

Chatterbox#304 – Burnout

AD-FREE

Episode description

Do you ever feel exhausted and overwhelmed with work or other aspects of your life? If so, you're not alone. Burnout is a common experience that can happen to anyone. In this episode, Andrew and Anna explore what burnout is, how to recognize it, and most importantly, what you can do to prevent it.

Chatterbox is a series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features native English speakers having natural conversations on interesting topics. Studying with this series will help you build your fluency, sharpen your listening skills, and expand your vocabulary.

Fun fact

Did you know that during the pandemic, a new term “Zoom fatigue” started being used to describe the tiredness and burnout caused by overuse of video conferencing? Many people have experienced higher levels of stress and burnout as a result of remote work, social isolation, and the constant use of video conferencing platforms like Zoom.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To go the extra mile
- To [one's] detriment
- Dread
- To grit and bear it
- Ins and outs
- To grind it into the ground



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the DetailedExplanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Chatterbox number 304. Burnout, featuring Andrew and Anna. Hello, Anna.

Anna: Hello Andrew and hello to everybody listening as well. So today, we're going to be discussing a topic that has to do with wellbeing, stress, mental health, careers, and all of those fun things rolled into one because we're going to be talking about burnout.

Andrew: Burnout. Yes, that's right. And I think it's probably a term that many of our listeners have heard before. It's kind of a buzzword these days, in fact. And Anna, even maybe some of our listeners, but hopefully not too many of our listeners, but maybe some have even experienced burnout personally.

Anna: Definitely, burnout can be a huge, huge life challenge. So, I hope that too many of you out there haven't had to go through it. But I think it's something that a lot of us, at least on some level, can relate to. Anyway, we'll be chatting all about this topic and sharing our own personal experiences and opinions about it.

Andrew: OK, Anna, let's get started with our conversation about burnout and I'd like to begin this episode Anna, the same way that we begin many of our episodes and that's with a definition. It's just a great way to make sure everyone's on the same page and knows exactly what we're talking about right from the start. So, Anna, I will put you on the spot here, would you like to take a stab at it? Could you let us know what your definition of burnout is?

Anna: Of course, not a problem at all. So, burnout is a state of feeling really, really tired and stressed out. It's like you feel mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted.

Burnout usually happens when you have too much stress, maybe it continues for a long time without being managed or taken care of. And really, it can happen in any part of your life, maybe work or relationships or both.

Andrew: Exactly. Yeah, that is a fantastic definition. Now, for all of the visual learners out there, I think you can imagine this expression in your head, kind of. Like what pops into my mind, at least, is I think of a little camping stove. You know, those little camping stoves that are fueled by the gas canisters, Anna? When the gas canister is full, it has lots of energy, and it can power the fire to light the stove without any problems at all. But when that gas keeps burning and burning, and eventually becomes exhausted and empty, then there's no more energy left to keep the fire burning, and the fire just burns out. There's nothing left. So just like one of those little gas canisters, when people have used all their energy dealing with a stressful situation, like you mentioned, it could be at the office, or maybe it is a kind of dysfunctional family relationship. Or maybe it's even just a big personal project that you're going through, you know, you're juggling too many things at once, too many responsibilities at once. Well, any of those things can lead us to burnout. We have no gas left in the tank, we have no energy left to give, and we just feel drained and exhausted.

Anna: Andrew, I'd like to start asking you, I guess the first obvious question is, have you ever experienced burnout yourself?

Andrew: You know, I was thinking about that while we were preparing for this episode today. And I don't think I've ever experienced burnout in a serious way. I mean, of course, I'm human. I'm like everybody, and everybody can feel tired and stressed and frustrated from time to time. And sometimes those feelings make you want to just give up and quit. And I certainly know that feeling, like just nothing's going your way and you're tired and you're frustrated, and you want to quit. So, I've had that feeling for sure. I've had that

feeling many times in different aspects of my life. In my professional life at work. I remember when I was younger, and I used to play music a lot and I played in bands. Sometimes after a band practice, if things just weren't going well and you felt like you weren't making any progress with your music, you felt like just quitting and giving up. I've even been in some relationships with some ex-partners and even some friends in the past where I felt like things weren't going very well and I just wanted to give up.

