

Catch Word #201 – Emotional baggage

Episode description

Not all of our experiences in life are positive. Sometimes life is difficult or even traumatic. In this Catch Word episode, Andrew and Jeremy discuss English terms to use when speaking about emotional baggage and our past experiences.

Fun fact

The emotional baggage of the brothers in the film *The Darjeeling Limited* was not just metaphorical. Louis Vuitton made a special luggage collection for the film. The bags ended up playing an important role in the arc of the story.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Emotional baggage
- Drama
- Brain fog
- To name names
- To drive [someone] up the wall
- To shoot some hoops



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.

Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips. Hey, Jeremy.

Jeremy: Hey, Andrew, how are you doing?

Andrew: I'm a little bit tired this morning and, actually, I was worried about recording 'cause I experienced a little **brain fog** when I woke up.

Jeremy: You were feeling foggy this morning? I see. Have you had your morning coffee yet?

Andrew: I'm working on it right. I've had about half a cup, but I'm starting to wake up a little bit. I'm feeling better. So I think this recording session will go OK. I hope.

Jeremy: I hope so.

Andrew: Well, Jeremy, today we are going to do a Catch Word episode, and Catch Word is our series where we teach all of our listeners how to use really interesting English vocabulary, like idioms or slang or phrasal verbs, the difficult vocabulary that's actually really important and will help your English sound more natural if you use it. What is our theme for today's episode?

Jeremy: Emotional stuff.

Andrew: Emotional stuff, emotions.

Jeremy: Emotions, emotions.

Andrew: Emotional situations, or emotional people, that is the topic for today's episode.

Andrew: Before we get started, I want to tell everybody about our study guide for this episode. If you want to take your studies with Culips to the next level, I suggest studying along with the study guide. What do you get in it? Well, you get a transcript for the episode, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world usage examples, a quiz, and also some prompts that you can use to practice conversation with your friends or tutor, or maybe just use them as writing prompts and write a diary or written response. So that's all that's included in the study guide. It is awesome and it's available online right now on our website, Culips.com.

OK, so let's get into it. What's our first expression today?

Jeremy: Our first expression is **emotional baggage**. **Emotional baggage**.

Andrew: **Emotional baggage**. Now, we're not talking about the type of baggage you take with you when you wanna go travelling, or are we?

Jeremy: Well, it's similar. We use this term, I think, without the word emotional sometimes as well. If you say he has a lot of baggage, it also means **emotional baggage**.

Andrew: Exactly.

Jeremy: But it's similar to the way we carry suitcases in an airport or something, in the same way someone who has **emotional baggage** carries their sadness around with them like baggage.

Andrew: Yeah, so that's a good way to put it. So if we take a look at the definition for **emotional baggage**, it's leftover trauma or leftover negative feelings from a previous relationship. Most of the time, I think, when we use this we're talking about a relationship.

Jeremy: Yeah, it's true.

Andrew: It could be a different traumatic situation, like, I don't know, if you've experienced some trauma as a child, perhaps, you could say you have baggage left over from that experience. But, most of the time when you hear **emotional baggage**, it's about some negative feelings from a previous relationship that's still affecting you to this day. It's still having an impact on your life.

Jeremy: Yeah, I agree. Do you think that the term baggage makes it seem like the person has the choice to let go of it or not? Because when you carry a suitcase, it's your choice, right?

Andrew: Wow, this is a question we should ask a psychologist. Well, it's interesting because the verbs that we use with **emotional baggage** really illustrate how much of a struggle it is, right? We can say you're carrying around **emotional baggage** or dragging **emotional baggage** or hauling it around. There's a sense that it's really a chore, that it's a task that is not pleasant to do. And, yeah, I think often when somebody has **emotional baggage**, it's not really a choice, like, people don't wanna be affected in this way. But it's something they have to go through and hopefully with time—you know, the cliché is time heals all wounds—they'll be able to get rid of the baggage and live a normal life again.

Jeremy: That's a good way to put it.

Andrew: So, again, **emotional baggage** or baggage is just a negative feeling or an attitude or belief about the world and about the way, usually, relationships work that is caused or that is the result of a negative experience or a negative relationship in the past. Now, this expression sounds really serious, right? But I think people use it in a pretty lighthearted way, like, we use it to joke around.

Jeremy: Sometimes, yeah. It depends on the situation, though.

