

Catch Word #218 – Give it a shot

Episode description

Have you ever tried something and it didn't go the way you'd planned? In this Catch Word episode, Andrew and Jeremy introduce useful expressions for talking about past experiences that didn't work out the way we might have hoped.

Fun fact

Albert Einstein has a famous quote that says, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." This quote is especially useful in this episode, where we discuss failures that occurred in the past. However, as Albert says, failure is a part of life; new things cannot be experienced or achieved without a few failures and mistakes thrown in as well.

Expressions included in the study guide

- I tried doing the whole thing for a bit, but
- A solid [something]
- To throw oneself into [something]
- To give [something] a shot
- To stick with [something]
- Burnout





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.

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to another edition of our Catch Word series, the Culips series where we teach you very useful idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, and interesting English vocabulary. Today I'm joined by Jeremy.

Jeremy, hello, sir, how are you?

Jeremy: Sir? I am very good today, sir. How about you?

Andrew: This is one of the things that I say to my students all the time, I always call the male students sir. I don't know why, I've never used the expression before in my life, and then suddenly I started teaching and all of my students became sir.

Jeremy: It's not a bad habit. I do call people sir sometimes. But with friends or people I'm close to like yourself, we sometimes use it for fun. It's just a way to lighten the mood.

Andrew: I think that's how I was using it just now, a little tongue in cheek because, yeah, I don't think you're a knight or somebody that I have to refer to as sir, you're a peer. But it's kind of a fun expression to pull out from time to time.

Jeremy: Tongue in cheek, I feel like you must have done an episode about that one as well?

Andrew: Oh, I can't recall off the top of my head, but, yeah, it must be there. Yeah, tongue in cheek just means we're being a little sarcastic, right? We're not being serious, a little cheeky.

Andrew: In today's episode, everyone, we are going to teach you two English expressions that you could use to talk about past experiences that you've had that really didn't end up going too well for whatever reason. It was not a positive experience, or just an experience that didn't work out the way that you had initially thought that it may end up.

But before we start teaching you these expressions, I do want to let you know that there is a study guide for this episode on the Culips website, and it's jam-packed with lots of good things that we've designed to help you get the most out of studying with this episode. So if you'd like to check that out, just visit our website, Culips.com, to give it a download.

All right, so, Jeremy, the first expression here, it's hard to actually call this an expression. It's more like a set phrase. It's a chunk of English that's really common, that you hear many people say in this situation.

Jeremy: It's a very useful phrase if you have tried something and it didn't work out.

Andrew: So the expression here—it's a little long, guys, but bear with us—it is **I tried doing the whole something thing for a bit, but. I tried doing the whole something thing for a bit, but.** And when I say "something," we can insert any kind of experience into that slot.

Jeremy: **I tried doing the whole freelancer thing for a bit, but.**

Andrew: **I tried doing the whole salesman thing for a bit, but.**

Jeremy: So it's a way of summarizing the entire experience of that thing into one word. So if we say the whole freelancer thing—for those who don't know, freelancer is someone who works on their own, someone who doesn't work for a company. Sometimes this can be difficult, so the whole freelancer thing, this means everything about the lifestyle of a freelancer, so finding your own clients, getting your own payments, paying your own taxes. All these little things that go with being a freelancer, they are summarized or encapsulated into one phrase here saying the whole freelancer thing.

Andrew: Yeah, when I hear somebody say this expression, I really get the sense that they **threw themselves into their work** completely. They really committed to the job and gave it an honest effort, but didn't really work out in the end. And another point that we should mention is I really think that we use this often to talk about career experience or job experience.

Jeremy: I think it's definitely an action. It has to be something you do or something that is related to a lifestyle. So careers affects your whole life, but I could say I tried doing the whole homeless thing for a while, right? Someone who tried living the life of a homeless person, tried living without a home.

Andrew: You're absolutely right because, for example, you know there's some trendy diets, right?