So, I've experienced that feeling. But I can't say that I've ever been burnt out to the point where I just couldn't recover from. At least my feeling with burnout is it's something that really takes you out of the game for a long time. It's like you need some time to recover before you can come back. But in my life, I've usually always been able to bounce back fairly quickly. Like that feeling disappears pretty much after I have a good night sleep or something then I can get back in control of things. Anna, how about you, have you ever experienced burnout?

Anna: For me, I'm in a similar situation, I don't think I've ever experienced pure burnout. I think I've definitely gone through some periods where I've been working a lot. And for burnout, for me personally, stems from work. And then the fact that you're burnt out at work then starts to affect your personal life or other areas. So, for me, it's very much a work-based thing. And there have been times, I remember when I was working in the UK, and there have been some really important projects I was working on that had really, really tight deadlines. And it was kind of burnout maybe over a very temporary period, but it wasn't something that was a long-term thing. Fortunately, I don't think I have been through a really serious case of burnout.

However, I do remember when I was a teacher, and this is something that can really affect teachers and lots of other professions as well. But I do know a lot of teachers can feel burnout purely for the workload. I mean, that's one of the key things about burnout is like a heavy, heavy workload, all the things you have to do and not having enough time to do

them, or having to do a lot of overtime, in order to actually do the work that you're just supposed to do with your normal hours. Working on the weekends, working late at night, it almost feels like you have no time to do anything else. Your whole life is consumed by work. And I know, I do know some other teachers who have experienced burnout just purely from a heavy workload. And I do know that it affects a lot of different people. But then I do think there are some people who, they have burnout, but they're almost workaholics as well. So, I think there is an element of that. It's like almost sometimes burnout becomes the norm for some people.

Andrew: I never thought of it that way. But yeah, maybe if you are a workaholic, you just get used to it, right? You're like, "Oh, this is just what life is, this is how things are supposed to be." And you might not even realize that you're burnt out. That could happen, I suppose. One thing that I just thought of while you were talking about teachers, Anna, is that as a teacher, you have to work with many different students. And sometimes those student relationships can also be extremely demanding. If you have a challenging student in your class, sometimes even when you leave the school and you go home at the end of the day, you're still thinking about your relationship with that student. Maybe how you can help that student, or how you need to operate your class to make the class successful if you have a student that causes a disruption in the classroom. I'm thinking more now about, you know, high school teachers and maybe even elementary school teachers. But those teachers that have to deal with students like that, you know, they can't really turn that switch off. That like, I'm at work, I'm at home switch, it's always going.

And something that my wife has told me before is like, the dreams that she hates the most are dreams that have to do with work. Like if she has an office dream, which can happen from time to time, right? You have a dream about being in the office. And she's like, "I hate those dreams, because that's my personal time and it's like, I feel that same stress of working, even when I'm sleeping." So, I think maybe people who can flip that switch really easily, like this is my work time, this is my personal time, and they don't let the two mix.

Maybe that's a way that you can avoid burnout, but it's probably really person to person and also profession to profession. Some professions are really easy to do that. And I think others, the work just carries along with you throughout your whole life, really.

Anna: Yeah, you know, the lines become very blurred, as you said before. And I think that's also made worse by things like home working. Sometimes it's very difficult to separate what's my home life, and what's my work life. And another profession that pops into my head, kind of is normalized burnout, is the medical professions, doctors and nurses. I have family members who are — who are nurses, and they work so much and so many hours, and they switch between shifts and it's a very stressful high-pressure job as well. So, I'd be interested in what some of your strategies are Andrew, and you mentioned there about being able to switch on and switch off. I think one of the most effective strategies for me and something I'm still learning to do, by the way, guys, is about being able to say no, when you need to say no. You don't have to say yes to everything. And you don't even have to say yes to something that you think oh, maybe this could be a really, really good opportunity for me. Or maybe this would be really good, if it's going to mean that it's going to put a lot of pressure, it's going to put a lot of work on you, you're not going to be able to do it very well because you're going to spread yourself too thin.

