

## Chatterbox #284 – The cult of overwork

### Episode description

In many countries, there is a cult of overworking and people are expected to work long hours. In fact, working long hours can be seen as a sign of good moral ethics. However, overworking is also a big problem for workers, as it puts a lot of stress on them. In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Anna discuss the cult of overworking and their experiences with this phenomenon.

Chatterbox is a series designed for intermediate and advanced English language learners. This series features conversations between two native English speakers on a variety of interesting topics.

### Fun fact

According to a 2017 study, Cambodia was the country that had the longest working hours, with employees putting in an average of 2455.55 hours annually. The lowest out of the 66 countries studied? Germany! They clocked in with an average of 1353.89 hours per employee.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Near and dear to [one's] heart
- Dependent
- To battle with [something]
- At the whim of [someone]
- Hamster wheel
- To put in face time



## Transcript

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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.

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**Andrew:** Hello, everyone, my name is Andrew.

**Anna:** And my name is Anna.

**Andrew:** And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Hey there, friends, welcome back to Culips. This is Chatterbox, the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features natural conversations between two English native speakers about something very interesting. And, of course, today we have a great topic prepared for you. It's one that's **near and dear to both my heart and my cohost Anna's heart**. Anna, hey there, what's going on?

**Anna:** Hey, how are you, Andrew?

**Andrew:** I'm doing very well. And, Anna, what are we going to talk about today?

**Anna:** Today, we're going to talk about a really interesting topic for me, because it's something that I'm dealing with at the moment, which is overwork and the culture of overworking.

**Andrew:** Yes, now, I said it was **near and dear to our hearts** and maybe that wasn't the best way to phrase it. I think why I said that is because it is something that we are both dealing with and that probably many of our listeners are dealing with, as well. So in that regard, it is close to us, but it's not something that we love, is it? I'm not really a big fan of overworking, personally.

**Anna:** No, of course not. I think nobody likes to overwork. And I think this is one of the key issues that a lot of people have faced over the past couple of years. And I think it's something that's so important that people learn how to deal with in the future, with the future way of working. And now that we're all working at home and this is something that's going to be, I think, even more important as, like, an issue in society moving, moving forward.

**Andrew:** Exactly. So we'll get into this conversation in more detail here in just a moment, everyone. But before we do, I want to let you know about the study guide and transcript that's available for this episode. And, actually, we make study guides and transcripts for all of our episodes. And if you sign up and become a Culips member, then you will get unlimited access to our study guide library, which includes a full pass to all of those study guides. Now we think that following along with the study guide while you listen to us is the best way to study with Culips. And by becoming a Culips member, you'll be able to improve your English and also support us and help make future Culips episodes possible. There's also a bunch of other extras that you get when you become a member. So, to learn about all of the details and to sign up, just visit our website, Culips.com.

Anna, when I was preparing for this episode, I came across a fact that was really shocking to me. I couldn't believe that it was true. And I'm wondering if this is as shocking to you as it was to me. The fact is that workers around the world, on average, do 9.2 hours of unpaid work per week.

**Anna:** Actually, I have to say if you'd asked me that maybe a couple of years ago, I probably would have said wow. I probably would have been more shocked. But I think, with my experience and the people that I've worked with, actually, that would probably be about right. And it wouldn't even shock me, which is a shocking thing in itself that it doesn't surprise me.

I think, obviously, this type of statistics have to do with some specific types of sectors and industries. And I do think overworking hits other industries more than others, but I know that there's this huge culture of working more than you are supposed to. And some people say, you know, overtime, but overtime is when you're paid for something in my view, you do extra hours and you're paid for it. This is just extra work that you're doing outside of your schedule. And, honestly, right now, from my experience and the people that I know, it doesn't really surprise me. And that's the scary thing.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I mean, I guess it is field **dependent**, and some people are going to work longer unpaid hours than other people, especially people who are salaried workers, right? Maybe you are salaried to work 40 hours per week, but you end up working 50 hours per week and you don't get any overtime pay for that, then that would be the 10 hours of unpaid work right there. Now we've titled this episode "The cult of overwork" and I think we should break that down a little bit to our listeners, because it might be a little bit difficult to understand on the surface. What do we mean when we talk about the cult of overwork?

**Anna:** So, for me, the cult of overwork is like how we view overworking and the fact that, in many societies, overworking is seen as a sign of success, or working more hours is seen as a sign of being very dedicated, or being a better employee, or maybe even a better person, I don't know. So the cult of overwork is kind of this thing, this belief that we have that the more you work, I guess, the better person you are or the more successful you are.

