



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 74

TOPICS

Ask an American: Being a single woman in the US
obviously vs. apparently, sorrow, to delay vs. to postpone vs. to defer

GLOSSARY

full – complete; not missing any part

* On his 90th birthday, he told his friend and family that he thought he had lived a full life.

gradual – little by little; moving or progressing slowly

* The progress on the project may be gradual, but we will get it done before the end of the year.

to be partnered with – to be grouped with another person; to be one of a pair (two people)

* During class, Jenny was partnered with David to do the science experiment.

to decorate – to make something nicer or more attractive by adding or changing its appearance

* Do you plan to decorate your new office or leave it as it is right now?

to be willing and able to (do something) – to want to do something; to not be reluctant (not want to)

* If I can find someone willing and able to spend a year working in the downtown office, I'd hire them right now.

entirely – completely

* I can see that you've given this decision a lot of thought, but are you entirely sure that you won't change your mind?

satisfactory – acceptable; good enough, although not outstanding or perfect

* We reserved a deluxe room in this hotel and the standard room you've put us in is not satisfactory at all.

equality – having the same; being at the same level as other people

* Do you believe that there can be true equality in a marriage?



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mutual – shared with another person; doing the same thing to other people as they have done for you

* When you have two people who share a mutual respect for each other, it's easy to understand why they get along.

common – same; similar

* My roommate and I have nothing in common. He likes watching sports all the time and I like to read.

obviously – clear; easy to see

* It's obvious that the party can't be held in the park today because of the rain.

apparently – seeming to be real or true, but not necessarily so

* I'm not sure why they came back early from their trip, but apparently one of their children is sick or hurt.

sorrow – being very sad; deep sadness

* It's impossible not to experience some sorrow in one's life, but hopefully, there will be more good times and bad.

to delay – to make something late or to slow something down

* Do you think we can delay our presentation for a half an hour so we can fix the mistakes in our handouts?

to postpone – to arrange for something to be done at a later time than was originally scheduled

* The doctor said that she didn't think it was a good idea to postpone surgery until next week.

to defer – to put off until a later time; postpone (used for official appointments or the start of an official commitment)

* When he was appointed to this position by the president, he asked to defer for three months to have time to finish his work at his current job.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Red Hat Society

There are many organizations in the United States formed by women that have important “missions” (purposes), such as doing “voluntary service” (work to help others without being paid).

In recent years, other women’s organizations or clubs have appeared for another purpose: to build “sisterhood.” “Sisterhood” (or “brotherhood” for men) is the idea of closeness and friendship between women who care and help each other, even if they are not related by blood.

One of these organizations is the Red Hat Society for women over the age 50. The Society was “founded” (started) by a woman in California in 1998, and it now has more than 1.5 million members in 40,000 “chapters” (local branches or groups). The goal of the Society is for women to interact socially and to encourage fun, creativity, and friendship.

The group is called the Red Hat Society because it takes its name from a poem called Warning that starts:

When I am an old woman I “shall” (will) wear purple
With a red hat that doesn’t “go” (match) and doesn’t “suit me” (make me look good)

When its members meet, they wear red hats and purple clothing. The founder of each local chapter is called the “Queen” and its members are called the “Red Hatters.” Together, its members participate in many events and hold parties where its members can socialize together.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 74.

This is ESL Podcast's English Café episode 74. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On today's Café, we're going to be talking about women in the United States - single women - unmarried women. This is going to be a combination of our "Ask an American" and "In the News," where we'll listen to some interviews with women about being single and being unmarried. And, as always, we'll answer a few questions. Let's get started!

There was a story in the American newspapers recently about some new statistics about the number of women in the United States who are not married or who do not live with a man.

In 2005, for the first time in American history, the majority of American women were not married, 51 percent. Back in 1950, more than 50 years ago, there were only 35 percent of women who were not married. So, this is an interesting change in American culture.

I thought it would be interesting to listen to some women talk about this change, and I found a story on this topic on another website, which some of you may know, called "Voice of America," which is the US government's radio station. The good thing about this radio station and Internet website is that we can use their recordings for free. So, we're going to listen to some women talk about being single and why they are single. We're actually going to listen to a couple of different voices.

As we did in our previous episodes with "Ask an American," we're going to talk a little bit about it, and then we're going to listen to the quote - or listen to the person talking - then we'll go back and I'll explain some of the vocabulary. They will be speaking faster; they'll be speaking at a native rate of speech - at a regular speed - so it may be a little more difficult for you to understand. Try to understand as much as you can, and then I'll explain it after we're done listening.

