Catch Word #25 – To get ahead of yourself

Transcript

Jessie: Hi everybody, this is Jessie …

Maura: And Maura …

Jessie: Welcome to today's episode, which is a **Catch Word** podcast. In Catch Word we take a close look at one word or an expression.

Maura: Yeah, fun idioms in the Catch Word podcast.

Jessie: We talk about how that expression is used and we give you some synonyms and similar expressions.

Maura: Yeah, and as usual, if you would like to learn more about any expressions today, or any of our other expressions from other episodes, you can go to our website Culips.com and check out Lipservice.

Jessie: That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: Yeah.

Jessie: So Maura, what's today's expression?

Maura: Today's expression is **"to get ahead of yourself."**

Jessie: **"To get ahead of yourself."**

Maura: Yeah, what does that mean?

Jessie: Well **"to get ahead of yourself"** means that you think something or you do something **assuming** that something else will happen.

Maura: Right.

Jessie: Even though that thing might not happen.

Maura: OK. So, like, you're thinking about the future, but you're thinking too far in advance.

Jessie: Exactly. So, if you go out and buy a wedding dress and you aren't even dating anyone yet, you might be **getting a little ahead of yourself**.

Maura: Yeah, I think I'm definitely **getting ahead of myself** if I buy a wedding dress before I even have someone to marry.

Jessie: It's kind of like your imagination is moving ahead of reality.

Maura: Yeah.

Jessie: Like you're in one place, but your mind is out ahead of you.

Maura: Right. So we're in 2009, but maybe we're thinking so far ahead we're thinking about something in 2010.

Jessie: Right! That would be **getting ahead of yourself**.

Maura: Yeah, **way** ahead of yourself! Can you give me another example?

Jessie: Well, if I took one piano lesson and then I went out and joined a band, I would be **getting ahead of myself**.

Maura: Right, because if you take one piano lesson you probably don't know how to play very well.

Jessie: Exactly! But it's like I'm already imagining the time that I can play really well.

Maura: Exactly, so yeah, you'd be definitely **getting ahead of yourself** if you tried to join a band.

Jessie: To say that someone's **getting ahead of themselves**, that's generally a bad thing, it generally means that they're not being realistic or maybe they're being impatient.

Maura: Right. Yeah, they're not thinking about what is actually happening.

Jessie: People who are impatient, I think often **get ahead of themselves 'cause** they don't like waiting for something to happen, so they start making plans and acting as if it already happened.

Maura: Yeah. For sure. Sometimes I can **get ahead of myself** when I'm excited about an idea, but I'm thinking about what's going to happen, the result more in the future.

Jessie: Right.

Maura: Or another example could be a friend of mine, she thought she got a promotion at work, and so she thought she was going to have more money, she thought got a **raise**, so she went out and she bought a new car because she was so sure, and unfortunately she didn't get the promotion, so she **got ahead of herself.**

Jessie: **Sounds like it.**

Maura: And this expression is not a fixed expression, you can say it in lots of different ways. Like, you could say, **"I'm getting ahead of myself,"** or **"She's getting ahead of herself,"** how else?

Jessie: You could say that **"Last month we really got ahead of ourselves."**

Maura: Right, or **"He always gets ahead of himself."**

Jessie: Right.

Maura: Yeah, you can use it for anybody.

Jessie: And it's also an example of a phrasal verb, which means that it's a verb and it's a phrase.

Maura: Yeah, you have a verb and usually some sort of preposition that comes afterwards.

Jessie: Exactly.

Maura: Yeah. OK. What are some other expressions that are similar to "**get ahead of yourself**"?

Jessie: Well, one is **"to jump the gun."**

Maura: **"To jump the gun."** Where does that expression come from?

Jessie: Well, I think that it comes from when people are running in a race.

Maura: Right.

Jessie: Sometimes at races, there's a gun called a starter pistol.

Maura: Right.

Jessie: And when the person shoots the gun, that means it's time to start running.

Maura: OK.

Jessie: So, if one of the runners starts running—jumps up and starts running before the gun—then they've started too soon.

Maura: Right. So it's not good to start the race before you are supposed to.

Jessie: Right, because that would be **getting ahead of yourself**.

Maura: Exactly! Good. So what's an example with the expression **"to jump the gun"**?

Jessie: You could say that a company **jumped the gun** and released their product before it was ready for the public.

Maura: Right. So the product wasn't quite ready, it wasn't the right moment, and they released it too early, so they **jumped the gun.**

Jessie: Right.

