



American Expression E0082 Better late than never

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

The phrase "Better late than never" is an idiomatic expression that suggests it is preferable to do something or arrive late rather than not doing it at all. It conveys the idea that even though an action or event may be delayed or occur after the expected time, it is still valuable or beneficial to complete or experience it.

The expression acknowledges that timeliness is important and that being punctual is generally preferred. However, it also recognizes that circumstances may prevent individuals from meeting deadlines or arriving on time, and in such cases, it is better to follow through or participate later rather than abandoning the endeavor entirely.

"Better late than never" can be applied to various situations in life. For example, it can refer to completing a task or project after its intended deadline. While it may not have the same immediate impact or optimal timing, it still allows for progress or completion, preventing the effort from going to waste.

In personal relationships, the phrase can be used to emphasize the importance of forgiveness and second chances. It suggests that even if apologies or resolutions come late, they are still valuable in repairing or strengthening the connection between individuals.

Furthermore, "Better late than never" can apply to personal growth and self-improvement. It encourages individuals to take action and make positive changes in their lives, even if they may have missed opportunities or delayed their progress. It promotes the belief that it is never too late to start something new, learn a skill, or pursue a passion.

However, it is important to note that the phrase does not justify habitual lateness or a lack of punctuality. It is meant to offer solace or encouragement in situations where delays are unavoidable or unexpected, rather than promoting a lax attitude towards timeliness.

In summary, "Better late than never" conveys the idea that it is preferable to complete a task, participate, or make progress, even if it occurs after the intended time or deadline. It acknowledges that timeliness is important, but also recognizes that circumstances may lead to delays. The expression encourages individuals to follow through on their commitments and seize opportunities, emphasizing that it is never too late to take action, make amends, or pursue personal growth. However, it should not be used to justify consistent tardiness or a lack of punctuality.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can you think of a personal experience where you have encountered the situation described by the phrase "Better late than never"? How did it impact your perspective or approach to similar situations in the future?
2. How does the concept of "Better late than never" align with the notion of perseverance and resilience? In what ways can the belief that it is never too late to start or complete something positively influence our motivation and determination?
3. Are there instances where being late or delayed can actually diminish the value or impact of an action or event? How can individuals strike a balance between recognizing the importance of timeliness and embracing the principle of "Better late than never"?
4. How does the phrase apply to forgiveness and second chances in personal relationships? Can you think of examples where a delayed apology or resolution has still been meaningful and beneficial in repairing or strengthening the bond between individuals?
5. How can the principle of "Better late than never" be applied to personal growth and self-improvement? Are there specific areas in life where individuals may feel discouraged by a sense of missed opportunities or delayed progress? How can adopting the belief that it is never too late to start anew or pursue new endeavors positively impact one's mindset and actions?