

Why We Drift Apart — and How to Stay Close | How to Live a Good Life, Episode 3

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

16 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1 to drift apart

DEF

To become less close gradually, usually without a deliberate decision or argument.

Used for friends, couples or groups. The image suggests two things slowly moving in different directions.

Martin and Tomás drifted apart without ever arguing.

Old friends can drift apart when nobody makes a plan.

2 shared history

DEF

Experiences and memories that two people have built together over time.

Shared history can strengthen a bond, but the episode contrasts past memories with present attention.

A shared history does not keep a friendship alive by itself.

Their shared history helped them understand each other quickly.

3 social fitness

DEF

The health and strength of your relationships, maintained through regular attention and action.

A metaphor based on physical fitness: relationships need repeated practice rather than one large effort.

The seven questions helped Martin assess his social fitness.

Regular calls are a simple form of social-fitness training.

4 a bid for connection

DEF

A small action or comment that invites another person to give attention or respond.

John Gottman uses this term for everyday moments such as sharing a story, pointing at something or asking a small question.

Showing someone a bird can be a bid for connection.

Her joke was a bid for connection, so I stopped and listened.

5 to turn towards someone

DEF

To respond to another person with attention, interest or warmth.

In relationship research, this is not necessarily physical movement; it means accepting a bid for connection.

Julia turned towards her partner by putting down the phone.

Turn towards your child when they want to show you something.



6

to turn away

DEF

To fail to engage with someone who is seeking attention or connection.

It can be intentional, but often happens through distraction, tiredness or misunderstanding.

Looking at the phone made Julia turn away from the conversation.

I was tired and turned away without noticing.

7

to pull back

DEF

To reduce contact or emotional involvement because you feel uncertain, hurt or rejected.

This phrasal verb suggests retreat rather than a direct ending. It is common in relationship and workplace contexts.

Nadia pulled back because she thought Rachel had rejected her.

He pulled back after his idea received a cold response.

8

to grab a coffee

DEF

To meet someone informally for coffee, usually for a short conversation.

Grab makes the invitation sound casual and quick. With sometime, it may express warmth without fixing a real date.

Rachel suggested that she and Nadia grab a coffee sometime.

Shall we grab a coffee after the meeting?

9

to keep the answer open

DEF

To avoid giving a final yes or no because a decision has not been made.

This is useful for interpreting soft or non-committal language. Open does not mean positive; it means unresolved.

I will let you know may simply keep the answer open.

She kept the answer open until she knew her schedule.

10

how to take something

DEF

How to understand or interpret the meaning, tone or intention of something.

Common in the pattern I was not sure how to take it. Here take does not mean physically receive.

I was not sure how to take Rachel's vague invitation.

Was that a joke? I do not know how to take it.

11

to put something in the diary

DEF

To agree on a specific date or time and record it in a calendar.

A common British expression. Diary here means a calendar or agenda, not a private journal.

Let us put something in the diary before we both forget.

We should put lunch in the diary for next Thursday.



12

a ritual of connection

DEF

A small, repeated habit that regularly brings people into contact.

Ritual does not have a religious meaning here. Regularity makes the connection easier to maintain.

A Sunday phone call became their ritual of connection.

Our monthly walk is a simple ritual of connection.

13

to keep in touch

DEF

To continue communicating with someone even when you do not see them often.

Usually followed by with. Passive social-media activity may not provide the direct contact the expression normally implies.

Martin believed that liking photos meant keeping in touch.

We keep in touch with a short call every month.

14

to catch up

DEF

To talk with someone you have not seen recently and exchange news.

Often used in invitations: Would you like to catch up? It can refer to the conversation or the meeting itself.

Martin asked Tomás if he would like to catch up.

Let us catch up over lunch next week.

15

to show up

DEF

To be present and give someone your time, attention or support.

Beyond physically arriving, it often means being reliable and emotionally available.

Friendships need you to show up, not only to remember the past.

She always shows up when her friends need help.

16

to row

DEF

To move a boat through water using oars.

The episode uses row metaphorically: making a concrete effort stops a relationship from drifting.

The training is not that he answers; it is that you rowed.

Both friends must row if they want the relationship to move forward.