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: Let's say a gluten-free diet, you could say **I tried doing the whole gluten-free thing for a bit, but** didn't like it. OK, you're totally right that it's not limited just to careers, it's any lifestyle choice that you make.

Jeremy: This is when we say tried doing, you can use this, the whole mm-hmm thing you can use this form to encapsulate lots of things. The whole fighting thing in hockey just doesn't make sense to me.

Andrew: Yes, exactly. When you're summarizing any aspect of life, "the whole mm-hmm thing" fits.

Jeremy: A large complicated thing that would be difficult to explain in detail on the spot.

Andrew: Exactly. Well, why don't we jump into a couple of examples here and we can let our listeners know how English speakers use this set phrase in a real-life situation.

Jeremy: All right, let's do it.

Friend 1: Are you still working at the Starbucks downtown?

Friend 2: No, not anymore. **I tried doing the whole barista thing for a bit, but** it just wasn't a good fit for me.

Friend 1: Oh, so are you looking for a job, then?

Friend 2: No, I started a landscaping company with my brother. We're keeping really busy these days.

Friend 1: Oh, good for you. That's great.

Andrew: So in the example we just heard, two friends bumped into each other while they were out and about, and they were having a conversation about one of the friend's jobs. What does he do? What is he doing these days? And so one friend asked, are you still working at the Starbucks downtown? But this friend said, no, he wasn't. He tried it for a little while, **he tried doing the whole barista thing for a bit, but** it didn't work out. It wasn't a good fit for him, so instead he started a landscaping company with his brother. So here, he summarized his entire experience of saying that, you know, he committed and he really gave making coffee an honest effort, but it wasn't a match for him so he started doing a different job instead.

Andrew: OK, we have one more example for you guys, so let's get to it right now.

Friend 1: Do you ever regret not going to college when you were younger?

Friend 2: No, not really. **I tried the whole student thing for a bit, but** realized I'd rather just work and earn money.

Friend 1: Well, looks like that was a good choice in the end.

Friend 2: Yes, luckily everything turned out fine and I have **a solid career** that I love. You know, I wouldn't change it for anything.

Jeremy: In this example, a guy is saying that he does not regret not going to college. **He says he tried the whole student thing for a bit, but** it didn't work out for him. He chose to quit school and to start working instead. But now, looking back, he realizes it was a good choice because he enjoys the career that he has built for himself.

Andrew: Exactly. So here we use this expression used to talk about student lifestyle, right? This guy **threw himself into the student lifestyle**, he gave being a college student an honest try, but it wasn't a good fit for him. So he decided to quite college, drop out, and just do a different thing instead. You know, retrospectively, now that he's looking back on this decision, he doesn't regret it at all.

All right, we have a second expression for y'all today, and it is, **to give mm-hmm a shot, but. To give something a shot, but.** OK? Now we use this expression **to give something a shot** very commonly in English, and we can use it to talk about any kind of experience, right? Could be a positive experience, could be a negative experience, but when we use the conjunction but at the end, then it really clearly communicates that the experience was negative, didn't work out the way that we had planned initially or that we had thought it would initially.

Jeremy: So let's illustrate that with an example.

Andrew: All right, let's do it.

Friend 1: You went rock climbing last week, right? How did you like it?

Friend 2: Yeah, **I gave it a shot, but I don't think it's for me.** I just don't think I'll be able to get over my fear of heights.

Friend 1: Ah, that's too bad.

Friend 2: Yeah, yeah. For now, I'm just gonna **stick with yoga** for exercise.



Andrew: So in this example, we heard two friends talking about exercising, and one of the friends said that he **gave rock climbing a shot, but** it just wasn't right for him. He said, I don't think it's for me, OK? So here **he gave it a shot**, he tried rock climbing, but he didn't like it. The experience didn't go the way that he planned. I'm sure before he tried rock climbing he went in with a lot of expectations that this might be a perfect sport for him, but in the end it didn't work out. So here we hear this expression **to give something a shot, to give rock climbing a shot**, but it didn't work out. They talk about, yeah, this experience that just didn't go as planned.

