

## Catch Word #54 – Two-faced

### Transcript

Robin: Hello everyone and welcome back to the Catch Word podcast at Culips.com.

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

Robin: I'm your co-host Robin.

Maura: And I'm Maura.

Robin: And this is the episode where we take an expression and we break it down, give you similar expressions.

Maura: Yeah, and if you go to our website and become a member, you can have access to the transcript, more explanations and a quiz.

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

Maura: So today's episode is a Catch Word episode. What is our expression for today Robin?

Robin: Well, the first expression is **to be two-faced** or simply just **two-faced**.

Maura: Right, so **two-faced**.

Robin: **Two-faced**.

Maura: So ... like, to have two faces?

Robin: Absolutely. And this means that you're not very honest. So you present yourself in one way around some people and in another way around other people.

Maura: Right. So you might say things in one situation but then in another situation you might say the exact opposite.

Robin: I can give you an example. A person can say, "Wow Maura, you're an amazing soccer player," and then when you leave the room, they'll say to Harp, "You know what? Maura is horrible at soccer. She **sucks!**"

Maura: Exactly, so in that case with one person you give an opinion that I'm a good soccer player and then with another person you say the exact opposite. So

it's like you have two different faces. One is maybe positive and the other negative.

Robin: I'm sure we all know somebody like this.

Maura: Yes, and maybe all of us have done something like this as well.

Robin: All of us have been **two-faced** at some point in time.

Maura: Right.

Robin: Can you give me another example?

Maura: Maybe at work, your boss asks you a question like, "Robin what do you think of this report?" And then of course you answer, "Oh it's great, it's excellent. Good work, boss." But when your boss leaves, you tell the truth. You tell the truth to a friend and you say: "The report was really awful."

Robin: Absolutely, so in one situation you say something very positive to your boss and then in the other situation you say something quite negative to a colleague or to a friend.

Maura: Right, so it's like you have two completely different opinions, or two different perspectives.

Robin: OK, so there's another expression that's similar to being **two-faced** or similar to **two-faced** and that is ...

Maura: That is **to talk behind someone's back**.

Robin: **To talk behind someone's back**.

Maura: Yeah, **to talk behind someone's back**. So it's like you're talking about someone in a negative way when their back is turned, so they can't see you or they don't know what you're saying about them.

Robin: When they can't see you. So they don't know, they're, maybe, looking at a picture on the wall and you're saying to somebody else something horrible about them.

Maura: Yeah, so in reality when the person is speaking negatively about, for example, their friend, their friend isn't actually in the room. Their friend is usually at home or doing something else. But it's a good image to have in your head, that the back is turned.

- Robin: Absolutely, that person does not have to be in front of you for you **to talk behind their back**. So I have this good friend named Teddy and he's been dating this, this girl named Samantha for quite a long time, about 3 years and when they're together, it seems like such a loving relationship, they're always holding hands and talking and he's always complimenting her on how beautiful she is and how nice of a person she is, and then sometimes when she's not there and we're hanging out, he'll say the most horrible things about her. It's really bad how he **talks behind her back**.
- Maura: He sounds really **two-faced**.
- Robin: He is!
- Maura: He's not really your friend is he, Robin?
- Robin: Unfortunately yeah, he is.
- Maura: Right, but that's an excellent example of someone who **talks behind another person's back** and is **two-faced**.
- Robin: Absolutely, they go **hand-in-hand**.
- Maura: Yeah, so just like **talking behind someone's back**, you can also **backstab** another person.
- Robin: Absolutely, you can **backstab** a person.
- Maura: Right so another expression, another similar expression, is to **backstab** someone. Yeah, so you can **backstab** a person by speaking negatively about them or by doing something that **betrays** your friendship.
- Robin: Absolutely. It could be a friendship or even could be a business relationship.
- Maura: Yeah, could you give us an example of **backstabbing** in a business relationship?
- Robin: So, a perfect example could be, say, we wanna **open up** a restaurant together. I say, "You know what Maura? I'm going to do this with you." You invest all your money, and then I go and I **open up** a restaurant with Harp.
- Maura: That would be bad!
- Robin: Yeah, that would be bad and that would be me **backstabbing** you.
- Maura: Yes, but you're not a **backstabber** are you?

