

Words and Their Stories: Number One

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

Today I will tell about expressions using numbers. Let us start with the number one. Numbers can be tricky. **On the one hand**, they are simply numbers. On the other hand, they have meanings. **I for one** use these expressions a lot.

Many people consider themselves **number one**, the most important person. They are always **looking out for number one** and **taking care of number one**. It is as if they are the **one and only** person on Earth. Some people however, are not so self-centered. My brother is such a person. It is true – no joke. I am not trying to **pull a fast one** on you.



"One in a Million" was the name of an album by Aaliyah

First, you have to understand that my brother is **one in a million**. He is such a nice person. All his friends like him. They consider him **one of the boys**. Recently, my brother had a bad day at the office. It was just **one of those days**. Nothing went right. So he stopped at a local bar -- a drinking place -- after leaving work. My brother planned to have a glass of beer with his friends -- a **quick one** -- before he went home. But a **quick one** turned into **one or two**, and soon those became **one too many**.

As my brother was leaving, he ordered a last drink -- **one for the road**. His friends became concerned. **One by one**, they asked him if he was able to drive home safely.

Now my brother is a wise and calm person. He is **at one with himself**. He recognizes when he has had too much alcohol to drink. So he accepted an offer for a ride home from a female friend.

At one time in the past, my brother had been in love with this woman. She is a great person -- kind, thoughtful and intelligent -- all good qualities **rolled up**

into one. But sadly their relationship did not work. He always used to say "**One of these days**, I am going to marry this girl." But that never happened.

For one thing, she did not love him as much as he loved her. It was just **one of those things**. The situation was regrettable and my brother had to accept it. But even now, he considers her **the one that got away**.

However, they are still friends. And because my brother had been kind to her, she felt that **one good turn deserves another**. He was good to her and she wanted to help him in return. So she drove him home.

If my brother had driven home from the bar that night, his **number would have been up**. Something bad would have happened. Thankfully he made it home safely. And, he and the woman are **back to square one**. They are back to where they started – being friends.

(MUSIC)

This VOA Special English program, WORDS AND THEIR STORIES, was written by Jill Moss. I'm Faith Lapidus.