Jeremy, how about one final example for today?

Jeremy: Let's do it.

Coworker 1: Now that Mark has been transferred to the European office, I'm hoping I can take over the assistant manager position.

Coworker 2: That would be a great fit for you, I think.

Coworker 1: Are you going to apply for it, too?

Coworker 2: **I gave management a shot back at my last job.**

Coworker 1: Oh, yeah, is that right?

Coworker 2: Yeah, but I was extremely stressed and I just got **burnt out**. Since then, I just realized that management is just not my thing.

Jeremy: In this example, two coworkers are talking about a potential new job opening. They both could apply for the assistant manager position, but one of the two has already **given it a shot**. Meaning he has tried it before, but he realized that it wasn't his thing. Meaning it wasn't something he liked to do. So he is not going to apply for the new position.

Andrew: He already has this experience of being a manager, right? He has this experience, but it didn't go well. He didn't like it, and so he's not going to apply for this other new assistant manager job that's opening up in that company.

Jeremy: For those who don't know this, Andrew currently lives in South Korea and I have also lived in South Korea before, although I do not at the moment.

- Andrew: Sometimes when I visit back home in Canada, I meet other people that have also lived in Korea. This is very common for young, fresh graduates from university to come over to Asia—could be any Asian country—to teach English for a year or two and then they go home. So these people, you know, if you only stay for a year, you maybe didn't like the experience, maybe it was too difficult for you. So you could say, for example, **"Oh, I gave the whole teaching English thing a shot"** or **"I gave the whole living in Korea thing a shot"** or **"I tried doing the whole English teacher thing for a bit, but I didn't work out"** or "I didn't like it" or "it was too difficult."
- Jeremy: So you can put a whole phrase in that blank here. **"I gave living in Korea and teaching English at a small school at shot, but ..."** So you can insert a very long phrase into this gap, this is important to know, I think.
- Andrew: Yeah. And, Jeremy, I think I just mixed up the two expressions, too, which shows us you can combine these two, right?
- Jeremy: They are very similar. Yeah, they are very similar, almost the same.
- Andrew: Almost the same. Exactly, with the exception that you can use **to give something a shot** to also talk about positive experiences, right? **"I gave rock climbing a shot, and I loved it,"** you could say that. So **to give something a shot** is very flexible in this regard, just keep that in mind, everybody, and I think you'll be OK.
- Jeremy: However, the first expression we talked about usually implies that a negative attitude, usually implies that it didn't work out. **"I tried the whole mm-hmm."** "The whole mm-hmm," when you say that, the whole mm-hmm thing, it is usually used in a negative context, whereas **to give mm-hmm a shot** is both negative and positive, can be either one.
- Andrew: Exactly.
- All right, Jeremy, well, I think that about wraps it up for us today. I want to thank all of our listeners for studying with us and we hope that you learned a lot here with us.
- Jeremy: If you would like to give studying with a Culips study guide a shot, you can go to Culips.com to find out how to download the study guide for this episode.



Andrew: Yeah, there's even some free samples on our website. I think there's maybe six or seven free study guides that you can check out. So if you don't have the experience of studying with our study guides and you would like to give it a shot, why don't you do it for free, check it out, and if you think it's a good fit for you, then maybe you would want to become a premium member and get access to our entire study guide library.

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We will be back soon with another Culips episode, and we'll talk to you soon everyone. Goodbye.

Jeremy: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

I tried doing the whole [something] for a bit, but Phrase

This episode introduced phrases to talk about past experiences that didn't go as planned. The phrase **I tried doing the whole [something] for a bit, but** is the first phrase that Andrew and Jeremy introduce in this episode. **I tried doing the whole [something] for a bit, but** is used to talk about something that one tried in the past, but it didn't work out or it didn't turn out the way he or she imagined. For example, someone might believe that she would enjoy yoga, but she soon finds out that yoga is not something she actually enjoys. In this case, she could say, "**I tried doing the whole yoga thing for a bit, but** it just wasn't my style. In other words, she tried yoga a few times and quickly realized she didn't like it after all, so she quit.

