

Catch Word #28 – Terms of endearment

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone, this is Maura ...

Robin: And Robin ...

Maura: And this is the Culips podcast at Culips.com.

Robin: Yes, and today we're going to look at the Catch Word, and what is that, Maura?

Maura: This is the podcast where we look at an expression or a new word and give you all kinds of synonyms and explanations for this word.

Robin: OK, and the special word that we're going to break down today, what is that?

Maura: Today we're going to look at **terms of endearment**.

Robin: **Terms of endearment**.

Maura: Yeah, **terms of endearment**.

Robin: OK, now, what are these things, **terms of endearment**?

Maura: Well, I know it sounds very complicated and long, but it's actually not complicated. It's just the name for these special words we use to talk to people that we **care about**.

Robin: OK, is it just for people that we **care about**?

Maura: Well, it shows that you **care about** the people. Well, some people in some parts of the world use these names for everyone—strangers on the street, people in shops or stores. And some people use it with close family and friends. And other people only use these special names with their romantic **partner**, like boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife.

Robin: **Partner**, etc.

Maura: Right! But Robin, do you use these **terms of endearment**, these special words for people?

- Robin: Not so often, but it's probably because I don't have a romantic **partner**.
- Maura: Oh! Well, I have a romantic **partner**, but we don't usually use these words, and I don't use them with my family or friends either. So, like we said, some people don't use them at all. And it's probably the best advice to not use them because it's hard to know when is a good time to use them.
- Robin: And if you do use them, use them with your romantic **partner**. That's probably the safest, **safest bet**.
- Maura: Right! So don't use them but if you want to, if you want to try it, use these words with a romantic **partner** or a really close friend or family member. OK, now let's get into these words.
- Robin: OK, so we have a **couple of them**, there's "**sweetheart**," and "**sweetie**," and also "**sweetie pie**."
- Maura: Right! So, they're all kind of related, they're all similar, they all have the same word "sweet." Right, so I could say, "Could you get me a cup of coffee, **sweetheart**?"
- Robin: Only if you give me five dollars, **sweetie pie**.
- Maura: Right! So you can use these words in a sentence, in a question, you just put them on the end.
- Robin: Are there any others?
- Maura: We could say "**babe**."
- Robin: "**Babe**."
- Maura: Yeah, hey **babe**, let's go for a walk.
- Robin: Sure, **baby**.
- Maura: Right! So this one—"babe, baby"—it's used, I think, more with romantic **partners**.
- Robin: Absolutely! You don't want to use it with your employer, or your boss, or a co-worker in most cases!

- Maura: Right! Definitely not! That would be a bit strange or, yeah, you have to be careful when you use these. So we have “**babe**” or “**baby**,” and we said “**sweetheart**,” “**sweetie pie**.”
- Robin: And there’s also “**dear**.”
- Maura: Yes, “**dear**.”
- Robin: Would you like some fruitcake, **dear**?
- Maura: I would love some. Could I help you in the kitchen, **dear**?
- Robin: Sure, why not.
- Maura: So “**dear**” is another **term of endearment** that you can use with a close friend.
- Robin: I just wanted to point out that if you look at the word “**endearment**” the word “**dear**” is actually in it.
- Maura: Right. So if something is dear to you or “**dear**” is a really kind of emotional word that something is close to you.
- Robin: It means a lot to you and you have strong feelings for it.
- Maura: Exactly, right! What’s another word that we might use to talk to a special friend?
- Robin: Well, I have a **couple of them**, there’s “**hun**” and there’s also “**honey**,” and if you want to be a little bit funny you could say “**honey bunch**.”
- Maura: Right! So, you have “**honey**” and then a short form “**hun**,” and then I guess a longer form, “**honey bunch**.”
- Robin: Absolutely, and I want to point out I was actually in the store today, this restaurant, a wonderful restaurant in Montreal, called **Schwartz’s** and they make these smoked meat sandwiches—they’re great. I go in there and I’m paying for my food and the woman behind the counter was like, “OK, here’s your change, **hun**.” So she gave me back the money but she called me “**hun**” and it made me feel good inside.
- Maura: Yeah, but that is kind of strange. You don’t hear people using these words very often in Montreal with strangers.

