



## Burning Man Vocabulary Lesson

Welcome back. This is the vocabulary lesson for the conversation “Burning Man.” In this conversation Joe is speaking to one of his friends named Terence. They’re talking about this big festival that happens one time a year called Burning Man. Terence has been to Burning Man many times.

Okay, let’s begin with the conversation.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Joe starts out by saying, “Hey, Terence, so how’d you spend your Labor Day weekend?”**

*How’d. This is just short for how did. You won’t see how’d in written English but you’ll definitely hear it in conversational English. Labor Day. Labor Day is an American holiday. It’s the first Monday in September. Labor Day. And when Joe says Labor Day weekend, he’s just talking about the Saturday and Sunday before Labor Day, the holiday on Monday. So how’d you spend you Labor Day weekend... It just means what did you do for Labor Day weekend.*

**And then Terence says, “Um, I spent my Labor Day weekend not doing anything except wishing I was...”**

*Or he’s saying, thinking about how I wanted to be.*

**“at Burning Man.”**

*Burning Man. This is an American festival that takes place in the desert over Labor Day weekend. Burning Man. That’s the name of the festival.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “I had, uh, plans to go but they fell through.”**

*Fell through. Now what Terence is saying here is his plans did not happen. If something falls through it does not happen. For example: I wanted to get a massage but my plans fell through because the massage therapist was sick. Fell through.*

**And then Joe says, “Oh, man, that sucks...”**

*Now oh man... He’s just showing some emotion here like, oh I don’t believe that. That sucks. That sucks means it’s unfortunate. That sucks. For example: It sucks that I got sick before the party because I really wanted to go. That sucks, or in this example, it sucks.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “because I know that, uh, you’ve really enjoyed it in the past.”**



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*Or what Joe is saying is, you've really had a good time at Burning Man in the past.*

**And Terence says, "Yeah..."**

*Yeah being slang or casual or informal for yes.*

**And Terence goes on to say, "I've, I've, as you know, I've gone quite a few years..."**

*So he's saying, I've gone many years.*

**"in a row."**

*So what he's saying is, quite a few years in a row. He's gone to a lot of Burning Man festivals year after year after year. That's in a row.*

**And Terence goes on to say, "But this year I couldn't make it."**

*Or he's saying, I couldn't go.*

**"Um, y'know, but I guess that the, the saving grace about it..."**

*Now saving grace... This is something you like about something although you do not like anything else about it. For example: The movie theatre is small and dirty but its saving grace is that it shows good movies. So saving grace.*

**So Terence is saying, "the saving grace about it is that I'm not in the heat. And I really can't stand the dust."**

*Dust meaning dirt. So he's saying yeah, y'know, I really wanted to go but the saving grace, or the good thing about me not going even though I wanted to go, is that I'm not out in the heat. It gets really hot at Burning Man. And he says I'm not in the dirt. I'm not in the dust. When Terence says he really can't stand the dust... Can't stand means... it means do not like. Or he doesn't like the dust. For example: I can't stand waking up early. Can't stand.*

**And then Joe says, "Oh yeah?"**

*Or he's saying, oh really?*

**And Joe goes on to say, "I know. I hear that the heat and the dust can be overwhelming."**



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*Or what Joe is saying is, it can be too much.*

**And then Joe says, “I’ve had some friends who have gone in the past years and they didn’t prepare enough.”**

*Or they didn’t get ready enough.*

**And then Joe says, “And they said they were in over their heads.”**

*In over their heads. This means to be involved with something that is too difficult to do. In over their heads. For example: I’m not good at math. So whenever I had to take a math test I was in over my head. In over their heads, or in this example, in over my head.*

**And then Terence says, “Oh yeah, yeah, it’s definitely the kind of thing that, um, it helps to know what you’re getting into...”**

*To know what you’re getting into. This means to know what to expect. To know what you’re getting into. For example: When I went trekking in Nepal, I did not know what I was getting into. So I was not prepared for the weather. To know what you’re getting into.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “with the conditions...”**

*What conditions means here is the weather. It gets really hot at Burning Man.. And because it’s in the desert, there are dust storms.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “and just what to expect. Because no amount of description can really, really help with what you’re gonna experience.”**

*Now no amount of description means nothing anyone can tell you, or anything that you hear, is going to help prepare you for what you are really gonna experience, Or gonna being short for going to experience.*