Guys, this is a beautiful expression, but basically if you spread yourself too thin, you don't do anything really very well. It's better to do a few things, but really well, rather than to spread yourself too thin and not do anything very well at all. So, for me saying no is really powerful, because I think a lot of us, we just always want to say yes, like, "Yeah, we'll do it. Don't worry, I'll stay late. Yeah, I'll do that extra project. Yeah, I'll stay. I'll do the work on the weekend." So, saying no can be really powerful. But it's really actually very difficult to do, especially if you're like me, and maybe Andrew, you're same as well, and you guys listening, you always want to say yes to things and help people out and **go the extra mile** and go above and beyond. But sometimes, if it's going to be **to your detriment**, it's not

always a good idea to do it. I don't know what other strategies you have, as well, Andrew, about managing stress and preventing this type of burnout situation.

Andrew: Yeah, it's a good question. I definitely agree with you that knowing when to say no, and what you can take on and what you can't take on, knowing your limits as a human is really important. And that's something that I've got in touch with over the years, I think. And now I feel like I have a pretty good handle on that, and I try not to take on too much extra responsibility. I think also setting aside some time where I do no work at all is really important. So, I'm lucky in my life that I have work, I get to do work that I really enjoy. I love doing the podcast, I love teaching English, it's really aligned with my interests and my passions in life and that makes working really easy, right? I'm very lucky in that regard that I'm not one of those people who wakes up in the morning and just goes like, "Oh, I gotta go to that office again, or I got to do this job again." Like, I've experienced that in the past, I've had jobs in the past that I really hated for many different reasons. Maybe it was the coworkers, maybe it was the work itself, maybe I felt like I was just underpaid and overworked. For many various reasons I felt that way in the past, but I don't feel that way anymore. So, every day when I wake up, I don't have that feeling of **dread** or not looking forward to the day ahead. So that's amazing, like that really probably helps with avoiding burnout right from the start. But like you said, having these boundaries about what you can and can't do.

And also, about taking time like setting apart time for myself, for my family is really, really important. So usually, because of the podcast, I have to work a little bit on the weekends. The weekend is when I do Culips. But I always make sure that I carve out some time for spending time with my wife on the weekend, no matter what, like even if we're behind schedule with a Culips episode and I feel the pressure like we got to make a new episode, we have to release a new Culips episode, I know that's important. And I know there are always people expecting a new episode and wanting to have new English studying content. Guys don't think I'm not prioritizing that because that is a big priority in my life. But

it comes second to spending time with my family each week. So, I do definitely make sure that I carve out some time to spend with my family, with my wife. And yeah, that's really important and I think that helps avoid burnout in my case.

Anna: Yeah, definitely, I'm the same. I've definitely spent a couple of years where I haven't been as active as I was before. So now during the week, I carve out some time, as you said, to just be outside. Being outside for me is really, really, really important. Being outside, not in the house, because I work from home. So, that kind of time that I have every week I set, and I put it in my calendar, which means that I will actually do it. And I will prioritize that over responding to an extra email, for example. And I think, look, it's different stages of our life, right? When we're younger, we want to take on a lot of things and we kind of have more capacity to do more, because maybe when we're younger, we don't have as many responsibilities, or we don't have as many things to take care of. And I think it kind of depends, I mean, when you have a family and you have children and I don't have children, so I don't fully understand. But there's just so many things that people have to worry about. They have to think about. And is burnout more common these days than ever before? I don't know, maybe?