- Robin: Absolutely! That's probably why I felt kind of surprised but happy at the same time.
- Maura: Yeah, it's a nice sweet thing to say but it's rare in the big cities, for sure.
- Robin: Do you think she liked me?
- Maura: Maybe.
- Robin: All right.
- Maura: Yeah, so let's give a couple more examples with "**honey**."
- Robin: Hey, would you like to go skiing this weekend, **hun**?
- Maura: I would love to, **honey**, but I'm so busy with work I think I'll have to stay home.
- Robin: Come on, **honey bunch**, you can take some **time off**?
- Maura: But **sweetheart** I'm so busy, I really can't.
- Robin: **Dear**, we never go out.
- Maura: I know, I know, but **babe**, I can't this weekend.
- Robin: OK, so I guess that was an example of integrating all the different words, using all the different words, there.
- Maura: Those are just some of the **terms of endearment**, we'll repeat them for you one more time.
- Robin: So we have "**sweetheart**,"
- Maura: "**Sweetie pie**,"
- Robin: "**Dear**,"
- Maura: "**Babe**" or "**baby**,"
- Robin: "**Hun**,"
- Maura: And "**Honey**,"

Robin: And “**honey bunch.**”

Maura: OK, perfect! So if you want any more information about these cute little words, you can go to our website, click on Lipservice, you’ll have more explanations there and transcripts and a quiz.

Robin: Absolutely! For now this has been Robin ...

Maura: And Maura ...

Robin: And we’re signing off. Take care.

Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

Terms of endearment

This big long fancy title represents the category for all the names that we use to show someone we **care about** them. When these names are used it creates a friendliness and sometimes closeness between the two people.

Like we said, it is not a good idea to start using **terms of endearment** with everyone. Some people do use **terms of endearment** with everyone, but it can be a strange thing to do if you are not comfortable. No one at Culips uses **terms of endearment** with people we do not know VERY well, and we only use them in a casual situation with close friends, family or a romantic **partner**.

If you want to try these names out, use it with your **partner** or close friends only.

A **term of endearment** used between romantic **partners** can also be called a “pet name.”

Care about / Care for

Sometimes “**care about**” and “**care for**” mean the same thing, but sometimes they have different meanings depending on the context. Here are some examples with the different meanings in different contexts.

Both are used here to show you have feelings for and a real interest in another person or thing:

Bob: You should just end the relationship.

Shannon: But I really **care for** her.

Bob: You should just end the relationship.

Shannon: But I really **care about** her. (This is more popular than “**care for**.”)

Used to show that you do not like something or someone:

Hilary: I don't **care for** pizza.

Susan: He doesn't **care for** her, so he wouldn't go on a date with her.

Used to show that you do not have concern for something or someone:

Hilary: I don't **care about** Jon anymore. He can do whatever he wants.

Isabelle: He doesn't **care about** saving the planet. He drives to work every day.

Used to express that one person is responsible for, or takes care of, another person or thing:

Sally: Peter **cares for** his grandmother on the weekends. He makes her dinner every Sunday night.

Jackie: I **care for** my garden every Saturday morning.

Partner

We used the word “**partner**” in this first section about **terms of endearment**. This word is being used in a relatively new way now. Traditionally “**partner**” is someone who you work with or are associated with. “**Partner**” usually involves only two people.

More and more “**partner**” is now being used to mean “romantic **partner**,” but it is not always necessary to say “romantic.” This is likely happening for two reasons.

One reason this is happening is because there is a high divorce rate and marriage is on the decline (is decreasing) in the western world. So many adults are not getting married or getting divorced and then having long-term partners. The names “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” do not accurately describe a serious long-term relationship and so “**partner**” replaces these names.

Another reason is that “**partner**” is a gender-neutral term. We cannot know if someone's **partner** is a male or female. The word “**partner**” for “long-time romantic **partner**” was first used in the gay community, and as social acceptance (at least in the western world) of homosexual relationships has increased, the term “**partner**” has also become more popular for heterosexuals too.

Safest bet

“**Safe bet**,” or as Robin says, “**safest bet**,” means that something is almost certain to be correct, practically guaranteed. It is similar to “assuming” something because it is probably true.