First we're going to listen to several different women give their opinion - their ideas - about this topic, then we'll talk more about it. I'd like you now to take a listen - that's expression we use. To take a listen is when you want someone to



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listen to some music or listen to something on the television, and you're asking them to listen. We say, "Take a listen." So, take a listen to these women talking about being single.

[start of recording]

"Single women today have full, happy lives."

"I get to make the choices, myself, about where I live, how I live, how I decorate my house."

"We don't have to be married; we don't have to be partnered."

"I'm not surprised at all. This is just one more example of a very gradual change that's occurring in the United States and elsewhere."

[end of recording]

You heard some different accents there, some New York or east coast accents. You also heard somebody talking on a telephone. Those were quotes from different women about being single. They did speak rather quickly. Let's go back and listen a little bit to some of what they said, and try to explain it.

The first woman who is interviewed says:

[recording] "Single women today have full, happy lives."

She says, "Single women today have full, happy lives." When we say you have a full life, we mean you have a - a complete life, you're not missing anything. "My life is full," you could say.

The next two women talk about the freedom that comes from not being married:

[recording] "I get to make the choices, myself, about where I live, how I live, how I decorate my house."

[recording] "We don't have to be married; we don't have to be partnered."

The first woman says that she gets to make the choices herself about where she lives, and how she lives, and how she decorates her house. To decorate, "decorate," is a general term - a verb - meaning deciding on what kind of furniture



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- what kind of couch and chair you may have in your house; what color the walls will be; whether you're going to put a photograph on the wall or a painting - all of those are part of decorating your house.

So, she's saying that because she's not married, she can make all those decisions herself. I think this comes from someone who has never been married, because if you are married, you know that your wife will make all those choices anyway!

The last quote was a woman saying that “we don't have to be partnered.” To be partnered, “partnered,” means to have someone that you are in a romantic relationship with. Nowadays, when someone says, “This person is my partner,” usually that means that they are not married but that they are in a romantic relationship with that person. The noun, partner, just means someone that you are with. So, you can have a partner who's not a romantic partner; you could have a business partner, for example. Those are other possible uses of that word, partner.

Finally, we hear from a woman who is a scientist - a researcher - talking on the telephone about these changes. She says:

[recording] “I'm not surprised at all. This is just one more example of a very gradual change that's occurring in the United States and elsewhere.”

She says she's not surprised at this change in the number of women who are not getting married or who are not married. She says it's part of a “gradual change” that is taking place - or happening - “in the United States and elsewhere.” Gradual, “gradual,” means slow, usually in describing the change from one thing to another. It's often used as an adverb - “I am gradually changing the way I eat” - I'm changing it slowly, but you can tell I am changing it, I'm eating less fatty things; I'm eating more vegetables. Well, I'm not actually, but I should be eating more vegetables! So, that's a gradual change.

The researcher here is saying that there has been a gradual change in the way women are living, not only in the United States but elsewhere. Elsewhere, “elsewhere,” (one word) means in another place - in other places, in this case, in other countries.

Now, why has this change taken place? Once again, the researcher gives her opinion about why women are not marrying as much as they used to:



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[recording] “What is significant about this is that women are now postponing marriage, and they are more willing and able to leave a marriage if it is not satisfactory, or even to say no to marriage entirely.”

She says, “that women are now postponing marriage.” To postpone, “postpone,” means to delay - to put off - to do at a later time. You might say, “I have to postpone my dentist appointment because my car is not working and I can't get to the dental office.” To postpone means to delay - to do at a later time. So, women are postponing marriage. They're getting married, but they're getting married at a later age.

The researcher also says that women are “willing and able to leave a marriage” that they don't like - that “is not satisfactory.” To be willing and able to do something means that you can do it and that you want to do it. You'll actually hear that expression a lot in English. Someone may just say, “I'm willing and able,” meaning I want to and I can - I have the capacity to. So, women are “willing and able to leave a marriage” they don't find “satisfactory.” Satisfactory, “satisfactory,” means here to be acceptable - it is good for you - it meets your expectations. That would be something that would be satisfactory.

The last thing the woman says is that women are able to “say no to marriage entirely.” Entirely, “entirely,” is an interesting adverb; here it means completely or thoroughly. So, when someone says, “I'm going to say no to this entirely,” they are saying I'm not going to do this at all - I'm not going to do this in any way. We sometimes use entirely as a way of emphasizing something - a means of emphasis. For example, “The classroom consists entirely of women.” That means that there are only women in that classroom.

Now, I don't want you do think that American women are no longer interested in getting married. What we're really talking about here is a change of attitude by women in the United States. The researcher explains:

[recording] “People are very interested in having a love relationship. But, they want a love relationship based upon equality and mutual regard and common interest.”

