

DailyStep English

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Level 5: Advanced Daily Audio Lessons

DailyStep-5_business-communication-003_GB-01

Melissa: Can I have a word with you in private please?

Robert: Yes, what is it? I'm incredibly busy at the moment.

Melissa: Well, I don't like having to say this but I think if you and I are to continue working together, we are going to have to draw up some ground rules. We're not exactly getting along like a house on fire, are we?

Robert: Oh, and you think it's all my fault, I suppose?

Melissa: No, no, I'm not saying that! I'm just trying to get to the root of the problem and to understand where we're going wrong. I'm not trying to lay all the blame at your feet. I know that I probably share at least fifty percent (50%) of the responsibility.

Robert: I'm sorry. I'm being out of order. Let's start this conversation over again, shall we?

Melissa: Yes, let's. As far as I'm concerned, I can't see any good reason why you and I can't get along a bit better. Unless we try to address the problem it is just going to get worse and worse as time goes on and it is in both of our interests to sort it out.

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Situation: Melissa approaches her colleague Robert to discuss that fact that their problematic relationship is making their working life very difficult. He is initially hostile but then opens up.

Style: trying to avoid confrontation

Functions:

1. **Asking to speak with someone about an important matter:** Can I have a word with you in private please? (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
2. **Prefacing an awkward opinion:** Well, I don't like having to say this but I think if you and I are to continue working together we are going to have to draw up some ground rules. (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
3. **Using understatement:** We're not exactly getting along like a house on fire, are we (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
4. **Reacting angrily to criticism:** Oh, and you think it's all my fault, I suppose? (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
5. **Apologising for an extreme reaction:** I'm sorry. I'm being out of order. (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
6. **Expressing an opinion:** As far as I'm concerned, I can't see any good reason why you and I can't get along a bit better (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)
7. **Indicating the best course of action:** it is in both of our interests to sort it out (*note: please copy the tone and emphasis carefully*)

Notes:

1. Can I have a word with (*idiom*) you..? = Could I speak to you..?
2. in private = alone / not in the presence of other people
3. I'm incredibly busy = I have a lot of work to do
4. I don't like having to say this = I would prefer to not to have to say this
5. to draw up (*phrasal verb*) = to establish / to agree / to list
6. ground rules (*idiom*) = basic rules or principles for how we proceed or behave
7. We're not exactly getting along like a house on fire (*idiom*) = We are getting on (*phrasal verb*) very badly
8. getting along like a house on fire (*idiom*) = having a very friendly relationship
9. it's all my fault = I've caused the problem / I am the one who is to blame
10. I'm not saying that = that is not what I mean
11. to get to the root of (*idiom*) = to find the cause of or the reason for
12. to lay all the blame at your feet (*idiom*) = to hold you fully responsible for it
13. I'm being out of order (*idiom*) = I'm being unreasonable / I am behaving badly
14. As far as I'm concerned = In my opinion
15. get along (*phrasal verb*) a bit better = relate to each other better / have a better relationship / get on (*phrasal verb*) a bit better
16. to address the problem = to try to find a solution to the problem
17. as time goes on (*phrasal verb*) = as time progresses
18. it is in both of our interests to sort it out = it would be beneficial to both you and I to find a solution
19. to sort it out (*phrasal verb*) = to find a solution to the problem

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