TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 240

A Change of Heart: 4 Idioms About Change

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

90 lines

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

A community garden was about to close, until its volunteers changed their minds.

Then one new idea changed what they could grow.

What happened?

Welcome to Idioms.

I'm Martin.

And I'm Julia.

Today is lesson 19, and the topic is change.

Before we start, one important thing.

Our website has a free course, and this episode is lesson 19.

The lesson includes examples and practice, and the direct link is in the description.

Now, let's visit a community garden and meet its volunteers.

Martin, did you see Sam at the garden this morning?

He used to leave all the work to other people.

I know.

Today he arrived early and said he wants to turn over a new leaf.

Really?

Last week, he wanted the garden to close.

Yes, but he had a change of heart after talking with his neighbours.

And the volunteers want to try a new way to collect rainwater.

They hope other gardens can learn from it.

That is true.

If their experiment works, it could break new ground in water saving.

But I hope nobody moves the goalposts.

What do you mean?

Last year, the council promised support if the garden saved water, then demanded more after the volunteers reached the target.

You are right.

This time, the volunteers should ask the council for clear rules from the beginning.

Do you think Sam will keep helping?

I hope so, but we will see next Tuesday.

That was a lot of change in one garden, and we used four idioms.

Let's look at them one by one.

First, turn over a new leaf.

It means to start behaving in a better way, often after a mistake or a bad habit.

We change the verb for the time: "He turned over a new leaf," or "I'm going to turn over a new leaf."

For example, "After the argument, she turned over a new leaf and started listening more."

It usually sounds hopeful.

Second, have a change of heart.

It means to change your opinion or your feelings about something.

We often add about: "She had a change of heart about the job."

For example, "I wanted to sell the car, but I had a change of heart."

It often means a decision changes, from no to yes, or from yes to no.

Notice the difference.

With turn over a new leaf, you change how you behave.

With have a change of heart, you change what you think or feel.

Third, break new ground.

It means to develop a new idea or method, especially one that makes progress in a field.

For example, "The research team broke new ground with a new way to save water."

We can also say break new ground in a field, for example, "She broke new ground in medicine."

Fourth, move the goalposts.

It means to change the rules or the target while someone is trying to reach it, and this is usually unfair.

We often say it with a negative feeling: "They keep moving the goalposts."

For example, "I finished the report, but my boss moved the goalposts."

It is frustrating, because you cannot win.

So, remember: the first two idioms are about people changing.

The third is about doing something new.

The fourth is about changing the rules in an unfair way.

Now let's try a challenge.

Listen to each situation, and choose the best idiom.

Number one: "Anna stopped smoking, and she now goes running every morning."

She has decided to ...

Turn over a new leaf.

Anna starts behaving in a better way.

Number two: "Tom wanted to say no to the offer.

After a night to think, he said yes."

He ...

Had a change of heart.

He changed his opinion.

Number three: "The team agreed on a target.

Then the manager made it bigger without warning."

The manager ...

Moved the goalposts.

The target changed while the team was working.

Number four: "The scientists created a completely new kind of battery."

Their work ...

Broke new ground.

They did something new.

Great work.

Four ideas about change, and four idioms to talk about them.

These idioms are common at work and at school, so they are very useful.

Let's do a quick review.

Turn over a new leaf means start behaving better.

Have a change of heart means change your opinion.

Break new ground means do something new.

Move the goalposts means change the rules unfairly.

And remember, lesson 19 of our free course is on yourenglishtoolbox.com.

It has more examples and more practice, and the direct link is in the description.

Which idiom is your favourite?

Try to use one today.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.