

Chatterbox #331 – Modern identity labels (ad free)

Episode description

Andrew and Anna talk about modern identity labels that people use in their daily lives. They look at labels for work, relationships, finances, and more. Some examples include WFH (work from home), solopreneur (running a business alone), and dink (double income, no kids). They also discuss terms for different generations, like millennial and zoomer, and relationship labels like situationship. Andrew and Anna explain what these words mean, how people use them, and why these labels have become popular. This episode will help you understand new English vocabulary and learn more about Western culture.

Fun fact

The acronym “DINK” (Double Income, No Kids) was reportedly first used by marketing professionals in the early 1980s to describe couples with two incomes and no children. This group had higher disposable income and quickly became a significant target market for advertisers.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Dink(y)
- Situationship
- Empty nester
- Achilles heel
- Mollycoddled
- Out of touch



Transcript

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

Andrew: Chatterbox number 331. “Modern Identity Labels.” Featuring Andrew and Anna.

I've got a question for you to begin this episode. And the question is, how do you describe yourself to others? These days, it seems like there are so many ways that we can define our work, our relationships, and our lifestyle choices. And in this episode, I'll be joined in just a sec by my co-host Anna from the UK. And we're going to talk about modern identity labels. From remote workers and solopreneurs to terms like **DINK** and **situationships**. We'll dig into how these new terms reflect the changing ways we live, work, and connect with others in today's world.

So, I'm very much looking forward to this conversation. Here we go. Please enjoy.

Joining me now to talk about modern identity labels and to break these down, and explain what they mean, and how we use them in our everyday lives, where we hear these expressions, all of these good things is my co-host, Anna. Hey there, Anna. How's it going?

Anna: I'm very well. Thank you, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: I'm good. Thank you. I'm excited to talk about this episode topic. Anna, you were the one who suggested this actually, and I thought it was a great idea. And maybe one that people could be very confused about because there's a lot of acronyms and neologisms, which are what we say for words that are brand new, that like they're just newly formed. And so, I think for English learners, a lot of these words and concepts and ideas that we're going to talk about today might be brand new to them. So, I hope this will be helpful for you guys. And also, I think it's quite cultural as well.

So, it'll be interesting to hear from our listeners, their feedback to say if these concepts, these identities, these labels that we're going to discuss today, if they exist in their culture as well. And guys, we do have our Discord server. That's the place where we'll be continuing this conversation after the episode. And that would be a great place for you to leave a comment and let us know if these identities and these labels exist in your culture as well, or if they're more just like a Western culture thing. It'll be interesting to read those comments.

But Anna, we've divided this episode into several categories. We have work and career, family and relationships, financial and housing, generational, and relationships, kind of family relationships, friend relationships, romantic relationships. So, we're going to talk about as many of these categories as we can without running out of time. And so, I guess we'll start with work and career, Anna. We have several on our list here. Why don't you choose one that stands out to you and we'll talk about it?

Anna: I'm going to choose the first one on our list here because I identify with the first one. This is my identity, which is WFH, which stands for work from home professional. And that is absolutely me because I have an online business and I do my podcast and I have clients. So, I work from home. I do work in another company where I go to an office, a place, but I am at home the majority of the time during the week. And so, this is my new life.

And, if you had told me this 10 years ago, let's say in 2014, if you told me, Anna, in 10 years, you're going to have your own business, you're going to be working from home full time, I would have been like, what? I would have had no idea. You can't imagine. This is just so far away from what I actually thought I would end up doing. But I'm really proud to be a WFH, a working from home professional. It's a different type of life. It has its challenges. It's definitely not perfect. But do you know what? I probably wouldn't go back to the nine to five. So, I am a proud WFH, to be honest.

Andrew: Yeah, I think probably a lot of our listeners maybe know what it's like to be a home worker, work from home. Because during the pandemic, so many of us got a taste of it, right? And now I know that a lot of companies are back to the office full time. And so unfortunately, probably a lot of people know what it was like to be work from home and now are back in the office. So, if you're one of those people, hey, I'm there with you as well. I was in that situation. Although I do have to say I'm kind of 50-50. I work from home half of the time and I'm in the office the other half of the time.

My wife is pretty much almost still always working from home. And some days, usually on Friday, we're both work from home. So, we actually work together on Friday. And that's interesting. We can eat lunch together and enjoy our day together. Sometimes take a stroll at lunchtime, something like that. So, that's really fun. I think if it were full time, 100 percent of the time, you know, absence makes the heart grow fonder, as they say.

But I wanted to ask you about the WFH term itself. My understanding is that we usually see this more online when people are talking about it. They'll just type out WFH meaning work from home. But when they're speaking, they wouldn't say, like, I'm WFH. But I don't know, maybe you're more familiar with this than I am. Can you say, like, I'm a WFH or is it more just an online acronym?

Anna: That's a really good point. And thank you for bringing that up, Andrew, because I need to tell you guys that, no, we don't say WFH. So that was just me being silly, essentially. OK, I was just trying to be, well, I guess funny, maybe. But no, we would always say to work from home. So that's a really good point that you brought up there. So, yeah, you would say I work from home. I'm a working from home professional or my job is based at home, maybe you could say as well. But we don't say the acronym letter for letter.

Thank you for reminding me of that, Andrew, just so I don't confuse you guys. And you start walking around saying, I'm a WFH. And everyone's like, oh, my goodness, what is that?

Andrew: Another one that I would like to talk about from the work and career category is solopreneur. I guess that's how we pronounce it, solopreneur. And this is what we call a blended word. So, it's the word solo and entrepreneur. And we've smashed them together to make solopreneur. And a solo entrepreneur or solopreneur is just somebody who has started their own business and is operating it all by themselves.