Andrew: Yeah, it can be serious. But it can also be used in a lighthearted way. All right, well, I think maybe the best thing to do now is to listen to some examples. So let's do that right now, here's our first example with the expression **emotional baggage**.

Friend 1: You know, it's been a while since you and Sarah broke up. You ever thinking about getting back out there and dating again?

Friend 2: I don't know, man. I'm still carrying a lot of **emotional baggage** from that relationship. I don't think I'm quite ready yet, to be honest.

Friend 1: That's cool, man, take your time.

Andrew: OK, in that example, two friends talk about relationships. One of the friends mentions that he has **emotional baggage** left over from his previous relationship. So this simply means that he's dealing with the aftereffects of his last relationship. Something happened in that last relationship that's still making him feel sad and is preventing him from pursuing a new relationship.

All right, Jeremy, are we ready for example #2?

Jeremy: Let's do it.

Friend 1: Hey, why don't you set me up with one of your friends? You know a lot of single ladies, right?

Friend 2: Yeah, I guess I do.

Friend 1: How about Danica?

Friend 2: Believe me, you don't wanna date her right now. She's got a lot of **emotional baggage** left over from when she was seeing Dan.

Friend 1: Ah, well, you got anyone else in mind?

Friend 2: I'll see what I can do.

Jeremy: In this example, a guy asks his buddy to set him up on a date with Danica. He warns him that that's a bad idea because Danica has a lot of **emotional baggage** left over from her last relationship. So, essentially, Danica is still dealing with the aftermath of the relationship. That past experience is affecting her in the present in a negative way. That's **emotional baggage** in a nutshell.

Andrew: Indeed.

All right, so now that we've looked at **emotional baggage**, I think we should move on to another very actually funny and extremely common expression in English.

Jeremy: Very, very common.

Andrew: Very, very common. It's a simple one. It is **drama**.

Jeremy: **Drama**. There's even some songs about this. No more **drama**. I know some song like, "No more **drama**" or something.

Andrew: Yeah, no **drama**.

Jeremy: No **drama**. I don't want any of that **drama**.

Andrew: I don't want any of that **drama**. So I think when a lot of learners will hear this expression, the first thing that will come to mind is, like, a TV show or a movie. It's a genre, right? **Drama**. But we're using it in a different sense here, aren't we?

Jeremy: Yeah, when used as a noun like this, it can mean a lot of things, but I would say the essential meaning is interpersonal conflict.

- Andrew: People doing bad things to each other or treating each other poorly and causing, well, **drama**, causing a scene, causing weirdness in the relationships, awkwardness, yeah.
- Jeremy: But **drama** doesn't include actually physically hurting the person or robbing them or some sort of illegal activity, that kind of thing. It's more social, social problems, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, that's a good point. And it's also usually among multiple people. You could have **drama** between just two people, maybe two friends that are fighting, but usually **drama**, I think, is with a group of people. Like maybe, you know, **drama** at work could be among coworkers, or **drama** at school could be among multiple students. It's usually, like, a group situation where **drama** occurs.
- Jeremy: And in the sense that most people may know this word, **drama** on TV, **drama** TV shows, **drama** in movies, is essentially that. There's some sort of lying or backstabbing or gossiping going on among people, and that conflict is the problem.
- Andrew: Yeah, so that emotional situation where you get a lot of the things you just mentioned—backstabbing and gossiping and lying and manipulating, maybe even when we're talking about relationships, cheating—this causes **drama**.
- Jeremy: Problems.
- Andrew: Problems. As our listeners probably know, I'm living in Korea right now, and maybe our listeners don't know this but, Jeremy, you also lived in Korea for a while.
- Jeremy: Yes, that's true.
- Andrew: And one of the things that I appreciated, especially when I first moved to Korea and I had zero knowledge of the Korean language, was that my life was suddenly **drama** free. I couldn't understand the conversations that were happening around me at work, so it was like there was no **drama** in my life because, before I went to Korea, in Canada I had a lot of **drama** at my workplace, and so I really loved it. Like, I came to Korea, I can't understand what people are saying, there's no **drama**. I'm outside of it. And it was beautiful.
- Jeremy: What about now?
- Andrew: Well, now, you know, as my Korean's getting better, I start to realize, oh yeah, there's **drama** in Korea, too. I was just ignorant to it at first.

- Jeremy: Yeah, ignorance is bliss, they say, right?
- Andrew: Ignorance was bliss.
- Jeremy: Was bliss.
- Andrew: So I realized that **drama** can actually have a big toll on your life. It can cause a lot of stress and worry unnecessarily.
- Jeremy: Definitely, definitely.
- Andrew: Everyone, if you can escape **drama** by moving to a foreign country, I recommend it.

