



ESL Podcast 361 – Feeling Lonely

GLOSSARY

lonely – with the sad feeling of being alone, solitary, and isolated, without other people

* Sometimes it can be lonely to live in an apartment by yourself, but at least you don't have to deal with roommates!

to strike up a new friendship – to begin a new friendship; to begin being friends with someone

* Tamara is able to strike up new friendships very easily, but her sister is shy and it takes her more time.

sociable – very friendly and outgoing, enjoying spending time with other people

* Suwelo is very sociable and always has at least three parties to go to each weekend.

lasting friendship – a friendship that lasts for a very long time, perhaps all of one's life

* Zoe has a lasting friendship with her best friend from first grade and now, thirty years later, they still see each other every week.

lone wolf – a person who likes to be alone more than with other people; a person who does not enjoy spending time with other people

* Albert is a lone wolf who prefers reading books and listening to music in his room instead of going out with friends.

out on (one's) own – independent; without financial and/or other support from other people; alone

* Many Americans go out on their own when they are 18 years old and are considered adults.

solitary – alone; isolated; without other people

* All of Becky's friends went to the beach, but she had to stay home, so she had a very solitary weekend in town.

to yearn – to want something very much; to long for something

* Some of our best students genuinely yearn for knowledge.

to people-watch – to go to a public place and watch the people passing by, noting how they are dressed, how they act, and what they say

* We like to people-watch in New York City's Times Square because there are so many different types of people there!



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to hang out – to spend time with someone in a relaxed, unstructured way

* Do you want to hang out with us on Saturday, or do you already have plans?

arm-in-arm – walking with arms linked; walking with one's arm bent at the elbow so that another person's arm passes through the opening created and the two people are close to each other

* Celinda walked arm-in-arm with her husband as they entered the room.

to break down – to get rid of something; to eliminate something; to overcome something

* It can be very difficult to break down racial stereotypes.

companionship – friendship; being with someone whom one likes; not being alone; having friends

* Some older people like to live in group homes because they enjoy the companionship of other people their own age.

camaraderie – the feeling of friendship among a group of people who spend time together

* At first, the business students didn't know each other, but within a few weeks they had developed a strong sense of camaraderie.

rapport – easy communication, good understanding, and friendliness between and among people

* Do you have a better rapport with your math or English professor?

to dread – to fear something that is going to happen in the future; to be worried or anxious about something that might happen

* As summer vacation ended, Hannah dreaded going back to school.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What would a “lone wolf” enjoy doing?
 - a) Striking up new friendships.
 - b) Doing solitary things.
 - c) Hanging out with friends.

2. Why did he dread the weekends?
 - a) Because he wanted to do solitary things.
 - b) Because he enjoyed people watching.
 - c) Because he didn’t want to be alone.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

out on one's own

The phrase “out on (one's) own,” in this podcast, means without financial and/or other support from other people: “How old were you when you moved out on your own for the first time?” The phrase “to make something (one's) own” means to change something a little bit so that it seems to belong to oneself: “The band took a famous Beatles song and made it their own by changing the speed and words.” The phrase “for one's own good” means for one's benefit or disadvantage: “She is too honest for her own good. She should learn to keep some things secret.” Finally, the phrase “on one's own” means alone: “If you aren't able to do it on your own, just ask for help.”

to break down

In this podcast, the phrase “to break down” means to eliminate or overcome something: “That organization is trying to break down educational barriers by making sure that every student has a computer.” The phrase “to break down” also means for a machine, especially a car, to stop working: “The car broke down on the freeway.” When talking about people, “to break down” means to lose control of one's emotions: “The woman broke down and began crying in the store.” The phrase “to have a nervous breakdown” means to completely lose control of one's emotions and/or become crazy: “I think I'm going to have a nervous breakdown if I continue working here!” Finally, the phrase “to break (something) down” can mean to analyze something, splitting it into its smaller parts: “Let's try to break this problem down to make it more manageable.”



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CULTURE NOTE

As described in this podcast, sometimes it can be difficult to “meet people” (make new friends) in a new city. Fortunately, there are many things that you can do when you are new to an American city to try to “interact” (speak with) with other people.

The Internet can be a good way to meet people. For example, one website, www.meetup.com, helps “match” (find similarities among) people with other people who have similar interests. Of course, you need to be careful when meeting people online, making sure that you physically meet them in a public place for your own safety.

Another good way to meet people is through sports. You can join an exercise class at a “gym” (a place where people exercise), “sign up” (register) for tennis classes, or join a running group or cycling club. You can even train for a major sporting event, like a “marathon” (a long-distance running race).

“Enrolling” (beginning to participate in something) in a course can also be a good way to meet people. Many people enjoy “culinary” (cooking) classes, photography classes, or other courses in “community colleges” (two-year colleges with classes not necessarily for academic degrees). Dance classes can also be good ways to meet people, especially when the dancers are asked to “change partners” (dance with people other than those with whom they came).

Of course, you can also meet people through work. Many businesses and organizations organize sports teams for their employees, especially for volleyball and “softball” (a sport similar to baseball).

Whatever you are most interested in, try to find a way to begin doing it with other people. “In no time at all” (in a very short period of time), you will begin making friends in the new city.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 361: Feeling Lonely.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 361. 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 – that's www.eslpod.com. If you go there, you can download a Learning Guide for this episode that contains all of the information you need to help you improve your English even faster, including all of the vocabulary, definitions, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is called "Feeling Lonely." "To be lonely" is to be sad because you are by yourself; you are alone, there is no one else with you. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Moving to a new city can be a lonely experience. When I first moved to Los Angeles, I didn't know anyone and it was hard to strike up new friendships. I'm a pretty sociable person, but it's still hard meeting new people and even harder to make lasting friendships.

