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Simple, honest mobile

The SMARTY dictionary of

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Created with
Guz Khan

Right now, it feels like we're living in a world of double-speak. We say one thing when we mean something else. Maybe this has always been how it is but, with all the social media and office jargon in the world, bringing us these new words and phrases, sometimes we need a guide, not just for what's being said, but for what things actually mean so we can be simply and effectively connected.

That's why we've teamed up with Guz to help you figure out all the little things in everyday conversation that people get wrong: How to "Take something offline", talk about the "Elephant in the room", and what exactly is "Synergy"?

Unbelievably, all this is going to be covered in this small and mighty book. Prepare to learn the absolute truth about what your friends, your colleagues, and your family are really saying when they use confusing phrases. Connecting us and keeping things simple with no added nonsense.

So, strap in, take a deep breath and get ready for a funny, informative journey into the world of Jargonary.

Bang for your Buck
Bee's Knees
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**Get Bent Out
of Shape**

Bang for your Buck

(phrase) /bæŋ/ /fo: / /ʃo: / /bʌk/

Definition

Good value for money.

What this *really* means

A deal so good you go out and shout **BANG!**

I don't want to get into an argument about what 'bang' is but why are we spending so much money on it? Nothing good was ever called a bang. Except for cleaning materials, which are a very different thing.

You know what would be good value for money if you could get a deal on it? Bangs. I'm talking about the American word for a long fringe. Like celebrities have. They look great, like they have the back of their head at the front of their head. We should all start saying 'bangs for your buck' because finding someone good to give you a fringe for a reasonable price, that's a really good deal. From now on, when we get a good deal, we're gonna call them 'good bangs for the buck.' Thanks America. You're welcome, Guz.

Bee's Knees

(phrase) /bi:z/ /ni:z/

Definition

A highly admired person or thing.

What this *really* means

This is good, but I'm gonna use such an annoying phrase that you can't appreciate the compliment.

The phrase, 'bee's knees,' is supposed to describe something being fantastic by comparing it to something weird and imaginary like a 'bee's knees.'

But bees do have knees. Bees have five knees on each leg and every bee has six legs. This means every bee has 30 knees. (Try saying that quickly.) So, a bee's knees aren't actually that special!

And how often do you see bees use their knees anyway? How often do you see bees use their legs? Bees can fly. If I could fly, I'd definitely skip leg day.

Call Dibs

(verb) /kɔ:l /dɪbz/

Definition

Declare the right to share or choose something.

What this *really* means

They want to claim ownership of stuff that they're not willing to put a shift in to get themselves, but that has limits and you can't call dibs on everything.

What you can call dibs on

- 1 The window seat on a plane
- 2 The front seat in a car
(Also called shotgun)
- 3 The last slice of pizza
- 4 The best room in a flat share
5. What movie to watch
- 6 Characters on a videogame
- 7 The naming of your child
- 8 What you go as for Halloween
- 9 The last parachute in a plane crash
- 10 A newly available parking space

What you can't call dibs on

- 1 One child over the other in a divorce
- 2 Chatting up someone your friend also likes. You're better than that.
- 3 Fantasy Football drafts
4. A dead relative's jewellery
- 5 A sunbed by the pool on holiday
- 6 In demand babysitters
- 7 The BAFTA for Male Performance in a Comedy Programme
- 8 Who gets to keep the shampoo you steal from the hotel
- 9 Who gets the face on the Colin the Caterpillar birthday cake
- 10 Control of the television while the baking show's on

Circle Back

(verb) /'sɜːkl/ /bæk/

Definition

To consider or return to something at a later point.

What this *really* means

I really should have looked at this. I need to look as if I've looked at this.

This'll be used when people at your work haven't read what you've sent them. There can be a few reasons for this. They might have been too lazy to read it or they might have been extremely busy thinking about the screenplay that they'll never write. Other times, it can mean all your work was for nothing because they're never gonna look at this again.

