

Catch Word #221 – I'd take a bullet for you

Episode description

There are many ways to tell someone you love them. Jeremy and Andrew look at two curious expressions that mean “I love you” or “I care about you.”

Fun fact

Andrew and Jeremy reference the song *Grenade* by Bruno Mars. Give it a listen to hear some of the expressions from this episode used in a real-life context!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To take a bullet for someone
- To take
- To question someone's sanity
- To throw yourself in front of a train or bus for someone
- In a bind
- Loaded



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: Hey, everyone, my name's Andrew.

Jeremy: And this is Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Andrew: Hey, everyone, welcome back to Catch Word. This is the Culips vocabulary series where we teach you natural English expressions that will help you become a better English speaker and English listener. And today, I am joined by my cohost, Jeremy.

Andrew: Jeremy, how are you?

Jeremy: I'm doing pretty well. How about yourself?

Andrew: Jeremy, it's Friday. TGIF, I'm doing great.

Jeremy: Yeah, man.

Andrew: Friday's the best. My favourite day of the week, I think, actually.

Jeremy: As it should be. I like Sunday and Saturday, too.

Andrew: Yeah, all of them are good. I agree.

Jeremy: Yup, yup.

Andrew: Today, we are going to teach all of our listeners two English expressions that we can use to express our love or our loyalty or our devotion to another person. And I think everyone will learn a lot with this episode.

Jeremy: Are these going to be romantic expressions?

Andrew: Yeah, you could use them to express your love in a romantic sense. But it could also be, like, your love or your loyalty to, really, anybody. Anybody that you have a strong connection with, or that you care deeply for.

Jeremy: Interesting.

Andrew: Yeah. And, actually, they're a little bit violent, these two expressions that we're going to look at. It's ironic that we're talking about love and violence at the same time.

Jeremy: It will make sense, everyone, just keep listening. It will make sense.

Andrew: Exactly. So, we'll get started here in just a moment.

Andrew: Just before we do that, I want to let all of our listeners know about the study guide for this episode. Guys, it is available to download on our website, Culips.com. And the study guide is full of great material that will help you get the most out of this episode, and we highly recommend that you check it out. So, to do that, simply visit Culips.com and you'll be able to find out how you can download the study guide.

Andrew: All right, so let's get started by **taking** a look at the first expression for today. It is **to take a bullet for someone**. Or sometimes we also say **to take** a grenade for someone. But I think most commonly I hear **to take a bullet for someone**.

Jeremy: I'd **take a bullet for him**. I'd **take a bullet for you**, man.

Andrew: I'd **take a bullet for you**, man.

Jeremy: That's almost equal to saying, I love you, man. Like, in a friend way, saying I love you, man. I would **take a bullet for you**. They're almost equal.

Andrew: Yeah, I agree, they're very similar. They have the same depth of meaning to them. And so, **to take a bullet for someone** just means that you love somebody so much, or you care for somebody so much, that you would be willing to die for that person or put yourself at great risk in a very dangerous situation so that the other person, the person that you love, would not get injured, right?

Jeremy: So the situation that is implied by this expression is that someone is pointing a gun at your friend or your loved one, and if you were there with them, you are saying that you would jump in front of the bullet if your friend was going to be shot. You are saying, with this expression, that you would jump in front of the bullet and let the bullet hit you so that it would not hit them. This is the same with a grenade. You would jump on top of a grenade so that if it blows up, it hurts you and not your friend or your loved one, right?

Andrew: You could almost think that you are the bodyguard for your loved one, just like a bodyguard protects people. You could think of a bodyguard for the president, for example. If there's somebody that's trying to assassinate or shoot the president, then it's the bodyguard's job **to take the bullet for the president**, to jump in front of the bullet and get injured instead.

Jeremy: Now one part of this expression that could be confusing is the verb **take**. Here, it doesn't mean **take**, like **to take** a napkin or **to take** something home with you. It doesn't mean you carry that thing away or it doesn't mean you become the owner of that thing. In this situation, it means you let the bullet hit you, you let it hit your body. So, we have many expressions with this version of **take**, **to take** a hit.

