

Chatterbox #309 – Quiet quitting

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Episode description

In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Anna discuss quiet quitting. This term gained popularity during the COVID pandemic, and it refers to a situation where workers do the bare minimum of their employment responsibilities and do only the job that they're being paid to do. Through this, employees refuse to engage in hustle culture. The question is, is quiet quitting a problem or a solution? Tune in to find out what our hosts think about it!

Fun fact

Quiet quitting is a popular topic these days, but have you heard of quiet firing? Quiet firing is when an employer tries to get rid of an employee without directly firing them. They make the employee's job less important or exclude them from important tasks, hoping that the employee will leave voluntarily. It seems like both employees and employers have found their own indirect ways of dealing with workplace challenges!

Expressions included in the study guide

- Fed up
- To put [one's] best foot forward
- Stiff upper lip
- To get on board with [something]
- Laid-back
- Ripped off



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: Chatterbox number 309. Quiet quitting, Featuring Andrew, and Anna. Today, I am joined by my cohost, Anna. Hey there, Anna.

Anna: Hi, Andrew and hello, listeners. I hope you're all doing well. In the episode we're going to be talking about a recent work phenomenon called, quiet quitting. Contrary to its name, quiet quitting isn't actually about quitting your job. Instead, it refers to doing the absolute bare minimum required to keep your job and doing nothing more than that. No above or beyond.

Andrew: These days, I've been hearing so much about quiet quitting. And I'm sure a lot of our listeners have as well. And who knows, Anna, we may even have some listeners out there who are participating in quiet quitting right now. And they may be even listening to this episode on the job, who knows.

Anna: Could be, who knows? I've actually heard estimates that up to 50% of the workforce are quiet quitters, so that would actually make a lot of sense. So, then, everyone, today we're going to be doing a deep dive into this topic and try to examine it from all sides. Along the way, we'll share our opinions and of course break down and explain some of the important vocabulary we use to talk about quiet quitting.

Andrew: Now, with that being said, we want to get started with this episode and our conversation about quiet quitting. Now, we hinted a little bit earlier about what quiet quitting is. But I think, Anna, it's time for us to give a proper definition. So, would you mind starting us off with a definition of quiet quitting?

Anna: So, I think most people first learned about quiet quitting after the hashtag went viral on TikTok last summer. It went so viral that it soon spread off of TikTok and across the internet and was soon talked about in a lot of traditional media as well, on the news, in magazines, and also on the radio. But let's go back to that first TikTok video that kicked it off. It was made by a guy named Ziad Khan and the video he offered was a very nice and succinct definition of quiet quitting. He said, "You're not outright quitting your job, but you're quitting the idea of going above and beyond. You're still performing your duties but you're no longer subscribing to that hustle culture mentality that work has to be your life. The reality is, it's not and your worth as a person is not defined by your labour."

Andrew: Yeah, I find that super interesting. And before we talk about it in more detail, why don't we just break down the vocabulary that Ziad used in his TikTok a little bit because it is very useful and very interesting vocabulary. So, first, he said that quiet quitting is not about going above and beyond. And to go above and beyond means to do something extra that is not regularly expected. So, for example, let's say you work a regular nine to five, work shift. But then you get busy with a project. And instead of going home at five like you're supposed to, well, you stay at the office until 9pm, you do some unpaid overtime. That would be an example of going above and beyond, you're using your own time to work instead of spending it doing whatever else you'd rather be doing. Now, the next thing that he said was that quiet quitters no longer subscribe to the hustle culture mentality. And guys, this is a really good expression to know, hustle culture, or even that verb, to hustle. Anna, could you break this one apart for us a little bit?

Anna: Definitely, I would love to do that. So, a mentality is just a mindset, or an attitude and hustle culture is the idea that success, your career, and your finances can be achieved through really constant hard work and by sacrificing other things in your life—like your free time, relationships, hobbies—and so that you can spend that time working instead. And that's really what this kind of hustle mentality, hustle culture is all about.

Andrew: Exactly. And it's a really—kind of buzzword, popular word at the moment. And a lot of my friends use it. And they talk about hustling. And in this sense, hustling means just to work really hard to try and get ahead in life or make extra money or even in some situations, just survive, unfortunately, because of the way the economy is. So, in this kind of work context, if you hear someone say hustle, then it means to work really hard, and try to make some extra money. So, Anna, why don't we share our opinions and thoughts on this topic now that we know exactly what quiet quitting is? And I'm going to start by throwing a question over to you, Anna. And I guess I'm just curious about why you think that quiet quitting suddenly became such a hot issue?

