TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 251

Clear the Air: 4 Idioms About Conflict

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

97 lines

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

Two friends share a market stall, and on Saturday they have a big argument.

They are both tired, they are both right, and neither of them wants to listen.

How do they fix it?

Hello, and welcome to Idioms.

I'm Martin.

And I'm Julia.

Today is lesson 20, and the topic is conflict.

Before we start, one important thing.

Our website has a free course, and this episode is lesson 20.

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

Now, let's imagine the two friends, Lena and Omar.

I'll play Omar, and Julia will play Lena.

Omar, you closed the stall at four again!

We lost customers.

Lena, I was exhausted.

I started at six in the morning.

You never ask me.

You just decide.

And you always complain.

Maybe you should do the morning shift yourself.

That's not fair, and you know it!

Notice what happened here.

Both people had a real problem, but nobody was listening.

That was a tense moment.

Then a neighbour walked past and laughed.

He said, "Two business partners and one broken plate, that's a great day."

He did not mean to be unkind, but his joke added fuel to the fire.

Lena and Omar became even angrier.

The next morning, the two friends sat down with coffee.

Omar, I don't like how we spoke yesterday.

I think we need to clear the air.

You are right, Lena.

I was tired, and I said things I did not mean.

I can open the stall in the mornings, but only if you close it at six.

That works.

I will meet you halfway, and I can come earlier on Fridays.

Thank you, Omar.

Let us bury the hatchet and make a fresh start.

That was a short argument, and a short solution.

Now let's look at the language we used.

We heard four idioms about conflict, and each one belongs to a different moment.

First, add fuel to the fire.

It means to make an argument or a problem worse.

We often say it about a comment, or an action.

For example, "Please don't mention that now, you will add fuel to the fire."

Second, clear the air.

It means to solve a misunderstanding or reduce tension by talking openly.

We often say it with need to: "We need to clear the air."

For example, "After the meeting, they cleared the air and felt better."

Third, meet someone halfway.

It means to accept a compromise, so each person gives a little.

We change the person: "I'll meet you halfway," or "She met him halfway."

For example, "I wanted to leave at six, he wanted seven, so we met halfway."

Fourth, bury the hatchet.

It means to end a disagreement and make peace.

It usually describes people who were angry with each other.

For example, "After ten years, the two brothers buried the hatchet."

One more tip.

These idioms are common in conversation and can also appear in writing, depending on the context.

So, remember the order.

Add fuel to the fire makes a conflict bigger.

Clear the air starts the conversation.

Meet someone halfway is the compromise.

Bury the hatchet is the peace at the end.

Now let's try a challenge.

Listen to each situation, and choose the best idiom.

Number one: "Two colleagues were arguing, and a third person said something sarcastic."

The sarcastic comment ...

Added fuel to the fire.

The comment made the problem worse.

Number two: "There was tension in the team, so the manager invited everyone to talk openly."

She wanted to ...

Clear the air.

She wanted to remove the tension by talking.

Number three: "I wanted to pay fifty euros, she wanted sixty, and we agreed on fifty-five."

We ...

Met halfway.

Each person gave a little.

Number four: "After a long argument, the neighbours shook hands and became friends again."

They ...

Buried the hatchet.

They ended the conflict.

Let's repeat the four idioms once more, slowly.

Add fuel to the fire.

Clear the air.

Meet someone halfway.

Bury the hatchet.

Good.

Say them out loud, and your memory will thank you.

Great work.

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

Try to use one of them this week, in a short sentence about your own day.

Even a small example helps you remember it.

Lesson 20 of our free course is on yourenglishtoolbox.com.

It includes a dialogue, slower audio, and practice exercises, and the direct link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.