

Catch Word #55 – To tear a strip off someone

Transcript

Robin: Hello everyone and welcome back. This is Robin.

Harp: And Harp, at Culips.com.

Robin: C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: And we're bringing you a Catch Word podcast.

Robin: And in this podcast we're going to take an expression and break it down. We'll give you related expressions.

Harp: Make sure you check out the website because there you can find the Lipservice, and in the Lipservice there is the detailed explanation, the complete transcripts, and even a quiz.

Robin: Absolutely, so check it out. So today's expression, what is it Harp?

Harp: It's ***to tear a strip off someone***.

Robin: ***To tear a strip off someone***.

Harp: Yeah, ***to tear a strip off someone***.

Robin: And what does that mean?

Harp: When you **tear a strip off somebody**, you speak to them in an angry, aggressive way, because you don't like what they've done.

Robin: Someone's done something bad and you're extremely angry, your face is red, and your fists are **clenched**, and you start yelling at them, screaming at them.

Harp: Yeah exactly. When you're doing that you're **tearing a strip off** them.

Robin: Absolutely. Have you ever been in a situation, or have you ever witnessed someone getting a **strip torn off** of them?

Harp: For sure. Just last week, I was taking the bus and I was waiting at the bus stop, minding my own business, when **all of a sudden** this couple came to

the bus stop, and she was very angry, very, very angry and she just started yelling at him, she was **tearing a strip off** him.

Robin: So the guy's girlfriend was yelling at him. What was she yelling at him about?

Harp: Apparently he was **cheating** on her and she just found out.

Robin: OK. That's not a conversation that you like to be having in public.

Harp: At all, ever, but in public would make it worse.

Robin: Absolutely.

Harp: Can you think of an example for **tear a strip off someone**?

Robin: Oh, definitely. My mom, when I was a kid, she would **tear a strip off** my brother when he'd run into the house with his shoes on.

Harp: Oh!

Robin: She'd get so mad.

Harp: So she would yell at him and scream and tell him not to do it again.

Robin: Absolutely. She'd, like, just **go crazy, flip out**, and **tear a strip off of him**.

Harp: Wow. Did he ever stop?

Robin: Yeah!

Harp: OK, that's good.

Robin: Are there any related expressions to **to tear a strip off of someone**?

Harp: Yeah, a related expression is **to chew somebody out**.

Robin: **To chew someone out**. I like that.

Harp: Exactly. So the meaning is the same. When someone reacts with a lot of anger and they're yelling at someone, they're **chewing somebody out**.

Robin: Mm hm, mm hm, so for example, like in that situation you were telling me about, the girlfriend was **chewing out** her boyfriend for having cheated on her.

- Harp: Exactly. Another example could be, if you did something very wrong at work, you made a big mistake, you lost the company so much money and your boss just yelled at you, he just screamed, he was so angry.
- Robin: He **chewed you out**.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Robin: OK, that doesn't happen that much at Culips, thankfully.
- Harp: Never, really! There's another expression that is similar to **tear a strip off someone** and **to chew somebody out**.
- Robin: Absolutely, and that is **to give someone a piece of your mind**.
- Harp: Yes, **to give someone a piece of your mind**.
- Robin: **To give someone a piece of your mind**. And it's the same sort of thing; it's the same thing as **to chew someone out**; same thing as **to tear a strip off someone**. You are very angry and you say **what is in your head** to somebody.
- Harp: Exactly, you give someone your opinion in a very angry way.
- Robin: You express your anger towards somebody.
- Harp: Yeah, should we do, maybe, a dialogue example for this?
- Robin: Absolutely, let's go ahead. Hey Harp! Hey, that's a real nice car that you got out there.
- Harp: Thanks!
- Robin: Um ... I just wanted to tell you ... uhh ... I accidentally scraped it with my bike when I was coming to work. You were parked kinda close to the curb, and ... uhh ...
- Harp: Robin! Why are you so careless? All the time! You always break things, you never respect anyone's property, this is my new car and you already wrecked it?
- Robin: It was an accident Harp. I was riding my bike, your car was parked-
- Harp: Robin, I can't even understand you, you never respect anyone, anyone's property ... you're just ... Oh you make me so angry!

