
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

To take the rough with the smooth



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello, this is The English We Speak and I'm Feifei.

Neil

And hello, I'm Neil.

Feifei

Hey great news, Neil!

Neil

Oh yes, what's that?

Feifei

I got a promotion.

Neil

Oh well done. Congratulations and all that.

Feifei

Come on, Neil – you were never going to get one. And anyway, it's not all good news.

Neil

A promotion – a pay rise, more power – how is that not all good news?

Feifei

Well, it means longer hours, harder work, having to work with you more. I expect you have some English expression to describe that!

Neil

I do, Feifei. You have to take the rough with the smooth. It means you have to accept the bad or unpleasant things in a situation as well as the good things. In other words, you can't have everything.

Feifei

Thanks for the sympathy, Neil.

Neil

Here are some good things though, Feifei: examples!

Examples

A: I'm going to use my qualification to get a really good job, but I've lots of studying to do before I get it.

B: Well you have to take the rough with the smooth but good luck!

Having kids is very fulfilling but it can be challenging too, especially the lack of sleep – but I guess I have to take the rough with the smooth!

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're learning about the phrase 'to take the rough with the smooth' which means you have to accept the bad things in a situation as well as the good things.

Neil

So poor you, Feifei – you've got a great new promotion but you're going to have to work longer. So fewer lunches with me, less time at the pub...

Feifei

The expression for that would be 'to take the smooth with the smooth'. But do you know what – this programme is a good example of taking the rough with the smooth.

Neil

So you mean there are some good things and some bad things? Hmm, so what are they?

Feifei

Well, the rough things are presenting with you...

Neil

And the smooth things?

Feifei

The smooth things – the good things – are it's a short programme and it's nearly over. It's time to go, Neil.

Neil

Thank goodness. Enjoy your promotion then – hope it goes smoothly

Feifei

It will! Bye.

Neil

Bye.