Welcome to Be Bilingual podcast. Be Bilingual wants to help you to learn English. You can find the transcript of this audio for download.

Today we are going to learn the idiom “Blood is thicker than water”.

Do you have a brother, a sister or maybe a cousin that usually asks you something? Though it is always a problem when this person comes to you to ask for a favor you always say yes. Well, that’s when we can use “blood is thicker than water”.

Well, idioms are just like expressions, but the difference is that you cannot translate every word you see in an idiom, it means, you cannot really understand what it really wants to say if you just translate it literally, you translate word by word. Before you understand what situation we’re gonna use “Blood is thicker than water”, we’re gonna understand every word we have in the sentence, so we can listen a little bit more and we can learn some words.

The first word is “BLOOD”. Well, as you may know, blood is the liquid that runs in our veins. It is red and carries all the nutrients our body needs. This liquid is pumped by our heart. If you are cooking, using a knife, for example, and you get a cut, blood comes out of your body.

Let’s imagine you have one pen and one marker. The pen is very thin, like a regular pen, a ballpoint pen, and the marker, like a whiteboard marker. Well, the marker is usually very thick. It means, its diameter is larger than the ballpoint pen. The marker is thicker than the pen.

At last, water is the liquid we drink, all creatures depend on this. Water is the most abundant element in our planet, and oceans, lakes, rivers are full of it. We need water to live.

But what does “Blood is thicker than water” really mean?

Well, literally it means that blood is denser than water. It means water is more liquid whereas blood has this, uh ... thick, you know, appearance.

Once this is an idiom, we cannot really understand it by its literal meaning. We have to use some examples.

Imagine this person, a relative of yours, you know, a person from your family, has always some trouble, some problem, that he cannot solve by himself and whenever it happens, whenever he has a problem, he calls you. Alright!? You are the saver, you are the person he can rely on. He can always call and ask for help.

Let’ say the issue is always money, ok!? So, he has a problem with money, he gives you a call and asks you for money. Every single time you lend him, he never pays you back. Obviously, you don’t like it and you always think like “I will never lend him money again”. But the thing is, he is your brother and he needs your help. You know you can help him and you don’t wanna see him in trouble.

That’s the situation we’d say: “Blood is thicker than water”, and It is because this person is your relative, in this case your close family, because you and him have the same blood running in your veins, so you can’t do anything but help him. You feel like you need to help him. Well, he is your BROTHER, and it doesn’t really matter if he is a stupid guy, you always gonna help him because family ties are stronger.

Now let’s imagine you are in a bar talking to a friend and you say:

“Guess what, man!? My brother asked me for money again.”
“Really!? Ah man, don’t tell me you lent him money again.”

“Well, I did. What can I do? He is my brother. You know, blood is thicker than water”.

“Oh I know, blood is thicker than water. It sucks!”

That would be exactly the situation we would use it. Blood is thicker than water, what can I do about it? I need to help my brother, he needs me. He isn’t just a person I know or a friend or whatever, he is FAMILY. The idea behind this idiom is that people tend to care more about family than anything else. Family bonds are stronger than any other bonds we may have in life.

I hope you have understood the idiom and now that you know it better I bet you’re gonna find it in movies or series. DON’T FORGET TO USE IT FROM NOW ON!

See you in the next podcast.

GLOSSARY:

- **Though**: although = embora.

- **Ballpoint pen**: a pen with a tiny ball as its writing point. The ball transfers ink from a cartridge to the paper.

- **Thick**: the opposite of thin.

- **Solve**: to find an answer to, an explanation or solution.

- **Whereas**: in contrast or comparison with the fact that.

- **Whenever**: every time that, at any time or whatever situation.

- **But**: além de: “There was nothing on the floor but papers.”

- **Family ties**: a bond or connection between two or more family members; an obligation to one’s family.

- **Bond**: a tie or connection between two or more parts.

- **It sucks**: “que saco isso”.