Anna: That's a really good question. For me, personally, the idea of quiet quitting and what it's about is really nothing new. I think there's another phrase in English which pops into my head, which is working to rule. And this kind of has some similar things, which is about if I finish at six, I finish at six, I'm leaving, and I'm not working, and I'm drawing a really clear line between work and personal life. So, for me, this idea is nothing new. The phrase is new, and I guess perhaps the reason why it became such a hot conversation topic is maybe it's a generational thing. And I know that different generations are looking for different things from their employers and different things that they want out of life, and I also think that maybe people are **fed up**. I do think that maybe, for whatever reason, there's many different factors, but people are always on. I was actually speaking to somebody this week, who was telling me that it's really normal for their boss to call them at 9pm at night, or it's normal to have to respond to something on a Sunday afternoon when you're supposed to be enjoying your weekend. So, I think there are people that are genuinely **fed up** of—kind of having all of their personal time invaded by work and really wanting to draw that specific line and be like, “This is my personal life, and this is my work life. And that is that.” I mean, who knows, I'm sure there's many different factors. But for me, maybe it's a generational thing and maybe it is because some people are just **fed up** with having their work life invade all elements of their personal life where they're always on. I guess—it's what I would think. What about you, Andrew, why do you think it kind of took off this phrase why it became viral?

Andrew: Yeah, well, I think there are probably many reasons. I think big issues like this usually don't just have one specific cause, right? There are usually lots of factors at play. But, Anna, before I explained my opinion here, I wanted to go back and tell a very quick story, because what you started off by saying was that you don't think it's a new thing. And that kind of made me think of a funny story about one of my friends from high school. And it was during summer vacation, and he got a job with the city government doing some landscaping for the city, you know, in the parks and stuff. And he said on his first day at the job, he was really gung-ho and wanted to work really hard and was trying to, you know, **put his best foot forward** and show that he was really a good worker. And he got in trouble by his manager, his manager said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down. Why are you working so hard?" And it was at that moment that he realized that the whole crew of landscapers that worked for the city, were working slowly, because if they worked too hard and too fast, then they would get more tasks to do and then they would have to work harder than expected, I suppose.

So, I guess it's true that this is not new, because this was like 20 years ago when this happened. And even at that time, there were people who were essentially kind of quietly quitting, right, like, unfortunately, that landscaping unit was part of the city government. So, that means that the taxpayers, we were funding them, and I learned at that time, our tax dollars, maybe weren't being spent the most efficient way. But yeah, it goes to show that in a lot of situations, I think people don't want to go above and beyond if there's no incentive to do so. So, there was no incentive for those landscapers to go above and beyond, right, they would still get their paycheck like regular. And without that extra motivation, like the only thing that they would receive for going above and beyond would be more work, right? So, that's like a negative incentive.

So, to get why I think quiet quitting maybe has become popular, and a buzzword these days. And I'm no economist by any means. But I think it might be in reaction to the kind of collapsing American dream—if I can put it that way. You know, we always heard maybe, Anna, about our parents' generation, or our grandparents' generation, where there was

this American dream, or we'd say the Canadian dream in Canada. I don't know, do you have a phrase like that in the UK as well?

Anna: We have a different culture with the United States, Canada, and the UK so we don't have the British dream. I'm not really sure what the British dream is. But we don't have a similar phrase, I'm sure it wouldn't be as good. We don't have an aspirational kind of cultural phrase. We're much more stoic. We have a lot of things about, you know, stoic in sort of **stiff upper lip** and things like this. But we don't have that sort of American dream and go for it. And that hustle culture, which we mentioned before in the intro. So, I think it's a really good point that you're making, actually, yeah.

Andrew: So, just to explain what's the American dream—and this is definitely a part of Canadian culture as well—the idea is that if you work hard, no matter what your background is, if you're an immigrant, or if you're from a poor country, or you have a rough start in life, through hard work, you can achieve a comfortable lifestyle, a middle class lifestyle, you know, you can afford to buy a home, you can afford to have two cars in the garage, you can kind of just live a very comfortable lifestyle. This was like the promise of America, back maybe in the 1940s, 50s, 60s. But slowly, over time, the possibility of achieving that is becoming way more difficult than was promised to my generation and to younger generations. We still have that phrase, the American dream, and many people believe in it. But really, if you look at the prices of houses, and the prices of cars, and just how hard you would have to work to achieve that dream, it makes it really, really difficult for many people to do that.