So, of course, here at Culips, you know, I have a great team. We've got many people who help us produce the podcast and our learning materials and our Discord server and all of these things. We've got several people behind this organization. But just for example, if I were to run the podcast all by myself and I had no support or no co-hosts at all, then I could say I'm a solopreneur.

And Anna, maybe actually now that I'm talking about it, we could say you're a solopreneur, right? I think with your podcast, you're wearing all of the hats, doing all of the tasks on your own.

Anna: Yep, that's me. All the hats, all the hats, all the time. Multiple hats during the day. I'm getting a bit sick of all the hats that I have to wear, to be honest. I need more. And I'm probably going to have to wear more hats going forward. But, yeah, I would absolutely put me in that category, the solopreneur. I think it makes it sound a little bit glamorous. Really, it's just sort of solo worker. But solopreneur makes it sound a little bit more fancy, right?

So, OK, I'll go with that. I'll be a solopreneur. I wonder, guys, if you are maybe like this as well. But I think it kind of tags on to the trend of digital nomad and all of that that's been happening since the pandemic as well, of this kind of people just being able to work from anywhere just with a laptop. And especially with the creator landscape as well, this is something that's very common because a lot of creators start off just with themselves, maybe producing a YouTube channel. And then maybe they grow, like you said, into something that more resembles Culips, the people behind the scenes, et cetera.

But, yeah, it's something very different. And I think maybe in the past it did exist. There must have been people that just started businesses by themselves. But now we have this

cool term, solopreneur, that makes us, you know, sound glamorous and fancy. But really, it's just one person wearing all the hats. In the past, we also used to say things like one man band, which obviously doesn't quite work now because, well, one woman band then, I guess I must be.

Andrew: One person band.

Anna: One person band. There we go. That's the one I was looking for. Yes. Wearing all the hats. And by the way, guys, when we say wearing all the hats, I think I just want to explain that. It just means that you have to do all the tasks. So, you have to do HR. You have to do finance. You have to do marketing. You have to do sales. And let's imagine that all those tasks are different hats. So that's what we mean if somebody says, I have to wear all these different hats. It means I have to be responsible for all these different things. That maybe if you worked in a company, you just focus on your thing. You're an HR professional. You're a finance professional. You're a marketing professional. But when you're a solopreneur, you've got to do everything. So, pros and cons. But that's what we mean when we're talking about hats. I'm not literally wearing lots of hats. Just to clarify. In fact, I hate hats. Just to add that.

Andrew: Oh, yeah. I remember that fun fact that we learned about you not too long ago, that you're not a hat person. But speaking about doing multiple different tasks, there's another word for these kinds of people. I think especially freelancers or maybe people who are in the gig economy, you know, where they're actually having to string together multiple different jobs to have enough income to survive. These kinds of people these days are called slashies. Slashie. So, you know, like that punctuation mark that's a slash? Often, we use that. You could say, I'm an English teacher slash podcaster, right? It means I do these two different jobs. But these days, a lot of people have these multiple professional identities. So maybe they're a video editor slash photographer slash sound engineer, right? They're doing, like, all of these different digital tasks. And they're wearing lots of hats. And they're doing all of these things. Maybe they can't make it professionally just by

doing one job. So, they have to broaden their horizons and do lots of different jobs in order to make a living.

And I think, Anna, this goes back to what you were saying. Like, it's a nice spin on a situation. Like, it makes it sound cool, right? I'm a slashie. I do these different things. I'm a writer. I'm a photographer. I'm a consultant. But what would we call these people back in the day? Probably just like I have two part-time jobs or something, right? I don't have full-time employment. But maybe now it's a more positive way of looking at it. So, I can say I'm a slashie. And I think, Anna, you're a slashie as well.

Anna: Yeah, absolutely. Definitely a slashie. I don't bond so well with the term slashie because it kind of sounds like slushie, which in English is like a drink, like an iced drink. So, I mean, I wouldn't be so keen to call myself a slashie. I just don't like the term. But I think there's a lot of people in this category. And I was just thinking, especially with the rise of these big platforms like Fiverr, for example. Guys, maybe you've heard of that. But that's one of these big platforms where you can advertise your services as a freelancer. And, in fact, I've used and worked with several people through Fiverr, which I found amazing because it connects you with people all over the world. And there's lots of people that work on these places like Fiverr that are graphic designers. Then they do a little bit of music. Then they do a little bit of this. So, I think it's fantastic to have these platforms to allow people to have another source of income.

So, I'm all for that. I think it's great. And for me personally, as a solopreneur, as we said before, it's great because I can just connect with people all around the world. And I can get things done in, like, one day. I get in contact with somebody on Fiverr and I say, I'd like to create a new graphic design for my podcast. You could literally have somebody do that for you in 24 hours or 48 hours. It's incredible. I love that. I really do.

Andrew: Great. Yeah. And it's a way for people to expand what they do and to make more money. So, yeah, why not? I think maybe some of these terms are not the kind of terms that people use to refer to themselves. But maybe when we're taking a look at

different demographics, we could say, oh, there's the slashies, right? The people who work multiple jobs in order to make a living. So, yeah, I don't think... Me too, I wouldn't say I'm a slashie, but from maybe an academic perspective or a demographic perspective, when we're looking at this group of society, we could say, oh, they're the slashies. They're the people who do multiple things to make a living.