I do think that it has a link to this idea of being a moral person, being a good person, you know, working hard, I think is a good thing. It's, to have a good work ethic, is seen as something which is really positive by other people. But having a good work ethic and working too much, it's like a very fine line between those two things. I don't think that a lot of people know that line or are aware of that line.

**Andrew:** Yeah, absolutely. I think, at least my cultural background, there's something called the Protestant work ethic, which is this idea, that kind of Protestant people, which is a branch of Christianity, it's like a moral virtue to work hard and to be successful because of that work. It's, like you put in the effort and good things come from that effort. And working hard is moral, like you are mentioning, Anna. And I think that's part of the cultural background of many English speakers. And maybe it's embedded into modern culture as well. I'm not an academic, I'm not an expert on this issue so I couldn't say for certain, but I have that kind of gut feeling that there might be something there, some kind of connection.

And to touch on that point in more detail with a specific example, Elon Musk, the world-famous entrepreneur and businessman and billionaire, he is on the record as saying that if you want to work at one of his companies, you're going to have to work hard, because he mentioned, quote, unquote, that "there are easier places to work, but nobody ever changed the world on 40 hours a week." So I think this hits right on that point that you were talking about. It's like if you don't work hard, if you don't overwork, then maybe you're not living up to your potential, and maybe you're not really a good person, maybe you're a little bit lazy.

**Anna:** Oh, sure, and this is something I **battle with constantly**. And from my perspective, I now work more for myself than I do for a company. So I've made that transition recently, going from being, having the majority of my money from a salary to now working for myself, which has been a pretty stressful process, I have to say. And I'm always **battling with this thing** of, for example, if I take the day off, a Sunday, for example, and I don't look at my email, I don't prepare anything, then I feel guilty, because I think, well, I could have made some progress on that. Or I could have spent some time doing that.

And I'm not sure if that's very healthy, but I do think there are some points in your life when it is important to work hard. For example, if you have an exam, if you really want a promotion, if you're working on a really important project. So there are different points in your life where maybe you have to work more than others.

But the point is that a lot of people can't tolerate that level of stress or pressure for a long period of time. And if you don't look after yourself and think, OK, I need to stop or I need to slow down a little bit. If you don't kind of have that moment, then it could lead to a point where you are very burnt out. And then you have to take time off. So it's kind of like a catch-22. You know, if you work a lot, you need to make sure that you look after yourself in a physical sense and also, you know, in a mental sense as well. And I think that's the key point that people maybe are missing sometimes.

**Andrew:** Absolutely. And there's two things that you just said, Anna, that I want to touch on because I think they're really, really interesting. The first was going into business for yourself. And, Anna, I have a job at a university, I'm an instructor at a university, so I do get a salary from them, but in a lot of ways I feel like I'm pretty independent. It's maybe different than most people who have an office job, for example. But one of the disadvantages of being an instructor is that you're always **at the whim of your students** and they can email you all the time, any time of the day. Often they email me at 3 or 4 a.m., because they are 20 years old and they stay up till 3 or 4 a.m.

So I always feel like I'm kind of tied to my job. And there's really no times when I'm completely free from the job. And sometimes I wish that I was a businessman that had a 9 to 5, go to the office, check out at 5, and come home and I don't think about my job until the next morning. I'm wondering, are you ever jealous of people that have a very set routine job, and it's kind of like they clock in, clock out, and then that's it?

**Anna:** I think there are pros and cons to that. For me, looking at my previous jobs that I've had, and where I was very much a 9 to 5, an office job, but even in 9 to 5 and office jobs, I was still probably overworking and doing more hours than I should have been doing. I know students who, for example, in consultancy, that are working crazy hours. I mean, they work 14 hours a day. I mean, it's just unbelievable. But again, industry specific. There are some industries that are just absolutely known for this style of overworking culture, and it's just part and parcel. Well, I mean, you could argue it's part and parcel, and maybe some of these habits have to change.

But, yeah, I mean, I do feel more pressure, which I think is obvious being somebody who's self-employed and doing your own thing, you feel more pressure, there's nobody else to back you up. You are it, you know, you are the person. So you don't have a team, you don't have anybody to run things by all the time. So sometimes I do feel maybe envious or, or jealous, or I think, well, I wish I had a normal, "a normal" I say in speech marks, job. But there is really no normal job.

