

Real English Conversations: Don't step in the dog doo! (Cats and dogs part 1 of 4).

Introduction

Hi! Lori here, welcoming you to another episode of Real English Conversations from betteratenglish.com.

In today's conversation, which is part one of four, my British friend Michael (whose real name is actually Andy) and I begin by talking about whether we are "dog people" or "cat people." Then we move on to discuss the social etiquette of dog walking – particularly picking up after them in public places.

As always, you can find the full transcript of this podcast and vocabulary notes on our website, www.betteratenglish.com.

OK, here we go!

Conversation Transcript

- Lori:** Would you consider yourself a **dog person** or a **cat person**?
- Michael:** Oh, I'm a dog person, I can tell you straight away.
- L:** Really?
- M:** Absolutely, 100% confirmed, dog person. You bet.
- L:** [laughter] Dog person... Have you ever had a dog?
- M:** Yes, I have. Yes, I had - let me see, this would be about 10 years ago. I had my own **doggy**; I had a Norwegian Elk Hound.
- L:** Oh, was he cute?
- M:** He was very cute; he was **painfully cute**. He was great. But I don't have a dog nowadays, but I have...I walk my neighbors' dog.
- L:** Oh right, yeah, Bertie.
- M:** That's right, I was telling you the other day. They're a lovely old couple, who I've known for years, but they're **getting on a bit** and they're not so active, so I take their dog out for a walk quite often.
- L:** OK! Do you have a law in England or in your city that you have to pick up the dog **poo** when you're walking your dog?
- M:** Well, I think it depends on the council, the local government. Because if you go to certain areas, they have signs up and it will say, "Don't let your dog **foul** the footpath!" and they will actually tell you that there is a **fine** of fifty pounds or whatever. I think it can be a lot more than that, actually. But I don't know whether it's a **blanket** law, you know, I don't know if it's a law for everywhere. I think it's more **down to** the local authorities.
- L:** OK. Do you notice that people **are good about** picking up dog poo when they're out with their dogs? Do you find a lot of, you know, doggy **doo**?
- M:** I still see quite a few dog **turds** on the pavement, I'm afraid. And unfor– I'm sorry to say, and not nearly as much as in the seventies. That was part of my childhood. I remember.
- L:** Oh, stepping in dog poo, totally, in the summertime when you're running around barefoot.

M: Oh when it squishes between your toes?

[laughter]



Clean it up!

L: Oh. That is, oh, the worst. But at least if you're barefoot it's easy to wash off. It's almost worse when you step in a pile with your **sneakers** on. It gets all inside the **tread**, oh man.

M: Oh. Right. OK. Like the Adidas **trainers** that used to have the ridged **soles** as well. So it would get.

L: Yeah, or any hiking boots or anything at all that has a, you know, a pattern and ridges and texture on the sole.

M: Well, my parents actually had a special stick and a scrubbing brush which was specifically for getting dog poo off your shoes.

L: Yeah, 'cause...that's, oh, it's such an annoyance. But I, you know, I have to say that here in Sweden I think it is some kind of law that you have to **pick up after** your dog. And when people go out walking their dogs they have little...special little plastic bags, little black bags...and there are actually special garbage **receptacles** for depositing the dog poo. And people are pretty good about it, I have to say.

M: Well we have those bins here, at least the area that...you know, around here where I take Bertie for a walk. There are quite a few of these special dog bins, these red bins, and there's a picture of a dog on the front of it. So that's never a problem. But, for me, still you find that people just let their dogs foul the footpath, even though there are these bins around. And I don't know, I guess it's not, it hasn't quite **caught on**.



Dog Bin

L: Maybe people think it doesn't apply to them, or whatever.

M: Well, who knows? It's no fun. I must admit I don't **relish**...

L: No, it's not nice.

M: ...picking up the dog's mess, but...

L: But you pick up after Bertie?

M: Absolutely I do. Yeah.

L: Do you have special little bags?

M: No, I just use my **Tesco** bags.

L: [laughing] Tesco bags?

M: Yeah, Tesco are great. You know how I feel about Tesco, but...

L: Yeah, maybe it's almost like I feel about Google.

