**What Is a Euphemism?**

A euphemism can be defined as **milder** and **less direct way** of saying something that is **shocking** or harsh in order to **avoid upsetting** or shocking people. For example, instead of directly saying that someone has died, you could use the euphemistic phrase, “passed away”.

You notice that the euphemistic phrase, “pass away” is a less direct and milder way of saying “die”.

The main reason why euphemisms are used is because the speaker or writer wants to say something **unpleasant** in a more pleasant way in order to avoid shocking or upsetting the listener or reader. For example, if I want to tell you that I want to go to the toilet and I don’t want to “shock” you by saying the blunt words “I want to go to the toilet”, then I can easily use the euphemistic expression: “I want to *attend to nature’s call*”

Below are some very common euphemisms covering certain areas of life:

**Common euphemisms for death**

The topic of death is always a shocking one. And certainly, to announce the death of someone normally leaves listeners or readers shocked and sad. This is the reason why many times speakers or writers tend to use euphemistic expressions when saying that someone has died. Here are some of the most commonly used euphemisms for death:

* **To meet the Maker/ to be with the Maker**: *The singer overdosed and met Maker.*
* **To be with the Lord**: *The poor children are now with the Lord.*
* **To go to the happy hunting grounds**: *Freddie left for the happy hunting grounds with a smile on his face.*
* **To be written out of the script**: *They broke down in tears when I told them that the man had been written out of the script.*
* **To go to a better place**: *Our grandfather has gone to a better place.*
* **To depart this life**: *I don’t want you to cry for me when I depart this life.*
* **To go the way of all flesh**: *Jane has finally gone the way of all flesh.*
* **To be taken by the Grim Reaper**: *The man has been taken by the grim reaper.*
* **To go to one’s long home**: *I was shocked when I heard the headmaster had gone to his long home.*
* **To have breathed one’s last**: *Sorry Mrs. Freeman, but your husband has breathed his last.*
* **To pass away**: *The policeman, who was shot yesterday, has passed away.*
* **To be pushing up daisies**: *It is likely I’ll be pushing up daisies before I get there.*
* **To pay the supreme sacrifice**: *If you keep hanging out with those gangsters I can assure you that you’ll end up paying the supreme sacrifice in no time.*

**For suicide**

When someone commits suicide, it can really be an unpleasant and very shocking thing to broadcast the news to people, which is why there is the need to find a less direct or a milder way to say it to people so as not to shock them too much. Here are some very common euphemistic expressions for suicide:

* **To do away with oneself**: *The disgraced politician did away with himself last week because he didn’t want to spend the rest of his life behind bars.*
* **End it all**: *After losing all his money and his family, Mr. Brown decided to end it all.*
* **To take one’s own life**: *The singer shocked fans all over the world when he took his own life in his hotel room last night.*
* **To take the easy way out**: *The terrorist took the easy way out as police officers were about to place him under arrest.*
* **To die by one’s own hand**: *According to police, the politician died by his own hand.*
* **To make away with oneself**: *The woman almost made away with herself after she lost all her money to the fraudsters.*

**For going to the toilet**

Although going to the toilet is a natural thing and we all do it, it can sometimes be harsh to just walk up to someone and tell them directly that you want to go to the toilet. This is even worse if the person you are talking to is eating. In order to avoid upsetting your listener with the direct words “go to the toilet”, you can use the following euphemistic expressions instead:

* **To answer the call of nature**: *I feel like answering the call of nature. Can you direct me to the nearest bathroom?*
* **To have a bowel movement**: *For three days now I haven’t had any bowel movement.*
* **To powder one’s nose**: *I need to powder my nose now before it gets too late.*

Here are some very common euphemisms for the word “toilet”: bathroom, powder room, wash room, the littlest room, the little girls’ room, the little boys’ room, rest room, the conveniences, the smallest room, etc.

**For being pregnant**

Sometimes when a woman is pregnant and you want to avoid saying this directly, you can use any of the following common euphemistic expressions:

* **To be expecting**: *Janet is expecting.*
* **To be with a bun in the oven**: *I was shocked when I heard she had a bun in the oven.*
* **In the family way**: *Did you know that your former girlfriend is in the family way?*
* **To be in the club**: *Amanda just got married and she is in the club!*
* **Awaiting the patter of tiny feet**: *My wife just told me that she is awaiting the patter of tiny feet.*
* **To be in an interesting condition**: *I just found out from someone that the singer is in an interesting condition.*
* **Expecting a happy event**: *Mr. Freeman was so excited when the doctor told him that his wife was expecting a happy event.*

**For being dismissed from work**

We all know how embarrassing and shocking it can be for one to be dismissed from their workplace. This is the reason why when dealing with the topic of dismissal from one’s workplace; we try as much as possible to say it in a less direct way by using the following euphemistic expressions:

* **To dispense with someone’s services**: *I cannot believe Mr. Shelton dispensed with my services.*
* **To declare someone redundant**: *John’s boss just declared him redundant*.
* **To be given a golden handshake**: *Mr. Brown was given a golden handshake for constantly going to work late*.
* **Give someone his or her marching orders**: *I received my marching orders from my boss this morning.*

**For physical and mental disabilities**

* “**Aurally challenged**” instead of “deaf”: A person who is deaf can be said to be an aurally challenged person. Here, you notice that the expression “aurally challenged” is not as offending as the word “deaf”.
* “**Uniquely abled**” instead of “physically disabled”: A person who is physically disabled can be said to be ‘uniquely abled’, which is a less offending and insulting way to describe that person.
* “**Intellectually impaired**” instead of “stupid”: A person who is stupid can be said to be “intellectually impaired” instead of using the highly offending and insulting word “stupid” to describe him or her.
* “**Optically or visually challenged**” instead of “blind”: If a person is blind and you want to say so in a less offending and insulting way, then you should use the phrase “optically challenged”. So instead of saying something like this: “*John has been blind since birth*”, we say this “J*ohn has been optically challenged since birth*”.

Those of you who are familiar with political correctness might notice easily that the euphemisms for these physical and mental disabilities are also politically correct expressions. Expressions or language that is **politically correct**, is one that is carefully chosen in order not to offend or insult anyone. This therefore makes politically correct language and expressions fall under the huge umbrella of euphemisms.