- Robin: I don't think so.
- Maura: I don't think so either! So let's look again at all of the expressions we saw today. The first one was ...
- Robin: The first expression was **two-faced**.
- Maura: Right, so someone who could be very positive when speaking to you but then very negative when talking to someone else.
- Robin: Absolutely. And the second expression ...
- Maura: was ...
- Robin: **To talk behind someone's back!**
- Maura: Yeah, so you talk negatively about a person when they're not there.
- Robin: Absolutely, when they're out of the room, they're somewhere else, they can't see you. You say something bad about them.
- Maura: And the last expression we looked at was, **to backstab**.
- Robin: **To backstab!**
- Maura: Yeah, hopefully none of my friends are, are any of these things.
- Robin: Absolutely and I don't think they are.
- Maura: Yeah.
- Robin: I'm not certainly.
- Maura: OK, good, I trust you.
- Robin: OK.
- Maura: Alright, if you want to know more about these expressions, don't forget to go to our website and become a member.
- Robin: Absolutely. This has been Robin.
- Maura: And Maura.

Robin: And we're signing off everyone, take care.

Maura: Bye.

## Detailed Explanation

### Two-faced

When someone is **two-faced** this means that they act one way in a situation with people and a different way in a different situation. Usually one of the ways that they act is real, and the other is not true. Here is an example.

Travis: Jon, I really love your car.

Jon: Thanks!

(Later)

Travis: Did you see Jon's car? I think it is kind of ugly.

Erin: Yeah, it is a little bit old.

Travis: It looks so bad! I can't believe he bought it.

In this example, Travis says that he likes the car when speaking to Jon, but when speaking to Erin he says that he does not like the car. In this case, Travis probably doesn't like the car. He may just be trying to be polite with Jon, but he is still being **two-faced**.

Here is another example of someone who is **two-faced**.

Sharon: Scott, I don't think that Joel did a good job on his part of the report, and that's why the boss didn't like it.

Scott: Oh really. I didn't notice that.

Sharon: You should review it because he really needs to write his section again.

(Later)

Sharon: Hey Joel, you know *Scott's* part of the project could have been better.

Joel: Yeah, we all could have worked harder.

Sharon: But Scott really didn't try. I think it was his fault that the boss didn't like it!

In this example Sharon tells Joel one reason why she thinks the boss didn't like the report and then tells Scott another reason. We don't know what the truth is, but clearly she is lying in one of the situations.

These are both examples of someone who is **two-faced**. When someone is **two-faced** it is always a negative thing. If someone says different things to different people but they are always positive, then that person probably would not be called **two-faced**.

### Sucks

It **sucks**. They **suck**. She **sucks**. We **suck**. That **sucks**. Everything can **suck**! *To suck* is a verb, but in this case we use the word **suck** idiomatically. When we describe something by saying it **sucks**, it means that it is not good in some way.

In this episode, Robin says that Maura **sucks** at soccer. This means simply that she is not good at playing soccer. Let's look at some other examples with **suck** as slang.

Michelle: Did you get that job you applied for last week?

Nancy: No, I didn't end up getting it.

Michelle: Oh, that **sucks**. I am sorry to hear that.

**Sucks** means that something is unfortunate in the above example. **Sucks** is used to just express disappointment.

Val: Did you give your assignment to the teacher yet?

Margi: Yes, I did, but I think it **sucks**.

Val: Why do you say that?

Margi: I have been so busy lately, that I didn't get a chance to work on it very much.

Here, **sucks** means that the assignment is not of good quality.

\*Some people consider this slang term rude or vulgar. In casual situations, it is generally acceptable. If you are trying to present yourself in a professional manner, do NOT use the word **suck** in the slang way.

#### To talk behind someone's back

The image of talking behind a person's back is a good memory trick to remember that this expression means that one person speaks negatively about another without them knowing. If your back is turned, then you cannot see or hear what someone might be saying behind you. Actually, the person who is **talking behind someone's back** is almost never in the same room as the person they are speaking about.

Here are some more examples using the expression **to talk behind someone's back**.

Henry: I heard what you said about me. Jean told me yesterday that you called me fat!