**And then Joe says, “Yeah. I was talking with a friend of mine who lives in Canada and I mentioned...”**

*Or I told him about.*

**“Burning Man and he’d never heard it. And he was like...”**

*Like is just a filler word here. It doesn’t really mean anything.*

**“he was like well, y’know...”**



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*Y'know is just short for you know.*

**“y’know, what’s it about?”**

*So Joe’s friend in Canada is asking what is it? What is Burning Man? What’s it about?*

**And Joe goes on to say, “And he wanted me to describe it.”**

*Or he wanted me to tell him about it.*

**And then Joe says, “And I realized that, y’know, I wasn’t really... I’m not really able to describe it to him because I’ve never been.” And Terence says, “Yeah, um, it’s, it’s one of those things, it’s kind of hard to describe.”**

*Or it’s a little difficult to describe.*

**And Terence says, “I mean...”**

*Or what I’m trying to say.*

**“the first time you go you really can’t... you really can’t believe your eyes.”**

*Now what he’s saying here... Can’t believe your eyes or could not believe my eyes... What you see does not seem real. Can’t believe your eyes. For example: When I went to Nepal and saw the mountains I could not believe my eyes. They were so beautiful they did not look real. Can’t believe your eyes. Or could not believe my eyes in this Nepal example.*

**And then Terence says, “What you see, I mean just all the people and all the effort...”**

*Or everything.*

**“they put into it, all the creativity.”**

*Creativity is new and different ideas. Or new and different art or music, etc.*

**And Terence says, “It’s really something to behold.”**

*Something to behold. This means it’s amazing. Something to behold. For example: The mountains in Nepal are something to behold.*



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**And Joe says, “So, um, how would you describe it though, like...” And Terence says, “I would describe it just as a, just really large festival...”**

*Large meaning very big.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “where basically...”**

*Or he’s saying really.*

**“anything goes.”**

*Now anything goes.... This means you can do anything you wish to do or you can do anything you want to do. Anything goes. For example: There are areas in Pakistan near the border of Afghanistan where there are no police and anything goes.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “Anything you wanna do...”**

*Wanna is short for want to.*

**He’s saying, “Anything you wanna do is accepted.”**

*Or it’s okay to do.*

**And Terence says, “Um, any way you wanna express yourself, it’s okay...”**

*Now express yourself. This means to show something about yourself. For example: Jane likes to express herself by painting. Express yourself.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “whether it’s how you dress, what you say, um, the kind of music you wanna play, anything.” And Joe says, “Yeah, I’ve heard there’s some pretty wild outfits.”**

*Pretty wild. Pretty here means very. And wild just means very different, unusual, uncommon or not common. And outfits... Outfits means clothes or a costume. A costume is something that you wear or a style of dress for a party, festival, etc. So for example: The people at the party were wearing some funny outfits.*

**And then Joe goes on to say, “People just dress up as, uh, crazy as they possibly can.”**

*Now crazy here means as different or as unusual or uncommon as they possibly can.*



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**And Terence says, “Yeah, you never kn-, you never know what people are gonna do...”**

*Gonna being short for going to.*

**And then Terence says, “um, I’m, I, I never cease to be amazed...”**

*Never cease to be amazed. What this means is not surprised. So Terence is saying, I’m never surprised with what I’m gonna see there. An example of this would be: The beauty of the mountains in Nepal never ceases to amaze me. Never cease to be amazed or never ceases to amaze me.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “with what’s gonna, I’m gonna see there.” And then Joe laughs and says, “Nice, that’s great. How long...” And Terence says, “But...” And then Joe says, “is it, uh, oh, I’m sorry, go ahead.”**

*So Joe’s saying, go ahead and talk. I didn’t mean to interrupt you. Go ahead.*

**And Terence says, “Y’know, but, y’know, like I said, it’s, it’s, I’ve gone five years and the, the process...”**

*Or he’s saying, everything you have to do to get ready for it.*

**“the process of going does get a little old.”**

*Get a little old. What this means is it’s no longer fun. Get a little old. For example: I always loved going to school the first day of a new school year. But it would get a little old by the end of the first week. Get a little old.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “I mean the first time I went, y’know, I definitely was, um, had that first time blown away feeling...”**

*Blown away. What Terence is saying here is I had that first time pleased and very surprised feeling. For example: I was blown away by how large New York City is. Blown away.*

