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.