

Chatterbox #250 – Sue’s engagement story: Part 2

Episode description

Here’s Part 2 of Suzanne’s amazing engagement story! Find out about the funny and touching experience in this Chatterbox episode with hosts Andrew and Suzanne.

Fun fact

Pop star Mariah Carey was once given an engagement ring reportedly worth \$10 million by her then-boyfriend. Unfortunately, they did not end up getting married, although she did keep the ring after their breakup.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Speaking of
- To parley
- To sidetrack [someone]
- Been through a lot
- On the spot
- A touch



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hey, everybody, my name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Andrew: Welcome back to Culips. In this episode, you'll hear Part 2 of Suzanne's engagement story. If you haven't heard Part 1 yet, you might want to stop this episode and go back and give it a listen. You'll find it in your podcast feed or on our website, Culips.com. Just look for Chatterbox episode #247.

Andrew: **Speaking of** Chatterbox, that's what you're listening to right now. It's the Culips series that features completely natural English conversations for you to listen into. And, guys, there's a study guide available for all Culips premium members on our website, Culips.com. So go check out the website to learn about how to download and study with it. I think that's about all I wanted to tell you. So let's take a listen to Part 2 of Suzanne's engagement story right now.

Andrew: I'm curious because I know a lot of my friends here in Korea feel a lot of pressure to get married from family members. Did you feel any pressure?

Suzanne: I had that pressure, yes. I was under more pressure because, like we said, in France there isn't. We were talking earlier, there is not so much pressure in France to get married. It's great if you do. It's fine if you don't. It's not a cultural pressure. But my family is American and also Catholic and also Italian. This is a combination more inclined to give you pressure to get married. So even my sister was with her husband, now husband, for 10 years, too, before they got married. But they knew each other since they were 15. So they got married at, like, 26 which is kind of, like, a normal time to get married.

Andrew: Seems so young to me.

Suzanne: Me, too. I'm, like, I think back to 26, I'm like, girl. I was not ready to do anything like that. I was hanging out and having fun. So I, yeah, I did have pressure. My family did ask me a lot. My grandparents, especially. Out of love, you know, they didn't mean it to be mean. They were just, like, they wanted me to be like everyone else in the family. So they're very happy that we got engaged.

Suzanne: Yeah, it's hard to mitigate that pressure, right? To mitigate that pressure or mediate that pressure, like, to really be in between one culture and the other.

Suzanne: I'm sure our listeners understand that, if they've ever lived abroad, or maybe they live in an English-speaking country now. It can be difficult to kind of **parley** between two different cultures or expectations, to really kind of have to balance, like, where you came from and where you are now, right? That's not always easy. So.

Andrew: And **speaking of** which, Suzanne, one of our listeners asked us to talk about this exact topic, about intercultural relationships. And I realized that, I think, out of the five Culips hosts that we have on our team, four of us are in intercultural relationships. So I think we're kind of experts, maybe, on this, between us.

Suzanne: I think so.

Andrew: So maybe we can save this topic for another episode, 'cause I think all of us will have lots to say about it.

Suzanne: Totally, totally, especially, like, being in an intercultural relationship living in the other person's culture.

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: Right? Because that's a different thing. You can be in an intercultural relationship where they are living in your culture. And that's, anyway, that's another topic for another day.

Andrew: Yeah. So we'll save that one for another day, but I think we'll have lots of interesting stories to tell when we get to that topic.

Andrew: Sue, let's fast-forward again. I keep **sidetracking** you. But tell me about how Oli proposed, what was the proposal like?

Suzanne: Yeah, well, we took our 10-year anniversary vacation. We went to Hawaii, so the island of Kauai. And we treated ourselves to a really, really amazing and fancy, beautiful hotel with this crazy, awesome view. We paid extra for like the ocean view. And maybe I can post a photo of that.

Andrew: Yeah, you should.

Suzanne: Because that was really beautiful. I'll have a few pictures for this episode, I'm sure.