So, Anna, why don't we move on to the next category, which is family and relationships? And we got to talk about this one because this is a common one these days and it's kind of fun. It is dinks, dinks. I'll break it down for you and tell you what it means, everybody, so that your mind doesn't go to the wrong place. It stands for double income, no kids. Double income, no kids. And Anna, you actually told me in your email when you were suggesting this topic, you introduced dinky to me, which I didn't know about. I hadn't actually heard that one. If we tack a Y onto the end, then it means double income, no kids yet. So, it refers to, I guess, a couple who are living together, right? They're probably cohabitating in the same residence and they both are working. So, they have a double income, two salaries, but no kids.

And that would describe me and my wife. Actually, me and my wife are dinks. We're double income, no kids. And yeah, I think it's a very common configuration these days. As we're seeing the birth rates around the world, really, in most places, most Western and Asian countries, the birth rate is falling. A lot of people are choosing not to have kids or are delaying having kids. This is becoming more and more common. And when I think of my friends, there are a lot of dink couples. And when I think of my friends who are not dink couples, who actually have children, I think they're a little bit jealous when I talk to them. They're like, oh, you guys having that extra time. And especially with inflation and, you know, everything being so expensive these days and raising a kid is really, really expensive these days. They look at me and they say, oh, it must be nice to be a dink. And I mean, I'm sure it's great to be a parent as well. Don't get me wrong. But I think, yeah, being a dink is a pretty good situation in terms of like financial stability. More so than, you know, being a single person on one income or a family, maybe having two earners, but

having to support children as well. The dink configuration is probably the most ideal from a financial perspective, at least.

Anna: Absolutely. I think the first thing I would say about this is what an unfortunate acronym. I mean, really, dink! Could they not come up with anything else? It's such an unfortunate acronym. You know, it's like, really? You couldn't think of anything else there?

So, number one, hate the acronym. But number two, it is actually something that is a very common setup, especially here in Spain, for example, and in other countries around the world where the birth rate is much, much lower. And in fact, the reason why I thought of this episode was because I met some new students in a group that I'm doing recently. And one of the people introduced himself using this term. I ask all my students to do a short introduction to tell me about them. And he said, you know, I work in technology, blah, blah, blah. And I have a partner, but we're a dinky couple. And I was like, what?

You know, at first, I did think I was a bit sort of taken aback. I was like, I'm not really sure what you mean there. But then he explained it. And it was interesting that he used that term to explain his identity. And I think in a way for some people, it's kind of an easy way to let people know that they don't have children. Because I think some people find it awkward when people say, oh, do you have any children? Because they assume that they have children because maybe they're in their 30s or 40s or whatever, and they just assume that they have children. So, they say, do you have any children? And they say, no, I don't. And I think it's also a way for some people to just sort of say at the beginning, like, I don't have any children. So please don't ask me if I have any children. Does that make sense?

I'm not sure whether I read that right. But I think sometimes people find it a little bit awkward, that question, when people just assume that they have children. Which, by the way, is an absolutely fine question to ask somebody. You can ask somebody if they have children or not. I don't think that's rude whatsoever. But I think it can be a way for people just to get it out there. But, yeah, the acronym is awful.

Andrew: Yeah, not the best one, but a funny one. It always brings a smile to my face. I mean, I have heard it a lot. Again, I wouldn't say I'm a dink, anything like that. But when talking about these kinds of relationships, when talking about economics or demographics, anything like that, the birth rate here in Korea, it's a huge topic of conversation every day. Everybody's talking about the low birth rate. And so, this expression is used often.

Anna, why don't we move on to another one? I like this one: **Empty nester**. Empty nester. My folks are empty nesters. Are your folks empty nesters as well, your parents?

Anna: Oh, absolutely, yeah. Mom got rid of us years ago. So, she's been an empty nester for a while. I think she's quite happy about that, by the way. I don't mean that in a bad sense. But, yes, definitely an empty nest. I think that's a good thing. In the end, we're off doing our own thing, me and my brother and my sister. So, I think she does miss us every now and again. But I don't think she'd want us to move back in either.

Andrew: So, we should explain what an empty nester is. It's what we call parents whose children have moved out of the home. So, when we're born, we live with our family most of the time, usually. And then we grow up, we move out, and then the parents are empty nesters. So, it's kind of a little bit of a lonely expression. But as you said, Anna, your mom is happy about it. I think my parents probably are. I mean, they love when we come to visit, but I'm sure they like it when we leave.

Anna: Exactly. And also, just to add, if you're thinking, why nest? What it's referring to there is a bird. So, a bird, when they have babies, they have a little nest. Oh, I don't know if you call bird babies babies. But, well, whatever. That's a different topic. But so, it's the nest where they have it, and then you leave the nest. So, it's a reference to birds, essentially. That's why it's called a nest.

Well, my mom is having a great time. She always sends me pictures. She's going out for brunches. She's curling. She's going for walks, taking her bike by the river. I mean, wow, how the other half lives. She's having a great time. So, I don't think there's any complaints there. But I agree that kind of empty nester, it sounds quite a sad term. But for my mom,

it's definitely, I think, a positive thing. But also, a situation I think a lot of people find themselves in when they're older. If they've had children, they're older. And then maybe they're retired. Their children live away from home or maybe in other parts of the world, for example, like in your case, Andrew. So, yeah, I think it's a really common situation. I guess it depends on the person whether it's good or not. I'm sure that some people really miss their children. And other people are quite happy that they're off doing their own thing. So, yeah, everyone's different.

