

Spoken English

How to break a bad news?

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Your best friend Sanjeev works in Dubai. Unfortunately, his ailing mother has passed away and his family wants you to deliver the bad news. You are at your wit's end on how to go about it. Breaking a bad news to someone is very hard and you should be prepared mentally to handle the situation. The scenario can be death, material loss, job loss and even financial loss.

A little preparation beforehand goes a long way in making you comfortable and confident enough to handle a sensitive situation like this.



Things To Remember When Breaking A Bad News:

1. Prepare a set – up

A bit of situational preparation is necessary while giving a bad news. Such messages are not to be given in a casual manner or in a hurried way, as the affected party can misinterpret it. The best way is to talk to the person privately. If he is in a group, you can say, "Hey Rajat, Can I have a minute? I need to talk to you about _____".

2. Straight to the point

It is preferable not to beat around the bush and get straight to the point. It makes the news easier to digest. It's not that bad news improves the longer you keep disclosing it. By being straight to the point, the listener will appreciate the honesty of your message.

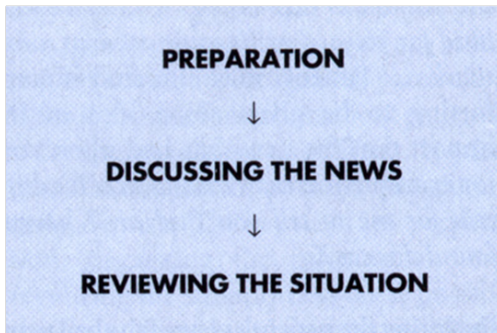
3. Sitting down position

It is preferable to give the news sitting down physically. It helps the person absorb the news in a better way. The chances of injury also decrease in case the person is not able to handle the news well. It is therefore important you make the person take a seat before breaking the bad news.

4. Sympathy

Tragic situations call on for sympathy. The emotional aspect of breaking a bad news is very important because of unexpected and tragic nature of the news. A simple "I am sorry about your loss" can go a long way in conveying your

sympathetic thoughts.



Sample Dialogues:

A. Death Situation

Situation: You and your best buddy Sanjeev are in Dubai, where you receive the news of his mother passing away. You visit him in his office.

You: Hey Sanjeev, can I talk to you for a minute?

Sanjeev: Hey Rajat, what a surprise! Is everything okay?

You: Could you please sit down Sanjeev.

Sanjeev: Why? What is the matter?

You: I received a call from your sister. I am sorry to say this but Auntie passed away an hour ago. I am really sorry.

B. Loss of Job

Situation: You are the manager of a company and the higher management has instructed you to layoff an employee. You call him to your office.

Ramesh: You called me, Sir.

You: Yes, Ramesh. Take a seat. I need to talk to you about something.

Ramesh: What is it, Sir?

You: As you know, the company is going through a tough phase and some layoffs are inevitable. I am very sorry to say this but you have to put in your months' notice today.

Ramesh: But why me?

You: The Company feels it cannot provide room for growth, for you. It's best that you look for other opportunities. We will provide every support possible in your endeavors.



The above tips and samples will guide you to break a bad news in the best possible manner. For more confidence, [improve your spoken English](#) with the help of an online English teacher.

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- By Monika Agarwal

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