- Robin: I'm sorry Harp!
- Harp: So that was just an example, this never happened.
- Robin: Absolutely, and in this example, she really **gave me a piece of her mind**. You weren't too happy, were you?
- Harp: No, in the example I was very upset at Robin, so I was **giving him a piece of my mind**; I was giving him my opinion of him.
- Robin: In that case you **gave me a piece of your mind**, that is you yelled; you expressed yourself in a very angry sort of way.
- Harp: Exactly, and that's what **to give someone a piece of your mind** means: to give someone your opinion in a very angry **fashion**.
- Robin: Very angry, very aggressive way. I really don't want to get you angry!
- Harp: Ha ha!
- Robin: Honestly!
- Harp: It's a bit scary.
- Robin: It is, it is! And I guess we can recap.
- Harp: Sounds good.
- Robin: The first one was **to tear a strip off someone**. Same thing, very angry aggressive way, you tell somebody **what's on your mind** in a very aggressive and angry sort of way.
- Harp: And the second expression was **to chew somebody out**. You give them your opinion in a very negative, and a very angry, aggressive way.
- Robin: And our last one again, to recap, was **to give someone a piece of your mind**. And I think that's about it for today's Catch Word episode. **For now**, this has been Robin.
- Harp: And Harp.
- Robin: And we're signing off for Culips.com.
- Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

To tear a strip off someone

As Harp and Robin explained in this episode, **to tear a strip off someone**, is to get very upset at them and to express that emotion in a very harsh and angry way. This could involve yelling or screaming, or just very angry, mean words.

As you can imagine, literally getting a strip torn off you would be a very painful experience. Getting a strip torn off you in the idiomatic sense is often very painful in an emotional way!

As you may have noticed by the way the idiom **to tear a strip off someone** is used in this episode and in this Lipservice, it isn't a set phrase. This means that the idiom can be conjugated in different tenses and the order of the words can be changed around too.

Here are some examples of different forms of the expression **to tear a strip off someone**:

"If my husband forgets our anniversary this year, I'm going to tear a strip off him."

"My wife tore a strip off me when I forgot about our anniversary last year."

"My mother in law knocked on the door while I was tearing a strip off my husband."

"I was late for work today. I got a strip torn off me when my boss found out."

To tear a strip off SOMEONE is an idiom for getting very angry and scolding someone, but **to tear a strip off SOMETHING** isn't used as an idiom, it just means to rip a long piece (a strip) off. For instance, you could tear a strip off a piece of paper to write a short note to your friend. But you would not say that to mean you were angry with the paper!

To chew someone out

To chew someone out means the same thing as **to tear a strip off someone**. It means to scold them or yell at them in an angry way.

But unlike **to tear a strip off**, **to chew out** can only be used as an idiom, and you can only **chew out** a person. You can tear a strip off a piece of paper, but you can't chew out an apple. Unless you get really mad and yell at the poor apple!

Here are some examples of the idiom **to chew someone out**:

Elaine: Was Ben mad that you borrowed his bike without asking?

Steve: Yeah, he **chewed me out** when I got home. He thought it had been stolen.

Gerry: You look upset. What's wrong?

Tina: My co-worker sent the wrong file to one of our clients, but I'm the one who got chewed out by our boss!

To give someone a piece of your mind

To give someone a piece of your mind is another idiom that's almost the same as *to tear a strip off someone* or *to chew someone out*.

To give someone a piece of your mind is to tell him (or her) how angry you are at him/her, and why.

For some reason, *to give someone a piece of your mind* is only used for anger, never happiness or other nice feelings.

In the dialogue from today's episode, Harp **gives Robin a piece of her mind** after he scraped her new car with his bike. She yells at him and says he's careless and disrespectful. She's very angry at him. (Don't worry, she's only pretending!)

On your mind

In this episode, Robin says that when you tear a strip off someone, you are very angry and you say what is in your head. By this he means that you say what you're thinking.

Sometimes we describe thoughts as *what's in your head*, but a more common term is **what's on your mind**. To say what's on your mind means to say what you're thinking. Whether you're happy, sad, or angry, you can use the term **on your mind** to describe what you're thinking about. To have something (or someone) on your mind means to be thinking about it (or him/her).

Here are some examples:

Taylor: Can I talk to you for a minute?

Scott: Sure, what's on your mind?

Taylor: I was wondering if you could give me some advice about buying a new car.

Billie: Ray, you look so distracted. Are you even listening to what I'm saying?

Ray: Sorry Billie, I've got Georgia on my mind. I'm going to visit her this weekend and I can't stop thinking about it.

To clench

To clench an object is to hold on to it very tightly. If you're scared of driving, you might **clench** the steering wheel because you're so nervous. A dog that wants to play with you might bring you a stick or a toy **clenched** in its teeth.