Andrew: I'm going to pull out a really rare, uncommon word, which I think is what we call a baby bird, Anna. I believe we call it a fledgling. Is that the word that we use to call a baby bird, a fledgling? I'm going to toss it out there. Yeah, I'm going to toss it out there to our audience, a little homework. Guys, you have to go to the dictionary and search the word fledgling. And if it comes back as a baby bird, then my word power for today is on point.

But Anna, to go back to the empty nest, you know, these days, so many families actually have the kids move back in. Maybe they leave the home to go to university or they just want to be independent, so they move out of the home. But as we talked about, the cost-of-living crisis, inflation, it's an expensive world out there. And it's not easy to make it on your own.

And so, as a result, so many young people in their 20s, even into their 30s, are actually moving back home to live with their parents again. And we have a special term for this as well. It's called a boomerang family. You know, a boomerang is one of those things. It's like a little curved piece of wood that comes from Australia. I'm sure everybody knows what a boomerang is. That object, when you throw it, it comes back to you, right? And so, a boomerang family is like a family that goes out there into society for a little while and then returns back to the home. So, yeah, these days, that's another common phenomenon is kids that live at home, even as adults. And if they leave and then they come back, that's a boomerang family.

Why don't we go on to the next category? And Anna, maybe we have time for one more. I'll let you choose. Do you want to talk about the financial ones, the generational ones, or the relationship ones?

Anna: Let's do the financial ones because I think these are interesting because I read some articles about these, and they popped up. Another time you might hear these terms is if you're reading newspapers, for example, and articles. A lot of these types of terms come up in these forums. So, I think that's also useful, guys, as well, to know that you might see these more written rather than necessarily spoken as well. But let's take a look at finance and housing. And I want to get your opinion on this one, Andrew, which is FIRE. FIRE, yes, F-I-R-E, just like the word. And what it stands for is Financial Independence Retire Early.

I saw an article about this on BBC and it was a video of people who were in their 30s or late 30s and they had already retired. And what they do is essentially they set up their life and they make investments so that they basically live off the investments and lead a frugal life so that they can survive for the rest of their life without ever having to work again. And I remember watching it thinking, wow, that sounds amazing, but definitely not something that's on the cards for me. And I thought, how is that even possible?

And honestly, I thought this was an interesting article. I thought it was interesting to put it out there. But at the same time, I think essentially unrealistic for many, many, many people. Maybe it's the dream, but I think in reality, I'm not really sure how many people would be able to actually reach that goal. So, it was good to see it, but it kind of made me feel worse watching it rather than making me feel better. You know, I'm like, goodness me, there are these people at 30 and they've already retired. Great for them. But I don't think it's very achievable, really, for many people. I don't think there's many people in the FIRE category. I don't know what you think, Andrew.

Andrew: Yeah, I think FIRE, just like digital nomadism, might be some of these terms that are thrown around a lot. And there's a lot of articles written about them. But in reality, it's a

very select group of people, maybe related to high-income tech jobs, who can actually do it, right? Like, if you are a tech worker, maybe a programmer or something, it's really easy for you to be a digital nomad and to work from many different places. Whereas if you are a plumber, then you can't do that, right?

So, like, that kind of career option is available for some people, and then for other people, it's totally impossible. FIRE maybe is also the same thing. If you work for Google and you're an AI developer and you have a huge salary and you can save 90% of your salary, because the 10% that you need to live on is still a lot of money, like maybe the same amount as my salary for the whole year, right? Then probably it would be possible for reaching this kind of early retirement, this financial independence, retire early.

It also depends on your discipline. If you are really, really dedicated, if you're really good at saving your money, having a minimalist lifestyle where you don't spend your money carelessly, right. You're very careful with your money, and if you are good at investing, right? If you're always not just, like, saving your money but making good, wise investments, and you're really up to date on those things, I think maybe it could be possible. But it requires a lot of discipline. And for 99% of us, we don't have that discipline, and so we can't really do the FIRE, the financial independence, retire early. Because if we did, then nobody in their 50s or 60s would be working, right? You would see everybody that's past 40 years old, they'd just be chilling at the pool all day long, but nobody's doing that. People are still working.

And I think also, people find value in work. It gives us something to do with our time, it can be a great source of joy or satisfaction, of course, depending on the field that you work in. But I think, Anna, we probably find a great deal of joy helping our students improve their English, and we find it satisfying, right? It's satisfying work. When you just cut that out and you don't do that, of course, you know, I could probably find some other things that would bring me a lot of joy too, maybe that aren't related to work. But I don't know. I think it's like a nice dream when you're 20, maybe you're just starting your career and work really sucks and you're dreading going to work every day. But as you build a career and invest a lot of

time and energy into it, you start to like it. And a lot of people actually don't want to retire, right? They're scared of retiring.

I think this was kind of funny, but in Japan, there's a term and it's escaping my mind right now, maybe our Japanese listeners can chime in on the Discord and let me know. But there is a term that Japanese women have for their husbands retiring, where they like fear the retirement, because suddenly the husband's going to be home all day and they're like, oh no. So, I think, yeah, it's harder to let go of a career the more time you invest in it. I think a lot of people actually don't want to retire at the end of the day because they're scared. Like, how am I going to fill my days?

I've got lots of ideas of how I could fill my days. I would love to fire and retire early. Don't get me wrong. But as you mentioned, Anna, easier said than done. And I think there are several reasons behind that.