I mean, there's just so many things that people have to deal with and some people just kind of **grit and bear it** and get on with it, and then for other people, it's really, really difficult. Everybody's different and everybody deals with stress differently but there definitely are people that I've met throughout my career that I think have had burnout and some people are able to take time off. Sometimes the strategy is to actually take some time off work. Sometimes people take leave, and maybe it's a couple of months, maybe it's four weeks, and they take leave from work to get over that. And sometimes it is just about making some of these small changes to make your routine a little bit more manageable. I mean, I don't know Andrew, what do you think in terms of responsibility, like do you think that employers or organizations have a role to play in helping prevent burnout with their employees?

Andrew: That's a great question. I think yeah, I mean that kind of arrangement is a relationship, right? A company has a relationship with their employees. And ideally, you would want that relationship to be functional and a good relationship, you want to have a good working relationship. And if somebody is burned out and stressed and unable to really do their job well, because of that, well, then that's not good for the company and it's also not good for the employee. So, there's a problem there. So, it makes sense, in my opinion, for the company to want to avoid burnout in their employees, so they can have a healthy, productive, workforce. That just seems to be a no-brainer, in my opinion. So, I know that there are a lot of progressive companies who give their employees like mental health days, right? If you're feeling stressed, you can take a day off just for mental health. And of course, there are some rules in place so that this isn't abused. But yeah, I think there are a lot of examples of companies who do this. And as a result, the employees feel thankful to the company. And they also feel like, well, I'm working for people who care about me, you don't want to work for people who just don't value your time or your health or your wellbeing at all, right?

So yeah, I would say in my opinion, definitely employers should be concerned about their employee's health, because overall, it probably affects the bottom line, and ultimately could make the company more money, more profit, if their employees are at their best.

Anna: Absolutely, I mean, you know, worst case scenarios, the person has to take time off and obviously, that means then they're not working in the company so it's in the company's best interest. However, I do think that a lot of companies and sectors and industries actually are built on the fact that people work an excessive amount of hours. So, they're kind of built on burnout, essentially. So, you know, I think it has to come from the top really, for me. You have to have the management team that appreciates and understands that employee wellbeing is important and then that filters down. That's really important for me, I think if it doesn't come from the top, it's very difficult to then set a good example because if you have people at the top not leading by example, then that just

filters down and everybody copies. So, if they're kind of burnout, and they're working a lot and they're not taking care of their wellbeing, then that's kind of the impression that people think they're like, "OK, here in this company, what we have to do is work loads of extra hours. And that's the only way that we can be successful. That's the only way we can move up." Where sometimes it's just nice if your manager asks you, "Are you OK? Is everything all right?"

I remember a couple of people have asked me that before, a manager in the past sort of asked me like, "Is everything OK? Like, are you all right?" And I was like, "Well, no, actually, I'm not OK." And you know, and then it opens up that conversation, which is really nice, you know? When somebody just asked you, "Are you OK, and is everything all right?" Sometimes that's even just enough that somebody appreciates and acknowledges that you're working hard. And you know that they're aware of that. So yeah, it's a difficult one. But I do think it's a situation that a lot of people are — are going through.

And like I said before, everybody reacts differently to stress in a different way.

So, burnout for one person is very different to burnout to another person, you know, we're all different and we all experience and deal with stress differently.

Andrew: Anna, I've got one final question here that I'll throw out to you before we wrap things up. And we'll bring it back to learning English, because that's why we're all here, right? So, I was thinking, you know, English-learning burnout could be a thing. Is it possible for someone who's learning English to feel burnt out from the process of studying English?

Anna: Oh, definitely, I think so, learning any type of language is frustrating, you have to put in a lot of effort. And sometimes you have to put in a lot of effort for what is sometimes not a big reward initially. So, the results are very much in the long term, which is like the most demotivating thing ever. You're like, OK, yeah, you know, you need to learn a

language for 20 years. I mean, it's like, you know, it doesn't exactly make you sort of want to get up and go, does it? So yeah, definitely, I think if you're studying for maybe an exam, and you're practicing a lot, and you kind of reach a point where you're like, "I don't know what I'm doing anymore. I don't know where I'm going. I'm not seeing the progress." So yeah, anything where you're working a lot, or you're under a lot of pressure for something, then if that feeling isn't like you said, and I really identify with that, like waking up in the morning, you feel bad when you wake up, it's thinking about the day ahead or thinking about the things you have to do. It's not a great feeling. So yeah, sure, why not English burnout. I will go with your theory, Andrew.