A “**bet**” is when you risk money on something. A classic example would be at a horse race. You choose a horse that you like and then you **bet**, or put money on, that horse. If the horse wins the race, you win; and if the horse loses, you lose. People also **bet** money at casinos, too.



And as most of you know, “**safe**” is the opposite of “dangerous.” When something is **safe** there is little or no risk involved, and no reason to worry about the outcome.

So, a “**safe bet**” is literally a risk (just like a bet) that is actually not very risky, because it is safe. We now use this expression to mean that something is probably right.

Robin says that it is a **safe bet** to use these **terms of endearment** with your **partner**. This means that if you want to use these special names (and sometimes it can be strange to use them), but you are not sure when to use them, using them with your **partner** is safe and probably fine.

Here are a couple other examples with the expression “**safe bet**”:

Carly: Where is Jeff?

Ursula: Well, it is a beautiful sunny day and he loves the water. I would say it is a **safe bet** that he is at the beach.

Harry: I can’t believe how much Melanie yelled at the boss.

Sandra: It’s a **safe bet** that she is not coming back to work here.

Sweetheart/Sweetie/Sweetie pie

We talked about some of the **terms of endearment** in this episode. There are so many! They are often connected to “sweet” things, but sometimes the names are so strange!

Here is a little list including the ones we mentioned*:

- Sweetums/My Sweet
- Babe/Baby (used by young romantic **partners**)
- Dear (used by older people)
- Honey/Hun/Honey bunch
- Love
- Pookie (used by **partners**)
- Sugar
- Pumpkin
- Muffin
- Angel
- Darling



*People don’t use these words as frequently as we do in the examples in this episode.

“Couple of them”

Most of the words in the expression “**couple of them**” are not new words for you. But if you listen to Robin speak, it is a good example of how English speakers change words when they speak or mispronounce them.

Instead of saying clearly, “**couple of them**” it sounds like Robin says “**couple a them.**” Often “**of**” sounds like “**a**” when spoken. There are a couple examples below, but if you really want to hear it, listen to the episode again. Below when “**a**” is written it is replacing “**of**.”

Dean: I am moving soon so I need a **couple a** boxes.

Pat: Carmen gave me a box **a** chocolates.

Ben: A few **a** my colleagues are going for drinks tonight.

This kind of information is to help increase your listening comprehension. We don't recommend trying to speak like this.

Schwartz's

Schwartz's is a very famous restaurant in Montreal. It is a big destination for tourists, but local people also go to this place. It is a Hebrew delicatessen that specializes in smoked meat. Montreal has many smoked meat restaurants, but this is definitely the most famous.

All year people line up outside the doors to get a seat inside, experience the fun ambiance and eat the famous smoked meat. If you come to Montreal, we recommend it. And the line usually moves pretty quickly!



It was at **Schwartz's** where Robin said that the woman who worked there called him “**Hun.**” She was a very friendly woman.

Time off

If you have “**time off**,” this means that you are not working or not going to school when you usually do. You have **time off** from the work you usually do. (There is no “time on.”)

We can also say “afternoon off,” “day off,” or “week off” when we specify how much **time off** we have.

Here are some examples:

Kelly: When are you going shopping?

Brad: I don't have time until next week. I will finally have some **time off**.

June: I want to take you to dinner.

Fran: Well, I have some **time off** starting Monday.

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

1. Which name is not a variation of “sweetheart”?

- a) sweetchocolate
- b) sweetie
- c) sweetie pie
- d) sweetums

2. Jim says, “I don’t really care for musicals.” What does this mean?

- a) Jim likes musicals
- b) Jim doesn’t like musicals
- c) Jim doesn’t care about musicals
- d) Jim takes care of someone in a musical

3. Which expression is now being used for long-term boyfriend or girlfriend?

- a) chum
- b) lover
- c) pattern
- d) partner

4. Robin says that it is the _____ to use these terms of endearment with your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) best bet
- b) safest bet
- c) safe name
- d) secure bet

5. Which term of endearment is more often used by older people?

- a) baby
- b) pookie
- c) babe
- d) dear

6. "A couple of them." What can this phrase sound like when spoken?

- a) A couple a them
- b) A couple o them
- c) A couple to them
- d) A couple them

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