Anna: Definitely. You've got to be a high earner initially to be able to get the funds behind you to then invest and then be able to live off those investments. And I guess also as well, I mean, if it didn't work out, you could always go back to working, right? It's never off the table completely. But I just wanted to mention something as well that I thought of when you brought up this fear of your partner retiring and then them being at home all the time. It's kind of the opposite of the golf widow term, which is where either the wife or the husband are always playing golf. Well, in this case, the husband. And they're always playing golf every weekend for hours and hours. And then the girl's kind of just left there with like nothing to do. So, there's this term golf widow. I don't know if you've heard of that, guys, which is quite funny. So, it's kind of the opposite, right? Golf widow or being afraid of them coming back because they're going to be there all the time after retiring. So, that's also another funny term I've seen recently is this golf widow idea.

Andrew: Golf widow. Sounds not so great.

Anna: Well, golf takes ages. It's like hours and hours and hours. So, if you're playing every weekend, it can take the whole day on a Saturday or the whole day on a Sunday.

And then the other person's like, well, what do I do with that? Like, let's do something together. And they're like, no, sorry, got to play golf. See ya.

Andrew: Yeah, it doesn't sound like the foundation for a great, solid relationship.

Anna: Maybe not.

Andrew: It's an interesting one. Sometimes that can work for you. Every relationship is different. And Anna and I are going to continue our conversation here for just a little bit longer for all of our Culips members as a way to say thank you guys for your support. We hope that you will enjoy this extended conversation.

And so, Anna, we have two categories left that we didn't have a chance to talk about in the regular edition of this episode. They are generational identity terms and modern relationship identity terms. And I think we'll start with generational because I really like these terms.

And I guess first I should say, Anna, that I am a millennial or to be specific, I'm what people call an elder millennial. People who are elder millennials are born between 81 and 88, and I was born in 84. So, it's kind of funny, like that millennial group, there's the younger millennials and then the older millennials. And the older ones, like my generation, we call ourselves elder millennials, like we're looking over the younger millennials. Anna, I know you're definitely quite a bit younger than I am. What generation are you?

Anna: I'm a millennial as well. I guess I'm right in the heart of the millennial phase because I was born in 1991. So, I'm right in there, in the middle of it. So, I'm a pure millennial, let's say. I don't know how to say that. But I'm a mid-millennial. I'm right in the middle there. A true millennial, maybe we could say. I don't know.

Andrew: Yeah. And so, I'm an elder millennial. And yeah, I think it's funny. I love that term elder millennial. And I unfortunately have a bad habit of browsing Reddit. It's my **Achilles heel**. You know, it takes up a lot of my downtime. If I'm wasting time on the internet, on my

phone, I go to Reddit, which in and of itself is an elder millennial thing to do. I think that's like the demographic. My generation uses Reddit. And you see that term all the time on Reddit. So, it's something that people talk about as identifying themselves.

But some of these other expressions are also pretty fun. We have Zoomer. And that's another one that we hear all the time is a Zoomer. And a Zoomer is just a slang term for the Gen Z. And Gen Z people, I guess that's like the next generation, right? Born between 97 and 2012. So Zoomer. And we talk about the Zoomers a lot. And then the people who are above me, so they are between Generation X, which is before millennials, and millennials, those people are called Xennials. And that's like, I guess, people who would be maybe born in like 79, 80, you could call them an Xennial.

So, like I'm the oldest in my family. I don't have any elder siblings. But a lot of my friends growing up were the youngest in their family.

But my mom was 35 when I was born. And so that was pretty late. Like now I think that's common. But 40 years ago, that was pretty late. A lot of women had children when they were in their 20s. But she had her first child when she was 35. So that meant that I was the oldest in my family. But almost all of my friends were the youngest sibling. And so, I had a lot of, like, friends with older brothers and sisters. And I grew up with those people. And they would be the Xennials. So yeah, my friends' older bros, and sisters, the Xennials.

Anna: And then before that, we've got like my mom, for example. And we always make fun of my mom for this because she's a baby boomer. So, she always likes to squeeze in the Generation X. I'm like, no, mom, you're a baby boomer. And that's that. That's where you are. So that's the one before Generation X. So, this was maybe let's say my mom was born in 1963. So, it's kind of around that zone there, the baby boomer generation.

But it's very interesting because I think there's a lot of comparisons between zoomers, millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers in terms of the workplace, for example, how they're different. There's a lot of complaints about the zoomers that the zoomers just want free time. They don't want to work as hard. They're just concerned about their mental

health. Whereas if you compare that with baby boomers like my mom, for example, my mom's like, just get on with it. Like, what are you complaining about?

So, there are some different attitudes. But I think as with any generation, it's always the case that the younger generation is worse. So, everyone says that the Generation Z and the zoomers are just on their phones all the time and only concerned with certain things and social media. But I don't think that's really true. So, I think zoomers get a bad rep. And millennials as well, I have to say. There's a lot of bad stuff out there about millennials. How we're pathetic and, you know, worried again about things that we shouldn't be worried about and that we were **mollycoddled** when we were younger and things like this. So, I think there's always a bad rep about millennials and any generation that's younger than the one before. But I think there's pros and cons of everything, right?

I don't know. There's some good things about millennials, some good things about zoomers. But we'll just have to see how it plays out in the future, I guess. But the zoomers are definitely a different generation. If I compare with my brother, he's a zillennial, so he's right on that cusp between millennial and Gen Z. But my sister is a pure zoomer. And they are different. They really think about, of course, I'm generalizing here, but in the experience of my sister, she does think about things differently. She's had a different life. And if I think about technology especially, I didn't get a phone until I was 13. And the first phone that I got was a Nokia 3310. It was the most basic phone you could get. And it had that really cool game called Snake on it, which was amazing. But I didn't grow up with technology or social media, thank goodness. And I'm really grateful for that, actually.