**And then Joe says, “Yeah.” And Terence says, “but, y’know, then after a while, you, subsequent years...”**

*Subsequent meaning years after or the following years.*

**And Terence says, “y’know, it’s not quite as, as exciting and fresh.”**



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*Fresh meaning new.*

**And Terence says, “So you start to maybe focus...”**

*Or you start to maybe pay attention.*

**“a little more on some of the, um, discomforts...”**

*Discomforts meaning things that make you uncomfortable.*

**And Terence says, “Y’know, you, you have no creature comforts when you’re there.”**

*Creature comforts. These are things that are comfortable and familiar. Creature comforts.*

**And Joe says, “Yeah, and the traffic’s out of hand, too.”**

*Traffic is just a lot of cars that are not able to move. They are moving slowly because there are so many cars. So Joe’s saying, yeah the traffic’s out of hand. Out of hand means very bad. For example: The traffic in New York City is out of hand. It’s very bad.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “I hear you end up sitting in like traffic jams for hours.”**

*So a traffic jam is the same as traffic basically. It’s when there are so many cars going the same way that they’re not able to move forward. Or they’re moving forward very slowly. Traffic jam.*

**And Terence says, “You can. You can. Especially...”**

*Or you can most importantly.*

**“y’know, towards the end of the week when everybody’s in a rush...”**

*Or everybody’s in a hurry.*

**“to get there, it, it’s absolutely...”**

*Or it’s definitely.*

**“can be that way...” And Joe says, “What were...” And Terence says, “but then, y’know...” And Terence says, “go ahead.”**



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*Or he's telling Joe, oh I'm sorry I didn't mean to interrupt. Go ahead and talk.*

**And Joe says, "When do people start getting there?" And Terence says, "Um, some people go as early as a week before. I mean they really wanna, they really wanna get there and maximize their time."**

*Or Terence is saying, they want to have as much time as possible. Maximize their time.*

**And Joe says, "Yeah."**

*Agreeing with him.*

**And then Terence says, "You, you can be up there basically, um, for, uh, nine days, if you..." And then Joe says, "Is that like people who wanna build like structures and stuff?"**

*What Joe's talking about here is how people build or how they make small buildings out of wood.*

**And Terence says, "Yeah, definitely, there's some people who can actually go even before it starts and you can, y'know, if you're building a special art project, you could get there as early as a month beforehand."**

*Or a month ahead.*

**And Terence says, "But the maj-, y'know, people that are there setting up big camps..."**

*Big camps meaning large areas where groups of people stay for the whole week.*

**And Terence says, "they, they tend to..."**

*Or they usually.*

**"get there, um, probably like nine days beforehand."**

*Or nine days ahead.*

**And Joe says, "It sounds like it's just like a really art-, uh, artistic event..."**

*Artistic event meaning a place where artists go or people who like art.*

**And then Joe goes on to say, "like where everyone just trying to express themselves..."**





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*Joe should have said where everyone is just trying to express themselves but just probably speaking fast in the conversation he left is out. He didn't say is.*

**And then Joe goes on to say, "and their artistic sides..."**

*Artistic sides meaning people are trying to express artistic parts of their personalities.*

**And Joe says, "and showing off their art and stuff..."**

*Showing off. This means doing something to bring attention to yourself. Showing off. For example: Tim likes to show off his motorcycle because girls like it. Showing off.*

**And then Joe finishes saying, "and just acting a little crazy."**

*Acting a little crazy here means just being a little different or acting a little unusual.*

**And then Terence says, "Absolutely, absolutely."**

*He's saying definitely, definitely. He's agreeing with Joe.*

**And Terence says, "It's definitely an environment..."**

*Or he's saying it's definitely a place.*

**"where, it's, and the fact..."**

*Or since.*

**"it's in the desert, um, you, it just adds to the just surreal atmosphere of it."**

*Or he's saying the surreal effect of it. Surreal means unreal. For example: The mountains in Nepal seemed surreal because they looked like a picture. They did not seem real. That's surreal.*

**And then Terence says, "I mean you're there and you might as well be on the moon, with a..."**

*Might as well. Might as well means could be or the same as. So he's saying you could be on the moon or it would be the same as being on the moon. For example: There was so much traffic when I was driving to work I might as well have been in Bangkok. Might as well.*



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**And then Joe just laughs and Terence says, “with the costumes and people just totally...”**

*Or just completely.*

**“trick out their cars.”**

*Now trick out. This means to decorate. Trick out. For example: Lewis likes to trick out his truck. Trick out.*

**And Joe says, “Yeah. And then, eh, what do they do at the end? Like, I know they burn something.”**

*Or they set something on fire.*

**“But I’m not even sure what it is. Because, like I said, I’ve never been there.” And Terence says, “Yeah, it’s kind of this... It’s kind of the culmination...”**