All right, let's listen to a couple of examples with **drama**.

- Coworker 1: Haven't seen you around the break room lately.
- Coworker 2: Yeah, you know, I actually just started taking walks during my break instead of hanging out in the break room.
- Coworker 1: Why's that?
- Coworker 2: Ah, there's way too much **drama** in the break room. I can't take it anymore, all those rumours and gossip, it's ridiculous. I don't want to **name names**, but some of our coworkers act like children.

- Andrew: In this example, two coworkers chat about all the **drama** in the break room. And here **drama** refers to all the gossip, lying, rumour spreading, all of these fun things that some of the other company employees do during break time, during the coffee break. Maybe this example was inspired from my own life. I don't know.
- Jeremy: Is this a real example?
- Andrew: Perhaps. But, actually, I think this is quite common for people to complain about **drama** at work.
- Jeremy: Definitely, definitely.
- Andrew: OK, example #2, here we go.

Friend 1:	There is way too much drama in my life right now. I swear I'm gonna have a breakdown anytime soon.
Friend 2:	Why, what's up, man?
Friend 1:	My wife and my mother-in-law are constantly fighting. My kids are driving me up the wall , and, to top it, off my brother's not talking to me.
Friend 2:	Wow, that sound intense, man. If you ever wanna go shoot some hoops and let off some steam later, let me know. I'll go with you.

Jeremy: In this example, a friend shares the fact that there is too much **drama** in his life. He has all sorts of problems with different members of his family and it's stressing him out. So, again, when someone has **drama** in their life, they have a lot of interpersonal or relationship problems.

Andrew: Indeed. And I hope everyone that's listening out there doesn't have too much **drama** in their life, or isn't carrying around too much **emotional baggage**. It's never a fun situation to be in either of these states, is it?

Jeremy: But it is good to know these expressions, that's for sure.

Andrew: Totally. They are very commonly used.

Jeremy: Definitely.

Andrew: OK, Jeremy, I think that about wraps it up for us today. We don't have any other emotionally charged expressions to share with anyone.

Jeremy: Maybe next time.

Andrew: Maybe next time, yes. Thank you for listening, everyone. If you have any comments, questions, or even suggestions for future episodes, please drop us a line. That means send us a message. So, yeah, send us a message. And you can do that through our Facebook page, which is [Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast](https://www.facebook.com/CulipsPodcast), or you can email us directly. Our email address is contact@Culips.com.

Jeremy: For more episodes of the podcast, you can go to Culips.com or find them wherever you get your podcasts.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another episode. We'll talk to you then. Goodbye, everybody.

Jeremy: Catch you later. Bye.

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Detailed Explanations

Emotional baggage

Noun

Emotional baggage is a term that refers to past experiences that still affect you negatively. Some of the verbs associated with this expression are similar to those used with actual baggage, such as to carry around **emotional baggage**, meaning you are still affected by it, and to unpack **emotional baggage**, meaning you are trying to get rid of it.

Here's one more example with **emotional baggage**:

Britt:	How is your son doing these days?
Fran:	He's doing better.
Britt:	I know the divorce was really hard on him.
Fran:	Yes, it was. His homeroom teacher told me that he now hardly ever speaks in class. I feel so bad. He still has a lot of emotional baggage he needs to unpack.
Britt:	Maybe look into sending him to a camp this summer. He really loved that when he was younger.

Drama

Noun

Drama is when you have a lot of conflict within a social group. It often involves rumours, gossip, and lying.

Here's one more example with **drama**:

Patrick:	Hey, I thought you were having a family reunion today? What happened to that?
Phil:	That's still going on, but I won't be there.
Patrick:	How come?
Phil:	There's way too much drama in my family. I can't handle it. Ever since my grandfather died, everyone's arguing about money. Makes me sick.

Brain fog

Noun, informal

Brain fog is when you have difficulty concentrating, usually from still being groggy from waking up. Think of a foggy day outside: you will have difficulty seeing things around you very clearly. The same thing goes on in your head when you experience **brain fog**.

Here are a couple more examples with **brain fog**:

Wife:	Hurry up, you'll be late for work.
Husband:	I know. I'm just a little slow this morning. Where are my keys?
Wife:	In your hand.
Husband:	Oh. And my glasses?
Wife:	You're wearing them.
Husband:	Oh.
Wife:	That's some serious brain fog you have. Maybe you should take a taxi to work today.