But she grew up from the beginning with social media, Facebook, Snapchat, all of this stuff. So, it's a very different way to grow up. And then babies now that are born are like being born with iPads and people taking pictures of them. And it's just so different. So, of course, they're going to be different. They've had a different life. They've grown up in a different way. And actually, I think it must be really hard to grow up now, even though they won't know any different technically. But I'm actually grateful that I didn't grow up in that era of technology, social media. I'm grateful for that.

Andrew: Yeah, it's kind of funny. We probably are all biased in our own little ways. But I think, like, you were born a little bit too late because when you were born, the Internet was already quite ubiquitous. But when I was born, the Internet didn't even exist. And so, I had a really pure offline childhood until I was, like, around 11 years old. Like, of course, we had computers at school and at home, but they weren't connected to the Internet, right? We had video games and stuff, but they weren't connected to the Internet.

But then the Internet revolution occurred. And that was, yeah, maybe when I was, like, 12? 1112 years old. And so, I had this really pure offline childhood. But then the Internet came online and spread around the globe when I was still young enough to take full advantage of it and learn it as if I were a digital native. So, I was able to adapt to new technology really quickly because my mind was still young and malleable.

Whereas my parents, right, and my grandparents and all of that new tech was a huge adjustment for them to learn about because they were already too old and just didn't understand it. They were set in their ways.

But my mind, my young mind, was still fresh. And so that's one little cool thing about my generation is we know what it was like. We can think back before technology really took over every aspect of our life. But we were still young enough. We adapted to it very quickly. So, I'm happy for that. An amazing time to be born. Very cool.

Anna, we've got one more category to talk about, and that is relationships. And I think there are two here that I wanted to talk about. The first one is **situationship**. This is a fun term, a situationship. Could you define, what is a situationship?

Anna: Well, the common understanding of situationship is essentially an undefined romantic relationship. So, if I put this in simple terms, it just basically means when you like somebody, they like you, but you haven't basically become girlfriend and boyfriend yet. It's that classic thing that's been happening since the age of time where maybe you like somebody, they like you, maybe you've been on a date, but nothing's really been said.

You haven't had the conversation where you've decided that you're going to go for it and be formally together as a couple.

So, I think it's just a new term for a thing that's always been around. But that's my take on it anyway. I think it's just a cool word to put to something that's been going on for ages, which is before you maybe go out with someone. Or maybe another way that people define it is it's like somebody that you like and maybe you know, and you have a good time with, but you're not actually in a relationship. It's just seeing somebody for a period of time at some point in your life, but it's not necessarily serious. I think maybe that would be how some people would define it. But I think, again, just a cool word for something that's been happening forever.

Andrew: Exactly. And people will actually say, like, I'm in a situationship.

Anna: No, really?

Andrew: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

Anna: Oh my God. Really? People say that? So, they're like, what....?

Andrew: I think you could, no? I mean, maybe I'm **out of touch** because I haven't been in a situationship for too long. But, you know, I think if you're maybe talking with your friends, like.

Anna: Goodness, I didn't know that people were using it like that, as if to say, like, oh, "Are you in a relationship?" And they would say, "I'm not in a relationship now, but I'm in a situationship."

Andrew: No, I don't think you would say it like that, perhaps, like not in that kind of formal situation. But I'm just trying to think, you know, like, oh, "How are things going with, you know, Jerry? Are you guys... Are you guys dating yet?" "It's kind of a situationship. I don't know how I feel." You know, like maybe you could squeeze the word in that way.

But I want to say that this is a word that people use when they're speaking. Right? It's not just a purely Internet word or maybe I could say, you know, like, oh, "Jerry and Sarah, they're in a situationship." Right? They haven't made it official yet. We could use it like that, I think. But I'm this elder millennial who's **out of touch** with these new expressions, so....

The last one, we'll wrap it up here. We have chosen family and found family. And these are just newer expressions that we use to talk about people who are not your biological family members. But you have an extremely close relationship with, and you feel like as if they are family members, right? A chosen family, I guess, would be pretty much the same as a found family. Is there a difference between these two terms, Anna?

Anna: I don't think so, really. I think for me, the most common term is chosen family. I think I've heard that one more bounded around rather than found family. And especially for people who maybe have lost their parents and they are kind of on their own out there in the world. They kind of create this chosen family of friends, this close-knit group of friends that they essentially call their family because they are like family to them. Or people who live in a different country and they don't see their family very much. They create this chosen family of people around them as a support network.

And there's a really common phrase that we say in English, which is you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. And I think that's where this chosen family things comes from, is that you can choose your friends, but you can't necessarily choose your family. But your friends can become your family in a way. I think that's true. I think it can work like that. It's not my case, but I think there's definitely people that have such a close bond with people that it's as if they were a brother, a sister, a cousin or whatever. And I think actually often people are closer with their friends than they are with their family.

Andrew: Yeah, I think so. And I think, yeah, you're right. Some people who maybe have lost a family member, some people too, maybe due to the way they think about religion or maybe their sexual identity. Sometimes, unfortunately, people are rejected by their family. And, you know, this can be really painful, but they can find other people who are maybe in

a similar situation, and they can create like a family-like relationship. So, yeah, I've heard of this in these kinds of situations as well. And, yeah, I think you don't have to be blood to be family these days, right? As long as you have a good relationship, found family, chosen family, I'm behind it. 100 percent. Sounds good to me.

I think, Anna, this is a good place to wrap things up. So, thank you, everyone. Thanks to the Culips family out there for listening. And we'll talk to you guys in the next episode. Take care and bye bye.

