

I meant to say good
luck



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I meant to say good luck An AUBG teacher told a student: “ Go break a leg” for good luck, and the student actually broke a leg during a performance. The teacher felt somewhat responsible as if he wished bad luck upon the student. I think the teacher was sorry for not using a simple “ Good luck! ” Furthermore there are a lot of phrases that are used to wish good luck but have a bad literal meaning as “ Break a leg”. Most people use them without considering their literal meaning and history. The Oxford dictionary describes the phrase “ Break a leg” as slang for good luck.

This idiom relates to theatre performers as they are extremely superstitious. According to a website “ Wise Geek” the origins of this idiom can be found in Greek performances, as audience didn’t clap but stomped its feet. If the play was really good the audience would break their leg from too much stamping, as the AUBG student did. The term is also mentioned in the Shakespearian time when audience threw coins on the stage for good plays and the actors picking it up would have to knee and break their leg. By wishing an actor to break a leg you would wish him a successful performance. Now this is a standard way of wishing someone good luck.

The term “ Break a leg” has been misused. When used in theatre, this phrase makes sense, but today it is used for all kinds of situations: exams, competitions, meetings and it is slowly starting to lose its meaning. The use of the idiom can be sarcastic or cruel too, for example if a track runner wishes his opponent to break a leg. When I was told “ Break a leg” before my basketball game I thought it was a curse. As a result I responded with the curse I knew: “ Go get hit by a card”. Therefore I believe the idiom has the biggest strength when used in its original context related to performances.

A Russian term: “ Ni puha, ni pera” means neither down nor feathers. A friend told me of this expression and the legend that follows it. This legend tells about forest spirits that guarded the animals by chasing off the hunters. By saying out loud “ Neither down, nor feathers” the hunters were announcing to the spirits that they won’t get any pray, hoping that the spirits would leave them alone. Furthermore this legend led me to a funny comparison. AUBG-ers tried to make themselves look as poor as possible in front of the admissions board hoping for higher scholarships.

But when the time comes to go to Underground everyone will find a couple of leva in their wallet. According to a website “ When We Were Kids” (that defines commonly used phrases) Turks have an idiom “ Seytan'? n Bacag? n? K? r(mak)” that means “ Break the devil’s leg”. It is said to a person that achieved something after a lot of failures. This say also brings good luck by crippling the source of misfortune itself. My friends and I used a similar phrase in elementary school before exams. Instead of saying: “ I hope your exam is easy” we would rather say: “ I hope your teacher gets stuck in an elevator”.

I continued to use this say and I still use it today despite being criticized by my grandparents for cursing and “ calling upon bad luck”. All of these phrases are based on common belief that by wishing someone bad luck the opposite will happen. Some of these idioms have their roots in legends, but most of them are sarcastic in their essence. I wouldn’t feel confident wishing someone bad luck unless I really mean it. Maybe I’m just old fashioned but I would rather use a simple “ good luck” or “ you are going to do well”. You

never know, maybe a bad thing does happens and I don't want to be responsible for it.