Here's one more example with **I tried doing the whole [something] for a bit, but**:

Tanner:	Dude! Long time no see. How long has it been? Like 5 years?
Derek:	Hey! Yeah, it has been forever, hasn't it?
Tanner:	So what's up? I remember last time we talked, you were thinking about starting your own business. How's that going?
Derek:	Ah, yeah. I tried the whole entrepreneur thing for a bit, but it didn't really go as planned.
Tanner:	Oh, man. I'm sorry to hear that.
Derek:	No, it's cool. I actually went back to school for programming and got a job as a software engineer. I really like it, actually. It suits me.
Tanner:	Well, that's good to hear it all worked out in the end.

A solid [something]

Adjective phrase

Solid has quite a few meanings, the most well-known being something that is rigid or firm, not liquid or fluid. However, **solid** has other meanings, such as steady, dependable, strong, or fixed. For example, in this episode, one of the example dialogues talks about a man who has **a solid career**. In this case, **solid** means steady and dependable, so the man has a steady, safe, and dependable job that isn't likely to fire him or cut his hours.

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

Teresa:	Guess what Richard did for me last night?
Heather:	Let me guess? Not only did he remember your anniversary, he also made reservations to your favourite restaurant and bought you that necklace you've been dreaming about?
Teresa:	Yeah, pretty much. Are you a mind reader?
Heather:	No, he's just the perfect boyfriend and I wouldn't expect any less.
Teresa:	He is pretty great, isn't he?
Heather:	Yeah, and I'm totally jealous. What I wouldn't give to have a solid relationship like yours. I'm so sick of going on all these random dates.
Teresa:	Don't worry. You'll find someone soon, I know it.

Brandon:	What will you do? Raise the bid or fold?
Niko:	I'll raise \$20.
Brandon:	\$20! You must have one heck of a hand—unless you're bluffing.
Niko:	No way. I'm not bluffing. I've got a solid hand right here. So how about you? Do you call or fold?
Brandon:	I think you're bluffing. I'll call. OK, show me. What do you have?
Niko:	Ha! I've got a full house. Beat that.
Brandon:	Man, that is pretty good, but I've got a straight flush. You lose!
Niko:	No! How is that even possible?

To throw oneself into [something]

Phrase

To throw oneself into [something] is to begin doing something with a lot of passion and energy. For example, someone who **throws herself into learning piano** practices every day for several hours a day. Imagine putting all of your heart and energy into an activity; that is **throwing yourself into that activity**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to throw oneself into [something]**:

Bridget:	Wow! You look great!
Franny:	Oh, thanks. I've lost 20 kilograms so far.
Bridget:	How? I need to know your secret.
Franny:	It's not anything special. I just threw myself into the vegan lifestyle . Cutting out the meat, dairy, and refined sugars has done wonders for my weight and energy levels.
Bridget:	Oh, I don't think I could ever give up on eating hamburgers or ice cream.
Franny:	You would be surprised how easy it is once you get into a routine. There are alternatives, too, like veggie burgers and coconut milk ice cream.

JiYu:	How've you been? I feel like I haven't seen you in forever.
Xie Lee:	Yeah, sorry about that. I've been pretty busy recently. I've just thrown myself into my work trying to get this big promotion and everything.
JiYu:	How's the project going?
Xie Lee:	Not bad. I've only got a week left to finalize the designs and then I'll present them to the committee.
JiYu:	Well, good luck. Let's get drinks after the committee. It'll be a celebratory thing if you get the promotion or a drowning your sorrows thing if you fail. Either way, I'm there for you.
Xie Lee:	Ha, thanks. Let's hope it will be a celebratory thing.