Anna: See you soon. Bye.

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

Detailed Explanations

DINK(Y) Acronym

DINK stands for "Double Income, No Kids." It describes a couple who both work and earn an income but do not have children. When you add a "Y" to the end, it becomes **DINKY**, which means "Double Income, No Kids Yet." This term is often used to describe modern couples who are financially stable because they have two incomes but do not have the financial responsibilities that come with raising children.

In this episode, Andrew and Anna discuss **DINK(Y)** as one of the "modern identity labels" that reflect changing lifestyles. Andrew shares that he and his wife are a **DINK** couple and highlights how this setup often gives couples more financial stability compared to families with children. They also point out how declining birth rates in many countries make this lifestyle more common.

While **DINK(Y)** is not a formal term, it's often used in casual conversations or discussions about relationships and finances. This expression helps explain the economic and lifestyle choices of many modern couples, especially in cultures where having children is being delayed or avoided.

Here are a couple more examples with **DINK(Y)**:

Alex: Hey, Sarah, do you think you and Ben will ever have kids?

Sarah: We're not sure yet. With the rising cost of living, it feels smarter to stay a **DINK** couple for now.

Alex: Yeah, I've read that economists think more people are choosing that. It's tough to afford everything these days.

Sarah: Exactly. For now, we're focusing on our careers and saving money. Kids might come later.

Mark: Did you see that article about how **DINK** couples are spending way more on luxury items these days?

Tina: Yeah, I read it! Makes sense, though. Without kids, they have more disposable income.

Situationship

Slang (noun)

A **situationship** is a romantic relationship that hasn't been labeled as official. It involves two people who like each other and may spend time together, but they haven't committed to being in a formal relationship. This expression is often used to describe the gray area between casual dating and a serious partnership.

In the episode, Andrew and Anna discuss **situationships** as a modern identity term that describes a stage in many romantic relationships. Anna explains that it's when two people are interested in each other but haven't made it official as a couple. Andrew mentions that people might casually say, "They're in a situationship" to describe this type of relationship. It's often used in conversations with friends to explain the uncertainty or lack of definition in a romantic situation.

The expression **situationship** is popular among younger generations, especially when discussing modern dating trends. It describes the early time in a relationship when people might be hesitant to commit or are still figuring out their feelings.

Here are a few more examples with **situationship**:

Maya: So, what's going on with Jake? Are you guys official now?

Lila: Not really. We've been hanging out a lot, but we haven't had "the talk."

Maya: So, you're in a **situationship**.

Lila: Yeah, I guess so. It's fun, but I wish I knew where we stand.

Josh: Did you hear about Sarah and Ben? Everyone thought they were dating.

Ella: Yeah, but they're not official. It's one of those things where they act like a couple but haven't labeled it.

Josh: Classic **situationship**. They've been hanging out for months!

Ella: Right? I wonder if they'll ever make it official.

Empty nester

Expression (noun)

An **empty nester** is a parent whose children have grown up and moved out of the house, leaving the parent(s) to live alone or with their partner. The expression comes from the idea of a bird's nest that becomes "empty" once the baby birds leave. It often describes a stage of life when parents transition to a quieter household without their kids.

In this episode, Andrew and Anna discuss the expression **empty nester** while reflecting on how parents adjust when their children leave home. Both mention their own parents as examples, noting that while some empty nesters enjoy the freedom and new hobbies, others may feel lonely. Anna shares how her mom loves being an empty nester, filling her time with activities like brunches and bike rides.

You can use **empty nester** to describe parents whose children have grown up and moved out of the house. It's common in conversations about family life or life transitions, often referring to how parents adjust to having an "empty nest." The expression is neutral and works in casual or semi-formal settings, like everyday conversations.

Here are a couple more examples with **empty nester**:

Emma: How are your parents adjusting now that your sister moved out?

Lucas: They're officially **empty nesters**! My dad already turned her room into a home office.

Emma: Wow, that was fast. Are they enjoying the quiet?

Lucas: Mostly, but my mom keeps saying she misses having someone to cook for.

Sophia: Did you hear that Mr. and Mrs. Harris sold their big house?

Noah: Yeah, they said it's too much space now that they're **empty nesters**.

Sophia: Makes sense. A smaller place is probably easier to manage.

Noah: Definitely. Plus, they're talking about traveling more now that the kids are gone.

Achilles heel

Idiom (noun)

An **Achilles heel** is a weakness or flaw that can cause problems, even for someone who is strong or successful in other ways. The term comes from Greek mythology, where Achilles, a powerful warrior, was invincible except for his heel. This one vulnerability led to his downfall. Today, we use it to describe a specific weakness in a person, plan, or system.

In this episode, Andrew humorously refers to his habit of browsing Reddit as his **Achilles heel**, meaning it's his weak spot or a behavior that he finds hard to resist.

You can say something is your Achilles heel when it's a personal weakness or something that makes you struggle. For example, "Chocolate is my Achilles heel" means you can't resist chocolate, even if you're trying to eat healthily. You might also say, "Procrastination is his Achilles heel," if someone's bad habit of delaying work causes problems.

The expression is used in both casual and formal situations to describe anything from small personal struggles to larger issues, like "The company's outdated technology is its Achilles heel." It works best when describing a single flaw that could lead to challenges or failure.

Here are some more examples with **Achilles heel**:

Clara: I heard your team lost the big game. What happened?

Ethan: Our defense was strong, but turnovers were our **Achilles heel**. We kept giving the ball away.

Clara: That's rough. Do you think you'll fix it before the next game?