So, I think in response to that, if people are working, and they're like, no matter how hard I work, I can't get ahead in life. So, then what is the point of working? Like, there's no point, right? Like, I just feel like a slave almost, I'm just wasting my life away, doing this job with no incentive to get ahead. So, I think maybe it might be a reaction to that. That's my best guess is like, I can't ever buy a house, I can't ever buy a car, can't ever do the things that I

want with the job that I have, so I'm just going to give up. I think maybe that's what's happening.

Anna: Sure, it could be. And I guess that comes back to in a way that idea of what I was saying before, but just being **fed up** that—**fed up** with the situation and being sick of a situation. Like you said, there's no motivation here, or there's nothing driving me, or I can't see kind of—maybe it sounds a bit dramatic, but I can't really see the light at the end of the tunnel. And I also think quiet quitting is—obviously depends on different types of jobs, you know, and different things that people do. So, I wouldn't say it's a luxury that everybody has, I don't mean that in a negative way, if it is a luxury but for example, I'm self-employed. So, you know, if I quiet quit, I don't make any money. So, I would say that quiet quitting is definitely something that will be associated for me personally, with employment in a company. If you're self-employed like me, and maybe you're listening to this, you're self-employed too, quiet quitting is not really an option there. So, again, I think it's nothing new from me working to rule and wanting to put in boundaries.

And I think that word's really nice because this is a common thing that comes up in English, when we're talking about putting boundaries that maybe it's in relationships, or maybe it's like this, where you're saying, "Look, after seven o'clock, I finish work, and I don't want people to contact me, or I don't want to be called after work." And the thing is, in reality, I think in a lot of places, actually there are laws about this, that your work can't contact you at specific times. But the reality is that actually, often, that's not the case. And often those rules are not followed. So, I really respect people that are trying to put boundaries in place, because I think that's really important. And I think people are **fed up** and sick of work invading their lives. I guess the question everybody has to ask themselves is how much are you willing to go above and beyond? Or how much of your personal time are you willing to potentially give up for work? And I guess that question is different for everybody. And I do think there is a generational aspect to that as well. I'd love to ask you then, Andrew, what you think about in terms of—do you think quiet quitting is a problem? Do you think that it's an issue?



Andrew: I guess it depends on the perspective, right? You could think about this from an employee's perspective. And you could think of it from an employer's perspective. And I guess you could think about it from, like, a general economic perspective as well, right? If you are like a government economist, and you are trying to think about the health of the economy of your country, and yeah, we can think about this from many different perspectives. From an employee's perspective—and I'm an employee—so I guess maybe that's the perspective that I have. I mean, it makes a lot of sense to me. If you don't see any incentives to get ahead in life, then why should you put your all into it? It makes me think of that phrase, "Are you working to live or are you living to work?" And if you feel like you're just living to work, then that's really depressing. And I totally understand why many people would want to give up.

Now, I'm lucky enough that I have a job that's really rewarding and gives me some satisfaction apart from just getting paid, right? Like, of course, it's nice to get paid for what you do. But it's also nice to be a teacher and to help people. And that gives me a lot of good feelings as well, right? So, for me, my situation is maybe a little bit different. But I could think if I were just like, working for some company, that I didn't really care about their product or their service, and I was just sitting in a cubicle every day doing some kind of menial task, and I felt like, I'm just wasting my life away here, then yeah, in that situation, I would totally be a quiet quitter. I'm not gonna lie, I totally understand it from that perspective. So, from the employee's perspective, makes a lot of sense to me. And I'm kind of a supporter of the movement in that regard.

Now, from an employer's perspective, I think it's probably very alarming, right? Because how are you going to decide and find out and determine who is a quiet quitter and who isn't? And how is that affecting the bottom line of your company? Like, obviously, corporations goal is to make as much money as possible, and you want your employees to be as productive as possible, as well. And so, if they're not being productive, you're not making as much money as possible. And that's an issue. I have no idea how companies are going to solve that problem. And I'm sure each industry and each company would

have a different approach. And the other perspective I mentioned, was kind of a greater macroeconomic perspective. And I could imagine also, that's a big problem, right? Because you're not being productive. If you have a huge percent of the labor force, just kind of doing the bare minimum, then that's not gonna be great for like your competitiveness in a global sense. So, yeah, I do think that it could be a big problem, that kind of macro level, whereas on a personal level, I totally get it, and I support it. So, yeah, it just depends on who you are in life, I guess whether it's a problem or a solution?

