

Chatterbox #247 – Sue’s engagement story: Part 1

Episode description

Exciting news for the Culips team! In this episode of Chatterbox, Andrew and Suzanne discuss Suzanne’s recent engagement. Tune in to hear all about Suzanne’s amazing news and how she first met her future husband. This is Part 1 of a two-part story.

Fun fact

Only 34% of people over the age of 15 living in Quebec are married, while another 20% are living with a common-law partner.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Touristy
- To keep in touch
- To hit on [someone]
- Long-distance relationship
- Common-law marriage
- Juicy



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Andrew: Today we are going to talk about some very exciting news that Suzanne has to share. And if you're a loyal Culips listener, then you may have heard us preview this recently. In a recent episode, Suzanne, you told us that you're engaged.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Congratulations.

Suzanne: Thanks so much, Andrew. Yeah.

Andrew: So, Suzanne, in today's Chatterbox episode, we're gonna talk all about your engagement story and your plans for your wedding. And, guys, if you don't know what Chatterbox is, it's the series where we have completely natural English conversations and we let you listen in.

Andrew: So we'll get to Suzanne's engagement story here in just a moment. But before we do that, I want to let you all know that we have a study guide available for this episode on our website, Culips.com. And it's a great way to study with us. So just check out our website to give it a download.

Andrew: All right, Suzanne, let's get into this engagement story.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: And, actually, maybe we should start with just a little bit of your relationship backgrounds, if that's OK?

Suzanne: Sure.

Andrew: Could you tell us a little bit about your fiancé and maybe how long you've been dating or how you met or some of the details behind your relationship?

Suzanne: Yeah. So Oli and I met about 10 and a half years ago.

Andrew: Wow.

Suzanne: Yeah, right? It's, it's a long time. And ...

Andrew: Long time, yeah.

Suzanne: Yeah. And, um, I was a waitress at very popular lounge in Times Square in New York City. And it's, it was a, it is still a **touristy** kind of spot, because it's right in the middle of Manhattan and you have a view of the whole city. So Oli was visiting with his family, his mom and his cousin.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: And, um, he had just moved back to Montreal. And they took a weekend trip to New York in the summer of 2009. And, actually, they were my customers, and that's how we met. And we exchanged some, like, Facebook info or something like that. And we just **kept in touch** because he was really cool. And he thought I was cool. And we **kept in touch**. And then, finally ...

Andrew: Wow.

Suzanne: I, um, I moved. I didn't move right away. Scratch that, took 4 years. Um, and then finally I came to Montreal, like, about a month and a half after we met. Um.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: I had some time off. It was like, like, the end of August, beginning of September, you know, like Labour Day weekend, maybe. And ...

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: Which is our holiday here in North America.

Andrew: In September, is it?

Suzanne: Yeah, it's like the last weekend of August, beg, first weekend of September. Exactly,

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: Usually like August 30, September 1st, something like that.

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: And so it's like a long weekend. So I had a long weekend off and I said, OK, why not? And I came to Montreal to see if this guy was worth it. Huh? You know? I don't know, I had to see. Do I like this guy? And I was nervous 'cause, I mean, I was coming to a new city. I had never been to Montreal. So I got my own hotel room because I was, like, you know, I might meet this guy again and be, like, this is awkward and weird. Never mind. But at least I'll have my own hotel room and I'll have 5 days in a new city.

Andrew: Yeah, so you could meet him, hang out, and if he's a creep, then ...

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Just forget about him and have a little vacation.

Suzanne: Totally. And just, you know, chalk it up to adventure.

Andrew: So, Sue, just before we keep going, I have two clarification questions ...

Suzanne: Sure.

Andrew: I wanted to ask you. So the first one, you said he was coming from Montreal to visit New York City.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: But that might give the impression that he's Canadian, but he's not actually Canadian, Oli, right?

Suzanne: Oh, he's not Canadian, right. So he's from France. He's from the south of France. Yeah, from right near Spain, the French side of Catalan and he was moving back. So he had done, like, an internship here in Montreal, after university and stuff. And then he went back to France. But that was right around like 2008 when the market was really bad, it was hard for him to find a job in France. So he had a job offer in Montreal. So he said, why not? I'll move back to Montreal. So he moved back to Montreal, he came to New York, and he found me.