Ethan: I hope so. The coach is already planning extra drills to work on it.

Olivia: I've been trying to eat healthier, but it's so hard to give up junk food.

Noah: Same! French fries are my **Achilles heel**. I can never say no to them.

Olivia: For me, it's chocolate. I try so hard, but it's my ultimate weakness.

Noah: Well, maybe a cheat day once in a while isn't so bad!

Mollycoddled Adjective / verb

To be mollycoddled means to be treated with excessive care, protection, or attention, often to the point of being overprotected or spoiled. If someone is mollycoddled, they are protected from challenges or difficulties, which might make them unprepared for real-world situations.

In this episode, Anna mentions how some people criticize millennials for being **mollycoddled** as children, suggesting they were pampered or protected too much by their parents. This highlights the idea that being mollycoddled can have negative connotations, suggesting someone hasn't developed independence.

You can say someone is **mollycoddled** when they are being treated too delicately, such as, "She was mollycoddled by her parents and never learned how to handle failure." The expression can also be used humorously or critically, depending on the context, like saying, "Stop mollycoddling him! He can figure it out on his own!"

This expression is slightly formal and often used to describe parenting or relationships where one person is overprotective.

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

Rachel: Did you hear about Dylan's son getting a trophy just for participating in the race?

Owen: Yeah, I think kids are being **mollycoddled** too much these days. They need to learn about winning and losing.

Rachel: Exactly. It's important to teach them how to handle challenges, not just hand out rewards.

Owen: I agree. Otherwise, how will they deal with failure later in life?

Sam: I can't believe Mark's still asking for help with the same report every month.

Jenna: Well, the boss keeps **mollycoddling** him instead of letting him figure it out himself.

Sam: No wonder he's not improving. He's never had to do it on his own.

Jenna: Exactly. Sometimes people need to be pushed to learn and grow.

Out of touch

Idiom (adjective phrase)

The expression **out of touch** means someone is unaware of or disconnected from current trends, ideas, or information. It is often used to describe a lack of understanding or awareness, especially about something that has changed over time. For example, a person might be called "out of touch" if they don't know about modern technology, cultural trends, or the experiences of younger generations.

In this episode, Andrew humorously calls himself "out of touch" when discussing the expression "situationship," suggesting that he isn't fully up to date on modern dating slang.

You can say, "I'm out of touch" when you feel behind on trends, like fashion, slang, or technology. Similarly, you can describe someone else as "out of touch" if they don't understand a situation or group. For example, you could say, "He's out of touch with what younger people care about." This expression is informal and most commonly used in everyday conversations or casual writing.

To use this expression effectively, think of it as a way to show that someone's knowledge or understanding hasn't kept up with changes. Whether you're talking about yourself or someone else, it's a great way to describe a gap between knowledge and current reality.

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

Derek: Did you download that new game everyone's playing?

Megan: Honestly, I had no idea there was a popular new game out. I feel so **out of touch** with all these trends.

Derek: Don't worry, it's hard to keep up.

Megan: Thanks. Sometimes it feels like technology moves faster than I can keep up with.

Ava: Have you heard the latest album by Lunar Echo? Everyone's talking about it.

Tyler: Nope, I haven't. I guess I'm **out of touch** with new music these days.

Ava: You should check it out! It's really good.

Tyler: Maybe I will. I'm still stuck listening to the bands I loved in high school.

Quiz

1. What does "empty nester" describe?

- a) Someone without a place to live.
- b) A bird returning to an empty nest.
- c) A parent whose children have moved out.
- d) A family that refuses to have children.

2. What is an Achilles heel?

- a) A type of footwear for runners.
- b) A significant weakness in an otherwise strong person or system.
- c) A symbol of strength and invulnerability.
- d) A way to describe great physical strength.

3. What does it mean to be "out of touch"?

- a) To lose physical contact with someone.
- b) To be unaware of or disconnected from current trends or ideas.
- c) To refuse to communicate with someone.
- d) To misunderstand directions.

4. What does "situationship" describe?

- a) An undefined romantic relationship without labels.
- b) A professional partnership.
- c) A temporary friendship between two people.
- d) A serious, committed romantic relationship.

5. What does it mean if someone is "mollycoddled"?

- a) They rely only on their own abilities for success.
- b) They refuse to accept help from anyone.
- c) They are encouraged to take risks and be independent.
- d) They are treated with excessive care and overprotection.

Comprehension Quiz

6. Why does Anna say she wouldn't want to go back to a nine-to-five office job?
7. What does Andrew say about his work-from-home schedule?
8. What website is Andrew's Achilles heel?
9. What example does Anna give of wearing "multiple hats"?
10. What does Anna say about her mom being an empty nester?

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Which identity label discussed in the episode (like DINK, empty nester, solopreneur, etc.) do you think is the most interesting or relatable? Why?
2. Have you ever felt “out of touch” with a new trend, technology, or topic? What was it, and how did you handle it?
3. Do you think people today are more likely to be “mollycoddled” than in the past? Why or why not?
4. Andrew talks about how being an elder millennial gave him an advantage, growing up before the internet but learning technology as it became common in his adolescence. What are some pros and cons of your generation?
5. In your opinion, is it better to focus on one career or have multiple roles like a slashie? Why?

Quiz Answers

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

6. She is proud to work from home and run her own business.

7. He splits his time between working from home and going to the office.

8. Reddit.

9. She talks about doing all the tasks for her business, like marketing and finance, on her own.

10. Her mom enjoys it and spends her time doing activities like brunches and biking.

Episode credits

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