Close of Play

(phrase) /klaʊs/ /ɒv/ /pleɪ/

Definition

The end of a day's play.

What this *really* means

I'm gonna sneak up on you right when you were planning to go home.

Can we not just go back to calling the end of the day 'the end of the day'? I'm serious. The end of the day, shouldn't be the close of play. It's the close of work. It should be the start of play!

Is this play to you? Is this what you think play is? I'm spending my day in a cubicle, staring out a window thinking about flying over the car park with wings like an eagle, even though I've still got spreadsheets and all that to sort. Does that sound like fun to you?

Down a Rabbit Hole

(phrase) /daʊn/ /ə/ /'ræbɪt/ /həʊl/

Definition

Used to refer to a bizarre, confusing, or nonsensical situation or environment, typically one from which it is difficult to extricate oneself.

What this *really* means

They don't trust you to get out of this mess.

I've never fallen down a rabbit hole. I couldn't fit into a rabbit hole. Even if I could fit into a rabbit hole, I could get myself out because I have initiative like that. Don't offend me by saying I couldn't get out of a rabbit hole. It can't be that difficult if rabbits do it. Rabbits are cute but they're not geniuses. Last time I checked; no great inventions were done by rabbits.

I am a real life adult non-rabbit man and I can get myself out of any situation I want. Don't patronise me.

Ducks in a Row

(phrase) dʌks ɪn ə rəʊ

Definition

1 Complete one's preparations.
2 Become efficient and well organised.

What this *really* means

Oh, you think you're organised? Well, if anything goes wrong, clearly you weren't as organised as you thought.

You're playing a very dangerous game my friend. If you try claiming you've got all your ducks in a row, prepare for people who are worse-prepared to get jealous and blame any problems coming up on you because you were enough of a bigmouth to tell them you had it all together.

Also, let's be serious for a sec. No one puts ducks in a row. That's just how ducks swim. It's not a thing anyone does for the ducks. It's a thing ducks do on their own.

Elephant in the Room

(phrase) /'ɛlɪf(ə)nt/ /ɪn/ /ðə/ /ru:m/

Definition

Major problem or controversial issue which is obviously present but is avoided as a subject for discussion.

What this *really* means

Guys! There is a massive elephant in the room! Why aren't we supposed to talk about this? I repeat, a massive elephant in the room!

Elephants are absolutely massive and they smell like wet trainers. How am I not supposed to talk about it stomping around my house, destroying the carpets? But apparently that's what we're supposed to do, even though there is a dangerous, wild animal in the room.

If there's an elephant in my living room, I'm not gonna just ignore it. Elephants are a security risk. Don't give me any of that about them being herbivores. No animal gets that big just eating salads.

That's why it's so important that when there's something difficult, we grow up and mention it. We need to protect ourselves from elephants coming into our houses and us feeling like the polite thing to do is pretend it isn't there.

Get Bent Out of Shape

(verb) /ɡet/ /bent/ /aʊt/ /ɒv/ /ʃeɪp/

Definition

- 1 To take offense.
- 2 To become angry, agitated, or upset.

What this *really* means

You may be annoyed, but you're massively overreacting.

When someone tells you there's 'no need to get bent out of shape,' take that as a sign that you have every reason to be annoyed.

If anyone tells you you're bent out of shape, all you have to do is check what shape you're in and if you can keep your back straight and your arms by your sides, I'd say your pretty much properly bent into the right shape!

Hang You Out to Dry
Happy Camper
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these Strange and
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Out of the
Woodwork

Hang You Out to Dry

(phrase) /hɑŋ/ /juː/ /aʊt/ /tə/ /draɪ/

Definition

Leave you in a difficult or vulnerable situation.

What this *really* means

You really screwed up and I'm going to let everyone know I was nothing to do with it, by letting everyone know your failures.