And I have to try and remind myself that this is what I wanted, I wanted a little bit more freedom, I wanted flexibility. At the moment, I work 6 days a week. So the only day that I have when I don't work is Sunday. So for me Sunday's a really important day for me to relax. But, again, I have this guilt thing or I think if I'm not working, then maybe I'm a bit lazy. Or if I decide to take an hour lunch break, then I feel like I've missed out on some valuable productive time.

But the point is we can't be 100% productive 100% of the time, it's just not possible. So I try and use little tricks to manage my time better. I get up early in the morning, I try and work in the mornings. So I try and use little tricks to make the most of my time so that I try not to work too much.

**Andrew:** Very good. I think, yeah, maybe in my case, the grass is always greener on the other side, right? I'm like kind of idealizing a job that maybe just doesn't really exist, because these days, we're so connected with our phones and email and messaging that I don't know if there's anybody that can truly escape the workplace during their off time. I think probably workers in so many different fields probably feel like I do. And maybe there is not really any jobs anymore where it's just like you clock in and then clock out and you don't have to think about the job in your off time.

The second thing that you mentioned, Anna, that I wanted to bring up, because I think it's really important is the idea of burnout. And we should talk a little bit about that, because it's closely connected with overworking. And really what it is is the result of overwork. So burnout is when you have stress from working too hard and you're just not able to manage that stress. And as a result, you kind of melt down and you can't continue to work as you would like to do.

**Anna:** And often as well with burnout, sometimes people get ill, so maybe they will be working for a period of very intense period and their immune system will be low so, and they're tired, they're not sleeping. Sleep is so important, when—I've realized that a lot since I've become more independent, that I've really tried to look at my lifestyle, my body, and my health, and see how I can use that to make sure that I'm working better. Because, again, it's only you, if you get ill, that's a problem.

So, yeah, but burnout is really difficult. And I've seen people go through that, I've experienced similar situations where you work under such high pressure that, in the end, as you said, you kind of just collapse and you don't really know what to do. And it's not always obvious when people are burning out. People are very good at hiding that and seem like everything's fine, but behind that they're really, really struggling.

So I think burnout, especially now that we're really connected, as you said, we're always on, we're checking our phones. You know, working on things like social media is really difficult, because you're checking things, you've got to reply to comments, you've got to post content, it just seems like a never-ending **hamster wheel**. So I think the people who are going to be more successful are the people who are going to be able to manage those situations better, or find ways that work for them to manage that kind of life of always being on, but somehow trying to find ways where you can relax or you can disconnect. I think that's gonna be really important for people in the future.

**Andrew:** Somebody that I know recently suffered from burnout, and he got sick because of it, like his body just shut down, and he went to the hospital, and the hospital told him, "You need to take some time off and you need to rest or you're going to get even worse. Your situation is going to be even worse than it is now." So, he took a couple of days off. And then he went right back to work.



And I asked him, “Have you recovered? Like, are you OK now? Are you fine to go back to work?” And he said that, no, he didn’t feel fine but if he doesn’t work, then the work just piles up. And he was more stressed about not being able to keep up with his clients and with his responsibilities at work, that he felt like he needed to go back.

It’s really this vicious cycle, where the overworking causes you to feel stress and burnout, but then when you have to take some time off to deal with these feelings of burnout, then the stress of not working kind of forces you back to work. And there’s really no way to win, it seems like a lose-lose to me.

**Anna:** Exactly. And I think one thing that’s really important, especially talking about companies now, is the leadership in your company. For example, if you have a leadership team, a boss, managers that are always overworking, they’re always doing overtime, then you’re going to set that culture in your organization. If you’re an organization that just expects people to work a lot, all the managers are doing it, then everybody else is going to do it as well.

So I think it is also the responsibility of the people who are leading organizations, managing organizations to set the tone, to start the conversations about this, you know, how can we look after you better? How are you doing? And not all companies, unfortunately, prioritize that with all their employees.

But I think that you need to lead by example. If you want your team to take breaks, and you want them to manage their work better, then you have to do that. Otherwise, people will just copy leadership behaviour. If your boss is always overworking and working 60 hours a week, then you’re going to do it because that’s what people are like. So I think it’s a responsibility of people who are leaders to also set good examples for that as well.

But, again, easier said than done. As you said, with the example with your friend, you know, the thought of things, sometimes it’s more stressful than actually just doing it. So it is a vicious cycle. It’s really difficult. I think each person has to spend some time or should maybe spend some time thinking about how, if they feel stressed, how to figure it out. But then again, easier said than done. It really is. Sometimes people feel so much pressure, and so much responsibility. And you know, it’s difficult to put yourself in people’s shoes that are going through that.