Andrew: So, guys, if you look on our Culips Instagram, maybe that is the best place for us to post them. So if you follow us on Instagram, you'll be able to see those pics.

Suzanne: Yeah. And so we decided to hike the Kalalau Trail. The Kalalau Trail is on the northeast, I think, side of, sorry, northwest side of Kauai. There's a beautiful beach there you can only get to by hiking. So it's like a 2-mile hike, which in kilometres is about 4 or 5 kilometres, right? Two-mile hike, 4, about 4 kilometres. It's pretty easy to get to the beach. But then, if you want to, you hike to the waterfall, which is amazing and gorgeous. And it's only 2 miles, as well. But it's really harder. It's a lot harder.

Andrew: Is it uphill?

Suzanne: It's, like, 10 times harder. Yes, but it's also you're passing over a river, like, four times, a small river. But it's tricky. It's really tricky. And there are moments where you're kind of, like, walking on very, very thin rock, like, you're, like, kind of scaling a wall.

Andrew: OK. It's technical.

Suzanne: It's technical. It's very technical. And there's so many rocks and boulders that you're dodging that you, like, you have to make sure you don't step in a weird place and, like, twist your ankle or something. So it was kind of intense. We get to the waterfall, it's gorgeous. It's so big. And then we eat, like, a really weird sandwich. We got, like, a really weird sandwich, like, a ham and cheese from, like, the hotel, like, not our hotel, whatever. It was, like, you know, like, a pretend Starbucks at a hotel, like, Café Blue or something.

Andrew: OK, so you had a picnic, but you ate a weird sandwich.

Suzanne: Yeah, we were both, like, unimpressed. But it was expensive and not good. And we swam in the waterfall. It was amazing. It was so beautiful. And when you put your head, your ears, under the water, you can hear the waterfall. It's so powerful and beautiful. So we swam, we come out, we're sitting on the rock. And we're finishing the sandwich.

Suzanne: And all of a sudden, Oli takes my hand and he looks at me and I'm, like, what's happening? You know? Like, why are you doing this in the middle of the sandwich? Kind of like, why are you holding my hand while we're eating ham sandwiches?

Suzanne: And he said, you know, we've **been through a lot** over these 10 years. And I was, like, we have and he's, like, it hasn't always been easy. And all of a sudden, I was, like, yeah, you're right. And I, like, looked down at my sandwich and I look back up and he is kind of on his knee, you know? But, like, leaning against a rock because there's really no place. It's, like, a lot of boulders. There's a lot of boulders, there's no place to really kneel. So he's kind of, like, awkwardly up against this rock on his knee?

Andrew: Yeah. Tried his best.

Suzanne: And all of a sudden, yeah, is he with, like, one hand he has, like, the piece of sandwich that's, like, flopping around. He's so nervous. And he, I all of a sudden I see this little grey box and I'm, like, oh my god, what? I was, like, what? What's happening? Oh my god, and I realized what was happening.

Suzanne: And he opened the box and it was this beautiful diamond ring. And I was, like, freaking out. I was, like, started to cry and all of the tourists, there were all these tourists all around us. I think some of them heard me because I was, like, oh my god. And you know, when you're on a hike, and you hear someone say oh my god, like, kind of not screaming, but emphatically.

Andrew: Right, like, oh, did somebody twist their ankle or something?

Suzanne: So he asked me to marry him in French. And I was so excited and, like, crying that I guess I didn't answer. And he's, like, well, are you saying yes, like, are you gonna answer? And I was, like, oh, ben oui I said, ben oui, like that in French, but.

Andrew: Like, of course, of course!

Suzanne: Yeah. Like, of course. So, yeah, and so that was amazing. And we hiked back to the beach where we spent some really wonderful time on that amazing and gorgeous beach, which was great, because after that moment and such a long hike, you kind of need some relaxation time on the beach.

