "butting heads." "He wants me to quit, but I say, to each his own." This is an old expression; "to each his own" means each person can do what they want to do; they can decide how they want to live their life. Each person can do something different, if they want to. "To each his own" is the expression.

Paul then says, "The incentives are pretty good, though, I have to admit (meaning I have to be honest, they are pretty good): a cash bonus and more money towards our health plans." So, the incentives the company is offering the employees include additional money – a bonus. A "bonus" is extra money that a company gives you, usually because you've done well – you did a good job. Here at ESL Podcast, I never get a bonus because I never do a good job – that's what my boss tells me!

Vera says, "Yes, I could use the cash (I could use the money). Have you tried one of those nicotine patches?" "Nicotine" is a drug that is in cigarettes; it's the thing that makes the cigarettes addictive – it makes you want to continue smoking them. A "nicotine patch" (patch) is a small, plastic sticker that you put on your arm that gives you nicotine so that you don't have to smoke the cigarette. It's one way of helping you quit smoking.

Paul says, "No, I haven't (tried the nicotine patches)." Sometimes they're called simply "the patch" by smokers. Vera says, "Well...I'll try it if you will." Paul says, "Do you think it would work (do you think it will work)? I think I'm a lost cause." If you say you're a "lost cause," you mean that nothing can be done to fix you – nothing can be done to fix the situation, it's hopeless.

Vera says, "I'm not sure" if they'll work, but if you try the patches "I will, too." Paul says, "Okay, but I'm warning you. I have no willpower." "Willpower" (one word) is the ability to do what you think is right, even though it's difficult. We should all exercise a half hour a day, but it's difficult – we're lazy, you need willpower. You have to say to yourself, "Even though it's difficult, I will do it."

Vera says, "All right, but just remember: no pain, no gain." This is another expression; "no pain, no gain" means in order to get something, you have to suffer – you have to do something that may be difficult. This is especially true in exercise. If you want big muscles, you have to lift weights, which is difficult – but, "no pain, no gain," if you don't feel any pain, you won't benefit, you won't get anything for it. This is true in some areas in life, but it's not true of language acquisition. Language acquisition doesn't require pain; if it does, it's usually a bad thing!



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

[start of dialogue]

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Vera: I'm not sure, but if you'll try them, I will, too.

Paul: Okay, but I'm warning you. I have no willpower.

Vera: All right, but just remember: no pain, no gain.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by nonsmoker Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.



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