Andrew: To **take** a hit. Yeah, like that could mean a financial loss. Like, if you **take** a hit, then maybe you've lost some money on the stock market. You **took** a hit on the stock market, something like this. Exactly.

Jeremy: Yeah. Or if I'm boxing and someone punches me in the face, I just **took** a hit. Literally, I **took** a hit. I received it.

Andrew: Yeah, I think this is the best way to think about this expression.

Andrew: Jeremy, I think it's time that we move on to some examples. So why don't we **take** a listen to a couple of example conversations with this expression **to take a bullet for someone**.

Jeremy: All right.

Friend 1: Hey, dude, I've got a big favour to ask.

Friend 2: Sure, what's up?

Friend 1: Could I borrow your car for the weekend? I wanna drive to Seattle to see my girlfriend.

Friend 2: You know, I love you and I'd **take a bullet for you**, but there's no way I'm letting you borrow my car, dude.

Andrew: In this example conversation, we heard a friend tell his buddy that he loves him, and that he would **take a bullet for him**. But, even though he loves him this much, he still won't let that friend borrow his car, OK? The friend wants to drive to Seattle to see his girlfriend in his buddy's car, but the answer is no when it comes to borrowing the car. So, yeah, Jeremy, I think some people feel very possessive of their cars, right? Even though they might die for that person, they won't let them borrow their car. I guess I can understand that perspective, that point of view.

Jeremy: This is important to mention, also. This expression means I love you, but not in a romantic way. So, it doesn't really mean that I would actually let myself get hit by a bullet, sometimes. It's just an expression to mean I love you. In this example, he says, "I love you and I'd **take a bullet for you**." I would **take a bullet for you**, but. So, I love you and **taking a bullet**. Those two expressions are equivalents in this example.

Andrew: OK, let's listen to another example conversation with this expression.

Friend 1: What are you doing later? Wanna hang out?

Friend 2: I have **to take** Fido to the vet. He's a little sick.

Friend 1: Oh, no! I hope he's OK. I love that dog. I'd **take a bullet for him**.

Friend 2: Yeah, I'm sure he's fine, but better safe than sorry, right?

Friend 1: For sure, man.

Jeremy: In this example, we heard a person say that he loves that dog, and that he would **take a bullet for that dog**. This expression is used to show how much he cares about that dog.

Andrew: Yeah, so this is something that we didn't touch on yet, but it is important to mention it. You can use this expression to talk about pets, too. It's not just limited to humans.

Jeremy: But it must be something living. It can't be something nonliving. I **take a bullet for this couch** doesn't make sense because the bullet would not kill the couch. So it must be something that is living.

Andrew: That is a good point. It's very true. And if anybody was willing **to take a bullet for a couch**, I would have **to question their sanity**.

Jeremy: Yes.

Andrew: Maybe it could be a very rare, antique couch that you would be willing to sacrifice your life for. Who knows? Who knows?

Jeremy: I doubt it. I doubt it.

Andrew: So, the second expression that we are going to teach everyone today is **to throw yourself in front of a train or a bus for someone**, OK? **To throw yourself in front of a train for someone** or **throw yourself in front of a bus for someone**. So you could say, like, oh, Jeremy, I would **throw myself in front of a bus for you**.

Jeremy: Please don't ever say that to me.

Andrew: Again, it's kind of a graphic and violent image that we get from this expression, right? Somebody killing themselves for you because they love you so much.

Jeremy: Yes, I guess we can say that all of these expressions are variations of I would die for someone.

Andrew: That's exactly what it is. It's just a more visual way to express this idea that I would die for you. I've also heard before some people say I would jump out of a plane for you, but I don't think that one is as common.

Jeremy: All of these things, **taking a bullet**, **taking** a grenade, jumping in front of a train or a bus, or jumping out of a plane, all of them end in death. So they are all variations of the phrase I would die for you. We can say that, I think.

Andrew: Let's move on to a couple of example conversations here, with this expression **to throw yourself in front of a train or a bus for someone**.

Friend 1: I'm sorry about yesterday, man. I didn't mean what I said.

Friend 2: It's all right. I know you were frustrated. I forgive you.

Friend 1: You're the best. You know I'd **throw myself in front of a bus for you**, right?