Suzanne: Well, we were walking around the beach, and this woman, young woman, like, younger than me, comes up to us with this beautiful camera and she's like, "Hi, you guys." And we are like, "Hi." She's like, "I am a photographer. I'm actually on my honeymoon. I am a wedding photographer. And you guys are so cute. Can I take pictures of you?" And she's like, "And then I'll upload them to my site and you can just download them for free." Like, we're just on vacation and you guys are super adorable and we want to take pictures of you, like for my portfolio,

Andrew: That's random.

Suzanne: I was like, what? But we were, like, we just got engaged. And she's like, what?

Andrew: Perfect timing.

Suzanne: Yeah, we have incredible pictures of us, like, on this ridiculously beautiful beach ...

Andrew: Such good timing,

Suzanne: You know, that's, like, pristine. Yeah. It was, like, such good timing. Yeah. So that was amazing. So, yeah.

Andrew: That's really unique. I don't think too many people have engagement photos. Almost everybody that gets married has wedding photos, but engagement photos? Don't think I've heard of that before, like, **on the spot**.

Suzanne: I know. I was like, did you plan this, Olivier? He's like, I've never met this woman in my life. Like, I have no idea. She was from Seattle, and she is from Seattle. And

they, she's such an amazing photographer and so sweet and has such, just positive energy. And so we were like, sure, OK.

Suzanne: When you said, like, multicultural, one of the things that we're doing as we plan our wedding, because we're planning our wedding to be in France, where Olivier's from, in the south of France, and we decided to use wedding planners there. This would help us a lot so that when we go to France for the holidays, before the wedding, we can really taste all the food and try all the things we need to try and make some decisions all in 2 weeks, right?

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: And kind of have someone on that side of things helping us out. Well, one of the things that we decided is that we really wanna have a Franco-American wedding. Like, our theme is, like, French-American. So we're gonna bring, like, definitely have some, like, craft beers from Quebec and the US and things like that, little **touches** that are American. Some, maybe we're going to bring some horseshoe games.

Andrew: Nice.

Suzanne: In the garden. Yeah, like, just have some, like, little North American **touches** with some French.

Andrew: And for people that don't know what horseshoe games are—actually these kind of backyard games are really popular in North America in the summer, especially—horseshoes are what attaches to the foot of a horse, right? But we kind of play a game where, you know, we hammer a pole into the lawn, usually, and you try and throw the horseshoe around the pole. It's a pretty simple game, really.

Suzanne: Yeah. So weird.

Andrew: But there's other lawn games, like lawn darts, lawn bowling.

Suzanne: Yes, we want to do a bunch of those.

Andrew: What's it called, croquet?

Suzanne: Yeah, so there's croquet, but we're not British. So we're probably not going to do that. But we might have pétanque, pétanque.

Andrew: Oh, yeah.

Suzanne: Like bocce ball, kind of like bocce ball in Italian and pétanque in French, which, since I do have Italian background. So Oli and I were thinking of doing pétanque also.

Suzanne: Yeah. So we'll see how that will be for planning it.

Andrew: All right. And the date? Have you set a date yet?

Suzanne: Yeah. So I think it's gonna be August 2021. So we have time.

Andrew: So still, about a year and a half.

Suzanne: Yeah. Yeah. We have a little bit of time. So, yeah, this way we're in no rush. Yeah.

Andrew: Well, Sue, make sure to update us on the wedding planning, how it's going and how it develops, because I'm interested in this kind of thing. And I think our listeners would be interested, too, especially because this is a really unique, like, we were talking about, an intercultural wedding. And also since it's happening in the south of France, this will be a little bit different, I guess, then what we're used to in North America. So that'll be cool. And, again, congratulations to you and Oli.

Suzanne: Thank you so much.

Andrew: And I think all of our listeners would congratulate you, as well.

Suzanne: Thanks, guys.

Andrew: I think we should wrap it up here for today. So, guys, I wanna remind you just one more time that there is a study guide for this episode on our website, Culips.com, and all of our premium Culips members can download it. There's lots of good stuff in there, like the transcript and detailed vocabulary explanations and examples of all of the idiomatic vocabulary that you heard Suzanne and I use today. And there's also some discussion questions and a quiz, as well. It's really cool.