**Andrew:** Now, the pandemic that we’ve all been living through for the last year and a half, really, I think, has mixed things up. And one of the positive changes that the pandemic, I think, will bring in is that it is helping us to think differently about work and what work is and what we value in life. And I think this is a good thing, definitely.

I know that because of the pandemic, many companies started to offer employees access to counselling or some wellness apps, like maybe some meditation apps, they paid for subscriptions. And also more people are working from home these days. And also just not having as much to do during the pandemic. I mean, of course, it depends on what field you work in. If you're a medical professional, you're probably crazy busy. But some of us in the educational field, for example, we had some time to sort of step back and re-evaluate our professional lives and think about what we want to do going forward.

And I think many people realized that having some extra time to spend with your family or to be involved in a passion project or one of your hobbies is something that is really important and really improves the quality of our lives. So I think there might be some good news on the horizon. I think a lot of people are taking a step back these days and thinking about overwork and realizing that it's just not worth it for their overall quality of life and mental health. And I really hope that this might be one of the lasting impacts of the pandemic is that it ushered in kind of a new age of a more employee-friendly work culture.

**Anna:** Definitely. I think any conversation which opens up that kind of dialogue about are you all right? Can we do anything to help you? How's the project going? Do you feel that you can manage it? These types of questions just make, I think, people feel more valued. And if you feel more valued, then you're ultimately going to do a better job. So that is a win-win rather than a lose-lose for companies.

**Andrew:** Yes. So let's hope that more companies going forward start to think that way. I think that would be good for everyone, as you said.

Anna, I want to wrap this episode up with a kind of fun question that's kind of related to what we've been talking about. And I have to admit that I'm guilty of doing this, so if you are too, don't feel embarrassed. And I'm curious, have you ever sent an important email, maybe to a business colleague or a boss or even a professor when you are a student, and timed the email to arrive at a different time from when you wrote the email, so that you would seem more professional?

Like, personally, I've done this, I remember when I was a grad school student, sometimes I would schedule my emails so that they would be sent to my professors right at 7 a.m. so that, you know, they would think, "Oh, Andrew is such a studious student. He's waking up at 7 a.m. and asking these good questions." But, really, at that time, I would be sleeping. I just scheduled the email before I went to bed. Have you ever done this kind of thing?

**Anna:** Yeah, maybe. I mean, maybe I haven't scheduled emails to leave at different times, but sometimes I might send an email in the morning, for example, very early in the morning, maybe, you know, I'm awake, I'm doing things, I'm being productive. Maybe it has that kind of undertone to it as well, but I'm sure I'm definitely guilty of maybe staying a bit later in the office to show that I'm really dedicated, or going the extra mile. I'm sure I'm definitely guilty of that.



Less so now, but I would say definitely, in my early career when I was a graduate, absolutely. I wanted to make sure that people knew I was committed and I was dedicated and a hard worker, because for me, the ultimate thing is for someone to think that I wasn't a hard worker. That's like the ultimate thing that would make me feel really bad. Like if somebody thought I was lazy, like that would make me feel really, really, really embarrassed and I would hate that. So, hands up, I'm sure I'm guilty of that.

**Andrew:** Yes. Also, one of the difficult things about starting out as a young person in a new career is that often when you're kind of at the bottom of the food chain in a new company, you have to be the first to arrive and the last to leave. And it's not about really the quality of the work that you're doing. It's about the appearances, right? You want to look like a hard worker, look like you're being really productive. And this can, yeah, just spur on burnout. And I think this whole kind of corporate culture needs to be changed. I think at the end of the day, the result of your work should be more important than, you know, **putting in face time** at the office.

**Anna:** Absolutely. And one of the things I remember one of my best managers saying to me was, "Anna, I don't care how many hours that you work, but what I want to see are the outputs of what you're doing. So if I can see the outputs, then I'm very flexible about your schedule." And I think this is the type of attitude that would just be fantastic across all different types of professions. So we can hope, we can hope, Andrew, let's see what happens.

**Andrew:** Well, everyone, that is it for this episode. Thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoyed this conversation and found it as fascinating as we did. And we also hope that you learned a lot with us today, as well.

Our website is [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). And, again, if you want to get the study guide, including the transcript and practice exercises for this episode, then just check out the website to download it.

**Anna:** Becoming a Culips member is a great way to support us, but it's not the only way. You can also support us by leaving us a five-star rating and a nice review on your podcast app, telling your friends about Culips, and following us on social media.