Andrew: And listeners, we would certainly like to hear from you as well, probably you would know better than us if English burnout is a thing. Anna, I'm actually curious, because in South Korea, where I'm based out of, a lot of companies will require their employees to have an English test score. You don't necessarily need to speak English well, but you need to have the score. And I think this is especially important for getting hired at a company to have that on your resume. You know, maybe they're not making the 60-year-old veterans who have been at the company for 30 years go and do an English test every year but for their new hires, it's like something that will make you stand out from the competition is having that high English test score on your application. Is it the same way in Spain? Is that something that Spanish employers value?

Anna: Yeah, definitely. I don't know **the ins and outs** exactly. But I know that definitely, if you're applying for a certain type of job in Spain, they will be expecting to see an English qualification. And normally, I would say maybe at the minimum of B2 level, which is a significant level to achieve. So, some people have classes at university in order to pass that module because it's normally a module that's kind of part of the course. As far as I know, as far as I'm aware, guys, you can correct me if I'm wrong. So yeah, it's definitely for certain roles for certain companies, it's a must have to be honest, it's not a nice to have, it's a must have.

Andrew: OK, so yeah, then I could definitely see people considering English as just another part of their career almost, right? So, it's just like any other kind of annoying job task. But Anna, I hope that our listeners are not burnt out from hearing us talk about this topic today. We didn't **grind it into the ground**, did we?

Anna: No, I hope not. I hope you were all able to follow along. And you enjoyed that as much as you could, talking about burnout.

Andrew: Yeah, it's not the most optimistic or fun topic, but it is a realistic topic that many people are experiencing around the world these days.

We've decided to keep our conversation going a little bit longer for all of our members just as a way to say thanks for your support. So, Anna, I've got some more lighthearted, rapid fire style questions for us to discuss here. I know the episode was a bit heavy, but we'll try and keep it light. So, three questions, OK? And the first question I'd like to ask you is, have you ever experienced burnout from doing something fun? Like, maybe binge watching a TV show, for example?

Anna: Oh, my goodness, yes, many times. I don't know about you, Andrew, but you know, when you watch a series and like you're obsessed with the series, I'm thinking of one in my head, *The Handmaid's Tale*, which was a series that came out. And it's like, I could only go so far, it was like quite a dark drama series. And you kind of reach a point where you're like, "I don't know how much more I can absorb." So, you kind of have to stop and come back to it at a later stage. What about you? Have you ever had that?

Andrew: Yeah, I haven't had the pleasure of binge watching a TV show for too long, which maybe means I'm burned out. Maybe I need to make that time in my life so that I have that opportunity. I'm really dating myself with this, but I remember when I was a university student, I used to go to the library and borrow some of the DVDs from different HBO series. So, like when I was a university student, series like *Sopranos* and *Six Feet*

Under. These were like big popular shows back then and I would binge watch them. Those kinds of shows were really heavy dramatic shows just like *Handmaid's Tale*, I think. And so, I'd be like, "Oh, I gotta take a break. You know, I can't watch this anymore. It's too much." So yeah, I think there's — there's that saying, right? There's too much of a good thing, relaxing and watching TV is generally a good thing, but gotta do it in an appropriate amount.

Anna: Okay, Andrew, I've got one for you. Which one is worse, burnout from working too hard or burnout from being bored at work?

Andrew: There's nothing worse than being bored, in my opinion. I think I'd rather be stressed and busy and go, go, go all day than being bored because at least if you're like working hard the time flies. But if you're bored, and you're just watching the clock, tick tock, tick tock. Ah, it's terrible. So, for me working hard. How about you?

