

Why I don't speak in idioms

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By Jade Joddle

Hey guys! Idioms and why I don't use them in my speech. So I have been living in other countries, not the UK, for quite a few years and, a lot of the time, speaking to people whose first language isn't English. So it started off... I started off not using idioms a lot because, if you want clear, easy communication with people whose first language isn't English, just drop the idioms, because they're confusing. If you use an idiom, and you're speaking to a person whose English level isn't that high, then you will need to explain every idiom that you use. And then you start talking about language rather than the thing that you're communicating about in the first place.

So that's why I started not using a lot of idioms. But then another reason I consciously choose not to use idioms is because idioms tell you how the world is, and idioms tell you what's true for you and your life and people in general. So if

you're going around saying these idioms or proverbs, whatever, it's like you're saying, "I believe this to be true."

And what I would say is: Whereas they often seem to carry a kind of wisdom, they are true for a lot of people, but they don't have to be true for you. A lot of the time, these idioms, these proverbs carry with them some kind of pessimistic or cautionary view of the world, like, "Oh, don't do this: something bad will happen."

So that's another reason why I would be aware of the language that I'm using.

"I'm using this proverb, idiom, without really thinking about it; OK, fine. But what is it saying about what's true for me in my life?"

So I want to go through a few examples and just give my thoughts on them. On one level, they do appear to be true and good advice to follow, but if we look at them a different way, we could say, "Well, actually, maybe that is a load of rubbish. And I don't need to say that, and I don't need to believe in it."

So we'll start with the first one: "The grass is greener on the other side. The grass is always greener on the other side." That means: "Don't change anything! What's the point in ever changing something? Because if I...if I think, "This is not very good for me now, so I want to change something. But if I go over there, and

I try and make it better, I'll just feel the same. And it won't be worth it; it just won't be worth the effort of changing."

Whereas, speaking from someone who's made a lot of changes in my life, often the grass is greener on the other side. The grass is different, but the grass is greener. So if you're someone who goes around saying, "Oh, well, it won't be better over there," you're not really gonna change a lot in your life, so you won't know: Could it be different?

What I will add to that is, though: If you don't change as a person, and you move from this grass: "This is my grass; I don't like my grass; my grass is no good," and you move to that grass, and you stay exactly the same: "I don't like it; I don't like this; this is my...I don't like it," then your experience will be the same. It doesn't really matter which grass you're standing on. It matters how you have changed as a person.

So next one: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch." This one was really programmed into me when I was growing up. I heard it said a lot. What does this one mean? Yeah, it makes sense, doesn't it? You might really want this now; you might be so happy and excited about this now, but what if it doesn't happen?

What if it doesn't work out? Often it doesn't work out. So don't get excited; don't get excited about things, because in life, you don't get what you want a lot of the time. So definitely don't be planning for this good thing to happen to you, 'cause it's probably likely not to happen to you.

So how I would like to adapt this one: "Don't count your chickens before they hatch," is: What's the need to go around saying something is gonna happen? There's no need going around saying, telling everyone, "This is gonna happen, this is gonna happen." Because like the idiom says, "It might not." But on an inner level, you can desire something, want something and work towards it for yourself without that negative attitude, pessimistic attitude that "Oh, it's probably not gonna happen." That is a lot more constructive for you, working towards your desires, your goals and things that you want, rather than just persuading yourself, programming yourself that things you want are never, ever gonna happen to you in the first place.

Next: "Someone who is a jack of all trades but master of none." So, I'd say that the wisdom in there is that, yeah, of course, if you don't stick with things, and you just get it, dabble here in this thing for a while, but you know you don't get that into it, and after a few months, you completely forget it and move on to

something else and dabble a bit here, then that is no good. This is not a way to become skilled and have high abilities in anything. And this is also an inability to put in effort over a long time and stick with things, which is not going to get you very far.

But at the same time, there is something that contradicts the idea of this idiom, proverb, whatever it is to me, in that some people are really skilled and have really good abilities in a wider range of subjects. So it's not true for all people.

Some people can variety of different things: they could be really good at different things, you know. They can actually be good. Whereas, probably most people in general: No, I think it's true. Most people in general can't. If they're good at one thing in their life, that is good. But there are some people who can be good at many things. So you decide: Which person are you?

Next is: "Once a cheater, always a cheater." This is another one that I've heard a lot. Is it true? I think, this one we can only answer for ourselves by looking at ourselves. Have you ever been a cheater in some way in your life? So, it could be in a relationship; could also by being dishonest, breaking the law, something like that. Have you ever done something like that in your life? And did you ever stop doing it after? So, speaking about myself, when I was a teen-ager, I...I had

some experiments in doing things that were not...not strictly...um, perfect all the time, I would say! But I've stopped it now. So you could say about me: I used to be a cheater, I used to be a cheater, but not a cheater now. So I think it really depends on the person. And I think: If you want to change, if you decide to change, if you really want and decide to change, you can. So I've proved to myself in my own life, that that idiom isn't true for me. It might be true for a lot of people in the world, but it's not true for me.

Next is: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." "Why're you working hard on that? Why are you working hard on that? Stop it; let's go out and have some fun! Stop being boring; stop working." Well, what if your work is fun, and you enjoy your work? What if then? Does that...does enjoying your work make you boring? Do you need to play more? What if your work is play?

And lastly, "Birds of a feather flock together." So, this one means like: Similar people like similar people. OK, yeah, it seems...seems true in our experience in the world when we look around. But also it does happen that sometimes people are friends with all different kinds of people. They don't have to be anything like them. They can be a lot older, can be a lot younger, from a completely different background: different background in terms of class, different background in terms

of country, religion, culture. So yeah, it might be in general for the world at large that birds of a feather flock together. But it doesn't have to be true for you in your life experience at all.

So there are all my examples that I wanted to share with you today. If you can think of any idioms, proverbs that you—either you really believe are true, or you don't believe are true, leave them in a comment below and let me know what you think.

So thanks a lot for watching and join me again soon. Bye-bye!

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