



GLOSSARY

to express – to present, show, or display one’s feelings or thoughts in a particular way

* The frown on his face expressed his displeasure.

gratitude – feelings of thankfulness; wanting to thank someone

* A handwritten card does a better job of showing gratitude than a quickly typed email.[www.irLanguage.com]

along the way – over a period of time; while something else was happening; as something was developing, progressing, or changing

* We’ve learned so much from Professor Reyes, and along the way, we made some great friends.

speech – words spoken in front of an audience; a formal, spoken address

* The CEO made a brief speech to welcome all of the new employees.

stiff – not natural or relaxed; forced, artificial, and too formal

* Kate is usually so outgoing and friendly. Why do you think she was so stiff when we introduced her to Perry?

thanks a million – an informal phrase meaning “thank you very much”

* I’m so glad you stopped to help me change the flat tire on my car. Thanks a million![www.irLanguage.com]

wholeheartedly – completely and entirely, without any reservation, doubt, or hesitation

* Omar wholeheartedly supported his wife’s decision to go back to school.

to stick with (someone) – to support and be loyal to someone, especially during difficult times

* The employees who stuck with us during the recession were rewarded when the economy improved.

to let (someone) down – to disappoint someone; to not meet someone’s expectations

* Mom, I know I let you down by dropping out of medical school, and I’m sorry, but I’m much happier studying computer engineering.



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impersonal – not showing emotion or a personal relationship; feeling distant and without feelings of warmth or closeness

* Gifts to coworkers should be impersonal, like a box of chocolates. Never give them clothing or perfume.

awesome – fantastic and great; wonderful; very cool

* Wow, that ski trip was awesome! I'm so glad we went.

fab – fabulous; wonderful; very beautiful, glamorous, and nice

* Did you see that fab sweater Yoko was wearing?

thoughtfulness – a state of being considerate; thinking about other people's needs and feelings

* I've always admired Brenda's thoughtfulness. She's the kind of person who brings chicken soup when anyone is feeling sick.

generosity – willing to share one's time and money with others; not selfish

* Thank you for the year-end bonus. I really appreciate your generosity!

from the bottom of (one's) heart – sincerely; relating to one's truest, deepest emotions and desires

* Max loves Beatrix from the bottom of his heart.

sappy – with too much emotion; sentimental, foolish, and exaggerated

* Why do you watch those sappy movies? They always make you cry.

to give props to (someone) – to recognize and acknowledge a person or his/her contributions and to thank that person; to give credit to someone; to give proper respect

* I have to give props to Quentin. No matter how bad the situation got, I never heard him say a bad word about anyone else.

shout-out – recognition; a message of support, gratitude, or acknowledgement made in front of other people

* Thank you for coming to our launch party. I need to give a shout-out to everyone who helped to make it possible.

high-five – when two people hit each other's palm (the inside of one's hand) to show pleasure and celebration

* The team was winning by a lot, and the players began high-fiving each other before the game had even ended.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these phrases shows gratitude?
 - a) Thanks a million!
 - b) You're absolutely fab!
 - c) That's so sappy!

2. What does Mark mean when he says, "Why don't you just give props to people who deserve it?"
 - a) He thinks Gina should pay her supporters.
 - b) He thinks Gina should write letters of recommendation for her supporters.
 - c) He thinks Gina should thank and acknowledge her supporters.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

stiff

The word "stiff," in this podcast, means not natural or relaxed, but instead forced, artificial, and overly formal: "The woman being interviewed seemed very stiff and nervous when she walked into the room." When talking about the body, "stiff" describes a muscle that is difficult to move: "It was so cold outside that my fingers became stiff and I couldn't hold the tool properly." The phrase "a stiff upper lip" means being calm and not showing emotion, especially during difficult times: "Keep a stiff upper lip. No matter what happens, never let them see you cry." The phrase "stiff competition" means very difficult or challenging competition: "The basketball team will face some stiff competition on Friday night." Finally, the phrase "scared stiff" means extremely frightened: "We heard a ghost, and we were all scared stiff!"

shout-out

In this podcast, the word "shout-out" means recognition, or a message of support, gratitude, or acknowledgement made in front of other people: "While accepting the award, the actress gave a shout-out to her agent and her husband." The phrase "to shout at the top of (one's) lungs" means to yell as loudly as possible: "The neighbors were shouting at the top of their lungs, and somebody called the police." The phrase "to give (someone) a shout" means to find someone and tell him or her something: "Hey, give me a shout if you need help with that spreadsheet." Finally, the phrase "to shout (something) from the rooftops" means to want everyone to know something: "When Xavier got engaged, he wanted to shout it from the rooftops."