Andrew: If you want to follow us on social media, please do that. We would love it. You can just search for the Culips English Podcast, and you'll be sure to find us.

Suzanne: Yeah, and if you ever have questions or ideas for future episodes, you can always email us at contact@Culips.com. We love hearing from you guys.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Suzanne: Bye, guys.

Detailed Explanations

Speaking of Idiom

Speaking of is a way to transition in a conversation. At the beginning of this recording, Andrew mentions that Part 1 of Sue's engagement story is Chatterbox episode #247. He then transitions and explains what kind of Culips series Chatterbox is. To set this up, Andrew says **speaking of**. This is an expression you can use in just about any conversation. We often jump from one topic to a similar topic when chatting.

Here are a couple more examples with **speaking of**:

Jeffery: I had such a great time at the amusement park with you.

Yoon: Thanks. I had fun, too.

Jeffery: Too bad that really high observation tower was closed.

Yoon: Oh, **speaking of** that, there's a sky tower with a restaurant downtown. Do you want to go with me?

Jeffery: Sure!

Yasmin: Would you say you're a good cook?

Will: Yeah, I think so.

Yasmin: What kind of dishes are your best?

Will: I really like to cook meat-based meals.

Yasmin: **Speaking of**, we have a freezer full of elk meat that my husband got. Would you like some?

Will: Elk meat? I've never cooked that, but I'd like to try. Thanks!

To parley

Verb

In this episode, our hosts talk about intercultural relationships, which both Suzanne and Andrew find themselves in. In Suzanne's case, she talks about having **to parley** between her American culture and her partner's French culture.

To parley means to negotiate. In that sense, Suzanne is trying to find a proper balance between the two cultures. You can also use **to parley** in the sense of a financial negotiation.

Here are a couple more examples with **to parley**:

Zahra: I saw this great movie on the weekend. It was about a hostage situation.

Gilbert: Oh, that's not my kind of movie.

Zahra: What? It was so exciting. The whole movie was the negotiator trying **to parley** with the hostage-taker on his terms.

Gilbert: Yeah, it's a lot of empty talking. And you already know the ending before it starts.

Zahra: This one kept me on the edge of my seat. And it had a surprise ending.

Gilbert: Not for me, sorry.

Holly: Wow, is that a vintage leather jacket?

Tamara: Yes, it is.

Holly: Where did you get it?

Tamara: I went to a pawn shop because I wanted to sell a record player of mine. The owner seemed really interested in it. So I played it cool and ended up **parleying** to get this jacket, some pants, and some shoes.

Holly: Not bad at all.

To sidetrack [someone]

Verb

The main topic of this episode is the proposal story between Suzanne and her partner. At one point, Suzanne and Andrew talk about intercultural relationships but stop because they don't want to get **sidetracked**. That means they don't want to move away from their main topic. Think of how a train must roll along on railroad tracks. If you are off the tracks or **sidetracked**, that's not good. In this situation, Andrew says he doesn't want to **sidetrack** Suzanne and her story. He wants to get back on track, which means to get back on the main topic.

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

Kenn: Rina, you will work with Michael this afternoon.

Rina: Michael? Oh no.

Kenn: What's the problem?

Rina: It's impossible to get any work done around him. He talks so much and always ends up **sidetracking me**. Can I work with someone else?

Roman: Have you finished your project yet?

Ian: Not yet.

Roman: How come? You've been working on it for 2 weeks.

Ian: I know, but I keep getting **sidetracked**.

Roman: By what?

Ian: The internet.

Roman: No, my friend. That's you **sidetracking** yourself.

Been through a lot

Phrasal verb

To begin his marriage proposal, Suzanne's partner mentions how they have **been through a lot** together. This is a common way of saying that Suzanne and her partner have a lot of history together and that some of it might have been difficult. Although you can say you have **been through a lot** with someone else, you can also say that you've **been through a lot** on your own. That means you have suffered and have **been through difficult times** in your life.