Maura: All right, cool! Are there any other synonyms or similar expressions?

Jessie: Another expression that I really like is **"to count your chickens before they have hatched."**

Maura: That one is complicated.

Jessie: Well, it's not that complicated if you live on a farm.

Maura: Yeah, to count your chickens before they've **hatched**. What is "**hatch**"?

Jessie: Well "**hatched**" means to come out of the egg.

Maura: Right, OK.

Jessie: So when the baby chicken breaks open the egg, the chicken is **hatching**.

Maura: OK right, so in this case, if you have ten eggs, you can't be sure that you'll have ten chickens.

Jessie: Right, because they might not all **hatch**. So when we use this as an expression, we just mean that you're acting like you already have something before you actually have it.

Maura: Right. So in this case again you're thinking about the future, you are not thinking about what you actually have at the moment.

Jessie: Right.

Maura: You know, you've been talking about places you want to travel, Jessie, but you don't even have your visa yet. I think you're **counting your chickens before they've hatched.**

Jessie: Yeah, that's a perfect example.

Maura: Right. So you need your visa first before you can really plan to go to those countries.

Jessie: Right! So, if you're acting like you already have your visa, you're **counting your chickens before they've hatched.**

Maura: Right, or you're **getting ahead of yourself**. Same thing.

Jessie: Or you're **jumping the gun.**

Maura: Yeah, right! OK, cool. Any other expressions?

Jessie: Well, you know, once I bought a plane ticket to visit my friend in Europe and I didn't even ask her if she was free that weekend until after I had already bought my ticket.

Maura: **Oops!**

Jessie: I really **jumped the gun.**

Maura: Yeah, for sure! You **counted your chickens before they hatched.**

Jessie: I **got way ahead of myself.**

Maura: Right!

Jessie: And she was coming to Canada that weekend.

Maura: Uh oh! Did you get a refund on your ticket?

Jessie: I did get a refund, but I almost didn't.

Maura: Yeah, yeah, you're lucky, for sure. It's not a good thing to **get ahead of yourself.** Or to **jump the gun.**

Jessie: Or to **count your chickens before they have hatched.**

Maura: Exactly. So that's about it for today's episode, if you want to know more about any of these expressions, or just to find out more about about us at Culips, go to our website, Culips.com.

Jessie: See you there.

Maura: OK, bye!

Detailed Explanation

To get ahead of yourself

The expression this episode is "**to get ahead of yourself**". "**Ahead**" means "in front of". It is like you have a future "you" in front of the real present you.

"**To get ahead of yourself**" means to be thinking of the future and so doing something which is not appropriate in the present.

We give you tons of examples this episode, but we will give you one more.

Fred was trying to apply to University residence before he was accepted at the University. He was really **getting ahead of himself**.

This expression is also often used as a warning. It is generally not a good thing to **get ahead of yourself**. And because it is not a good thing, people warn "**Don't get ahead of yourself**" when someone is thinking too much about the future.

Here is an example of this.

Hailey: OK, let's have a party next month.
Penelope: All right. I will go buy the decorations now.
Hailey: Wait! **Don't get ahead of yourself**. We should first decide who we are going to invite.

Assume

When we "**assume**" we are more than 100% certain that something will happen or to behave as if it has already happened. And then we can make decisions or plans based on this belief.

When we **get ahead of ourselves**, we really do **assume** that something has already happened. Here are some examples with "**assume**".

Derek: Why didn't you invite Jasmine to the party?
Karla: I **assumed** that she didn't want to come.
Derek: Well, that is wrong and now she is sad that she was not invited.

Vicky: How many people are coming to the meeting?
Colin: Well, Marc is busy, so let's **assume** that he isn't coming. That makes 8 people then.

Way
"**Way**" has a few different meanings. You probably know the literal definitions. Here we use it as an intensifier like "really". It has exactly the same meaning as "really" or "a lot". Using "**way**" like "really " or "a lot" is definitely slang.

Here are some examples of "**way**" slang.

That is **way** cool. = That is really cool.

She did **way** better than you on her exam. = She did a lot better than you on her exam.

Norm has **way** more homework to do tonight. = Norm has a lot more homework to do.

He got **way** ahead of himself. = He really got ahead of himself.

'cause
More slang! This "**'cause**" is a casual form of "**because**". When we speak fast, we simply cut off the "be" and simple say "**'cause**". We also have the word "**cause**" but it is its own word (it is different because there is no apostrophe ' at the beginning).

