

Four tents in the backyard.

"We've got a bunch of poles missing," said my husband *in a huff, as he got in his car to go to a meeting. He had been looking in the storage area above our garage for tents, and all that goes with them. We needed the tents because nine boys had come over for a Summer party, and the expectation was, that they would camp out in the back yard. The weather was perfect for camping out, plus the thought of having an extra nine, *rowdy boys in my house at night, didn't appeal to me at all. So, camping it was. But you can't do any camping if you're missing any of the tent poles. Now, knowing that men aren't very good at finding things, (I know, that's a huge generalization, but *I'm sticking with it), I decided to go up to the storage room and look for the poles myself. The worst thing about our storage room, is that it isn't insulated, so this time of year it's boiling. We do have a couple of vents and a little fan, but when the temperature reaches over 100, they don't make much of a difference. When it isn't too hot, the storage room is an interesting place to poke around in. A few antiques, Christmas decorations, boxes of painting equipment, snow suits, jack-o-lanterns, memorabilia from trips, and piles of camping equipment fill the room. The missing poles were right where they should have been, next to the tents, not missing at all, you get my point. Well I was glad that I found them. While I was in the storage room, I decided to get all of the tents that we have accumulated *over the years, and set them up. Firstly, it would give me an opportunity to see which poles and pegs fit which tent, and secondly, the tents would get *aired out. I layed out each tent and its fly sheet on the lawn, counted out the pegs, and put the poles together. I layed the poles side by side to compare their lengths so I could avoid wasting time using poles that were either too long or too short. It took some time, but I was happy to do it by myself while the kids all played their noisy army game. When I finished, I looked at the tents and realised that I had erected them in a huddled group, like a little community. The kids would love that. There was ample room for everyone, plus the two dogs. It was about midnight when we went to bed. The dogs and the boys had piled into the biggest tent, and there were whispers, giggles, and flashes of torches here and there. The party had been a success, and everyone was exhausted. The next day, the friends stayed until about midday. Parents turned up here and there to pick up their boys, and slowly the group of kids got smaller and smaller. Everything was cleared away, and I took down the tents. And, do you know what? I found that we had extra poles....

Grammar notes.

Related expressions: in a huff, I'm sticking with it, over the years, to air out.

1. She went off in a huff after our argument; she didn't talk to me for weeks.
2. No one will change my mind. That is my opinion, and I'm sticking with it!
3. We planted that oak a long time ago. Over the years it has spread magnificently, and now shades the whole garden.
4. The blankets had been in storage all year, so I aired them out.