Andrew: That's great. And this leads into my second question ...

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: Which is you said he was visiting New York with his family?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Is that true? And so he was visiting the lounge that you were working at? Was he with his family, or?

Suzanne: With his mom.

Andrew: Wow, so that is, I can't really imagine that. He's a very brave guy. I think if I was out with my mom, to kind of **hit on the waitress**, or just chat up the waitress.

Suzanne: Well ...

Andrew: Wow, that's a very brave move.

Suzanne: We, like, I think that was what was so impressive was he was just really himself, you know? It's, like, wow, he just, he's really himself. And we had a really nice conversation. Uh, you know, a few conversations while he was there, I wasn't very busy. But when they left, they paid and left, and then he came back, he returned. So they were both—so his cousin and his mom were at the elevators waiting to go down. And he came back in and stood there and waited for me, because, at that point, it was very busy, actually. It was ...

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: Because the theatre had just let out. So, basically, it was like, I don't know, maybe, uh, yeah, like, probably like 9:30 at night. And it was, it was, like, packed. I got maybe, like, five or six tables all at once. And it got really busy. So he waited and he asked me for my information, my email and stuff. And, you know, when you work in a place like that, you kind of just go yeah, sure, OK. Like if you want to, if you want, if you like the person, it's kind of cool to have friends in different countries. And you just kind of forget about it, you know, because you meet—it's New York City, you meet so many people.

Andrew: Probably people from all over the world.

Suzanne: Totally. And I'm not trying to say that everybody asks for your email. But if you're a nice person, maybe you make a nice connection with people and they're, like, oh, if you're ever in Italy, come find us, like, email us. We have a guesthouse and you're like, OK, great. I'll do that for sure. Like, I'll take you up on that. So I've done that before. Like, yeah, customer's like, I own a hotel. I'm like, OK, mmhmm, perfect. Like, yes, we are friends. Um ...

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: We are now friends. Here's a free glass of wine. What? Um. So, yeah, so, you know, you, you make friends, but you don't necessarily think that they will follow up with their request. So, um, I was impressed because he did follow up and he emailed me and, and he was very funny in English, which was very impressive. But he was with his mom and his cousin. Yup.

Andrew: OK. Wow.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Wow.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Very interesting. All right ...

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: So you went to Montreal, he turned out to be a good guy. Uh.

Suzanne: Yeah, it was wonderful.

Andrew: Romance was in the air.

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: You guys fell in love, started a relationship. Eventually, you moved from New York up to Montreal.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Now ...

Suzanne: And that's when I met you, right?

Andrew: Yup.

Suzanne: That's when I met Andrew.

Andrew: Exactly. And now was that move solely because of Oli or was it ...

Suzanne: Yup.

Andrew: Kind of like you are looking for a change too, or?

Suzanne: Um, kind of, yeah, but I mean, we had been **long distance** or—so in English, I guess you say we are **long distance**.

Andrew: Um, yeah, a **long-distance relationship**.

Suzanne: Right. So you could say we were in a **long-distance relationship**, or you could say we were **long distance**. The, it works both ways. Um.

Andrew: Yeah, both are good.

Suzanne: Yeah. And he had tried to move to New York a couple times, but it was very hard, visa wise, to move to the US when you were French. So he was not yet a Canadian citizen.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: So it was more difficult. And, you know, we didn't want to just get married because of the visa, just in case then we find out, like, ugh, this is not working, and then it would make it really complicated, you know?

Andrew: Right, right.

Suzanne: When you, when you do that. So I knew that I wanted to do a master's in linguistics—I had been looking around at different universities—and in pronunciation. So I thought, well, this is a good way for me to get my visa, to get a study visa. As most of you guys out there know, that's the, that's the easiest way, is to go somewhere and get, you know, apply for a program or a master's or a bachelor's or something and take some time to study in another country. And you really learn the culture, too.

Andrew: Sure, sure.

Suzanne: So that's what I did. I got a study visa.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: And that's how I moved to Montreal. Yeah.

Andrew: OK. So that was, well, several years ago now. So ...

Suzanne: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: Fast-forwarding.

Suzanne: Six years.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Can't believe that, right?

Andrew: Time flies.

Suzanne: Isn't that, I've known you for, like, 6 years, 7 years. That's crazy, Andrew.

