

Introduction

- In this activity you will listen to a conversation between a mother and her son.
- You will learn vocabulary to do with families and relationships.
- You will learn about weak forms and practise your listening skills.

About the conversation:

Andrew suffers from depression. He still feels pain because his dad chose drink rather than him. In this conversation with his Mum Andrew tries to understand his own depression by facing the memory of his father.

Task 1: Vocabulary

Read the sentences. Can you guess the meaning of the underlined phrases?

- a. Sam will be upset that Leona's getting married. He's always held a torch for her.
- b. I've never been able to talk to my Mum about personal stuff – there's always been a barrier between us.
- c. There was a fight in the pub last night – the barman had to physically intervene.
- d. You need to have it out with her- she shouldn't be treating you so badly.
- e. I think you need to tell her what you've done - she might be angry, but you'll just have to face the consequences of your actions.
- f. I find it difficult to understand and empathise with people who say they're unlucky – I think you make your own luck.

Task 2: Pre-listening

You are going to listen to a conversation between Andrew and Wendy. Read these statements before you listen. Who do you think says what? Write Andrew or Wendy beside each one.

1. You have been angry with me, haven't you?
2. We've always had a barrier between us
3. I just feel like I should have protected you from him
4. I feel like I was a coward
5. I thought that I could give you enough for both of us
6. Something that's always upset me is that I had to teach myself how to shave

Now listen to the recording at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0129lyc> and check your ideas.

Task 3: Focus on weak forms

In English, many words are said quietly and quickly so it can be very difficult to hear and understand what people are saying.

Here are some words in the text which are pronounced in their weak forms:

- You: /jə/ I think you think I have been angry at you at times
- For: /fə/ for leaving my Dad and at times for not leaving him sooner
- At: /ət/ at times for not leaving him sooner
- It: /ət/ I didn't do enough to stop it
- Was: /wəz/ I was watching him
- Just: /dʒəs/ I was just a kid and stuff

Task 4: Gap Dictation

Listen to the first part of the recording. Fill in the gaps with unstressed words. Listen as many times as you want.

Andrew: _____ think _____ think _____ angry _____ you
_____ times _____ leaving _____ Dad _____ times _____ not
leaving him sooner

Wendy: _____ angry _____, haven't _____, and _____ angry
_____ you because _____ feel _____ used _____ hold _____ torch
_____ Dad and I suppose _____ hurt after _____ things he did.

Andrew: _____ feel like all _____ saw _____ me was the bad parts
_____ Dad

Wendy: _____ always _____ barrier between _____, Andrew, always
and _____ think, _____ know, today's the opportunity to put that aside and
know that we've both suffered.

Task 5: Transcribing the Text

Listen to from 0.27 when Wendy says: "You know I had the most loving Dad in the world" until the end of the recording. Now write down everything you hear. Listen as many times as you need to.

Then read the transcript and check your answers.

Task 6: Discussion Questions

Note down your answers to these questions. Share your ideas with a partner.

1. Who do you empathise with: Andrew or Wendy?
2. Do you think that Andrew is right to be angry with Wendy?
3. Why do you think that Wendy is angry with her son for “holding a torch for his Dad?”
4. What does Andrew regret?

Task 7: Expressing Regret

Andrew has a lot of regrets about the past. Look at the language he uses to express his regrets.

1. *I just feel like I should have* protected you from him
2. *If I'd just walked downstairs* and walked into the living room *he would've* stopped
3. *I've never really forgiven myself* for that
4. *I'll never be able to* have it out with him

What regrets do you have about your own life? What should you have done (and haven't done)? Note down your ideas and share them with a partner.

Transcript

Absent father: Andrew and Wendy

Andrew: I think you think I have been angry at you at times for leaving my Dad and at times for not leaving him sooner

Wendy: You have been angry with me, haven't you, and I've been angry with you because I used to feel that you used to hold a torch for your Dad and I suppose it hurt after all the things he did

Andrew: I feel like all you saw in me was the bad parts of my Dad

Wendy: We've always had a barrier between us, Andrew, always and I think, you know, today's the opportunity to put that aside and know that we've both suffered

Andrew: I just feel like I should have protected you from him and I didn't and like, I was sat there and I was watching him and I just watched and I didn't do anything and I feel like, I feel like, you know, you can say that I was just a kid and stuff, but I feel like I was a coward, you know, I mean I couldn't have physically intervened but I just think maybe if I'd have just walked downstairs and walked into the living room he would've stopped, I was just too scared to move and I've never really forgiven myself for that, you know? I feel like when you needed me I was

Wendy: I need you now. You were three year old. I didn't need you then, not to stop your dad being physical. It's the worst thing in the world to know that you saw it any of it

Andrew: I didn't do enough to stop it I didn't try I just watched

Wendy: Nobody could expect you to try and do anything

Andrew: I expected me to try and do something you know? I was

Wendy: You were three year old

Andrew: But I didn't protect my mam

Wendy: I'm here, I'm still here

Andrew: I know my dad was a bastard like, but I don't know why he had to, like, pick drink over me, I just don't get it, and I'll never be able to have it out with him, I'll never be able to talk to him about it because he drank himself to death before he had to face the consequences of his actions when me and Darren grew up

Wendy: You know I had the most loving Dad in the world so I find it difficult to understand and empathise with you because I think that you know you had me why

get yourself so upset because you didn't have both of us. You know, Yeah I thought that I could give you enough for both of us, And I tried to be the dad and the mam.

Andrew: I know and I don't blame you for that, you know. I didn't know who my Dad was and I felt like I didn't know who I was and something that's always really upset me is that I had to teach myself how to shave and I just don't know, I just feel like there should always be someone to teach a lad how to shave and I never had anyone for stuff like that, you know?