Anna: Definitely. And clock watching is the worst. You know, when you're like watching the clock, and when you watch the clock, it goes even slower. But yeah, I'm one of those people. And maybe you guys are like me, as well, and Andrew, you too, I'm like if I haven't got anything to do, I'll make something to do. Like, I will make myself busy, like, I'm the same. I would much rather be busy than having nothing to do at all. So yeah, burnt out from working too hard is definitely the one for me, if I had to pick one.

Andrew: Nice. OK, last question. Have you ever taken a mental health day? We talked about that during the regular episode a little bit earlier. Anna, have you ever taken one of these to avoid burnout?

Anna: I don't know if I've taken consciously a mental health day, but sometimes I'll just be like, "OK, that's enough. No more work." And I'll shut down my computer and I'll go for a walk, or I'll go outside or do whatever. Probably not a whole day because maybe I'd feel a little bit guilty if I took the whole day off, which is not bad to take a day off. But sometimes I

feel guilty about doing that. But yeah, sometimes I'll just shut down my computer. I'll be like, "No, it's enough." Because sometimes I just reach a point where I'm like, there's no point me doing any more because I'm being so unproductive and so ineffective. It's like just stop Anna, just stop and come back to it tomorrow or later on or whatever. So yeah, definitely I've taken like little breaks or afternoons off or mornings off just get a bit of a change of scenery. And you?

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. I don't think I've ever had the pleasure of an employer offering me a mental health day. Like maybe at some of my jobs back in Canada I'd call in sick, I wasn't really sick, I was more just like stressed out or tired. And now you know, even with Culips, from time to time, if I feel like things are just not going very well, maybe I'm trying to do some editing or you know, do some planning for the show or even doing recording. Sometimes I turn on the mic to record and I just stumble over my words, and nothing seems to come out right and I listen back to what I've recorded and I'm like, "Oh, it's all terrible, ahh!" Then I'll just walk away, right? Gotta walk away for a bit just like you, and I'll take some time off and then come back. So definitely, I do that, absolutely. Anyways, everyone that will bring us to the end of today's episode. Thanks so much for listening. Great job on completing an English study session here with Anna and myself today.

Anna: Now we'd like to throw things over to you. You've heard what Andrew and I have to say about burnout, but we'd like to know what you think. Share your thoughts with us and the Culips community by leaving a comment on our website, Culips.com.

Andrew: Take care and we'll talk to you next time. Goodbye.

Anna: See you later.

Andrew: That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time, bye!

Detailed Explanations

To go the extra mile

Idiom

To go the extra mile means to do more than is asked or expected. If someone goes the extra mile, they're making an additional effort to achieve something. This expression is common in professional and business settings. For example, if your boss tells you to go the extra mile when working on a project, it means you need to put in more effort and work longer and harder than usual.

In this episode, Anna talks about the importance of being able to say no. She uses the expression to go the extra mile when explaining how saying yes to everything can lead to burnout. In this example, to go the extra mile means to say yes to something and make an additional effort to help someone, even if you don't have enough time to do it.

Anna also uses a similar expression, **to go above and beyond**, which also means to do more than expected and to put in extra effort.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go the extra mile**:

Charlotte: Hey, are you coming to the party tonight?

Jacob: I don't think so. I have to stay home and study.

Charlotte: Don't you ever have fun? It looks like all you do is study.

Jacob: Well, if I want to get into college, I need **to go the extra mile** to make sure I have good grades and a strong application.

Charlotte: I see. Good luck with that then. I'll tell everyone you said hi.

Interviewer: And the final question, why should we hire you for this position?

Candidate: I believe I'm the right fit for this role because I have the necessary skills and experience. But what makes me stand out is that I'm always willing **to go the extra mile** to achieve success. I am always willing to put in extra effort and go above and beyond to ensure that the job is done well.

Interviewer: Very good, thank you. We'll be in touch soon.

To [one's] detriment Phrase

To one's detriment refers to something that causes harm or disadvantage to someone. This phrase is commonly used when someone's actions result in negative consequences for them. It means that their actions have not been in their best interest and did not benefit them.