Andrew: Wow. Unbelievable.

Suzanne: Wow. Weird. Weird.

Andrew: Suzanne, let's fast-forward to kind of present day. And your engagement was recent, and I'd love to hear about how that came about, how you guys decided to get married.

Suzanne: We had been talking about it for a while as something we wanted to do. We had some, you know, kind of ups and downs over the last couple years. And it just seemed like we had some kind of, like, bad luck. We were, like, what's this cloud of bad luck over our heads? I don't know if I've really told the listeners out there, but I went through cancer treatment for breast cancer over the last year. Yeah, like, a year ago now I was in cancer treatment. So we just were, like, this is the right time, kind of.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: And, but it was a surprise. I didn't, I didn't know that that's what he was planning. Um. We had kind of talked about it and, you know, we knew that we wanted to get married, but he kept it a surprise.

Andrew: OK, 'cause that's what I wanted to know. Because, you know, some couples really talk about it and it's, it's not a surprise. And some couples talk about it like you do, but it's also kind of a surprise, which I guess this sounds like your engagement was kind of a surprise. And then other couples have a complete surprise where they don't really talk about it and one partner springs the question on the other partner and it's kind of, like, oh my god, I don't know. You see ...

Suzanne: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: This sometimes, too, right?

Suzanne: Yeah, that scares me. I feel like the, the complete surprise is a little too scary for me. Like, I, I might freak out.

Andrew: It's usually guys that do this. I don't want to be too gender specific, but it's usually guys that do this type of thing where, you know, they'll, they'll get one of their friends to film it and they'll surprise ...

Suzanne: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

Andrew: Their girlfriend or their partner in a public place. And I always kind of feel bad for the person that's being asked the question in that moment, because ...

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: You don't want to let somebody down. But I don't know, that's kind of ...

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: An intense way to propose.

Suzanne: Or like at a baseball game or some sort of ...

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Sports arena, like, on a big screen?

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: And you're like, what? In front of thousands of people? Seriously?

Andrew: The pressure.

Suzanne: Oh, oh, no.

Andrew: But it wasn't like that. You guys had talked about it. You thought, yeah, let's get married at some point. But.

Suzanne: But I kind of thought it would never happen, because we had been together for like, 10 years. And I'm like, well, you know what, if it's like, I mean, we're basically **common-law marriage**, which in Canada is meaning you've lived together for at least a year. Um and you enter into ...

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: A **common-law marriage**, like a, so it's not an actual legal wedding. But it is a legally binding relationship.

Andrew: Right, you get a lot of the benefits of married couples in regards to your taxes and ...

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Maybe, like, in the case of if one partner passed away, you would kind of be, like, legally ...

Suzanne: Right.

Andrew: The wife in that situation even though you're not technically married. It would be treated the same way ...

Suzanne: Exactly.

Andrew: Under the law. That's kind of what **common law** is.

Suzanne: Right.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Yeah. Also, uh, he, uh, sponsored me for my permanent residency.

Andrew: Oh, OK.

Suzanne: So in that case, as well, like for immigration, you can also sponsor that person with that kind of relationship.

Andrew: We should also maybe talk a little bit about the culture where you're living in Montreal, because it's really ...

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Common to just live together with your partner and never get married, right?

Suzanne: Yes. This is very common, yeah.

Andrew: Even, even if you have children. I know some of my friends' parents have been together for 35, 40 years. They have children and, you know ...

Suzanne: Yup.

Andrew: Completely intact families, but just never got married. And that's really common in Quebec, actually. So.

Suzanne: Yeah, it's not common in the US. I don't think it's common everywhere else in Canada, necessarily.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: But in Quebec, it really is.

Andrew: It's, I mean, it's common for young people, especially, to live together with their partners, but ...

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Um. Yeah, I think in Quebec, it's especially common not to get married, whereas maybe in other parts of Canada, it's more common to get married.

Suzanne: Yeah. And a lot of our friends are not married, then they, and they have children—neighbors, friends, a lot of them. Most of our friends are not married, actually. So, exactly, that kind of culture just also, I think, influenced us for a while. And we're pretty like whatever people. We're not religious. You know, we don't have something that's pushing us ...

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: To do that in a kind of lifestyle way.