Anna: Absolutely. I think for me, personally, I'm not a big fan of the name, quiet quitting. Like, that doesn't really appeal to me. And I think it's got a kind of negative connotation for me. And the first thing that throws up in my head, and you mentioned there from the employee perspective about maybe somebody who's really unhappy in their job, there's nothing driving them or motivating them, there's no incentive. So, my question would be "OK, so why don't you quit then?" So, it also throws up that question as well, "Why not quit? Why not find something else? Like, really quit, not just quiet quitting? Why not quit, and maybe try and find something that might spark a bit more interest?" Of course, that's a very personal thing for each individual. Now, I'm not saying everybody has to quit their job if they're not happy. But there is also that question of, OK, well, could there be something else that's more suitable out there for you that might just spark something and rather than continuing in a job or in a role where you really don't feel very satisfied or fulfilled? So, I guess that's a question that will pop up for me.

So, I prefer personally, the idea of setting boundaries, I think that works more for me than quiet quitting because for me, personally, I think even if I were in a job that I didn't enjoy, I would always try to do my best. I'm not trying to make it, like, sound like oh, I'm always great or anything like that. But I think I always try and find maybe something that I could do, or something that could do a little bit better. I think that's just the way that I am. If you're listening to this, and thinking that sounds like me, too—so, I guess I would have to be in a pretty dire situation for me **to really get on board with this sort of quiet quitting**, but I am all in favor of setting boundaries. And so, that for me resonates more, i.e., setting

a boundary at seven o'clock, I finish, I'm not going to answer emails between seven o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning, for example. Or I'm not going to work on a Sunday, because there's many people out there that work seven days a week. I mean, there are people out there working many different types of jobs, maybe it's hospitality, and maybe it's in the service industry, maybe it's a consultant, there's many people that are working a huge number of hours, they're working six, seven days a week. So, there's many people who are doing many different hours. And maybe they come to a point where they're like, I really need to set boundaries for my mental health or just from my personal life, or just in order to spend more time with my family or just in order to feel sane. So, I'm all for setting boundaries.

But the question again, that I come back to is why not just quit? Why not quit for real and maybe see if there's something else that works better for you? And I guess from a company's perspective, as well, that's better because if you're in a job that isn't right for you, absolutely, as you said Andrew, you're not going to be as productive, which isn't as good for the company, and most importantly isn't as good for you either. So, maybe would be better in a different role in a different position in a different company. Of course, finding new jobs and moving into different roles is difficult and it's a challenge. But that would be the thing that would come up for me is, why not quit for real?

Andrew: Right. I mean, that's a fascinating question. And I think, yeah, it might be generational. Like, Anna, I was really curious to hear your perspective on this issue, actually because, you know, you said the culture in Britain is a little bit different. And you have that kind of "keep calm and carry-on" attitude, right? And so, even if things aren't perfect, then you just keep going and fight through it and keep calm and carry on, right? Like, that's kind of a cultural characteristic of British people. And, yeah, for me, I have no answers to that question. To me, that also makes a lot of sense, like, why if something's a bad fit, try and change it, right? And that's also my personality as well. I always want to challenge myself and push myself to achieve bigger goals and do better things in life. So, I think maybe if that were me, in that kind of situation, where I felt like quiet quitting, then

maybe yeah, just quitting and trying to find something better, overall, is a great idea. But I believe it might come back to this greater kind of realization that a lot of younger people in society are having right now, is that like, it doesn't matter what job I have, like, I just can't get forward in life.

Like, it doesn't matter if I have this job or a different job, the amount of money that I would have to make to do the things that society promised me that I could do, you know, if I went to university and graduated with a degree and got a job at a good company, I did all those things and I still can't get ahead. So, then like, what's the point of hustling and trying harder to do that? Because it's just impossible.

So, if that illusion of the American dream is now an illusion, and not something that people can achieve, then maybe that's why you would quiet quit, because like, I guess the feeling of desperation is so deep, that it doesn't really matter if I'm working this job, or if I get another job, or even if I double my salary, it's still like, I'm not going to go anywhere in life, I'll just always be a renter, or I'll always just be stuck at this level in life where I can't do what I want to do. So, I think maybe that is at play. But yeah, I don't know. That's just my gut feeling and I'm not exactly sure.

