



American Expression E0723 Put on a brave face

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"Put on a brave face" is an idiomatic expression used to describe the act of hiding one's true emotions, fears, or vulnerabilities behind a facade of strength and composure. When someone is facing a challenging or difficult situation, they may be encouraged to "put on a brave face" to present a positive and courageous demeanor outwardly, even if they are feeling anxious, sad, or scared on the inside.

The phrase is often used in times of adversity, distress, or grief, where individuals may be going through a tough time emotionally, but they choose to project a sense of resilience and courage to others. It does not mean denying or suppressing one's feelings but rather managing them in a way that does not burden others or exacerbate the situation.

"Putting on a brave face" is not about being inauthentic or insincere; instead, it is a coping mechanism that can help individuals navigate challenging circumstances with a sense of strength and hope. By maintaining a positive demeanor, they can inspire themselves and those around them to keep moving forward and face difficulties with determination.

The expression is commonly used in personal and professional settings, as well as during times of crisis or loss. For example, a person who has lost a loved one may "put on a brave face" during a funeral or memorial service to show support to others and provide comfort, even though they may be experiencing grief and sorrow inside.

In professional settings, individuals may "put on a brave face" during times of uncertainty or organizational changes, to instill confidence in their colleagues and maintain productivity and morale.

It is essential to acknowledge that "putting on a brave face" has its limitations. While it can be a valuable coping mechanism in the short term, it is crucial for individuals to process their emotions and seek support or professional help if needed. Suppressing emotions for extended periods can have adverse effects on mental and emotional well-being.

Additionally, there should be an understanding that everyone copes differently, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing challenging situations. Some people may find comfort in sharing their feelings openly and seeking support, while others may prefer to handle difficulties privately and maintain a brave front to protect themselves or others.

In conclusion, "putting on a brave face" is an idiomatic expression used to describe the act of hiding one's true emotions behind a facade of strength and composure during challenging or difficult situations. It is a coping mechanism that can help individuals navigate adversity and inspire resilience in themselves and those around them. However, it is essential to recognize that everyone copes differently, and while "putting on a brave face" can be helpful in the short term, it is crucial to process emotions and seek support when needed for long-term well-being.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some situations in your life when you have felt the need to "put on a brave face"? How did this affect your emotions and interactions with others during those times?
2. "Putting on a brave face" can be a valuable coping mechanism, but it also has its limitations. How do you strike a balance between showing strength and vulnerability when facing challenges, and what support systems do you rely on during difficult times?
3. In certain cultures, expressing vulnerability or emotions openly may be discouraged or perceived as a sign of weakness. How can societies encourage a more open and empathetic approach to emotional expression while still valuing resilience and strength?
4. Discuss the potential impact of "putting on a brave face" in professional settings. How can this coping mechanism influence workplace dynamics and mental well-being, and what strategies can organizations implement to support employees facing difficult circumstances?
5. When supporting friends, family, or colleagues who are "putting on a brave face," how can we show empathy and understanding without pressuring them to disclose their feelings? What are some effective ways to offer help and support without being intrusive?