**Andrew:** That's right. You can stay up to date with Culips by following us on YouTube and Instagram. And, everyone, we would like to hear your opinion about this topic of overwork and burnout. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). Please send us your reaction to this conversation today. Additionally, if you have a question or a suggestion for an upcoming episode topic, then we'd love to hear from you as well. We'll be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you all then. Bye.

**Anna:** See you later.

## Detailed Explanations

### Near and dear to [one's] heart Idiom

If something is **near and dear to [one's] heart**, it is both familiar and well loved by the person. In this episode, Andrew slightly misuses this expression but quickly corrects himself. The main topic of this episode is the idea of overworking. While this topic is familiar to both Andrew and Anna, it is not well loved.

You can also say **near to my heart** or **dear to my heart**. However, putting the two together adds some emphasis to the idiom. **Near and dear to [one's] heart** is more common, since it rhymes and has a nice rhythm when you say it.

Here are a couple more examples with **near and dear to [one's] heart**:

**Martha:** Oh, wow! Is this an original Beatles record?

**Lindo:** Yes, it is.

**Martha:** It must be worth thousands of dollars. Would you ever think of selling it?

**Lindo:** No way. I've had this for 50 years. It's way too **near and dear to my heart** to ever let it go.

**Myriam:** At the wedding, what song are you thinking of playing for your first dance?

**Kelly:** *We've Only Just Begun* by The Carpenters.

**Myriam:** I love that song. Is there any special reason?

**Kelly:** Yeah. We listened to it on our first date and it became our song. So it's **near and dear to our hearts**.

## Dependent Adjective

At the beginning of this episode, Andrew says that the number of unpaid hours someone works is field **dependent**. He means that this situation depends on what kind of job someone has. Being in a certain field means that you are **dependent** on the conditions of that field. Your situation is very different if you work in education or if you work in the sales industry.

If you are **dependent** on something, your life changes when that thing changes. Say, for example, that your business is **dependent** on \$1000 in sales to a certain company every month. If that company suddenly only buys \$500 worth of goods, that affects your business tremendously. You are **dependent** on doing business with them.

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

**Sanaa:** Do you think this pandemic is going to kill the need for physical buildings in the workplace?

**Beth:** I think it is industry **dependent**.

**Sanaa:** Can you think of examples?

**Beth:** OK. I think that, for many businesses, the traditional office will change. However, classrooms where teachers and students come together and communicate, they will still be needed.

**Harry:** How are your investments? I know the market hasn't been doing too well these days.

**John:** I know. Some of my stocks are losing money, but that's not a big deal for me.

**Harry:** Why do you say that?

**John:** Most of my investments are secured by the bank. They make 2.5% profit no matter what. That's good for me. Let me tell you, it's good to have investments that are not **dependent** on the whims of the stock market.

## To battle with [something] Idiom

In this episode, Anna talks about her transition between working for a company and working for herself. She says that she has **to battle with overworking**. **To battle with [something]** is a common way of saying you are struggling with something.

You can **battle with a situation**, such as overworking. You can **battle with a condition**, such as a drug addiction. You can also **battle with a difficult decision**, such as which house to buy or which health insurance to get.

Here are a couple more examples with **to battle with [something]**:

**Leonard:** Has Nancy decided on what direction she wants to take?

**Winston:** Do you mean what to do with the house after her divorce?

**Leonard:** Yes. It's a major decision.

**Winston:** She's been **battling with what's best** for her and her children. She might just sell the house and move to San Diego to be closer to her parents. That would be good for the kids, too.

**Mark:** How is your brother?

**Sofia:** He's doing better now.

**Mark:** Is he still trying to live the clean life?

**Sofia:** He's trying, but he relapses sometimes. He's still **battling with substance abuse**.

**Mark:** It never gets easier. I should call him. I've been sober for 10 years. Maybe I can share some things I've learned over the years.

## At the whim of [someone]

### Phrase

As an instructor at a university, Andrew explains that he is sometimes **at the whim of his students**. A whim is a sudden desire for something. To be **at the whim of someone** is to be affected by someone else's decisions or influence, often suddenly.

For example, many professionals receive urgent messages and emails at all hours of the day. In that situation, they are **at the whim of their clients or work partners**.

