ESL News Stories

Level-graded English lessons with reading, listening, activities, and discussion.

Lesson Info

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Social Post

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3 / B1

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He Wasn't Always Like This

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Lesson Content

- Warm-up, Vocab List, Reading and Audio
- Understanding: Read the Comments, Why Did They Post?, True or False
- Language: Words That Go Together, Everyday Expressions
- Use It: Reply Builder, Discussion Questions
- Answers

He Wasn't Always Like This

Think Ahead: What do you guess is causing problems in this relationship?

a) The boyfriend spends too much time with his friends.

b) The boyfriend has stopped taking care of himself.

c) The couple disagree about where they should live.

How long have I been wearing this shirt?

Vocab List

attracted (adj.) — Interested in someone in a romantic or physical way.

embarrassed (adj.) — Feeling uncomfortable or ashamed because of a situation.

pull away (phr. v.) — To move your body away from another person.

deeply (adv.) — Very much or very strongly.

move past (phr. v.) — To accept a difficult feeling or experience and continue with your life.

beer belly (n.) — A large, round stomach, especially on someone who drinks a lot of beer.

shallow (adj.) — Caring too much about appearance and not enough about more important qualities.

torn (adj.) — Having two different feelings and not knowing what to do.

He Wasn’t Always Like This

My boyfriend and I are both in our late twenties. When we got together, I was very attracted to him, but lately he has really let himself go. His car is a mess, his room is dirty, and he rarely brushes his hair or shaves. He also drinks alcohol every day and has developed a large beer belly.

I’ve brought it up many times, but nothing has changed. Now I feel embarrassed when we go out together, and I sometimes pull away when he touches me. I feel awful even writing this because I don’t want to sound shallow. I’m really torn because I still love him deeply. He is my best friend, makes me laugh, and cares for me in every other way.

I want to stay in love with him, but I’m worried that I won’t be able to move past these feelings. How can I bring this up without hurting him? I accept him for who he is, but I also need to be honest about how this is affecting me. I am afraid things will only get worse.

1. Read the Comments

EmilyR

You are not a bad person for feeling this way. Talk to him honestly, but focus on his drinking and how he cares for himself, not only his appearance.

This comment ___

DanielK

Drinking every day and not caring for himself may be signs that something is wrong. Ask him if he has been feeling unhappy or stressed.

This comment ___

Mia87

You cannot make yourself feel attracted to someone. If he will not discuss the problem or try to change, you may need to think about ending the relationship.

This comment ___

a. Explains when leaving may be reasonable
b. Focuses on his habits, not only his appearance
c. Suggests there may be a deeper problem

2. Why Did They Post?

Choose one:

→ She wants advice on how to talk to her boyfriend without hurting him.

→ She wants to know if she should break up with him.

→ She wants to know if her boyfriend might be depressed.

3. True or False

1. The poster and her boyfriend are both in their late twenties. TRUE FALSE
2. Her boyfriend recently started taking better care of himself. TRUE FALSE
3. The poster is only concerned about her boyfriend's appearance. TRUE FALSE
4. She has already spoken to her boyfriend about the problem. TRUE FALSE
5. She no longer cares about her boyfriend. TRUE FALSE
6. She is afraid the situation will get worse. TRUE FALSE

4. Words That Go Together

Match each word with the words it goes with:

1. Be	a) _____ a relationship
2. Sound	b) _____ a beer belly
3. Feel	c) _____ someone deeply
4. Love	d) _____ torn
5. Develop	e) _____ shallow
6. Affect	f) _____ attracted to someone

5. Everyday Expressions

Choose the correct meaning.

1. If someone **lets himself go**, he
   a) pays more attention to his appearance or health.
   b) stops taking care of his appearance or health.

2. If someone **brings it up**, they
   a) start talking about it.
   b) avoid mentioning it.

3. If someone **pulls away**, they
   a) move closer to another person.
   b) move back from another person.

4. If someone **moves past these feelings**, they
   a) stop being affected by them.
   b) begin experiencing them.

6. Reply Builder

1. Show that you understand her feelings.

   I understand why you feel _____

   because _____

2. Say what may be happening with her boyfriend.

   He may be _____

   , which could explain why _____

3. Suggest how she could begin the conversation.

   You could start by saying, "_____

4. Give your final advice.

   I think you should _____

   before _____

7. Discussion Questions

1. How messy or tidy are you?
2. Is it important not to "let yourself go"? Why?
3. Do you think attraction naturally fades in all relationships?
4. How important is physical attraction in a relationship?
5. Does the poster's boyfriend seem okay? Could he be depressed?
6. Which of his habits would bother you the most?
7. Do you think the poster is being shallow?
8. Is honesty always best, even when it might hurt someone?

Read the Comments:

1. **EmilyR:** b. Focuses on his habits, not only his appearance
2. **DanielK:** c. Suggests there may be a deeper problem
3. **Mia87:** a. Explains when leaving may be reasonable

Why Did They Post?: She wants advice on how to talk to her boyfriend without hurting him.

True or False:

1. True. She begins by saying that they are both in their late twenties.
2. False. She says that lately he has stopped taking care of himself.
3. False. She is also concerned about his dirty car and room, his drinking, and how little care he takes over his appearance.
4. True. She says that she has brought it up many times, but nothing has changed.
5. False. She says that she still loves him deeply and describes him as her best friend.
6. True. She ends by saying that she is afraid things will only get worse.

Vocabulary:

1. Be: attracted to someone
2. Sound: shallow
3. Feel: torn
4. Love: someone deeply
5. Develop: a beer belly
6. Affect: a relationship

Everyday Expressions: 1. b; 2. a; 3. b; 4. a

Reply Builder examples:

1. I understand why you feel worried because his habits are affecting your relationship.
2. He may be unhappy or stressed, which could explain why he doesn't shave.
3. You could start by saying, "I'm worried about you and want to know if something is wrong."
4. I think you should have an honest conversation before making a decision about the relationship.