

FUMC ESL 6-22-2017 High Intermediate Lesson

IDIOMS: Back, Shoulders and Chest: A Pat on the Back for a Job Well Done

There are many American expressions that use parts of the body. These include the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and even the heart. Today we will tell you some expressions that use other body parts – the back, shoulders and chest.

When I am facing a lot of pressure at work, my back and neck will start to hurt. Sometimes, this tension is the result of too much work. I have too many things to do because my supervisor is **on my back** all the time. In other words, my employer is always telling me to do things.

Sometimes, I want to tell my employer to **get off my back!** I want her to stop criticizing me and making too many demands on my time. I cannot say this, however. I would never **turn my back on her** and refuse to help when there is a need. If I did refuse to help, my supervisor might say bad things about me **behind my back**. She might criticize me when I am not present. This would surely be a **stab in the back**. It is never kind to unfairly harm or say bad things about other people.

Sometimes, when I am very productive in my job, my employer gives me a **pat on the back**. She praises my work. She might even say “**I will scratch your back if you will scratch mine.**” This means she will do something for me, if I do something helpful for her in exchange. Such an offer usually comes **straight from the shoulder**. My supervisor has a very direct, open and honest way of speaking.

I know that my employer carries a lot **on her shoulders**. She is responsible for many things at the office. And because she is so important, she sometimes gets to **rub shoulders** with the top officials. She gets to spend time with some very important people.

I believe the top official values my supervisor. He never gives her the **cold shoulder**. He is never unfriendly to her. He always treats her like she is an important part of the organization.

I also value my supervisor. In fact, I think she is very effective in her job. Of course, I could yell my opinion **at the top of my lungs**, or as loudly as I possibly could. It might even feel good to get my emotions **off my chest**. It is always helpful to tell people how you feel so that your emotions do not trouble you.

But it is not necessary for me to praise my supervisor. Most of my co-workers feel the exact same way about her. So, I think I will just **save my breath**. I will keep silent because talking or repeating myself will not do any good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the worst supervisor you have ever worked for.
2. What would you like to *get off your chest*?
3. Describe a situation in which “you would scratch my back, if I scratched yours”.
4. Tell about a time when someone gave you a *cold shoulder*.

5. People sometimes say, "He has a *good head on his shoulders*". What do you think this might mean? Who do you know that fits this description?
6. Sometimes you might want to "keep your cards close to your chest". When do you think you might do that?

Pronunciation Quiz: Circle the word the teacher says. Check your answers.

raced	raised	game	lame
rust	lust	gum	rum
cape	cake	baste	bust
stake	stuck	plague	plug
savor	safer	sane	same
scale	skull		

Now the student should pronounce one of the words in the pair. See if the teacher can circle the correct word.

died	lied
bus	base
choose	chose
racy	lazy
fuss	face
ram	lamb
cup	cub
cluck	clock
dull	doll
shut	shot
rubber	robber
gain	game
tell	tale
robbed	bobbed
ray	lay
real	rail