Anna: I think it's an interesting point. And one thing that when you were saying that about what's been promised to us, and I think we're kind of in a phase where I feel like there's a lot of mixed messages. And so, people think, OK, I have to have the hustle culture, but I also have to make sure that I have enough free time. And I feel like it's a lot of mixed messages. And OK, so I'm supposed to work really hard. But also at the same time, I'm supposed to be able to relax, too, and have all this free time and make sure that I dedicate all of these things to like arts and crafts or something like this.

So, it's like a little bit of a mismatch because I was talking to somebody about this this week, and they were chatting to their son, and they're in the baby boomer generation. And they were chatting to their son who's around early 20s, at the moment right now. And they

were talking about something in their contract where they had been asked to work a specific number of hours at the weekend, for example, and they weren't very comfortable with it. I'm talking about the younger person here. And what they said was, well, look, you know, I work seven days a week. And the reason why I've been able—one of the reasons why I've been able to give you this type of lifestyle in life is because I've worked seven days a week or because I've worked above and beyond for many, many years. So, I think maybe that's kind of forgotten in the way that sometimes in order to get to these places where you want to go, there is just a huge amount of work that has to be done. And it's like you're sold this thing of get rich quick as well. That's another kind of, I think, quite toxic message that's out there. It's kind of like oh, if you do this, you're gonna get rich in like two weeks or one year or six months. Or if you just make this one FX trade, then you're going to be a millionaire. So, people are kind of expecting to get all of these things, like you said almost the American dream really quickly. And then I think when it's kind of obvious that normally, actually what's required is a lot of work, and a lot of time.

So, I think there's a lot of mixed messages out there right now. It's kind of like hustle culture, get rich quick, but also making sure that you spend, or you dedicate a lot of time to your mental health and resting and relaxing and it's like, well, so I think there's a lot of mixed messages. And I think that's why people maybe feel like they are missing all this kind of dream, this American dream or what they were promised, because it kind of seems like you can get where you want to go without maybe doing as much work but actually, it's the age-old rule if you want to get something normally there's a huge amount of work behind that. Or it looks easier than actually it really is, maybe.

Andrew: Well said, Anna, and before we wrap up this episode, I just wanted to touch back on something that you mentioned earlier in the show. And that is that you don't like this phrase quiet quitting. And in China, they actually have a similar movement to quiet quitting. And I'm not an expert on the inner workings of Chinese society so I can't really comment too much on this. But maybe if we have some listeners from China, they could let us know in more detail.

But, there's a similar kind of movement happening in China to quiet quitting, where essentially, just younger generations feel like instead of working to live, they're living to work and kind of almost feel like slaves. So, that kind of movement in China, where people are quiet quitting is actually called *lying flat*, the Lying Flat movement, like they're just lying down and not getting up to go to work. And just, yeah, lying flat. So, maybe we could use lying flat in a western context as well. What do you think about that name, is that better? Or do we need a better expression still?

Anna: I'm not keen on that one, either because for me, when I think about lie down, I'm thinking about horizontal, which is like, if you call somebody horizontal, it just means somebody who's really **laid-back**. So, for me, yeah, it kind of has a touch of laziness in there. That's just my perception of the term. I don't think people are lazy, that are doing that. But it's hard for me to put myself in other people's shoes that are in a job that they really don't enjoy. They're not getting a lot of satisfaction from, so, of course, it might be different if I was in a different situation. But as I said before, I'm self-employed. So, if I quiet quit, I'm not going to survive.

Andrew: So, we've decided to keep our conversation going for just a little while longer for all of our members, just as a way to say thanks for your support, everyone.

And so, Anna, I've got a couple, well, three actually rapid-fire questions here for you. So, let's talk about them. And I'm wondering, of course, this is not going to be an official scientific answer or anything just off the top of your head. What do you think? What would cause a bigger change to society, would it be 50% of the population quitting their job? Kind of like you mentioned earlier, like if 50% of the people, they listen to you, Anna, and they got motivated. They're like, "Yeah, I'm gonna quit my job and find something better." So, half the population quits, or half of the population just quiet quits? What do you think would change society more?

Anna: Off the top of my head 50% of the workforce quitting their jobs? I think if people are unhappy if they quit their jobs, and they could find something better, or even start their own business, maybe become self-employed, and do something that they really want to do and be their own boss, I think that would be amazing. I understand it's risky, but I think more people could try being self-employed or doing their own thing. And it's something that I think a lot of people would enjoy more than they think. So, option one.