Hannah:	Do you know how much you got on yesterday's test?
Charlie:	Yeah. It's not good.
Hannah:	What? You're killer at math.
Charlie:	But I was so tired yesterday. I had so much brain fog that none of the numbers made any sense.
Hannah:	Did you drink the night before?
Charlie:	Um ... Maybe.

To name names

Idiom

To name names is to reveal the names of the people you are talking about. For example, if you are telling a story about two people and you don't want the others to know who they are, you are choosing not **to name names**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to name names**:

Bashir:	How is your soccer team this year?
Mark:	We're doing all right. But we're having problems in the locker room.
Bashir:	Like what?
Mark:	Let's just say some people are like a cancer in there.
Bashir:	Oh no. Is it who I think it is?
Mark:	I'd rather not name names . But, yeah, you can imagine who I'm talking about.

Lawyer:	Are you willing to testify in court?
Client:	Yes, I am.
Lawyer:	This might be extremely uncomfortable for you.
Client:	That's OK.
Lawyer:	And are you willing to name names ?
Client:	That's why I'm here. I want justice to be served.

To drive [someone] up the wall

Idiom

To drive [someone] up the wall is to irritate or annoy that person. This expression is mostly used in the personal sense, as in he **drives me up the wall**. Think of being so irritated by someone or something that you are climbing the walls trying to escape!

Here are a couple more examples with **to drive [someone] up the wall**:

Blaine: I heard you got new neighbours. Have you met them yet?

Trudy: Not yet. But I have heard their music.

Blaine: Oh, do they play their music loud?

Trudy: So loud! It's **driving me up the wall**. I can't stand it.

Blaine: Maybe you should go over and introduce yourself.

Dana: That's it! I'm quitting!

Eddie: Quitting? You have a great job. Why would you want to quit?

Dana: Because of my boss. He nitpicks. He shouts. He's so demanding. He's horrible. He **drives me up the wall**.

Eddie: Try asking for a transfer. Quitting will look really bad on your résumé.

To shoot some hoops

Idiom

To shoot some hoops is another way of saying to play basketball. The hoop refers to the ring that holds up the basketball net. Although you are shooting a ball at the hoop, and not actually shooting a hoop, this expression is very common with basketball players and casual fans alike.

Here are a couple more examples with **to shoot some hoops**:

Greg:	Any plans this weekend?
Dillon:	No, just taking it easy.
Greg:	Wanna shoot some hoops ?
Dillon:	Sure! I haven't played in a long time.
Greg:	Really? I practice every afternoon. Are you sure you still want to join?

Liz:	Oh, I didn't know you went to Stanford University. What did you do there?
Chuck:	I studied sports psychology and I shot hoops .
Liz:	You were on the basketball team? Wow!
Chuck:	Don't be too impressed. I mostly rode the bench.
Liz:	What does that mean?
Chuck:	It means I sat on the bench more than I actually played.
Liz:	At least you got a good education. Not everyone can make the NBA.

Quiz

1. True or false: Emotional luggage an accepted term in English.

- a) true
- b) false

2. To name names is to _____.

- a) name your children
- b) name your pets
- c) name secret identities
- d) know the title of songs

3. Which is the best example of drama?

- a) you spent \$100 of lotto tickets and didn't win
- b) your son got a below-average score on a test
- c) Vicky has been revealing secrets about Greg's personal life at work
- d) the battery in your car died

4. What does the expression time heals all wounds mean?

- a) just wait long enough and the pain will slowly disappear
- b) the doctor will help after going to the waiting room
- c) you have time to study the problem
- d) make sure your wounds don't get infected

5. What is probably not a cause of brain fog?

- a) waking up too early
- b) waking up too late
- c) being hungover
- d) drinking too much coffee

Writing or Discussions Questions

1. How do you deal with the emotional baggage you have accumulated in your life?
2. What is good advice you would give a friend regarding their past trauma?
3. If your good friend backstabs you, what reaction would you have?
4. Have you ever worked in a toxic environment where there was a lot of drama?
How did you deal with that?
5. What drives you up the wall?
6. Not everyone drinks coffee in the morning to get started. What are good tricks
you have to jump-start your brain after waking up?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Jeremy Brinkerhoff

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free, *Step On* by Jahzzar

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Matty Warnock

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Erol Ahmed (Unsplash.com)