

"HEART" IDIOMS AS PART OF BODY-PART PHRASEOLOGY

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Abstract: This study explores the rich tapestry of idiomatic expressions related to the "heart" as part of body-part phraseology. Idioms, rooted in cultural and linguistic traditions, often provide unique insights into the human experience. Analyzing a selection of idioms centered around the heart, this research investigates the figurative language and metaphorical representations that contribute to the nuanced understanding of emotions, relationships, and the human condition.

Keywords: Idioms; Heart; Body-part phraseology; Figurative language; Emotions.

Language, as a reflection of culture and human experience, is a vibrant tapestry woven with idioms that color our expressions. Among these linguistic gems, idioms centered around the "heart" stand out as powerful metaphors encapsulating a myriad of emotions, relationships, and aspects of the human condition. In this article, we delve into the rich world of "heart" idioms as part of body-part phraseology, exploring the figurative language that paints the canvas of our emotional lives.

Matters of the Heart:

The heart has long been a symbol of love, passion, and deep emotion. Idioms like "wear your heart on your sleeve" or "have a change of heart" reveal the intricate ways in which the heart is intertwined with our emotional states. These expressions go beyond the physical organ, providing a window into the complexities of human feelings and interpersonal connections.

Affairs of Love and Relationships:

In the realm of relationships, idioms involving the heart offer insights into the dynamics of love and companionship. "Heart-to-heart talk," for instance, signifies an intimate and honest conversation, emphasizing a connection that transcends mere words. On the flip side, expressions like "break someone's heart" or "win someone's heart" encapsulate the emotional highs and lows inherent in matters of the heart.

Emotional Resilience and Endurance:

"Heart of gold" and "heart of stone" are idioms that go beyond the realm of emotions to characterize a person's intrinsic nature. These phrases speak to qualities of kindness and compassion or, conversely, resilience and emotional detachment. The heart, in these idioms, becomes a vessel for virtues and attributes that define one's character.¹

¹ Morrow Phillip, R. (2009). Hand and Heart: A Study of the Uses and Phraseology Associated with Two Common Nouns.



Risk and Courage:

"Heart in your mouth" and "take heart" are idioms that touch upon the theme of courage and risk-taking. The heart, in these expressions, becomes a metaphor for bravery and the willingness to face challenges. These idioms illustrate how the human heart, beyond its physiological role, serves as a symbol for intrepid endeavors.

Unity and Collective Emotion:

"Heartbeat of a community" or "heart and soul" are idioms that extend the metaphorical use of the heart to encompass collective emotions and shared experiences. These expressions underline the idea that the heart, beyond its individual significance, plays a role in uniting people and fostering a sense of community.²

The human body has long been a source of inspiration for language, literature, and culture. Throughout history, various body parts have been used as symbols, metaphors, and idiomatic expressions to convey complex emotions, traits, and experiences. The heart, in particular, holds immense significance as a symbol of love, courage, and empathy, and has found its way into a myriad of idiomatic expressions within the English language.

From matters of the heart to expressions of affection and bravery, idioms related to the heart reflect a rich and diverse tapestry of human experiences. These idioms not only serve as linguistic expressions but also encapsulate the emotional depth and breadth of human existence. One of the most common and universally understood heart-related idioms is "to have a change of heart." This idiom signifies a sudden shift in opinion or attitude, often stemming from a profound change in perspective or feelings.³ Whether it involves a personal decision, a change in belief, or a reassessment of one's priorities, "having a change of heart" encapsulates the transformative nature of human emotions and thought.

Similarly, "to wear your heart on your sleeve" symbolizes a willingness to openly display one's emotions. This idiom conveys vulnerability, honesty, and transparency, suggesting that the individual is comfortable expressing their feelings and does not shy away from showing their true emotions. It speaks to the capacity for authenticity and emotional openness in human interactions. On the other hand, "to break someone's heart" embodies the profound sense of loss, disappointment, and emotional pain associated with love and relationships. This idiom underscores the fragility of the heart as an emotional center and the deep impact of personal connections. It vividly captures the tumultuous experience of heartache and serves as a reminder of the intricate nature of human relationships.

In contrast, idioms such as "to have a heart of gold" or "to take something to heart" emphasize positive attributes associated with the heart. "Having a heart of gold" conveys kindness, compassion, and generosity, highlighting the inherent goodness and benevolence within an individual. Meanwhile, "taking something to heart" signifies a meaningful and

² Křístková, B., ENGLISH AND CZECH IDIOMS WITH COMPONENTS 'HEAD' AND 'HEART'.

³ Iunescu, M. R. "The Human Body as Reflected in English Somatic Verbal Idioms." In *Language and Literature. European Landmarks of Identity, Selected Papers of the 12th International Conference of the Faculty of Letters*. University of Pitești, Romania, pp. 39-46. 2005.



personal emotional investment in a particular situation, demonstrating a deep and sincere concern for others' feelings or opinions. Furthermore, expressions like "to have your heart in the right place" illustrate the significance of intentions and character. This idiom signifies an individual's good intentions and moral integrity, underscoring the importance of empathy, goodwill, and a sincere desire to do the right thing.

The use of these idioms showcases the enduring symbolism and power of the heart as a representation of human emotion, passion, and moral character. Whether conveying affection, empathy, or emotional resilience, these idiomatic expressions serve as a testament to the enduring role of the heart in language and human experience. Heart-related idioms are integral components of body-part phraseology, reflecting the emotional complexity, depth, and universal themes of human existence. Through their rich linguistic symbolism, these idioms illuminate the profound significance of the heart as a symbol of love, empathy, and moral character. As linguistic expressions deeply embedded in everyday speech, they exemplify the enduring resonance of the heart within the fabric of our language and human experience.

In the intricate tapestry of language, idioms centered around the heart offer a nuanced and culturally rich exploration of the human experience. From matters of love and relationships to themes of emotional resilience, risk-taking, and collective unity, these idioms transcend the physiological function of the heart to become powerful metaphors. By unraveling the layers of "heart" idioms as part of body-part phraseology, we gain a deeper understanding of how language shapes and reflects the complexities of our emotional lives

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