

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week 126

About this script

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You're Fat! 你真胖!

Feifei: 大家好, 欢迎收听《你问我答》节目。我是冯菲菲。

Rob: (eating food) And... I'm.... Rob.

Feifei: Rob, it's very rude to talk and eat at the same time. Do you have to eat that doughnut right now?!

Rob: Well, it's delicious, packed full of jam. I just can't put it down.

Feifei: 实在是对不起大家了, Rob 非要边吃边说, 太没礼貌了。Actually Rob, looking at you, I think you've eaten a few too many doughnuts.

Rob: Pardon? Eaten too many? Are you saying I'm fat?

Feifei: Well....yes! Rob 最近在发胖。

Rob: Now you're just being rude.

Feifei: But it's true.

Rob: Hmm, I think you need to listen carefully to this week's question.

Insert

Hello China team,

My name is Zhang Yishi from Sichuan province. My question is how can I express politely someone is very fat. Many thanks!

Best wishes,

Zhang Yishi

Feifei: 来自四川的 Yishi 问我们, 怎们样才能婉转的告诉一个人他/她胖了呢? So she wants to express herself politely.

Rob: Yes, politely Feifei. When you comment about someone's appearance you need to be sensitive.

Feifei: I thought I was. 在英语里, 在对一个人的外貌做评价的时候要格外体谅那个人的感受。Of course there are cultural differences.



- Rob:** Such as?
- Feifei:** Well, in China I think we would be more honest and more direct. I would say 你过于胖了。 You look overweight.
- Rob:** I suppose that could be factually correct and you don't actually use the word 胖。 But looking overweight doesn't actually mean someone is overweight, does it?
- Feifei:** True. It's just an opinion.
- Rob:** Perhaps you need to weigh them first! Actually being overweight was once a sign that you might be wealthy but now everyone is health conscious so saying you are overweight is not a compliment.
- Feifei:** 是的，告诉一个人他的体重超重不是一个什么好的赞美。不信咱们来试试。 Let's try out my approach on someone from the BBC Learning English office.
- Rob:** OK, good idea. Our first victim is Kaz....

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ROB: Hello Kaz, thank you for joining us. Feifei and I wanted to say something to you – we think you're a little overweight. How do you feel about that?

KAZ: Well, I feel unhappy about that. I agree though and it's something my wife says to me. She says you're developing a pot belly.

ROB: What about if I said you're fat?

KAZ: I would disagree, I don't think I'm fat and to call someone fat is insulting really even if they are on the large size.

- Feifei:** Kaz 对我们说他体重超重一事感到非常不高兴，尽管他承认他是有些胖了。Kaz 的太太也说他胖了，还说他现在有个将军肚。 So he admits he's overweight and he's getting a pot belly: so he's fat!
- Rob:** Well Kaz would disagree. He doesn't think it's the same thing and it's a bit insulting, even if it's true! So I think he was a little surprised and upset by our comments.
- Feifei:** 告诉一个人他很胖是有些侮辱的意思。 So how could we politely 有礼貌的，委婉的 tell someone they are fat?
- Rob:** Sometimes it's impossible to say the right thing.
- Feifei:** Actually there's a Chinese saying 你发福了。
- Rob:** Your happiness is spreading. I like that. I have another suggestion. Instead of telling someone about their weight or their shape, get them to tell you.
- Feifei:** 还有一个方法就是不要告诉某人他看起来怎么样，让他自己说。 How do you do that Rob?
- Rob:** Let's try it out on Abdu who also works in our office.

Insert

ROB: OK Abdu, thanks for joining us on Q&A today. Would you mind describing your body, your figure to us? And be honest?

ABDU: I guess I'm rather chubby. I need to lose a lot of weight. Yeah, I'm fighting a losing battle with weight.

ROB: So you'd admit you are overweight?

ABDU: I can't deny it.

ROB: What other kind of words could you use apart from fat, politer words?

ABDU: well-rounded, big-boned, portly, portly's a good one.

Feifei: Ah, I like what you did! Rob 让我们的同事 Abdu 自己描述自己的外貌。Abdu 说自己体重有些超了，自己说自己胖乎乎的 chubby. So he admitted he was a bit overweight.

Rob: Exactly. I turned the tables and got him to admit to himself.

Feifei: Rob 把问题反问给了对方，turn the tables. Abdu suggested some more polite words to use when telling someone they're fat.

Rob: Yes, that's right. He said we could use the words 'well-rounded'...

Feifei: Well-rounded 原意指某人技术非常全面，这里可以形容某人体形圆乎乎的。

Rob: Big-boned...

Feifei: 骨架大的。

Rob: And portly...

Feifei: 健壮的。Well none of those describe me! Now Rob, all this talking has made me a bit hungry, do you have anymore doughnuts I could eat?

Rob: Feifei I am surprised at you! Don't you think it will make you a little fatter?

Feifei: 更胖! Rob, after everything we have said today, you can't say that sort of thing.

Rob: Well as we're friends we can be a bit more honest with each other! And you know what they say?

Feifei: What do they say Rob?

Rob: The truth hurts.

Feifei: 意思就像我们中国人常说的“良药苦口利于病，忠言逆耳利于行”。Hopefully we've been truthful with Zhang Yishi and suggested some polite ways to say someone is fat...

Rob: ...or overweight. If you have a question about English, please email us at questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk



Feifei: We look forward to hearing from you. Bye bye.

Rob: Goodbye.

