

Chapter 14: Get Down To Business

Pronunciation focus: (ə) Like But.

This day keeps getting worse and worse. Let me tell you what happened. I *just* got off the phone with my boss Mark. He mentioned that he would be interested in seeing me later in the day. As soon as he said that, **my heart sank** to the floor. I knew he wasn't *coming* to socialize. **The elephant that had been living in the office** for the past two months had gotten bigger. You see, about six months ago, a *company* that was in financial dire straits was being sold. Mark asked me if it might be something we would be interested in. He wanted me to go over their corporate profile with a **fine-tooth comb**. So, I immediately **got down to down business** and worked on it night and day. After working on this exhaustively, for the past two months, I had *come* to the *conclusion* that it wouldn't be something **viable** for our *company*. I informed *upper* management of my findings. In that meeting, we all agreed that it would be best to pass, and so I **washed my hands of** the whole deal. I had moved on to something else, but you know how that goes. It seems that I'll be the **fall guy** for letting this deal get away from us. It's just another day around here.

Breakdown

A) My Heart Sank: This means to feel or to experience disappointment. It can be used professionally and personally.

1) When she said she didn't want to have dinner with me, **my heart sank**.

2) I worked so hard putting the presentation together that **my heart sank** when I was told the prospective customer had decided to pass.

B) The Elephant In The Room: This is an expression used when there is an obvious problem or issue that everyone knows about but is never discussed. As you can imagine, an elephant in the room would be difficult to overlook.

1) It has been two months since we lost the huge account to a competitor, and it is still not being discussed.

We need to deal with **the elephant in the room** before we can go forward.

2) Look, we need to deal with the **elephant in the room**. This is something that can't be ignored. Please set up a meeting ASAP so we can discuss this.

C) Fine-Tooth Comb: This is an expression used when researching or investigating the smallest details about something.

1) The key to being a successful analyst is to research everything with a **fine-tooth comb**.

2) I think Jack is a good analyst, but I would put Lisa on this case. She goes over every detail with a **fine-tooth comb**.

D) Get Down To Business: This is used when we want to make sure everyone knows that it's time to work. This is to say that it is time to stop chatting and making small talk.

1) I see we don't have much time today, so I think we should **get down to business**.

2) We should **get down to business** because we have a full agenda today.

E) Viable: If something is viable, it can work successfully. You could also say, "feasible."

1) Looking at the current financial situation of the company, I don't see how acquiring that business would be **viable** for us now.

2) Do you see this as being **viable** in the long term?

F) Wash My Hands Of: When you wash your hands of something, you move on or forget about it.

1) After three months of working on this project, I was glad that I was finally able to **wash my hands of** it.

2) I'm telling you to **wash your hands of** this as soon as possible. You can't keep thinking about it.

G) A Fall Guy: A fall guy is a person used as a scapegoat who takes the blame for someone else's actions.

1) I wonder who the **fall guy** is going to be. Someone will have to take the blame for this disaster.

2) He was forced to resign from the company. Unfortunately, he was the **fall guy** for the unsuccessful launch of our product line.