Here are a couple more examples with **been through a lot**:

Etta: You look really sad. Are you all right?

Joelle: Do you remember my Newfoundland dog?

Etta: Of course.

Joelle: We had to put her to sleep. She was getting pretty old and had a bunch of health problems.

Etta: Oh dear, I'm so sorry to hear that. I know you and your family have **been through a lot** with that dog.

Joelle: We're going to miss her, but I think it was the right decision.

Isabelle: How has your mom been lately?

Spencer: She's getting better. She was sick for a few years, but we think she'll be all right.

Isabelle: I heard she's **been through a lot**. When she's up to it, we would like to invite her over to our house for a small party in her honour.

Spencer: I think she would like that. I'll have a chat with her about it.

On the spot Phrase

After saying yes to the marriage proposal, Suzanne and her partner were approached by a photographer with an offer to have their pictures taken. Suzanne remarks she was surprised. The hosts have heard of people taking engagement pictures, but not **on the spot!** **On the spot** means in the same moment or immediately after. You can say you won a \$20 bet with your brother and he paid you **on the spot**. That means he paid you immediately.

Here are a couple more examples with **on the spot**:

Elise: I thought you were going to buy a train set for your kids. What happened?

Jacob: I actually did buy the train set, but apparently it was the last one in the store.

Elise: And?

Jacob: And someone walked up to me in the parking lot and offered to buy it off me **on the spot** for double the price I paid.

Elise: Wow. With that money, you can buy your kids an even better gift.

Simon: Why are you smiling?

Cary: It's funny. Tom challenged me to a race.

Simon: Why would he do that? He's not faster than you.

Cary: I know. But he saw I was limping and a little tired, so he challenged me to a 100-metre race.

Simon: Just like that? **On the spot?**

Cary: Yeah. No warm-up or anything.

Simon: How much did you beat him by?

Cary: At least 10 metres. Silly Tom.

A touch

Noun

Suzanne talks about wanting both American and French **touches** to her wedding. In this sense, **a touch** means a small amount of something. For example, an American cultural **touch**, for her, would be to play the game of horseshoes. You can also use **touch** as an adjective. If you say someone is **a touch** sad, you mean that person is a little sad.

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

Salvatore: Nice dress. Did you make it yourself?

Tracy: Mostly.

Salvatore: What does that mean?

Tracy: I felt I needed a little help. I always go see my mom before I finish a dress.

Salvatore: Good idea. There's nothing like a mother's **touch**.

Tracy: But I did most of it.

Salvatore: I know, I know. I believe you.

Monica: What do you think of this painting?

Jose: Impressive. Is it finished?

Monica: Not quite yet. I still need to add the finishing **touches**.

Jose: Like what?

Monica: I'm just going to fix the green on the trees. Then after, I have to cover everything with varnish to protect the paint.

Quiz

1. In which American state does Suzanne's proposal story take place?

2. When should you use the expression speaking of?

- a) when you want to end a conversation
- b) when you want to start a conversation
- c) when you want to switch topics in a conversation
- d) when you want to speak

3. What does it mean to have been through a lot?

- a) to have walked a lot
- b) to have had many conversations
- c) to have had many obstacles
- d) to have enjoyed life

4. What is NOT another way of saying on the spot?

- a) probably
- b) instantly
- c) immediately
- d) now

5. What does it mean to parley?

- a) to speak
- b) to negotiate
- c) to dance
- d) to eat

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of Suzanne's engagement story?
2. When you were growing up, did you ever dream of the perfect engagement story you wanted?
3. How would you react if your love proposed to you holding a sandwich?
4. Do you believe in good omens? Minutes after Suzanne and her partner were engaged, a photographer who was on her honeymoon coincidentally wanted to take pictures of them. Do you think that's a good sign?
5. How easy or how difficult would it be for you to be in an intercultural relationship?

Quiz Answers

1. Hawaii 2. c 3. c 4. a 5. b

Episode credits

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