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Words and Their Stories: Heart to Heart

Now, the VOA Special English program WORDS AND THEIR STORIES.

Each week, this program explains the many meanings of English expressions. Today's expressions include a very important word – **heart**.

We will try to **get to the heart of the matter** to better understand the most important things about words and their stories. So **take heart**. Have no fear about learning new expressions. Besides, popular English words can be fun. There is no need for **a heavy heart**. Such feelings of sadness would only **break my heart**, or make me feel unhappy and hopeless.

Now, let us suppose you and I were speaking freely about something private. We would be having **a heart to heart discussion**. I might speak from **the bottom of my heart**, or say things honestly and truthfully. I might even **open up my heart** to you and tell you a secret. I would speak **with all my heart**, or with great feeling.

When a person shares her feelings freely and openly like this, you might say she **wears her heart on her sleeve**, or on her clothing. Her emotions are not protected.

If we had an honest discussion, both of us would know that the other person's **heart is in the right place**. For example, I would know that you are a **kind-hearted** and well-meaning person. And, if you are a very good person, I would even say that you have **a heart of gold**. However, you might have **a change of heart** based on what I tell you. Our discussion might cause you to change the way you feel about something.

But, let us suppose you get angry over what I tell you. Or worse, you feel no sympathy or understanding for me or my situation. If this happens, I might think that you have **a heart of stone**. And, if you say something to make me frightened or worried, my heart might **stand still** or **skip a beat**.

Yet, even though you may be angry, I would know that **at heart**, you are a kind person. In reality, you do care. And any argument between us would not cause me to **lose heart** or feel a sense of loss.

My **heart goes out** to anyone who loses a friend over an argument. It really is a sad situation, and I feel sympathy for the people involved.

I promise that what I have told you today is true – **cross my heart**.

I really wanted to play some music at the end of this feature. In fact, I **had my heart set on it**. So here it is, “Don’t Go Breaking my Heart” by Elton John.

Level: beginner - intermediate

Time: 20-30 minutes

This worksheet will help you learn new expressions with the word *heart*. You will practice the expressions, and write a short paragraph about *heart* expressions in your own language.

1. Think about the word *heart*. What does it make you think of? List five words that have to do with *heart*.

2. What does *break my heart* mean?

- make me feel great love
 make me feel great happiness
 make me feel terrible sadness

3. Have you ever had a *heart to heart discussion* with someone? What was it about?

4. Read the following sentence. Is it true or false? If it is false, correct the mistake.
If you *speak from the bottom of your heart*, you do not tell the entire truth.

5. Look at the following expressions. Which one doesn't belong? Why?

- a heart to heart discussion**
 the bottom of my heart
 open up my heart
 a heavy heart
 with all my heart

6. Have you ever **worn your heart on your sleeve**? Describe what happened.

7. Imagine that you want to take a vacation to Italy. I really want to go to Spain! After I explain my reasons, you agree to go with me to Spain. What *heart* expression can you use to describe this?

You had a _____

8. What kind of situation might make your heart **skip a beat**?

9. If you *cross your heart*, which of the following is probably true?

- you promise
- you lie
- you are unhappy

10. Rearrange the following words to make an expression from the article.

it / set / heart / I / my / had / on

OVER TO YOU

Do you have many expressions with *heart* in your own language? How do they translate into English?

Write 5-8 sentences explaining your answer.

ANSWER KEY

1. students' own answers
2. make me feel terrible sadness
3. students' own answers
4. false; If you speak from the bottom of your heart, you **are truthful and honest**.
5. a heavy heart has to do with sadness; the other expressions have to do with honesty and truth
6. students' own answers
7. You had a *change of heart*.
8. students' own answers
9. you promise
10. I had my heart set on it.