The mad thing about this is that they think they have to punish you for getting something wrong. Man, getting it wrong was the punishment! You didn't do it on purpose but they're acting like you keyed their car or something! Even though you'd have much preferred it if you'd got it right and then weren't having this conversation in the first place.

Happy Camper

/ˈhæpi/ /ˈkæmpə/

Definition

A comfortable, contented person.

What this *really* means

A person who thinks they're happy, but is secretly miserable because their idea of happiness is sleeping in a tent on the Isle of Wight.

If anyone says 'happy camper,' to me, I'll remind them why I'm not one:

- **Mosquitos.** When I go on holiday; I don't want to come home with my back looking like a pepperoni pizza.
- **Sleeping on the ground.** There is a reason we have beds. Even prisons have beds.
- **Boring.** Don't give me that about meeting new people. You know where there are new people? Hotels.
- **Crowds.** I do not want to see you greet the day in your Union Jack Speedos Nigel!
- **Cooking.** On holiday, I want to eat like a king. I don't want to cook, but apparently, I can't order pizza to a campsite!
- **Hassle.** You have to put up your tent. You know what you never put up? A hotel room!

Helicopter Thinking

(phrase) /'helɪkɒptə/ /'θɪŋkɪŋ/

Definition

Looking at the whole of your business, rather than only looking at the minute details.

What this really means

I can see the things that you little people could not even imagine.

There's nothing really wrong with 'helicopter thinking', but my question is, if it's someone's job to do everything, isn't that the same as doing nothing?

The phrase sounds exciting, but don't forget the fact it's still office work. Now, I'm not saying there's anything wrong with trying to make yourself seem a bit more exciting in your everyday life. I'm just saying, you'll never be as exciting as a helicopter.

We all think helicopters are cool. Only thing cooler than a helicopter is a jet and we can't fit a jet in an office, can we? It's fair to say strategies for growth; investment in staff; and diversification of product, might be cool but not helicopter cool. Even if you like them, I'm telling you none of those things will ever be as awesome as a helicopter.

Hope You're Well in these Strange and Unprecedented Times

(phrase) /həʊp/ /jɔː/ /wɛl/ /ɪn/ /ðiːz/ /streɪn(d)z/ /ənd/ /ʌn'prezɪdntɪd/ /tʌɪmz/

Definition

An acknowledgement of the difficult times that individuals or an entire society is collectively living through.

What this really means

Telling people that you are thinking of them, even in a general way to remind them that they're not alone and you're going through this together.

Right now, the world's living through the Coronavirus pandemic. This is what we mean when we say 'strange and unprecedented times.'

No one needs reminding that we're in a plague. Scanning QR codes and anxiety over toilet paper mean we can't escape it. There are babies being born right now who might have no idea what an indoor restaurant is, what the lower half of stranger's faces look like, or what it's like to stand in a long queue with everyone up next to each other. I call that 'strange and unprecedented.'

It's been so horrible and lasted so long the next time something's gonna be called 'strange and unprecedented,' we'll be living in some apocalyptic world, full of wastelands and off-road vehicles.

Let's Play Hardball

(idiom) /lets/ /pleɪ/ /'hɑːdɒːl/

Definition

- 1 To use every means possible to achieve a goal.
- 2 To disregard the harm caused to achieve a goal.
- 3 To act rough and ruthless, especially in politics or business.

What this *really* means

What this really means
What they're doing is so boring they're embarrassed and compensating.

Don't compare the things that you can do behind a desk or at a meeting table to sports.

Playing hardball to negotiate a contract? You gonna stretch beforehand? You gonna add it to the fitness app on your phone? Mate, if you can do something while wearing a tie pin, then hardball might not be the best comparison. Look, I'm only trying to help. Don't play sports in the office.

I am willing to play hardball to get rid of this nonsense.

Like Pulling Teeth

(phrase) /laɪk/ /pʊlɪŋ/ /tiːθ/

Definition

Used to convey that something is extremely difficult to do.

What this *really* means

This is hard for me, even though I'm not the one who's actually getting hurt.

