

# Better@ English

## Real English conversations: chick magnets

Hi, Lori here, welcoming you to another episode of Real English Conversations from Better At English dot com. Today, my English friend Michael and I talk about the irresistible attraction power of dogs and puppies, and how you can exploit this if you're in the market for a romantic partner.

As always, you'll find a full transcript and vocabulary list on the website, <http://www.betteratenglish.com>. And remember, your continued [donations](#) keep Better at English going – thanks very much to Kristof and Taz from the Netherlands, and Peter from Switzerland for your generous donations since the last episode. And thanks to Paul from France, who donated three awesome books about English from my B@E [Amazon wishlist!](#)

OK, enough of my yakkin' – let's get on with the show!

## Conversation Transcript

Lori: Do you ever go to the gym?

Michael: I don't go anymore; I used to go many years ago, but...

L: What...why don't you go anymore?

M: Well, it's very expensive, for one thing. And also it's a long way to travel from where I'm **living at the moment**; it's a long way to get to the gym, so I go walking with the dog and that's my exercise.

L: Ooooooooh, **doggie!** Doggie! What kind of dog is it?



*A border terrier*

M: It's a border terrier.

L: Ooooh, is he cute?

M: Which is...Oh he is very, very cute, and he's very friendly. And also gets me lots of attention while I'm out, because everybody wants to say hello to my dog, so...

L: I know, isn't that funny about dogs, they're **total conversation starters...**

M: They're a great way to get **chicks** as well!

L: Yeah, that's what I've heard!

M: If you, if you have a very cute dog, then, yeah, then girls want to come over and pet your dog, and then of course you can start talking to them, so yeah, it's a great way to meet friends.

L: Don't you call that "**chatting them up**" in British English?

M: Yes, chatting somebody up is, I suppose, **flirting** with somebody, and um...

L: Trying to get their phone number?

M: Yes! That's the kind of thing, yes.

L: Well I think that the **ultimate** weapon, you know, the ultimate **chick magnet** would probably be a cute little puppy.

M: Oh, oh, most definitely. For sure.

L: Because I can tell you from experience – and being a girl – that, oh, it takes all my power to resist going up to total strangers with cute little puppies and asking if I can pet the puppy. Seriously, it's...oh my god!

M: Okay, I'm going **to get rid of** the ... [line drops out] ...then.

L: **Sorry?**

M: I'm gonna get rid of the dog and get a puppy instead; he's too old now.

L: Oh yeah, total...total chick magnet. But you'll also be attracting a lot of **little old ladies** as well.

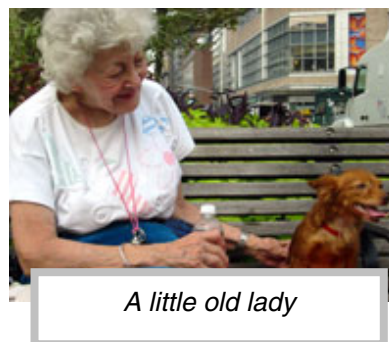
M: **Pardon?**

L: You'll also be attracting a lot of little old ladies as well.

M: Oh okay, so there is a **downside** to it.

L: Yeah, there is a downside...unless you like little old ladies.

M: It's not really **my thing**, no, no...



*A little old lady*

## Vocabulary List

**I'm living** at the moment

Grammar: this is a good example of the present continuous for temporary situations.

**Doggie** (or **doggy** - both spellings are very common)

Adding an *ie* or *y* to the end of a word is a diminutive in English. Diminutive forms make the object sound familiar, lovable (or pitiable), or just small.

### Total conversation starters

Using the word *total* in front of a noun has an intensifying effect, typical in informal, conversational American English. Compare "He's an idiot" with "He's a total idiot." A *conversation starter* is any object or tactic that helps get conversations started (usually with people whom you don't know).

### Chicks

In this context, *chick* is an informal word for girl or woman. Women often consider this word offensive. When men talk about "getting chicks," they usually mean establishing romantic relationships (even the one-night variant) with attractive, desirable women. In the literal sense, a *chick* is a baby chicken (baby birds of many species are referred to as *chicks*).

### Chatting them up

*To chat someone up* (BrE) means to talk to someone in a way that shows that you are sexually or romantically attracted to them.

### Flirting

*To flirt* with someone means that you behave as if you were sexually/romantically attracted to them (but you are not necessarily serious about it).

**Ultimate**

To describe something as *the ultimate X* means that it is the best or worst possible example of something. This is often used rather loosely in conversation just to make a point that X is very good (or bad).

**Chick magnet**

A chick magnet is an informal word for any person, object, or quality that attracts women (romantically or sexually).

**To get rid of**

*To get rid of something* means to throw it away, to dispose of it.

**Sorry?**

When you haven't heard what someone has said, you can say "Sorry?" (rising intonation) to alert them of this and get them to repeat. *Sorry?* is one of many phrases that have this function. Others include *Pardon?* (see below), *Excuse me?* And *(I) beg your pardon?*

**Little old ladies**

If you describe a woman as a *little old lady*, people tend to think of a stereotypical gray-haired, good-natured, somewhat fragile, elderly woman. It is usually used in a playful or affectionate sense, but sometimes is used disparagingly. Even though Michael certainly likes sweet little old ladies, he's not interested in "chatting them up!"

**Pardon?**

Saying *pardon?* with rising intonation at the end signals that you have not heard what someone just said, and want them to repeat it.

**Downside**

The downside something is its bad or undesirable aspects, its disadvantage(s).

**My thing**

If someone says *X is not my thing*, it means that they are not interested in X. It can also be a diplomatic way of saying that you don't like something. For example, saying "Getting up early is not my thing" sounds much softer than "I hate getting up early."

**Final words**

Thanks for tuning in to this episode of Real English Conversations at Better at English dot com. Before signing off, I have a small request: I'm trying to find out more about what type of people listen to B@E, so I've put a little poll up in the sidebar of the website. It'll take less than a minute for you to visit the website, [www.betteratenglish.com](http://www.betteratenglish.com), and complete the poll. Knowing more about our listeners will help us make better podcasts for you. And remember, your continued [donations](#) make Better at English possible. Bye for now!