

Chapter 13: Playing With Fire

Pronunciation focus: (the short ae)

Mike: Jim, *thanks* for coming in to see me. I'm not going to **beat around the bush** here because we *have* discussed the Thomas project a million times already. I thought we *had* decided that we were just going to ask *that* they pay more **up front**. We agreed that we were gonna let the royalty rate remain *at* five percent. We did, didn't we?

Jim: Yes, we did. Look, I know where this is going, but I'm telling you we are **playing with fire** here.

Mike: We've already been here and done this Jim. I'm not going to **go down this road** again with you. This could lead to additional projects down the line. So, we lose a little bit up front and make up for it in the long run. I'm willing to **bite the bullet** on this.

Jim: How long are you willing to bite the bullet for? A month? six months? Or are you just going to **play it by ear**?

Mike: Let's give it six months and see where we are. Trust me on this.

Breakdown

A) **Beat Around The Bush:** This means to avoid coming to the point.

1) Jim please stop **beating around the bush** and just ask me what you want to ask me. It sounds like you are trying to ask for the day off tomorrow, am I right?

2) Michelle is not one to **beat around the bush**. Sometimes, you'll like what she has to say, and other times you won't. At least you'll know exactly where you stand.

B) **Up Front:** This means to pay for something at the beginning of the deal or transaction. Another meaning is to be honest with somebody right from the start.

1) The cost of completing the deal is 120,000 dollars. They require that we pay 20 percent of the total **up front**. Is this something that we feel comfortable with?

2) Since we are a startup company, I'd rather not pay so much money **up front**. Would it be possible to pay more on the back end of the deal? I hope we can come to an agreement.

C) **Playing With Fire:** This means to do something which puts you at risk of being hurt or damaged. Often, it is used as advice against doing something which might put you in a dangerous position.

1) I'm telling you doing this deal might jeopardize the future of our company. You are **playing with fire** here. I would advise you think it over before proceeding.

2) I told you the market was volatile and that you were **playing with fire** by investing in that company.

D) Go Down This Road: This means to take or follow a specific course of action. The expression is often followed by the word "again". It is used when not wanting to discuss something that has been discussed before.

1) I'm sorry but I don't have time for this again. We've **been down this road numerous times before**, and I don't see any benefit in discussing this again.

2) Are you sure you want to **go down this road**?

E) Bite The Bullet: This means to endure something that is difficult or unpleasant. It is a common expression when doing something that needs to be done, even though the experience will be painful.

1) Do you think I like admitting that we were wrong on this? We have to **bite the bullet** and just do it. It's the right thing to do and may help us in any future business dealing we have with them.

2) I can't **bite the bullet** and just take this anymore.

F) Play It By Ear: This means to not plan ahead. You base your decisions on what seems best at the time, depending on the situation you are dealing with. It can be dangerous, but vital in business meetings and negotiations.

1) I didn't expect him to bring that up at all. What we have to do is stay calm and just **play it by ear**. We have no other choice. Let's go back in there and give it our best shot.

2) Even though you are comfortable **playing things by ear**, I'm not.