Pulling teeth isn't hard. All you need to pull teeth is one solid upper arm and a willing, restrained, or unconscious participant. Having your teeth literally pulled out is the hard part.

Pulling teeth with modern anaesthetics, is, not only peaceful, but sometimes fun. Sometimes a full anaesthetic will put you under and you have a blissful sleep. Other times, you'll have a local anaesthetic, and you can walk around for hours afterwards with half your face falling off. You get to feel like your head is a half-inflated balloon!

So, let's change this phrase to something that's actually grim, a lot less painless, and a lot less fun. Instead of saying something is 'like pulling teeth,' say it's 'like donating bone marrow,' because we're a long way off from making bone marrow transplants fun.

Low Hanging Fruit

(noun) /ləʊ / ˈhæŋɪŋ/ /fru:t/

Definition

The most easily achieved of a set of tasks, measures, goals, etc.

What this *really* means

If you can't do this simple thing you are definitely an idiot.

Describing something as low hanging fruit's just another way to make something seem easier. I feel I've got to warn you though, in lots of cases, this isn't low hanging fruit at all. Might not even be medium hanging fruit. Bet you never thought of that.

When they tell you something's easy, it's because they want you to think it's easy. Have a think if they're actually telling the truth.

Moving Forward

(idiom) /'mu:vɪŋ/ /'fɔ:wəd/

Definition

- 1 Advancing in position or progress.
- 2 Causing or compelling something to advance in position or progress.
- 3 Causing something to happen or occur at an earlier point in time.

What this *really* means

We screwed up but we don't want to dwell on whose fault it was (me), instead let's be optimistic and pretend that this mess (mine) is over.

Absolutely one of the biggest tricks in office jargon.

You ever travel backwards in time? Sideways? Has anyone ever gone any direction except forwards?

Your colleagues are forcing you to time travel weeks into the future to a time where this mess is so far in the past that you can't remember whose dang problem it was in the first place...even though you can.

Out of the Loop

(phrase) /aʊt/ /ɒv/ /ðə/ /lu:p/

Definition

Unaware of information about a particular matter.

What this *really* means

You're not informed because you're not important enough.

No one likes being left out.

I had this situation with my kids and they were talking about the cartoons they'd been watching so I went over and asked them about it and they looked at me like I was the stupidest person in the world. I'm standing there like, 'Look, I just don't watch a lot of cartoons. You can't expect me to be up to date on all the kid's TV, just give me the gist.' I was being cut out of the loop and I didn't know how to get back in.

Instead, they all just made some excuses like they had somewhere to be. We're in quarantine. Where you gonna go?

Kids, I am not out of the loop. You live in my house. I am the loop.

Out of the Woodwork

/aʊt/ /ɒv, / ðə / ɪ 'wɒdwə:k/

Definition

Emerging from obscurity or a place of seclusion.

What this *really* means

I want is to make you feel uncomfortable by making you think of weird animals that live in your walls.

If someone says this phrase to you, you are right to be freaked out. It is an extremely creepy image. These are all animals that come out of the woodwork:

- Ants
- Wasps
- Mice
- Bees
- Termites
- Cockroaches
- Many different types of beetles

These are animals that come out of your walls in horror movies.

If someone describes something as, 'coming out of the woodwork,' that is not a good thing. You are right to be suspicious of things coming out of your woodwork. That's why you have exterminators. They're doing a vital job.

So, instead of saying, 'Out of the woodwork' say things like 'Out of nowhere' which is a nothing phrase or 'Out of the blue' which is a much more reassuring phrase.

Pick Your Brain

Pity Party

Pretty Please

**Putting Feelers
Out There**

Reach Out

**Second Bite of the
Cherry**

Slide into DMs

Synergy

Take it Offline

Think Outside the Box

Pick Your Brain

(verb) /pɪk/ /joː/ /breɪn/

Definition

Obtain information by questioning someone who is better informed about a subject than oneself.

