

USEFUL PHRASES FOR DISCUSSIONS

Agreeing and Disagreeing

In a conversation, you may agree totally with what the other person said, or you may agree partially. On the other hand, you may mildly or even strongly disagree with the other person. Below are some common expressions that you can use.

- **Showing total agreement**

- Absolutely. /Exactly.
- Indeed! / That's for sure.
- You're right. / I totally agree with you.
- I agree with you a hundred percent.
- I couldn't agree with you more.
- Can't argue with that.
- Couldn't have said it better.
- We see eye to eye on this. (*idiom*) (*Meaning: we agree totally on this*)

- **Showing partial agreement**

- You may be right.
- Well, perhaps (you're right).
- You might have a point there.

- **Showing mild disagreement**

- It may be so, but ...
- I'm not sure if I agree with you totally there.

- **Showing strong disagreement**

- I'm afraid I disagree with you.
- I'm afraid I can't agree with you.
- I couldn't disagree (with you) more.
- I disagree completely.
- You've got that wrong. (*informal*)
- You're dead wrong. (*informal*)

Examples:

Dialogue 1: (between two friends)

- *Jim: Listen to this. They are going to ban smoking on the beach in Los Angeles.*
- *Joe: Really? That's good news. I think they should do the same here in Japan.*
- *Jim: **Exactly!***

Dialogue 2: (between two friends)

- *Ann: Guess what? I've made an appointment to have a nose job next week.*
- *Liz: A nose job? Are you for real?*
- *Ann: Yeah! What's wrong with that? If I look better, I'll feel better.*
- *Liz: **I'm not sure if I agree with you totally there.** Looks is not that important. What's important is your personality.*
- *Ann: **You're dead wrong, Liz!** Looks is everything for a woman.*
- *Liz: Well, I'm afraid **we don't see eye to eye on this.***

(*a nose job = cosmetic surgery on the nose)

Explaining misunderstanding

Misunderstandings occur in conversations. When someone misunderstood what you said, how can you point that out? Or, when you are not quite sure what the other person is saying, what can you say to encourage the person to give you an explanation? Below are some useful expressions which you can use.

- **When you are misunderstood**

- That's not what I meant.
- That's not what I said.
- I didn't mean that.
- I didn't say that.
- You've got me wrong.
- I didn't mean to give you that impression.

- **When you want an explanation**

- What exactly are you trying to say?
- What do you mean to tell me?
- What's your point?
- I didn't get that.

Example:

Dialogue 1: (between a man and his girlfriend)

- *Jim: I really envy Scott. His girlfriend is so beautiful and cute.*
- *Ann: **What exactly are you trying to say?** Am I not cute and beautiful?*
- *Jim: **No! I didn't say that...***

Interrupting

In a conversation, sometimes we would like to interrupt the other person to add our own view, to tell our own story or experience, or to voice our disagreement. We can interrupt without being rude by using some useful phrases, such as the following.

- **Interrupt and add a comment**

- May I say something here? / Could I just say something?
- May I add something here? / I want to add one thing...
- I have a similar experience... / Let me tell you a similar story of mine.
- Sorry, could I interrupt for a moment? (*formal*)
- I wonder if I could comment on what you have just said please? (*formal*)

- **Interrupt and voice your disagreement**

- Now wait a minute here. I don't agree with you. / Hang on! (*informal*)
- Excuse me for interrupting, but I don't agree with you on this point.
- Hold on a second. I disagree. I think you are wrong. (*informal*)

Examples:

Dialogue 1: (during a meeting)

- *Chairperson in a conference: Let's move on to the next item on the Agenda, and...*
- *Speaker A: **Sorry, could I interrupt for a moment?***
- *Chairperson: Sure, go ahead.*

Dialogue 2: (between a husband and a wife)

- *Wife: You don't care about me and our daughter anymore. All you care about is work and playing golf and ...*
- *Husband: **Now wait a minute here. I don't agree with you.** I spent the whole evening yesterday with you and our daughter!*