You can also **clench** your fist, by squeezing your hand tightly into a fist, or **clench** your teeth by squeezing your upper and lower jaw together. **Clenched** fists or **clenched** teeth are often a sign of anger or fear.

Robin described a person tearing a strip off someone as being extremely angry, with a red face and **clenched** fists.

To cheat on someone

You're probably familiar with the verb **to cheat**, as in, *it's wrong to cheat on a test*. But did you know that you can also **cheat** on a person? **To cheat** on someone is to be unfaithful to them. For instance, if a guy has a girlfriend but he kisses another girl, he's **cheating** on his girlfriend.

A person who **cheats** on their spouse (or girlfriend, or boyfriend) is a **cheater**.

Harp tells a story about a woman who was yelling at her boyfriend at the bus stop as an example of someone tearing a strip off someone else. In the story, the woman had just found out that her boyfriend was **cheating** on her, so she was very angry at him.

All of a sudden

All of a sudden is an adverb that means suddenly, abruptly. When something happens **all of a sudden**, it means that it happens very quickly and unexpectedly.

In Harp's story about the couple at the bus stop, she was just standing there when **all of a sudden** the couple came to the bus stop and started arguing with each other.

You can almost always substitute the phrase **all of a sudden** for the word *suddenly*, or the word *suddenly* for the phrase **all of a sudden**. Here are a couple of examples:

All of a sudden, I realized that I had forgotten to turn off the oven.

Suddenly, I realized that I had forgotten to turn off the oven.

Why did you **all of a sudden** decide to become a vegetarian?

Why did you **suddenly** decide to become a vegetarian?

To go crazy/To flip out

These are two fun synonyms that mean to get very excited, either in an angry way or a happy way.

In this episode, Robin tells a story about how his mother used to get very upset when his brother wore his shoes in the house. She would **go crazy**, **flip out**, and tear a strip off him. In this situation, Robin's mother was angry, but people can **go crazy** and **flip out** when they're really happy too.

See if you can tell whether the people in each of the following examples are talking about **going crazy** and **flipping out** in a happy or an angry way, based on the context of the situations:

Jud: I heard that Stephanie's passport got stolen.

Beth: Oh no! I would **flip out** if that happened to me!

Jud: Yeah, she **went crazy** trying to find it in her apartment, but it's gone.

Thomas: I surprised my girlfriend with a trip to the Bahamas for her birthday. She **flipped out** when I told her.

Miranda: I know! I could hear her **going crazy** from down the hall. She was screaming and laughing and jumping up and down!

Fashion

When you think of the word **fashion**, you probably think about clothes. But the word fashion can also be used as a synonym for way, or manner.

For instance, in this episode Harp explains that to give someone a piece of your mind is to tell someone your opinion in a very angry **fashion**. She also could have said a *very angry way* or a *very angry manner*. The word **style** also works like this.

For now

When you say that something is for now, it means that something is this way now, but it might (or will) change in the future. For example:

Someday I want to buy an expensive car, but **for now** I can only afford a bicycle.

At the end of this episode, Robin says, **For now, this has been Robin**. But he doesn't mean that he's only Robin **for now** and he might be someone else later. He means that the show is over **for now**, but that Culips will be back soon with a new episode!

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)**1. What do people sometimes do with their hands when they're angry?**

- a) cinch their hands
- b) clench their fists
- c) wrench their knuckles
- d) wring their fists

2. In Harp's story about the couple at the bus stop, why was the woman angry at her boyfriend?

Because he was...

- a) a cheatster.
- b) cheated.
- c) cheating her.
- d) cheating on her.

**3. Chris: What did Nanette do when you told her that you bought a puppy?
Craig: She flipped out!**

How does Nanette feel about Craig buying a puppy?

- a) She doesn't care.
- b) She's happy.
- c) She's mad.
- d) She's either happy or mad.

4. If you want to know what your friend is thinking about, which of the following questions should you ask him?

- a) What's in your brain?
- b) What's in your mind?
- c) What's on your head?
- d) What's on your mind?

5. Which of the following words means *abruptly, unexpectedly*?

- a) all of a sudden
- b) all of a suddenly
- c) all of an abrupt
- d) sudden

6. Enid: I have to go home, but do you want to study together again tomorrow?

Alice: Sure. Let's meet here at 10 o'clock.

Enid: OK. Bye _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) for good
- b) for later
- c) for now
- d) forever

7. Which of the following words can be a synonym for *way, or manner*?

- a) clothing
- b) dress
- c) fashion
- d) trend

Answers: 1.b 2.d 3.d 4.d 5.a 6.c 7.c