She says that women are still interested in a love - or romantic - relationship. But, they want that based upon - or founded upon - built upon “equality, mutual regard and common interest.” Equality, “equality,” comes from the word equal, meaning, in this case, that the husband and wife - the man and the woman - are the same - have the same kind of power in the relationship.



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Mutual regard - mutual, “mutual” - means the same as both. For example, “We have mutual interests” - we both have those interests. Usually talking about two different people, but it could also be among a group of people. It's something that you share with someone else. Regard, “regard,” as a noun, here means respect or having a good opinion of the other person. So, women are looking for a relationship based on mutual regard, where both the man and the woman respect each other.

Finally, she says they're looking for relationships with “common interest.” Common, “common,” here means the same. Sometimes we use that adjective, common, to mean not very special. In this case, however, common means the same.

So, that's a little information about women in the United States, and some of the changes that are taking place in terms of whether they get married or not. I hope you enjoyed listening to some different voices, not just my boring voice! Now let's answer a few questions.

Our first question comes from Nico, “Nico,” in Germany. Nico wants to know the difference between two very common adverbs: obviously and apparently.

Obviously means usually that it is easy to see or easy to understand; we might also use the word clear or clearly. Apparently is different. Apparently means that something seems to be true - it looks like or sounds like it's true, but it may not be true. For example, when we are guessing at the reason why someone did something but we're not sure why - we don't know exactly why - we might use this adverb, apparently, such as, “I heard Jeff McQuillan singing; apparently he has no training - no education in music. We're not sure, but if you listen to him sing, you'll know he probably doesn't.”

Now, if you know for sure, or if you think it is very clear from the evidence - from listening to him sing - that he has no musical education, you would say, “Obviously he has no musical education.” That means you're certain - you know that is true, and it's very clear, anyone could tell - anyone could come to that conclusion.

Our next question comes from Hasnaa, “Hasnaa,” originally from the country of Morocco, now living in New York City. The question is about the meaning of the word sorrow, “sorrow.” What does sorrow mean?



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Sorrow is a word that means very sad, that you are very sad usually because you lost something, usually a friend - someone died. When we say, "I lost my father," we mean my father died. It's a polite way of saying that. So, when you lose someone close to you - when someone close to you dies - you may have sorrow, which is a very deep or serious kind of sadness. It's also used to describe a disappointment or a misfortune - something bad that happened to you. Those could also produce sorrow.

Usually we use the word sorrow in more formal situations. You'll see it more in writing than you will in actual conversation. You may use it in certain circumstances, for example at a funeral. Someone at the funeral may say, "It is with deep sorrow that we say goodbye to this person" - it is with deep sadness. Notice the word deep here means a lot, or great sadness - great sorrow. You might also feel sorrow if you fall in love with a woman and she doesn't love you back - you have great sorrow.

Our final question comes from Korea, from Kyunghan, "Kyunghan." The question has to do with the difference between delay, postpone and defer.

Well, this is a good question for this episode. We already talked about postpone, and I gave, as one of the definitions, the word delay - to do something later. Now let's talk a little bit more about how you would use these words and what the differences might be.

All three words, delay, "delay," postpone and defer, "defer," mean to move something to a later time - to do something at a later time. We probably would use the word delay when we are talking about making something late or slowing something down. For example, "My flight to New York was delayed for two hours," it was late - something that you weren't planning on. Or, "The construction of the school was delayed because the city didn't have enough money to finish it." They were building a school, but they ran out of money - they have no more money so they have to delay the building. They weren't planning on it, but it happened.

Postpone is usually something that you do plan on - that you arrange for something to be done later. You are the person who is doing the postponing - you are the person who is responsible. For example, you might say, "I postponed my vacation for a month because I was too busy at work," or, "The meeting was postponed to a later date when more people could attend" - or could be there. So, it's something that you do to cause it to be at a later time.



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Defer also means to do something at a later time, like postpone, but usually we only use that word for official appointments or an official commitment, such as going into college - agreeing to go to a college or going into the Army. For example, “He was admitted to Harvard, but deferred his enrollment for a year so he could make money in order to pay for his schooling” - and if you go to the Harvard, you need a lot of money! So, deferring here means he decided to do it later. Again, it's more of an official thing.

Well, don't postpone going to our website and taking a look at our new offerings; go to www.eslpod.com. You'll also want to download the Learning Guide for this episode, and take a look at our new ESL Podcast Store.

If you have a question or comment for the English Café, you can email us. Our address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

Finally, I want to thank the “Voice of America,” at www.voanews.com, for their recording that we used in this episode.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.

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