Here are a couple more examples with **at the whim of [someone]**:

**Felix:** Are you planning to go to your home country this winter?

**Charles:** I'm thinking about it, but it's complicated.

**Felix:** How so?

**Charles:** With this pandemic, the entry requirements are challenging.

**Felix:** Even for citizens?

**Charles:** Yeah. We're **at the whim of the immigration department**. They change their policies every couple of months, so it's difficult to plan ahead.

**Xavier:** How's work these days?

**Sarah:** Busy. I'm always busy.

**Xavier:** Are you still working in the sales department?

**Sarah:** Yes. My clients are mostly from overseas, so I receive calls at all hours of the day.

**Xavier:** Wow. I don't envy you. I wouldn't want to be **at the whim of clients** from all over the world. I stick to those in the same time zone.

## Hamster wheel

### Idiom

When talking about overworking, Anna says that it seems as if you're in a never-ending **hamster wheel**. A **hamster wheel** is a real object that you can find in a hamster cage. It's a wheel where the hamster runs and runs but goes nowhere, something like a stationary bike for people.

In a working sense, being in a **hamster wheel** is the feeling you have when you are working so hard all the time but you are not advancing anywhere. For example, you might answer 20 emails in the morning. However, in the same time it took to answer those emails, you received 20 new emails and so you are no further ahead in your work. That's being stuck in a **hamster wheel**.

Here are a couple more examples with **hamster wheel**:

**Cory:** I'm thinking of quitting my job.

**Sinead:** Oh? I thought you liked your job.

**Cory:** I did when I first started.

**Sinead:** What went wrong?

**Cory:** Over the past few years, I realized that no matter how hard I worked, I could never advance. It's like being stuck in a **hamster wheel**. That's why I'm thinking of making changes in my life.

**Vince:** How's school going?

**Yuri:** This semester has been a bit of a challenge. I'm taking more classes than usual. I have so many papers to write. When I finish one, another professor gives me something else to write.

**Vince:** That's the true university experience. I did the same.

**Yuri:** Sometimes I think I'm running in a **hamster wheel**. But I have to finish my degree, so I can't jump off!

**Vince:** Just keep at it. You'll get there in the end.



## To put in face time Idiom

Near the end of this episode, Andrew says it should be more important to put in good work at your job than **to put in face time**. In this sense, **to put in face time** means to simply be present. If you are merely **putting in face time**, you are just showing up because you have to and you are not necessarily working hard.

You can also use this expression in a positive sense. For example, wanting **to put in more face time** with your boss can be a good thing. That means you want to communicate more with your boss, and you want your boss to see how hard you work. It can be good for your boss to see your actual face, instead of being anonymous in the workplace.

Here are a couple more examples with **to put in face time**:

**Fatma:** Did you hear that Martin showed up at the office on Saturday?

**Megan:** Again?

**Fatma:** Yeah. Apparently he was just playing online games all day.

**Megan:** That sneaky fellow. He's just **putting in face time** to make it appear as if he's a hard worker. Does the boss know about this?

**Fatma:** I'm not sure. Who's going to be the one to tell her?

**Paul:** Are you busy tonight?

**Florian:** Actually, I am. I'm **putting in some face time** with my parents.

**Paul:** Oh, that's right. You have a video conference with them every weekend.

**Florian:** Yeah. They get pretty upset if I forget or if I'm too busy to call.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following is NOT a good example of something near and dear to your heart?**

- a) a novel that is very special to you
- b) a person you just met
- c) your favourite dish that your mother makes for you
- d) a long-time friend

**2. What does it mean to be at the whim of someone else?**

- a) that person doesn't like you
- b) that person wants to make things easy for you
- c) that person's sudden decisions affect your life
- d) that person has a winning personality

**3. True or false? Putting in face time can be both positive and negative.**

- a) true
- b) false

**4. What does it mean to be stuck in a hamster wheel?**

- a) you're running a lot
- b) you're working hard but not advancing
- c) you're hardly working
- d) you're happy to be getting exercise

**5. What does it mean to be dependent on something?**

- a) you like it
- b) if you don't like it, it doesn't matter
- c) if it changes, your life will also change
- d) if you try hard enough, you will always succeed

## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are your opinions on the subject of overworking? Is this something that affects you?
2. Is there a cult of overworking in the country where you live? Explain.
3. How important do you think it is to put in face time at work?
4. What is a difficult aspect of your life that you battle with?
5. Describe something that is near and dear to your heart.

## Quiz Answers

1. b   2. c   3. a   4. b   5. c

### Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Anna Connelly

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Kevin Moorehouse

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Matty Warnock

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Tim Gouw (Unsplash.com)