CULTURE NOTE

When to Send Thank-You Notes/Cards

Everyone likes to feel “appreciated” (valued and respected), so it’s a good idea to send thank-you “notes” (short letters) or “cards” (a folded piece of paper with an image on the front and a written message on the inside) whenever you are the “recipient” (someone who receives something) of a gift or “kindness” (something nice that one person does for another person).

In the business world, people are expected to send thank-you notes after an interview. It’s also a good idea to send a thank-you note to anyone who writes a letter of recommendation that helps you get an interview or a job. Professionals often send thank-you cards to “clients” (customers with whom one has an ongoing relationship), and “real estate agents” (people who help others buy and sell property and houses) send thank-you notes and gifts when “transactions” (sales) end. Even car salespeople may send thank-you notes to their customers.

Thank-you notes are equally important for “maintaining” (keeping) strong “interpersonal” (between people) relationships. People are expected to write thank-you notes after receiving gifts for holidays, birthdays, and “graduations” (ceremonies when one finishes part of one’s education), especially for weddings, “bridal showers” (parties for a woman who will be married soon), and “baby showers” (parties for a woman who will have a baby soon).

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If you’re invited to someone’s home for dinner, or if you spend the night in someone’s home, it’s a “nice gesture” (an action that is kind and thoughtful) to give them a small gift or send a thank-you note a few days later. This lets your “hosts” (the people who invited you into their home) know that you appreciate their “hospitality” (how someone treats guests or visitors).

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,304 – Expressing Gratitude.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,304. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

This episode is a dialogue between Mark and Gina about thanking someone or simply being thankful for the good things you have. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Gina: I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to all the people who have helped me along the way . . .

Mark: You're not going to start your speech with that boring opening, are you?

Gina: It's not boring. It's a nice opening.

Mark: It's too formal and stiff. How about, "Hey, everybody. Thanks a million!"

Gina: That's too informal.

Mark: Fine, if you say so. What comes next?

Gina: Well, then I say, "I want to wholeheartedly thank those who stuck with us and who never let us down."

Mark: That's too impersonal. How about, "Hey Emiliano, you're totally awesome. And you, Tania? You're absolutely fab."

Gina: That doesn't even come close to expressing how I feel. I want to thank people for their thoughtfulness, generosity, and support from the bottom of my heart.

Mark: That's so sappy! Why don't you just give props to people who deserve it and a shout-out to the people who helped you? Then, you jump off the stage and walk through the audience to high-five everybody. That's how I would give a thank-you speech.



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Gina: I'll remember that the next time I speak to a group of 10-year-olds!

[end of dialogue]

Gina begins our dialogue by saying to Mark, "I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to all the people who have helped me along the way." "To express" (express) your thoughts, or feelings, or emotions is to show them or display them, or perhaps do something to let someone know what your thoughts or feelings are. The term "gratitude" (gratitude) means a feeling of thankfulness, of being happy that something good has happened to you and specifically being thankful to another person or perhaps a situation that has given you these good things.

Nowadays people talk about "gratitude" as being this feeling of thankfulness or this idea of thanking someone for the good things that have happened to them. Logically, you have to be thankful to someone, but many people talk about gratitude in a, I guess you might say, "impersonal sense," or a way that doesn't necessarily imply a specific person giving them certain things. People say, "I am grateful for this" or "I am grateful for that." "Grateful" (grateful) means being thankful for something. We often don't say to whom we are grateful.

In any case, Gina is expressing her gratitude to a certain group of people. She's actually thanking the people who have helped her "along the way." "Along the way" is an expression meaning over a period of time, or as you are trying to reach a certain goal or a certain point in your life. Mark interrupts Gina, who it seems is practicing a speech – a talk that she's going to be giving to a group of people. He says, "You're not going to start your speech with that boring opening, are you?"

Mark thinks that Gina's "opening," the beginning of her speech, is "boring" – not interesting. Gina disagrees. She says, "It's not boring. It's a nice," or good, "opening." Mark says, "It's too formal and stiff." "Stiff" (stiff) here means not relaxed, not normal, something that you say that is perhaps not appropriate for the situation, perhaps even not sincere – that is, you don't really mean it.

Mark suggests a more informal beginning to the speech. He says, "How about," meaning why don't you try this, "Hey, everybody. Thanks a million!" The expression, "Thanks a million" (million) is an informal phrase meaning thank you very much, or perhaps thank you a million times, meaning I really thank you. Gina says, "That's too informal." Mark says, "Fine, if you say so." Notice that expression "if you say so" is often used when you don't want to argue with the other person, but you don't agree with him either.