Andrew: All right, everyone, we're gonna cut things here for today, because Sue and I talked for a really long time. Don't worry, though, you'll be able to hear the rest of the **juicy** details about Suzanne's engagement story in Part 2 of this episode, which will be released real soon. So please look for that to appear in your podcast feed shortly.

Andrew: If you'd like to get in contact with us, just email contact@Culips.com. You can find us on your favourite social media platform by searching for the Culips English Podcast. And there is a study guide for this episode available for all Culips premium members on our website, Culips.com. If you enjoy studying with Culips, please support us. Leave a five-star rating and a positive review wherever you listen to your podcasts.

Andrew: That's it for now. We'll be back soon with Part 2 of Sue's story, and we'll talk to you then.

Detailed Explanations

Touristy Adjective

If something is described as being **touristy**, then it is related to or visited by many tourists. For example, a **touristy** restaurant would be a restaurant that many tourists go to, but that is usually avoided by the locals.

Here are a couple more examples with **touristy**:

Josh: Hey, you wanna check out that ice cream shop on Main Street?

David: No way, man. That place is way too **touristy**. We'll be waiting in line with a bunch of parents and toddlers.

Josh: I heard it's really delicious, though.

David: You want delicious? Then I'll take you to this tiny shop off of Birch Street. It is a well-kept secret of mine. They've got the best ice cream in the city.

Josh: Well, all right then. Let's go!

Marcia: Look at this adorable little key chain I found.

Clara: Oh, where did you get it?

Marcia: I got it at this cute **touristy** shop. It was part bookstore and part gift shop.

Clara: Did they have a lot of different key chains?

Marcia: Yeah, lots. I can take you there this weekend if you want.

Clara: Totally!

To keep in touch

Phrasal verb

To keep in touch is to keep in communication with someone, even if that person moves far away. For example, in this episode Suzanne said that she and her fiancé **kept in touch** even when she was living in New York and he was living in Canada.

Here are a couple more examples with **to keep in touch**:

Vanessa: I can't believe you're moving to Japan. That's like a million miles away!

Lucy: Ha! It's not quite that far. Don't worry, we'll still **keep in touch**, right?

Vanessa: Of course! You're my best friend. I'm going to call you every day.

Lucy: Well, make sure to check the time difference. I'm not answering if you call me at 3 in the morning!

Jose: Do you still talk to your ex-wife?

Roberto: Yeah, we still **keep in touch** from time to time. Why?

Jose: I was thinking about applying for a job at the company she works at and was wondering if she could put in a good word for me. Would that be weird?

Roberto: No, of course not. I'll ask her.

Jose: Thanks a lot, man. I really owe you one.

Roberto: Don't thank me yet. She still might say no.

To hit on [someone]

Phrasal verb

To hit on [someone] is to flirt with someone in the hopes of starting a romantic relationship with that person. For example, if a guy comes up to a girl at a bar, offers to buy her a drink, and tells her she looks beautiful, then he is **hitting on her**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to hit on [someone]**:

Vince: Hey, gorgeous, you wanna go grab some spaghetti together after this is over?

Rachel: Are you seriously **hitting on me** right now?

Vince: I mean, I couldn't help but notice you and that amazing dress you've got on. Just wow!

Rachel: We are at my grandfather's funeral. What kind of creep **hits on someone** at a funeral? Get away from me.

Yolanda: Oh my goodness, guess what? I just got back from the grocery store and I'm pretty sure the deli guy was **hitting on me**.

Sara: So?

Yolanda: This is exciting! I haven't been **hit on** in over 20 years, not since Jack and I got together.

Sara: Well, I'm happy for you, honey, but I'm sure you can do much better than the local deli guy.

Yolanda: Hey, don't judge. He could be an amazing man. A job is just a job.

Sara: If you say so.

Long-distance relationship

Noun

A **long-distance relationship** is a romantic relationship in which a couple lives in two different locations and cannot see one another on a regular basis; they can live just a few hours apart, or they can live countries apart. **Long-distance relationships** are often hard to manage due to scheduling conflicts, lack of intimacy, and the inability to support one another in day-to-day situations.

Here's one more example with **long-distance relationship**:

Karly: I am so sick of being in a **long-distance relationship**! I just want to be able to see my boyfriend anytime I want. Is that too much to ask?