"Cause" and "**'cause**" also have slightly different pronunciations. "**'Cause**" is sometimes also written like "cuz" or "cos" and so the pronunciation is similar to that spelling.

"**'Cause**", "cuz" and "cos" are generally not written unless there is a good reason for it, or otherwise only between good casual friends.

Here are some examples with **'cause**.

I wanted to take the course **'cause** I needed to improve my skills.

Sasha wants us to pick her up **'cause** she doesn't have a car today.

You will often hear us pronouncing "because" as "**'cause**" because it often happens naturally when native speakers speak English.

Sounds like it
The word "**sound**" is used a quite a few idiomatic expressions. This is one of them here. When something "**sounds like it**" this means that it seems to be true or is supposed to be true. Like, it sounds like what you are saying is true or I agree with what you are saying.

In this expression the first "it" is also often omitted. The full expression should be "It sounds like it".

This is probably easier to understand with some examples.

Harry: My boss was yelling and mad at everyone about something. My boss was so crazy today.
Jeff: **Sounds like it**. (Sounds like he was so crazy today)

Kelly: Tonight I have to write a paper and tomorrow I need to study for an exam the next day. I have so much homework to do.
Carmen: It **sounds like it**. (It sounds you have a lot of home work to do. I agree.)

A raise
A "**raise**" in any sentences means to that something goes up, rises or increases. When we speak about jobs or careers "**a raise**" means an increase in pay. Here are some examples.

I got a new job and so I will get **a raise** too.

She is getting **a raise** because of all her excellent work.

There was a raise in profits. (This one is NOT an increase in salary because the type of raise, an increase in profits, was specified.)

To jump the gun
We explain the expression "**to jump the gun**" in detail in the episode (you can always review this by looking at the transcripts). This was that someone starts something before it is time, like a runner who starts running the race before it begins. Here are a couple more examples.

I thought we were going to make the cookies together. It looks like you have **jumped the gun** and started making them without me.

Shelly **jumped the gun** when she called him a cheater, he didn't actually cheat! She was wrong.

To count your chickens before they have hatched
This is another expression similar to "**to get ahead of yourself**" and "**to jump the gun**". "**To count your chickens before they have hatched**" means that someone acts like something has happened that has not happened yet. The most literal example is that you believe you have chickens before the eggs have hatched. You can only know you have chickens when you see the chickens. When you have eggs you can only guess the future.

"**To count your chickens before they have hatched**" is to assume that you have something before you actually do.
Here are some examples. This expression is most often used in a negative warning.

You assume that everyone invited will be able to come to your party. Don't **count your chickens before they have hatched**.

She shouldn't **count her chickens before they hatch** or she will be disappointed.

Hatch
The verb "**to hatch**" means to be born of an egg. Chickens and other birds **hatch** from their eggs. Dinosaurs **hatched**.

Oops
This is a cute little word that English speakers use when they make a mistake or cause an error. We say "**oops**" when something happens that was not planned or is not good. It is a spontaneous sound that comes from being surprised by the mistake.

Jessie makes a mistake, as she tells us in this episode, when she buys a ticket to visit her friend without talking to the friend first. **Oops**! She made a mistake.

Another example could be when Sally put the dirty laundry in the dryer before washing it. **Oops**!

Britney Spears has a famous song called, "*Oops, I did it again*". So she made a mistake again that she did not intend to do.

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. **If Rick starts packing his belongings to move away to college before he has been accepted to college, he is _____.**

    Please fill in the blank.

    a) going away with himself
    b) getting ahead of himself
    c) beside himself
    d) getting down

2. **Which word is slang for "really" or "a lot"?**

    a) way
    b) wave
    c) wide
    d) wicked

3. **What does the expression "it sounds like it" mean?**

    a) we have an agreement
    b) this music sounds good
    c) I don't agree with you
    d) I agree with what you said

4. **The slang " 'cause " actually means?**

    a) to cause
    b) because
    c) Santa Clause
    d) clause

5. **What does "to hatch" mean?**

   a) to be born
   b) to crack an egg
   c) to be born from an egg
   d) to eat eggs

6. **Fred started the project before he had all the information. He really _____.**

   Please fill in the blank.

   a) hatched
   b) jumped ahead
   c) gunned it
   d) jumped the gun

7. **I warned Sharon, "Don't _____ or you may regret it".**

   Please fill in the blank.

   a) count your chickens before they have hatched
   b) let your chickens hatch before you count them
   c) let dinosaur eggs hatch
   d) crack an egg

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