What this *really* means

Man's gonna go feeling about in my brain for something they don't even know.

Stuff going on in my brain's very valuable. Imagine if someone picked my brain before I was famous and you wouldn't be getting any of the hilarity of Guz Khan. You'd better not be picking in my brain, getting fingers in there, stealing the next big thing.

You want to know something specific, don't be picking at my brain with your dirty fingers. Instead, scoop my brain carefully with a teaspoon you've run under hot water. Like it's Cookie Dough ice cream but you're only looking for the nice doughy bits.

If you want to take something out of my brain, don't ask, 'Can I pick your brain?' Instead say, 'Guzzy, I want to scoop something specific out of your brain with a hot spoon.' I'll be like, 'Fine, whatever, man. Just make sure you're wearing gloves.'

Pity Party

(noun) /'pɪti/ /'paːti/

Definition

An instance of indulging in self-pity or eliciting pity from other people.

What this *really* means

An opportunity for you to wallow and expect your friends to come up with solutions.

How to host the perfect pity party

1 Timing. You should host this party as soon as possible so you're as unready to process your feelings as possible. Give people as little notice as possible.

2 Opener. Make a good impression the first-time people see you. Maybe crying but be careful because you need something saved for later.

3 Food and drink. Flat fizzy drinks and stale crisps that have been open too long is always a winning (or losing) combination.

4 Focus. Make sure one person at a time feels obligated to help you without understanding how.

5 Games. This is for your friends as they find arbitrary ways to decide who gets to leave and who stays to be uncomfortably half-listened to.

6 Don't have a pity party. Process your feelings in a healthy way and be fair to the people who love and want to help you so you can help yourself in the future.

Pretty Please

(phrase) /'prɪtɪ/ /pli:z/

Definition

Used as a wheedling form of request.

What this *really* means

Since an ordinary "please" failed, I think adding another word's gonna swing it for me.

If you're putting your request in heels and a halter top, think why?

If I say I can't do something, I can't do it. I'm not trying to fob anyone off. What do you think's gonna happen if you say, 'pretty please'?

If you ask me to babysit and I can't do it because I've got tickets to see my favourite girl band, and then you say, 'Oh Guz, pretty please,' do you think I'll call my favourite girl band and ask, 'Alright favourite girl band? Any chance you could come to the West Midlands a different night?'

You've got other mates. Ask one of them instead of pinging out your please to me.

Your pretty please is an act of disrespect to me, to my principles, and to Little Mix.

Putting Feelers Out There

(phrase) /'pʊtɪŋ/ /'fi:ləz/ /aʊt/ /ðe:z/

Definition

Discreetly try to learn something.

What this *really* means

Creeping around all sly and asking weird questions.

All the animals who put out feelers are gross, remember that (insects, spiders, octopuses). Putting feelers out can get you into trouble because you can ask these vague questions and people somehow end up thinking you're insulting them.

They can also put the people who respond to them in trouble. My mate, Jeff, put some feelers out and asked me where I think would be cool to go on holiday and I suggested some family theme park. So, Jeff took his kids and they have a meltdown because they're scared of a man dressed like a pirate. Then Jeff's wife blames me because her kids are now needing therapy and I didn't even know what he was on about in the first place. I didn't know her kids were scared of pirates! And now I've got to pay for her children's therapy.

Reach Out

(verb) /ri:tʃ/ /aʊt/

Definition

Seek to establish communication with someone, with the aim of offering assistance or cooperation.

What this *really* means

I'm gonna make contact and I want you to appreciate how much effort that's gonna take.

Making contact with someone requires a single, solitary text. The people who say they're gonna 'reach out' want you to imagine they're stretching their arms out to pull someone in from the cold, like they're trying to wrestle a pigeon into a dinner jacket, even though it only needs a tiny bit of effort and the password combination to their phone.