In this episode, Anna talks about the negative consequences of not being able to say no. This can be to your detriment because it can put a lot of pressure on you and can lead to burnout. In other words, the consequences are negative for people who can't say no and try to do more than they can handle.

The expression **to the detriment of [something]** can be used to describe a situation where something has a negative impact on something else. For example, if someone spends a lot of time playing video games instead of working, you could say that their gaming is to the detriment of their work. This means that their gaming is negatively affecting their work.

Both to one's detriment and to the detriment of [something] are formal expressions and are suitable for professional or academic contexts, as well as less formal settings.

Here are a couple more examples with **to [one's] detriment**:

Rick: It's Friday! Let's go for a drink.

Amanda: Sorry, I can't. I'm staying for another hour, I have to finish something.

Rick: Haven't you been working overtime every day this week?

Amanda: Yes, that's true. And it's **to my detriment**. I barely slept all week and had no chance to relax and do something enjoyable. I feel exhausted.

Teacher: I noticed that you've missed the last three classes. Is everything OK?

Oliver: I couldn't make it to class because I was at work.

Teacher: You do realize that focusing on work **to the detriment of your education** can result in you dropping out of college, right?

Oliver: You're right. I should make education my priority.

Dread

Noun

Dread is a noun used to express a feeling of strong fear or anxiety about something that is going to happen. When someone feels a sense of dread, they are worried and afraid of what might happen, and they do not want it to occur. This powerful emotion can cause uncomfortable mental and physical sensations, such as heaviness or tightness in the body.

In this episode, Andrew uses the word dread to describe the feeling of not looking forward to the day ahead when getting up in the morning. If someone wakes up with this feeling of dread, they are anxious about what might happen and fear it.

Dread can also be used as a verb. For example, if someone is dreading going to the dentist, it means they are anxious and scared of it. Similarly, if someone is dreading an unpleasant conversation, they are anticipating it with fear.

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

Lucy: Are you all right? You seem all tense.

James: My wife just called.

Lucy: Did something bad happen?

James: I don't know. But she said, "I need to talk to you about something". She sounded so serious. I'm really anxious now, I have this **sense of dread**. I can't stop thinking about what she might want to talk about.

Lucy: Just try not to think about it. Let's talk about something else so you can get distracted.

Alan: I've failed my exam again.

Diane: Oh no!

Alan: The worst thing is, I have to tell my parents about it. It **fills me with dread**.

Diane: I'm sure they'll understand. They love you. Come on, I'll be here by your side. Let's call them together.

To grit and bear it Idiom

The expression **to grin and bear it** is commonly used to describe a situation where someone is dealing with a difficult circumstance by putting on a brave face and trying to stay positive. However, Anna uses the expression **grit and bear it** to describe a different approach to handling difficult situations. This idiom means to remain strong while dealing with a challenging and uncomfortable situation, and it implies being resilient and determined to overcome the situation.

The complete version of the expression is "to grit one's teeth and bear it." When we grit our teeth, we clench them tightly, which is something we tend to do when we feel tense and frustrated.

This phrase is often used to describe a situation in which someone must tolerate something they do not like but have no choice but to endure. For example, if someone has to work long hours to complete a project, they might say, "I just have to grit and bear it until it's done." This means they accept the situation and are determined to handle it without complaining or giving up, no matter how difficult it may be.

Here are a couple more examples with **grit and bear it**:

Andy: I can't believe our boss is making us come to work on the weekend.

Erin: Well, the project won't finish itself.

Andy: I understand, but I had other plans, you know. Now I have to cancel everything.

Erin: I know, it's not easy, but we just have to **grit and bear it**. The deadline is on Monday.

Connor: Is your husband's little brother still staying at your place?

Anna: Yes, John is still living with us. And honestly I don't think I can handle any more of it. He's so messy and noisy, and he keeps bringing his friends home. He wouldn't listen to me, and my husband loves him so much he'd never say anything.

Connor: Well, John's your family now too, so you just have to **grit and bear it** until he finds his own place and moves out.