I've never been a lone wolf, so being in a new city out on my own was a new experience. Sometimes I liked doing solitary things, but after awhile, I yearned to be around other people. I would go to busy places to people-watch. I would see families walking by, groups of friends hanging out together, and couples arm-in-arm, and wished I was walking along with them. When you're feeling lonely, it sometimes feels like there's a wall between you and everyone else, a wall that's not easy to break down.

Slowly, I started to meet people at my new job and to see them outside of work. Having this companionship and camaraderie, especially with people I had a good rapport with, was a welcomed change. In time, I made some good friends and I no longer dreaded the weekends. But, I've never forgotten how hard it was in those first months to be a stranger in a new place!

[end of story]



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Our story begins by me saying, “Moving to a new city can be a lonely experience.” We’ve already explained “lonely” as feeling alone, by yourself. When I first moved to Los Angeles – and this is a true story – I didn’t know anyone and it was hard to strike up new friendships. “To strike up something” means to begin something. “To strike up a conversation” means to start talking to another person, to begin a conversation. “To strike up a new friendship” means to begin a new friendship, to become friends with someone. When you don’t know anyone, it’s hard to strike up new friendships.

I say that I’m a pretty sociable person. Someone who is “sociable” is very friendly, likes spending time with other people; very “outgoing,” we might say. But it’s still hard meeting new people and even harder to make lasting friendships. Something that is “lasting” is something that goes on for a long time, endures for a long time. A “friendship” is, of course, when you are friends with another person. So, a “lasting friendship” is when you are friends with someone for very long time.

I say that I’ve never been a lone wolf. The expression “lone wolf” (two words) is a person who likes to be alone more than to be with other people. A “wolf” is actually an animal, but the expression “lone wolf” refers to someone who likes to be by themselves. Well, I am not a lone wolf, so being in a new city out on my own was a new experience. When we say you are “out on your own,” we mean that you are independent; you are no longer being supported by other people. Many college students live with their parents, or their parents pay for their education and their housing, and then they go out on their own. They find a job and they live in their own apartment, and so forth. I was actually out on my own back in Minnesota before I moved to Los Angeles, but I was also on my own here in LA when I first moved here back in 1991.

I say that sometimes I like to do solitary things. “Solitary” (solitary) means alone, isolated, without other people. There’s a card game called “Solitary,” that you can play by yourself, because it requires only one person. If you are in prison – in jail – and you do something wrong or they think you’re a very dangerous prisoner, they will sometimes put you into “solitary confinement,” which means you are in a place all by yourself, with no other prisoners.

“After awhile,” I continue, “I yearned to be around other people.” “To yearn” (yearn) means to desire or to want something very much. We might also use the expression “to long for.” “To long for” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to really desire something, to really want something.



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I would go to busy places to people-watch. “People-watching” means just what it says, you go to a public place, a mall or someplace where there are a lot of people walking by, and you look at them, how they act, how they’re dressed, perhaps what they are talking about. That’s “to people-watch.” Here in Los Angeles, most people drive cars from one place to another. Even if it doesn’t take very long to walk they’ll still drive, so there are not a lot of places you can go to people-watch, where people are actually walking down the street. It’s very different from many big cities such as New York, where everyone walks, especially in downtown, or in Manhattan. But here in Los Angeles, there are not that many places where people actually walk around.

I say that I would see families walking by, groups of friends hanging out together, and couples arm-in-arm. “To hang out” is an informal two-word phrasal verb meaning to spend time with someone in a very relaxed way, not to have any specific plans. So, I saw groups of friends hanging out together, and couples arm-in-arm. “Arm-in-arm” means walking with your arms linked, or connected. The other person is holding onto your arm. I would see couples, men and women, walking arm-in-arm.

I wished that I was walking along with them. You can also say, here, “I wished I were walking along with them.” In formal English grammar, “were” is considered correct. However in daily conversation, it is very common and completely acceptable to say “was” in this case.

When you’re feeling lonely, it sometimes feels like there is a wall between you and everyone else, a wall that’s not easy to break down. “To break down” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to get rid of something, to eliminate something. “To break down” has a couple of different meanings; once again, take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

“Slowly,” I say, “I started to meet people at my new job and to see them (to go out with them) outside of work. Having this companionship and camaraderie was a welcomed change.” “Companionship,” here, means basically the same as friendship, being with someone that you like, not being alone. “Camaraderie” means the feeling of friendship among a group of people who spend time together. “Camaraderie” is when you get along well with the people around you; they are your good friends. So, I say that having companionship and camaraderie, especially with people I had a good rapport with, was a “welcomed” change – a good change. “Rapport” (rapport), notice the “t” is not pronounced, means a good understanding, friendliness between and among people. When you have easy communication with someone, you have good “rapport” with them.



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In time – meaning over time, after a while – I made some good friends and I no longer dreaded the weekends. “To dread” (dread) means to fear something that is going to happen in the future, to be worried about something that might happen. I used to dread the weekends probably because you are used to being with friends and family on your weekend days and nights, and so if you are alone, you feel even more lonely because you don’t have anyone to spend your time with. And that was certainly true for me the first year or two that I lived in Los Angeles; I used to dread the weekends.

Well, I no longer dread the weekends. I hope you don’t dread listening to ESL Podcast, where we’re always here for you!

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

[start of story]

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[end of story]

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

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



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