Andrew: Option one. Yeah, I think if 50% of people quit their jobs suddenly, and things would be really different. It could be like a huge, like, change, you know, in a good way, I could imagine that could be really good for worker's rights, and maybe people getting into jobs that they want to get into. And I could see it being really awesome. And also, I could see it going the other way and just being a nightmare. So, yeah, I wouldn't be surprised if already 50% of people have quiet quit. But yeah, I don't think we'll be seeing 50% of the workforce quit their jobs anytime soon.

So, just for fun. Question number two is, do you think the main reason behind quiet quitting is economic, like people not getting enough benefits or monetary compensation? Or is it entitlement? Like everyone believes that they have a right to a job that lines up with their passion? You know, this is another thing that we're told as children in the west is like, just follow your passion, follow your dream, and things will work out OK for you. And so, when that doesn't happen for some people, then maybe they could feel **ripped off** in life. So, do you think quiet quitting is economic or entitlement?

Anna: I think the answer to this is quite generational. So, I think perhaps, I think it's a little bit of both. I think it really depends on the person. I think, probably, in the majority of cases, I would say it comes down to the bottom line, but I think there is a difference in younger generations that are more interested in doing something that's like aligned with their beliefs, their purpose in life, or what they really want to achieve. So, I think it could be a little bit of both. I gotta be honest, I'm not sure if it's clear cut either one or the other. I think it could be a combination.

Andrew: Yeah, I think it's case by case probably. And I would like to talk, I mean, Anna, you are already younger than me, but I would like to talk with somebody even younger than you to see, like, what somebody that is, like, really just entering the workforce maybe right—a fresh graduate from university would have to say about this as well. It would be interesting to see. But I'll have to see if I know anybody that young, these days it's getting harder and harder to be friends with people that young.

OK, the last question, and this sort of goes back to what we talked about in the main episode, actually, about the name. So, do you think quiet quitting has a bad reputation just because of its name? If we branded it something different, just like working at work, right? Like, you go to work, you do your work. But then like you said, Anna, there are some boundaries that you have set up so that you don't work once you clock out of the office for the day. Do you think if we kind of rebranded it to say, like, yeah, I'm working at work, but I'm not going above and beyond in my free time, if we rebranded it and rethought of it that way, would that put a more positive spin on this phenomenon?

Anna: Well, I think we already know what my answer is going to be about. I don't identify with the name at all. I think it sounds passive aggressive, but I get why it's popular because it's got quitting in it, so it sounds kind of—oh quiet quitting, like, it calls people's attention. But for me, I just don't identify with it. But yes, you're working at work, or work life balance, or whatever. But those are just terms that have been around for ages. So, I think it's popular because it's new. It's something different. Personally, for me, I think it's got a bit of a negative connotation, I don't identify with it. But I think it's the same thing as all the other things that have been going around for ages. So, it's just a different name. And it's catchy.

Andrew: Yeah, definitely catchy. And even in Canada, there's a TV commercial, where the commercial takes place in an office and one of the office workers is like, I quit, like, to her boss like quits while whispering because she thought that was something that you did

like very quietly to avoid drama in the office. So, even people are making jokes about this name in Canada to sell products on TV. So, kind of funny in that regard.

Well, anyways, I think that will bring us to the end of today's episode, everyone. So, thanks for listening and great job on completing an English study session here with Anna and me today.

Anna: Now we'd like to throw things over to you. You've heard what Andrew and I have to say about quiet quitting, but we'd really 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: So, take care everyone, and we'll talk to you next time. Goodbye.

Anna: Bye!

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

Detailed Explanations

Fed up

Adjective, informal

Fed up is an informal adjective that means very annoyed or frustrated with something. If someone is **fed up**, it means they've had enough of something, and they can't tolerate it anymore. When someone is **fed up** with something, it means that thing has been bothering them for a while and they've reached their limit.

When expressing her opinion on why quiet quitting has become such an issue, Anna suggests that the reason is that people are **fed up** with work invading their personal life. She means that people are frustrated with the fact that there's no clear boundary between work hours and personal time; they've had enough of it and don't want to deal with the lack of a separation anymore.

We usually use this expression in casual conversations with friends or family, when we want to complain about something. It can apply to various situations like work troubles, annoying habits of people, or ongoing problems that don't seem to get resolved. However, it's not common to directly say this phrase to the person who annoyed us, as it may come across as rude. It's a bit stronger than just saying "I'm annoyed" and shows that you're really, really tired of dealing with that person or situation.

Here are a couple more examples with **fed up**:

Alex: Can you believe it? They cancelled the delivery again!