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Mark says, “What comes next?” meaning what’s the next part or the next sentence in the speech. He’s asking Gina to continue her speech. Gina says, “Well, then I say, ‘I want to wholeheartedly thank those who stuck with us and never let us down.’” “Wholeheartedly” (wholeheartedly) means completely or entirely. It is often said when we are talking about things that we feel very deeply or that we have a strong emotion attached to. “I want to wholeheartedly thank you” means I want to thank you really and sincerely, and with a lot of emotion.

Gina wants to wholeheartedly thank those people who “stuck with them.” “To stick (stick) with” someone is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to support someone or to stay with someone, to be loyal to someone even when times are difficult, even when the situation is difficult. “Stuck” is the past tense of the verb “stick.” That’s why Gina says, “Those who stuck with us,” meaning who were there with us in the past when bad things happened to us, when the situation was difficult. “And” – she also wants to thank – “those who never let us down.”

The phrasal verb “to let someone down” or “to let down” someone here means to disappoint someone – not to do what someone was expecting you to do. Mark doesn’t like this line in Gina’s speech, this sentence. He says, “That’s too impersonal.” “Impersonal” (impersonal) means distant, without feelings of warmth or closeness, or simply not being emotional enough. Mark says, “How about” – once again, why don’t you try – “Hey Emiliano, you’re totally awesome. And you, Tania? You’re absolutely fab.”

Mark suggests speaking much more informally, including using something such as “Hey.” “Hey” is a way of getting someone’s attention, but it’s very informal. “Hey Emiliano, you’re totally,” or your completely, “awesome” (awesome). “Awesome” nowadays is an informal way of saying fantastic, great, wonderful, or perhaps cool. Mark suggests also that Gina say, “And you, Tanya? You’re absolutely fab (fab).” “Fab” is short for “fabulous” (fabulous), which in this context means the same as awesome, fantastic, great, wonderful.

Gina says, “That doesn’t even come close to expressing how I would feel.” She thinks that Mark suggestions don’t express her emotions properly. She says, “I want to thank people for their thoughtfulness, generosity, and support from the bottom of my heart.” “Thoughtfulness” refers to someone always thinking about another person, always considering that person, making sure that person is happy.

“Generosity” comes from the word “generous” (generous). “To be generous” means to give money or time to other people so that those people who need it



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have the help they need. If I'm "generous," I'm giving you a lot of something – more than I have to, perhaps. Gina wants to thank people for being thoughtful, generous, and supporting her.

She wants to do all of this from the bottom of her heart (heart). Doing something "from the heart" means doing it from a very deep emotion, or doing it sincerely. "From the bottom of your heart" means that you really mean it. You are expressing some very deep emotion, something that you want the person to understand as very sincere. You really mean it.

Mark disagrees. He says that what Gina is saying is "sappy" (sappy). "Sappy" means with too much emotion, so much emotion that it seems exaggerated and perhaps insincere, not meaningful. He says, "Why don't you just give props to people who deserve it?" "To give props" (props) to someone is to recognize someone who has helped you, to recognize someone who has done something good, perhaps. [www.irLanguage.com]

It's an informal expression, "to give props to." You'll sometimes hear that when a rock star or perhaps a young actor is accepting an award. This happens very frequently here in Los Angeles, here in Hollywood, where people love to give each other awards for things. Someone will go up in front of the audience the people watching the award show and say, "I want to give props to" a certain person. They're thanking that person for something that person perhaps has done. They're "giving credit to" that person because they respect that person.

Mark also says that Gina should just "give a shout-out to the people who have helped." That's another informal expression you will sometimes hear younger people use. A "shout-out" means I'm saying "hello" to. A "shout (shout) – out (out)" is an informal expression, to be sure. "To give a shout out" is the expression, actually.

Mark says that then Gina should jump off the stage and walk through the audience "to high-five everybody." "To high (high) – five (five)" someone is to put your hand up as they put their hand up, their arm in the air, and you hit each other's hand. You hit their hand, or his hand or her hand, as a way of showing excitement or as a way, in this case, of thanking the people. Mark is suggesting a very unusual, informal way of thanking people.

Gina says, "I'll remember that," meaning I will think of your advice, "the next time I speak to a group of 10-year-olds!" Gina is sort of making a joke here. She's saying that what Mark is suggesting is more appropriate for giving a speech to a



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group of children rather than to adults because of the informal ways that Mark is suggesting Gina deliver her speech.

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

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Gina: I'll remember that the next time I speak to a group of 10-year-olds!

[end of dialogue]

We express our gratitude to the wonderful Dr. Tse, who writes our wonderful scripts.



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

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