*Culmination meaning the last thing. Culmination. For example: The culmination of the party was when AJ gave a speech. Culmination.*

**So he’s saying, “it’s kind of the culmination of the event...”**

*Event meaning festival.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “um. It’s why it’s called Burning Man. They, there’s this giant man...”**

*Or this very large man.*

**“that’s basically burned.”**

*Now it’s not really a man that’s burned. The man is made from wood. It’s not a real man.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “I mean...”**

*Or he’s saying, what I’m trying to say.*

**“he, y’know, it’s kind of this tribal festival that...”**

*Now what tribal means is that parts of Burning Man, the Burning Man festival, are based on indigenous peoples’ cultures or native peoples’ cultures.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “it’s kind of this tribal festival that, um, reaches a fever pitch.”**



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*Fever pitch. This means a lot of excitement. So the festival reaches a lot of excitement. An example of fever pitch would be: When the football team scored, the crowd reached a fevered pitch. Fever pitch, or in this example, fevered pitch.*

**And Terence says, “Lots of fire dancers...”**

*So people dancing with fire.*

**“uh, people just basically going crazy.”**

*Going crazy here means people just getting out of control. They’re so excited.*

**And Joe says, “What’s the man made out of?” And Terence says, “Made of wood.” And Joe says, “Oh, okay.” And Terence says, “He’s made of wood. And there’s, and then there’s definitely some neon light on him...”**

*Neon light meaning really bright light on him.*

**“coz when you...”**

*‘Coz. This is short for because.*

**So Terence is saying, “coz when you... The event is kind of surrounding a middle area and the man is in the middle.”**

*So what Terence is describing here or saying is that the burning of the wooden man takes place in the middle of the whole festival.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “And that Saturday night, which is on Labor Day weekend, pretty much...”**

*Or almost all of.*

**“the entire place kind of just surrounds it and that’s when it all starts...”**

*So what Terence is saying... almost all of the people there come to stand around the wooden man. So the entire place kind of just surrounds it. Everyone comes to stand around the wooden man.*

**And Terence goes on to say, “And then it’s, finishes with him getting burned down. And the place**



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**just reaches a fever pitch...”**

*Or everyone gets very excited.*

**“at that point.”**

*Or he’s saying at that time.*

**And Joe says, “Yeah, I hear that, uh, it becomes like, with the number of people there, it becomes one of the largest, uh, towns in all of, uh, Nevada...”**

*Now Nevada... This is a state in America. So Burning Man takes place in the desert in Nevada. Nevada is over on the western side of America. And what Joe is saying here is that there are so many people staying there for the week of Burning Man that it becomes one of the biggest towns in Nevada.*

**And Terence says, “Yeah, I know it’s...” And Joe says, “for that weekend.”**

*Joe keeps saying weekend. He kept thinking that Burning Man is only for a weekend, but actually it’s for a week.*

**And Terence says, “Yeah, I know it’s top ten...”**

*Or he’s saying, it becomes one of the ten biggest towns in Nevada.*

**And then Terence goes on to say, “yeah, definitely. It’s a, it’s a real good experience.” And then Joe says, “Yeah, you know what, I’d, I’d really like to go next year but, uh, y’know I’m, I’m gonna plan for it but you never know what can come up...”**

*You never know what can come up. Now this means not sure what will happen. You never know what can come up. For example: I want to go to Thailand later this year but you never know what can come up.*

**And Joe goes on to say, “y’know, so I’ll just have to see how it goes.”**

*Or he’s saying, I’ll have to see what happens. See how it goes. For example: I was going to buy a car but then I lost my job. So I will just have to see how it goes.*

**And then Terence says, “Maybe I’ll see you out there.”**

*So what he’s saying is, maybe I’ll see you at Burning Man. Maybe I’ll see you there at the festival.*



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## Burning Man Vocabulary Lesson

**And Joe laughs and says, “Yeah, well if I go, you’ll definitely be one of the first ones to know.”**

*So what Joe is saying is, you’ll definitely be one of the first people I tell.*

**And then Terence ends the conversation by saying, “Awesome.”**

*So, awesome means great.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Alrighty, this is the end of the vocabulary lesson for the conversation “Burning Man.” Now make sure before moving on to the mini-story that you have a basic understanding of the vocabulary. And then when you’re ready, go to the mini-story.

Good luck, goodbye, see you next time.