



American Expression E0095 Blood is thicker than water

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The phrase "blood is thicker than water" is an idiom that expresses the idea that family relationships are stronger and more important than any other bonds or associations. It suggests that familial ties, based on shared blood or genetic connections, hold a greater significance and loyalty than friendships or other relationships formed throughout life.

The origin of the phrase can be traced back to the 12th century, with variations of the expression appearing in different cultures and languages. In its original form, the proverbial saying was "the blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb," which had a different meaning than its commonly understood interpretation today. It emphasized the importance of chosen relationships and shared experiences over biological connections.

However, over time, the phrase has evolved to convey the belief that familial bonds are inherently stronger and more enduring. It suggests that family members have a special duty to support and protect one another, often prioritizing family unity and loyalty over other relationships.

While the phrase can convey a sense of deep connection and support within families, it is essential to recognize that the strength of familial relationships varies greatly depending on individual circumstances. Not all family relationships are characterized by love, trust, and support. Some individuals may have stronger connections with friends or chosen families who provide them with the care and support they need.

The phrase "blood is thicker than water" can sometimes be used to justify or excuse negative behavior within families, disregarding the importance of healthy boundaries and individual well-being. It is important to acknowledge that healthy relationships, whether biological or chosen, are built on mutual respect, trust, and support, and they require ongoing effort and communication.

In summary, the expression "blood is thicker than water" reflects the belief that familial bonds are stronger and more important than other relationships. While it may hold true for some individuals and families, it is essential to recognize that the strength of relationships depends on a variety of factors, including mutual care, support, and respect. Ultimately, the quality of relationships, regardless of blood ties, is what truly matters in fostering healthy and meaningful connections with others.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you believe that "blood is thicker than water" in your own personal experiences? How have your familial relationships influenced your life, and do you prioritize them over other relationships?
 2. How can the belief that "blood is thicker than water" impact individuals who may have strained or difficult relationships with their family members? Are there situations where chosen relationships or friendships provide stronger support and connection?
 3. How do cultural and societal factors influence the perception of family bonds and the belief that "blood is thicker than water"? Are there cultural variations in the importance placed on familial relationships compared to other relationships?
 4. In what ways can chosen families or non-biological relationships provide the same level of support and loyalty as traditional family units? How can these relationships be nurtured and maintained to create strong and enduring bonds?
 5. How does the understanding of the phrase "blood is thicker than water" impact our expectations and obligations within family relationships? What are the implications for individuals who may have strained relationships with their family but feel societal pressure to prioritize those connections?
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