Katie: Well, complaining won't change anything.

Karly: Yeah, I know, but it still sucks.

Katie: Then why don't you just break up?

Karly: Because I don't want to break up!

Katie: Then I'm not sure how you can solve this problem. It's not like he's getting back from France anytime soon. He's still got 6 months over there, doesn't he?

Karly: Yes. I'm gonna go crazy before then.

Katie: Remind me to never get into a **long-distance relationship**. It really doesn't seem fun at all!

Tamara: Did you hear that Jen and Rob broke up?

Valarie: Yeah, and I can't say that I'm surprised, to be honest.

Tamara: Yeah, they were in a **long-distance relationship** for so long.

Valarie: At least 5 years, right?

Tamara: I was in a **long-distance relationship**, too, but it was just too difficult. I'll never do it again!

Common-law marriage

Noun

A **common-law marriage** or relationship is where two people who are not legally married live together for a long period of time and consider themselves in a marriage-like relationship. **Common-law** couples can often receive tax breaks or benefits similar to couples who are legally married, depending on where they live. Sometimes, use the shorter expression **common-law** when talking about **common-law marriages**.

Here's one more example with **common-law marriage**:

John: Hey, honey, guess what? We can finally file our taxes together this year. We're gonna get such a nice discount.

Gianna: Why is that, exactly?

John: We've been together for enough years that we are considered to be in a **common-law marriage**.

Gianna: (starts crying hysterically)

John: What's the matter?

Gianna: What's the matter? Are you really asking me that? You are more excited about stupid tax discounts than the thought of marrying me. That's it. We're over.

John: What? No, honey, I love you! I swear!

Franz: Are you married?

Roberta: No, but I have a **common-law** partner that I've been with for over 10 years.

Franz: That's great!

Juicy Adjective

Juicy has two common meanings. The first one is the most obvious; it is something filled with a lot of juice, such as a **juicy** steak or a **juicy** piece of fruit. However, another common meaning of **juicy** is to be extremely interesting, scandalous, or sensational. For example, **juicy** gossip is gossip that is extremely interesting and that everyone wants to hear about. **Juicy** gossip, **juicy** news, and **juicy** details are all ways of saying that information is interesting and worthy of telling others.

Here's one more example with **juicy**:

Britney: Have you heard the latest **juicy** gossip?

Casey: No! Tell me, tell me, tell me!

Britney: Well, Alice told Cathy who told me that Brad broke up with Lindsey.

Casey: No way! Brad's single again? This is the best day ever!

Britney: I know, right? But you better move quickly. I heard that Angela is already trying to get her hands on him. He definitely won't be single for long.

Claire: I heard a rumour Katie is going to get fired!

Helen: Wow! Why?

Claire: I'm not sure. We should talk to Ted, he always knows all the **juicy** details about what's happening in the office.

Helen: Let's sit with him at lunch and hear the story.

Quiz

1. A _____ is a relationship in which both partners live in different cities and they can't spend very much time with each other.
 - a) short-distance relationship
 - b) long-distance relationship
 - c) open relationship
 - d) closed relationship

2. Which is NOT an example of a touristy place?
 - a) Disney World
 - b) Hard Rock Cafe
 - c) a library
 - d) a museum

3. What is it called when you are not technically married, but you have legal rights similar to a real marriage?
 - a) a by-the-law marriage
 - b) a common-law marriage
 - c) an implied marriage
 - d) a shotgun wedding

4. What is the opposite of to keep in touch?
 - a) to drop by
 - b) to lose touch
 - c) to stay up to date
 - d) to remain in contact

5. Which cannot be described as juicy?
 - a) gossip
 - b) a peach
 - c) a steak
 - d) a flight

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you been married or gotten engaged? Who proposed, and how?
2. If you are married, how long did you date before getting married? If you're not married, how long was your longest relationship?
3. Have you ever been in a long-distance relationship? How was it?
4. What is one of your least favourite touristy places in the city or town that you live in?
5. Do you often keep in touch with friends or family who move away? What is your favourite way to communicate? How often do you communicate with them?

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.c 3.b 4.b 5.d

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Suzanne Cerreta

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free, *Let It Go* by Scott Dugdale

Episode preparation/research: Suzanne Cerreta

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Kassy White

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Suzanne Cerreta