Jessica: No, that is not true. I would never **talk behind your back**.

Paul: I can't believe Lyla was **talking behind your back**, Curtis.

Curtis: Me neither. I thought we were good friends.

\*Just like two-faced, the expression **to talk behind someone's back** is only used as a negative. If someone says something about another person that is a compliment, most people are fine with that!

#### To go hand-in-hand

Here is another idiom for you! When two things are associated or are often together we can say that they **go hand-in-hand**. Robin says that the expressions **to talk behind someone's back** and **to be two-faced go hand-in-hand**. These expressions **go hand-in-hand** because their meanings are similar and they can be used to talk about the same situation. If one is true or present, usually the other is true or present also.

Here are some examples of things that people usually think **go hand-in-hand**.

- Fish and chips
- Rain and Spring
- Movies and popcorn
- Love and marriage

### To backstab

This expression sounds so violent! **To backstab** a person means that one says or does something negative to another person. The examples we give in this episode include one person having plans with another, and then suddenly changing their mind, which results in something negative. Just like **two-faced** and **to talk behind someone's back**, **to backstab** is also always negative.

Here are some examples with **to backstab**.

Ivan: She told you not to date him and then she decided to date him instead! I wonder why she didn't just talk to you about it.

Shelly: Yeah I can't believe she would **backstab** me like that. I really liked him!

Joann: When I saw the email that Stella had written to Steve, I was so shocked to see that she had written mean things about me.

Rene: I was surprised too. I am surprised that Stella would **backstab** you because you are such good friends.

We can also say **to stab someone in the back** and its meaning is exactly the same as **to backstab**.

### Betray

To betray someone is the opposite of being loyal. To betray someone means that you have disappointed a person by doing something that hurts them and it breaks the trust between you. Someone who is **two-faced**, who **talks behind the backs** of others, and **backstabs** people often **betrays** others as they do this. Many people believe that betrayal is one of the worst things you can do to another person.

Here are some examples with **betray**.

Sheila: I can't believe Paul said such horrible things about me.

Justin: I was so shocked when I heard what he was saying.

Sheila: I feel so **betrayed**.

Don: Do you promise to never tell anyone my secret?

Kyle: Of course, I would never **betray** you.



Peter: I told John about the job opportunity but I never thought he would take the job right **behind my back**.

Carmen: I know. It's surprising. I can't imagine how **betrayed** you must feel.

To open up (a restaurant)

Robin gives the example of **opening up** a restaurant. **To open up** can have different meanings depending on how it is used. When Robin uses it to talk about a restaurant, **open up** means to develop a business. For example, someone might say, "I have always wanted to **open up** a consulting business."

Sometimes in English, two-word verbs like **to open up** have similar meaning to their one-verb root, in this case, **open**. We can say, "I have always wanted to **open** my own consulting business," and the meaning is the same as with the two-word verb.

**Open up** can also mean to expand, to become communicative, or to make available.

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

1. **Lisa: Lee–Anne said she loved my painting and then told Fred that I had no talent!**

**Brett: I can't believe a friend would be so \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) hard-faced
- b) three-faced
- c) two-faced
- d) friendly

2. **What expression is a slang term for something unfortunate, that is often considered rude?**

- a) sucks
- b) shiny
- c) shins
- d) susceptible

3. **Wally: He was talking about you last night, and he wasn't saying nice things.**  
**Anne: I never thought he would \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) have two faces
- b) have a party
- c) talk behind my back
- d) talk so much

4. **Which expression means that two things are associated with each other?**

- a) to give someone a hand
- b) handsome
- c) handy
- d) hand-in-hand

**5. In this episode, what example does Robin give for the expression *backstabbing*?**

- a) Robin opens a restaurant with Harp when he promised Maura he would open a restaurant with her.
- b) Harp goes to a restaurant when she had plans with Maura.
- c) Robin has always wanted to open up a restaurant.
- d) Robin hates going to restaurants.

**6. What is one of the worst things one person can do to another?**

- a) introduce them
- b) betray them
- c) boggle them
- d) disguise them

**7. Where can people be betrayed?**

- a) at work
- b) in Canada
- c) nowhere
- d) anywhere

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