Anna: I guess so. I just hope it happens soon.

Ins and outs

Noun phrase, informal

The expression **ins and outs** means knowing all the details or parts of something. If you know the ins and outs of something, you understand it very well.

In this episode, Anna talks about trying to get a job in Spain. She says she doesn't know the ins and outs exactly. This means that she doesn't know all the steps and details in the process. So, you can use this expression when you don't know something well, too.

People often use ins and outs to talk about someone who is an expert in their field. For example, if a person has been an engineer for 20 years, they probably know all the ins and outs of engineering. Similarly, if someone has worked in a company for a long time, they know all the ins and outs of that company. In both examples, the expression means knowing all the details and understanding something very well.

Here are a couple more examples with **ins and outs**:

Dan: Can you give me a ride to work?

Jennifer: Sure, what's wrong with your car?

Dan: I don't really know, but it just wouldn't start. I'll probably need to find a mechanic or something.

Jennifer: Why don't you just ask my father to take a look? He's been in the car repair business for 30 years. He **knows all the ins and outs** of fixing cars.

Peter: What are all these papers?

Karen: Oh. I'm applying for an Australian visa, just trying to figure out what documents I need to submit.

Peter: You're in luck! I used to work at the visa center, I **know all the ins and outs**. Let me see what you've got there.

To grind it into the ground

Idiom

The expression **grind it into the ground** means to keep doing or saying something until it becomes tiresome or irritating. When someone grinds it into the ground, they repeat the same thing many times, making the conversation unproductive. This expression is used to point out that a topic has been discussed too much, suggesting it's time to stop talking about it and change the subject.

For example, if a person keeps talking about their recent vacation, even though everyone has heard the story multiple times, they are grinding it into the ground. Another example could be a manager who constantly repeats the same instructions during a meeting, making the discussion boring and a waste of time for the team.

Near the end of the episode, Andrew jokes about listeners possibly feeling burnt out from the conversation. He asks, "We didn't grind it into the ground, did we?" In other words, he hopes the discussion about burnout wasn't annoying or tiring for the listeners.

This expression is usually used negatively, meaning someone is focusing too much on a specific issue or topic without making any progress.

Juliana: I can't believe him! It's been only two weeks since we broke up and he's already posting photos with other girls.

Damien: Honey, I know you're upset, but you've been checking his Instagram every minute ever since you guys broke up. You're starting **to grind it into the ground**. Don't you think it's time to try to get over him and focus on something else?

Juliana: You're right. Sorry I've been so annoying.

Chris: How was the meeting?

Joan: Ugh, it was so frustrating. The boss kept **grinding it into the ground** about last month's sales. We didn't do well. We get it. What's the point in repeating it over and over again?

Chris: Yeah, he does that a lot. You'll get used to it.

Joan: Really? But this is such a waste of time! I can't believe you guys are cool with that.

Chris: We don't really have a choice I'm afraid.

Quiz

1. If you do more than someone asks you to do and work harder than usual, you _____.

- a) swim the extra meter
- b) fly the extra kilometer
- c) go the extra mile
- d) jump the extra step

2. True or false? To your detriment means doing what's in your best interest.

- a) True
- b) False

3. If something fills you with dread, it means you're feeling _____.

- a) anxiety and fear
- b) excitement
- c) anger
- d) calm

4. Which of the following means to persevere through a challenging situation by showing determination and strength?

- a) to grip and bear it
- b) to grin and bare it
- c) to grit and bear it
- d) to grate and bear it

5. Which of the following best describes the idiom to grind it into the ground?

- a) to give up on something too soon
- b) to learn something very well
- c) to solve a problem
- d) to continue saying something to the point when it becomes annoying

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced burnout? In general, how well do you manage stress?
2. Can you think of a time when you went the extra mile?
3. Describe a time when you felt a sense of dread. What happened?
4. Can you recall a time in your life when you had to grit and bear it?
5. What is something you know the ins and outs of?

Quiz Answers

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

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