Second Bite of the Cherry

(phrase) /'sek(ə)nd/ /bɪt/ /ɒv/ /ðə/ /'tʃeri/

Definition

A second chance to do something, especially something that you failed at the first time.

What this *really* means

Yeah, you screwed up once but go on, give it another try.

Man's saying you failed at eating a cherry on your first go. It's disrespectful and it insults your ability to eat your fruit and veg like an adult.

Who is biting a cherry more than once? Have you seen a cherry? It's a little bigger than a grape. Are you saving your cherries? We're not going through a cherry shortage man. Eat that cherry quickly and, if you want two bites of the cherry, then have another cherry.

Slide into DMs

(verb) /slaid/ /'intu:/ /di:-ɛmz/

Definition

Sending someone a direct message on Instagram or twitter, often with romantic intentions in mind.

What this *really* means

Oh yeah, what I'm about to send you is gonna be so spicy it's got to be private.

Why is this a new thing? You know what private messaging was called before we did everything out in the open like a bunch of attention-seeking zombies? Texting. Before that? Phone calls. Before that? Letters. I don't know what came before that. I thought contacting someone privately was the OG of all conversation.

You can't just slide into chirpsing like you're skidding in your socks at a school disco. There's nothing cool or suave about rocking up and bothering someone with your attempts to turn every innocent thing they say into an opportunity to flirt.

Synergy

(noun) /'sɪnədʒi/

Definition

The interaction or cooperation of two or more operators that produces a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

What this *really* means

A way to pretend people who don't work well together, don't like each other much at all, have a mysterious chemistry making them a great team.

Don't be fooled! You don't like each other. Everybody knows it. You're stuck with each other on a project out of convenience and because you were both available. Forget what you've been told. There's no cosmic energy between the two of you, only awkward small talk and passive-aggressive brainstorming.

The point is, this ain't some sci fi thing and you don't have a psychic connection. That only exists in movies. If synergy and all that sci fi stuff was real, you wouldn't be working in an office, would ya?

Take it Offline

(metaphor) /teɪk/ ɪt/ ɒf ɪlaɪn/

Definition

Discuss a sensitive or highly specific topic individually or in a small group away from a larger group.

What this *really* means

This isn't going anywhere. I'll do it myself.

Living in an age where we are using computers for nearly every little thing, it cannot be over-stressed how little can usually be achieved 'offline'.

But when you're online with people chipping in on a call that's taking too long, sometimes you need to go off grid.

It's like that bit in the movie where the hero's got to go off on his own. Even though the funny little sidekick's nice to have around, they're probably not gonna be that useful on every little thing and sometimes their ideas aren't exactly helpful.

Think Outside the Box

(metaphor) /θɪŋk/ ɔʊtsaɪd/ ɪðə/ ɒbks/

Definition

Think imaginatively, using new ideas instead of using traditional or expected ones.

What this *really* means

Everything you've done so far needs to change.

Here's a sneaky way of telling you that everything you've been doing is wrong and they think it's boring. But it's ok. Don't worry man. All you have to do is think outside the box! Doesn't matter if there's anything outside the box. As long as you're outside it.

When they tell you 'think outside the box,' don't expect them to tell you how. They're sending you out to find inspiration from... does anyone actually know what's outside the box anyways? Apparently, you just have to step out, like kids in fantasyland, and your thoughts will be fresh and new! Doesn't matter that the ones who sent you out there have probably never spent a day 'outside the box'.

Touch Base

(phrase) /tʌʃ/ /beɪs/

Definition

Briefly make or renew contact with someone.

What this *really* means

Let's talk, but, you know, not for long because I want to talk to you, but, you know, not that much.

This one is infuriating. Do you want to meet up or not? I have a lot of stuff going on in my life mate and, if you really want to hear what's going on with me, you're gonna have to do more than touch that base, you're gonna have to sit down, with me, on the base, open up some snacks, and chill there, on the base, with me for an hour or more. We've got a lot to catch up on.

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