Susie: No way! Unbelievable.

Alex: I know, right? I had to rearrange all my plans and stay home all day waiting for it. And then they just cancelled it at the last minute without any notice. I'm so **fed up** with this incompetence!

Susie: That's completely unprofessional. You should demand a refund or something for all the trouble they've caused you.

Harry: You were on the phone for two hours! Who were you talking to?

Laura: Sarah. Ugh, I'm so **fed up** with her always complaining about her life! She talks about it nonstop but never does anything to change it.

To put [one's] best foot forward

Idiom

To put [one's] best foot forward means to make a great impression or show your best qualities in a particular situation. If someone **puts their best foot forward**, it means they're trying as hard as they can to show their best side and get someone's approval. Essentially, **putting your best foot forward** at work is the opposite of quiet quitting, or doing the bare minimum.

When sharing a story about his high school friend, Andrew says that on his first day at the job, his friend was trying **to put his best foot forward** and show that he was a really good worker. In other words, his friend was making an effort to present the best version of himself and to make a good impression.

We use this phrase in many situations where we want to make a good impression. It could be a job interview, a meeting, a social event, or a presentation. **Putting your best foot forward** involves dressing appropriately, communicating effectively, staying positive, and showing good manners.

Here are a couple more examples with **to put [one's] best foot forward**:

Ed: I'm meeting my girlfriend's parents tonight and I'm so nervous. I really want **to put my best foot forward** and impress them.

Rhonda: Hey, don't worry. Just be your charming self and they'll love you.

Ed: Thanks, I needed to hear that.

Nick: I have an interview tomorrow. I really want to get this job!

Caroline: I'm sure you will! Just remember to do your research about the company, dress professionally, and **put your best foot forward**. Show them your skills and enthusiasm, and I'm sure they'll be impressed.

Nick: Thank you, Caroline!

Caroline: Good luck!

Stiff upper lip

Noun

Stiff upper lip is a term that means staying strong and controlling your emotions in challenging situations. When someone keeps a **stiff upper lip**, it means they try not to show anyone how they really feel. It's like putting on a brave face.

The word stiff means firm or unmoving. When we feel emotional, our upper lip often trembles, which is how other people can see that we are upset. Keeping a **stiff upper lip** means not getting emotional and acting as if everything is okay.

In this episode, Anna uses this phrase when explaining why there's no such thing as the "British dream". She mentions that British people are much more stoic and tend to keep a **stiff upper lip**. It's important to note that this expression originated from British culture, where historically it's been common to hide emotions and keep one's feelings to oneself, particularly during challenging times.

The phrase to keep a **stiff upper lip** is often used to encourage someone to stay strong and composed when facing challenges. For example, if your friend is going through a tough breakup, you might tell them to keep a **stiff upper lip**. It means staying strong and resilient, even though it's a difficult time for them.

Here are a couple more examples with **stiff upper lip**:

Max: How did the meeting with the client go?

Amber: Not so good. He rejected our proposal! I've been working on it all night. I don't know what to do now.

Max: I understand that you're upset, but you need to keep a **stiff upper lip** and try to come up with a new plan to get their approval. Come on, let's think about something together.

Kelly: How are you feeling? I heard you had to cancel your trip to Mexico.

Toby: Yeah, it was disappointing. I'd been really looking forward to it. But I'm trying to **keep a stiff upper lip** and not let it get me down. We can always plan another trip there in the future.



To get on board with [something]

Idiom

When discussing the issue of quiet quitting, Anna says that if someone is truly unhappy in their job, they have the option to either quit and find something else or establish better boundaries. She personally doesn't see herself getting on board with quiet quitting.

To get on board literally means to step on board of a ship, train, or airplane in order to travel somewhere. However, this expression is often used idiomatically, and in that case, it means to agree with something and support it. If someone **gets on board with something**, it means they approve of it and are willing to be involved. We usually use this expression to talk about supporting ideas, plans or initiatives. The phrase can be used in various contexts, like work projects, group activities, or personal choices.

A variation of this expression is *to get someone on board*, which means to persuade someone to agree with an idea or join a plan. For example, if you're planning to throw a surprise party for your relative and you need their friends to help you, you might say that you need **to get them on board with the surprise party**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get on board with [something]**:

Paul: How was your day at work?

Becky: It was great! We pitched our business plan to the investors, and guess what? They **got on board with our ideas** and agreed to fund our startup!

Paul: That's great news! Congratulations!