To give [something] a shot

Phrase

To give [something] a shot is to try something. A shot is a try, so **to give it a shot** means to give something a try. **To give [something] a shot** can be a positive thing or a negative thing, because you can **give something a shot** and succeed or **give something a shot** and fail. This phrase is often expressed as **giving something your best shot**, meaning you try your hardest to succeed at something.

Here is one more example with **to give [something] a shot**:

Diana:	Do you wanna try getting a prize from the claw machine over there?
Miguel:	You know those things are a waste of money, right? Hardly anyone wins.
Diana:	Yeah, but it's fun. C'mon, let's give it a shot .
Miguel:	All right, but you're buying.

To stick with [something]

Phrasal verb

To stick with [something] is to continue doing something without quitting. For example, to become a master at something such as playing the piano, one must practice diligently, **sticking with it** for many years without quitting or taking a break.

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

Sally:	Guess what? I've just started running. My plan is to run a marathon by next year.
Roger:	Really? You always say things like that, but you always get bored and quit.
Sally:	Yeah, but this time I really mean it! I'm gonna stick with it until I run that marathon.
Roger:	How about we bet on it? That will give you more reason not to quit. If you run the marathon next year, I have to give you \$200, but if you quit and don't run it, you give me the money.
Sally:	Deal! You better save up, because that money is gonna be mine.

JiMin:	Dad, I suck at baseball. Everyone else on the team makes fun of me. Maybe I should just quit.
Dad:	Do you like baseball?
JiMin:	Yeah, but ...
Dad:	Do you wanna quit?
JiMin:	No, but ...
Dad:	Then stick with it . You might be the worst now, but if you work hard and stick with it , you'll get better and better. Don't worry what the other kids think of you. Only think about what you can do to improve, and practice that each and every day.
JiMin:	Thanks, Dad. I really needed to hear that.
Dad:	Anytime, son.

Burnout

Noun

Burnout is extreme tiredness that people experience after working too hard or undergoing too much stress. **Burnt out** is the adjective form of **burnout**, so if someone says they are **burnt out**, it means they are exhausted from overworking.

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

Macy:	Final exams are finally over! Summer vacation has officially begun!
Carly:	Thank goodness. I am seriously burnt out . I can't wait to sit on the beach next week.
Macy:	Right? We are going to have a blast. I can't wait to swim in the ocean, drink margaritas, and flirt with some cute boys.
Carly:	Amen, sister.

George:	What's up with Hector? I haven't seen him at work for a few days.
Tracy:	Oh, you haven't heard? He had some serious burnout . That last project he worked on caused him so much stress that he took a week off work for his mental health.
George:	Really? Well, good for Hector. Mental health is just important as physical health. If he needs the rest, he should definitely take it.
Tracy:	Yup, the boss thought so, too. He said he would pay for a massage for Hector himself.
George:	Ha. That's pretty cool.

Quiz

1. To start doing something with a lot of energy and passion is to _____ oneself into something.
 - a) drive
 - b) throw
 - c) swim
 - d) kick

2. Which phrase does not have a similar meaning to give it a shot?
 - a) give it a go
 - b) take a stab at it
 - c) keep at it
 - d) have a crack at it

3. If someone is feeling burnt out, he is feeling:
 - a) angry
 - b) tired
 - c) sad
 - d) excited

4. Why might someone choose NOT to stick with their current hobby?
 - a) They really like it
 - b) They want to master that hobby
 - c) They've done that hobby for many years
 - d) They found another hobby they like more

5. Which word below cannot be described with the word solid?
 - a) weakness
 - b) evidence
 - c) career
 - d) relationship

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is something that you tried for a bit in the past, but quit after a short time?
2. What is something that you recently gave a shot?
3. Have you ever experienced burnout? What did you do to energize yourself again?
4. What is something that you have stuck with for a long time? How long did you stick with it?
5. Have you ever thrown yourself into something with your whole heart and all of your energy? What was it?

Quiz Answers

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

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