M: Yeah, Yeah. [laughing] It's almost to that level. But the problem with that actually is because they're typical plastic supermarket bags, you know, and so they're actually **perforated**.

L: Oh, dear.

M: Yes. If you don't hold the bag in the right place, then there can actually be **contamination**, and that's not so nice. So...

L: Oh no. Oh dear. Well, are they...? That sounds like they could be big as well, so it could be a bit **unwieldy**.

- M:** All right. Quite. They're quite big.
- L:** You should just take some little plastic **baggies** with you.
- M:** Well. Yeah. Yeah. I suppose so. But I manage OK with the Tesco bags. You know?
- L:** I could send you some from here...special plastic doggy-poo bags
[laughter]
- M:** No. That's OK. We do have them here in England you know. But...
- L:** I hate to think of you getting contaminated. I think Bertie would probably hate it too.
[laughter]
- M:** He's very cute. But I'm afraid, you know, his poo does smell. So it's... you wouldn't think so to look at him, but..Yeah.
- L:** Well anyway, we're **digressing**. Enough about dog poo. What do you think the best thing about doggies is?

...hear the answer in part two!

Final Words

Thanks for listening. We'll be back soon with part two. This is Lori from BetterAtEnglish.com signing off until next time. Bye for now!

Vocabulary notes

Dog person / cat person

A *dog person* is someone who prefers dogs, and often doesn't like cats. A *cat person* prefers cats, and often doesn't like dogs.

doggy

Adding an /i:/ sound to the end of the word dog makes it sound little and cute. See "diminutive" in your dictionary.

painfully cute

By *painfully cute*, Michael means that the dog is so cute that it feels almost painful to look at it.

getting on a bit

In this context, to be *getting on a bit* means getting old.

poo

Poo is a childish or euphemistic word for feces or excrement. See also *doo* below.

foul

In this context, to *foul* something means to make it dirty. Dogs *foul* the sidewalk by *pooing* on it.

fine

A *fine* is money you have to pay as a penalty when you've broken a rule or law.

blanket

In this context, *blanket* [adj.] describes something that includes or affects a large area.

down to

In this context, if something is *down to* someone, it means that it is their responsibility.

good about

If someone is *good about* doing something, it means that they generally do it. Usually it's related to doing things that are boring, unpleasant or require an amount of effort. For example, "My students are very *good about* doing their homework.!" (Meaning, "My students usually do their homework and don't complain too much about it.")

doo

Doo is an informal, childish word for dog feces or excrement. You can say "dog doo" but not "cat doo" or "baby doo."

turds

A *turd* is a solid piece of feces or excrement. The word *turd* is mildly offensive, but not as offensive as the synonyms *crap* or *shit*.

sneakers

Sneakers (Am. E) and *trainers* (Br. E) are light, comfortable shoes that are designed for sports and recreation.

tread

The textured surface of the sole of a shoe (see image).

trainers

See *sneakers* above.

soles

The underside of a shoe, the part you walk on (see image).

pick up after

To *pick up after* someone means to clean the mess they make because they can't or won't do it themselves.

receptacles

A *receptacle* is a container used for storing things or putting objects in.

sneakers (Am E)
(Br E) **trainers**



bins	A <i>bin</i> is a type of receptacle (see above), often used for waste, rubbish, trash, garbage, or items to be recycled.
caught on	If something <i>catches on</i> , it becomes popular or widespread.
relish	To <i>relish</i> something means to greatly enjoy it.
Tesco	<i>Tesco</i> is a large supermarket chain in the UK. Michael is extremely fond of Tesco's blend of good quality items for reasonable prices.
perforated	If something (usually paper or plastic) is <i>perforated</i> it has many small holes to allow air or light to pass through it, or so that you can tear it easily.
contamination	To <i>contaminate</i> something means to spoil it by making it dirty, impure, or poisonous. <i>Contamination</i> means that unwanted dirty or poisonous substances are present.
unwieldy	If something is <i>unwieldy</i> , it is difficult to use or move because it is heavy, large, or strangely shaped.
baggies	<i>Baggies</i> are small plastic bags. Compare <i>doggy</i> above.
digressing	To <i>digress</i> means to leave the main subject and talk about something else.

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