Nigel: I heard you started the green initiative in our community?

Alicia: Yeah, we did! Hopefully, we can **get more people on board with it**.

Nigel: That would be great! We need to promote recycling and reduce plastic waste.

Alicia: Exactly! I believe that together we can make a difference in creating a greener environment and live more sustainably!

Laid-back

Adjective, informal

When Anna mentions that she isn't a big fan of the name for "quiet quitting", Andrew asks her opinion on the Chinese version of this movement which is called "lying flat". Anna says that she doesn't like this one either, because it sounds like it describes somebody who's **laid-back**, which to her means lazy.

Laid-back is an informal expression we use to describe people that are relaxed and not easily stressed about things. A **laid-back** person has an easygoing attitude towards life and doesn't let things bother them. We can use this word for things and situations as well. For example, if a cafe is **laid-back**, it means it has a casual and relaxed atmosphere, where people can unwind and feel comfortable.

Laid-back comes from the idea of sitting in an armchair or on a couch, leaning back and relaxing. Just like that, when used metaphorically, **laid-back** means calm, unhurried, and free from stress and worry.

Even though Anna perceives **laid-back** as lazy, these two words are not entirely synonymous. **Laid-back** people still get things done, just in a more relaxed and easygoing manner, balancing productivity with a calm and relaxed approach.

Here are a couple more examples with **laid-back**:

Richard: How's your first week at the new company?

Ellie: Pretty good! It's surprisingly **laid-back**. I wasn't expecting that.

Richard: How do you mean?

Ellie: Well, there's a casual dress code, flexible work hours, and the overall communication is relaxed and friendly.

Richard: Sounds awesome!

Phillip: The party last night was so much fun! I can't believe your dad didn't get mad when he saw the place this morning. Mine would be furious!

Chloe: Yeah, I guess I'm lucky my dad is so **laid-back**. He never seems to get stressed or upset about anything.

Ripped off

Verb, informal

When asking Anna's opinion on the reasons behind quiet quitting, Andrew suggests that some people believe that if they follow their dream, things will work out for them. And when it doesn't happen, they feel **ripped off**.

Ripped off means to be cheated, deceived, or charged too much for something. If someone got **ripped off**, it means they paid an unfair price for something they bought. For example, if you bought an expensive watch, and then found out that it's half the price on another website, you can say you got **ripped off**.

In this episode, the **term ripped off** means to get something that is not what you expected. People might feel **ripped off** because they feel like they didn't get the life they anticipated. They feel cheated, because they were promised that if they pursued their dreams, everything would turn out well, but it didn't go as expected. The word "feel" here emphasizes that it's their personal perception of the situation.

We talk more about this expression in [Catch Word episode #53](#). Check it out to learn more about it.

Here are a couple more examples with **ripped off**:

Maya: Dave, did you say you've been to Thailand before? I'm going to Bangkok next month. Can you recommend the best way to get to the city center from the airport?

Dave: Sure! Just don't take a taxi from the airport. They tend to overcharge tourists; you'll end up getting **ripped off**. I recommend taking the train instead. I'm going to text you the details.

Maya: Thank you so much!

Finn: I don't know about you, but I feel like that coaching instructor seemed like he had no idea what he was talking about.

Cindy: I agree completely. I can't believe I wasted my time and money on this course. It was such a disappointment! I feel like I got **ripped off**!



Quiz

1. If someone says, “I’m fed up!”, it means that they _____.
 - a) are hungry
 - b) are annoyed
 - c) ate too much
 - d) got a job in FBI

2. Which of the following means to present your best side in order to impress someone?
 - a) To put your feet together
 - b) To put your first foot
 - c) To put your best foot forward
 - d) To foot forward

3. True or false? Stiff upper lip is used to talk about being emotional and showing your true feelings.
 - a) True
 - b) False

4. What does to get on board with mean?
 - a) To approve and support
 - b) To go to work together
 - c) To disagree
 - d) To start a project

5. If you bought a new phone and got ripped off, it means that _____.
 - a) it was wrapped as a gift
 - b) it was very cheap
 - c) it was delivered quickly
 - d) you paid too much for it

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about quiet quitting? Would you rather quiet quit or quit for real?
2. Can you think of a time when you were fed up with something? What was it?
3. When was the last time you put your best foot forward?
4. Would you describe yourself as a laid-back person?
5. Describe a time when you got ripped off. What happened?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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Pixabay.com

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Image: Gustavo Fring (Pexels.com)