Friend 2: Yeah, man, I know.

Andrew: In this example conversation, we heard a friend apologize for something that he did in the past. And, actually, he says, "I didn't mean what I said." So we can assume that he said something that was hurtful. And after he's forgiven, he shows how much he loves his friend by saying that he would **throw himself in front of a bus for that friend**. He says, "You know I'd **throw myself in front of a bus for you**, right?" So, he's just expressing that he loves and cares for his friend and that he was really sorry about the hurtful thing that he said in the past.

Andrew: Let's check out our final example conversation for today.

Friend 1: I'm **in a bit of a bind**, I need to borrow some money. Could you help me out?

Friend 2: Sorry, dude, I'm kind of broke myself right now. Why don't you ask your cousin? She's **loaded** and she thinks you're the best. Heck, I bet you she'd even jump out of a plane for you.

Friend 1: Yeah, maybe you're right. I'll give her a call and see what she says.

Jeremy: In this example, someone asks to borrow money. In response, his friend says he should ask his cousin because she is **loaded**. To be **loaded** means to be very rich or to have lots of money. He then says, "I bet she'd even jump out of a plane for you." So this expression shows that the cousin really, really cares about this guy.

Andrew: But, Jeremy, just as we heard in the first example conversation, just because somebody loves you and is willing to jump out of a plane for you or **take a bullet for you** or **throw themselves in front of a train for you**, it doesn't necessarily mean that they'll lend you their car or lend you money.

Jeremy: Or money. It's very strange, yeah, very strange. There's actually a very famous Bruno Mars song with this in the chorus. Have you heard that song before?

Andrew: Probably, probably.

Jeremy: I would catch a grenade for you.

Andrew: I know that one.

Jeremy: There's a few versions of that expression.

Andrew: Right, it's the same general idea.

Jeremy: **In front of a train for you.** I think that's also another expression in the song.

Andrew: OK, so.

Jeremy: Perhaps we should link people to this Bruno Mars song in the show notes.

Andrew: That's a good idea. So in the study guide, we will research what the song is actually called, and let you know so that you know what to search for so that you can practice listening to these expressions in a real-life context, in a Bruno Mars song. And that's a catchy one, too, so.

Jeremy: It is.

Andrew: A good one to listen to. Bruno Mars is a good songwriter, good pop artist.

Jeremy: Yup.

Andrew: All right, everyone. Well, thank you for listening. That about wraps it up for us today. Don't forget to follow us on social media. We are everywhere on social media, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. Just search for the Culips English Podcast and you can find us.

Andrew: And if you liked this episode today, and if you'd like something new, then please support us by either giving us a five-star ranking and a nice review wherever you listen to your podcasts, or by supporting us and signing up to become a Culips premium member. And if you're a Culips premium member, you'll get unlimited access to our study guide library, as well as a bunch of other goodies.

Andrew: That is it for us for now, but we'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Jeremy: Bye, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

To take a bullet for someone

Expression

As Andrew and Jeremy explain in this episode, **to take a bullet for someone** is an expression that means you care about or love someone. It means that you would do anything for that person, including getting shot or dying. The idea is that if you're willing to risk your life for someone, that person means a lot to you.

Other ways to say this include **to take a grenade for someone**, **to catch a grenade for someone**, **to jump on a grenade for someone**, or **to jump in front of a bullet for someone**.

This expression is also used to say that you take the blame for someone. You can use it if you pretend you're responsible for something so that your friend doesn't get in trouble.

Here's one more example with **to take a bullet for someone**:

Daphné: How did it go with the professor? Did he get really mad at you?

Alexa: Ah, a little. He was more disappointed than mad. Told me that he expected more from me and that I should pay attention in class.

Daphné: Yikes ... He really doesn't like it when people talk during class.

Alexa: Nope, he does not.

Daphné: I'm really sorry you got in trouble when I was the one who was talking. You really **took the bullet for me**.

Alexa: Don't worry about it. That's what friends do! Anyway, what was so funny? I've wanted to know since the prof yelled at me in class.

Daphné: Ha, I'll show you! It was a meme Nick sent me. Hold on, I'll find it.

To take

Verb

To take is an extremely common English verb. Its meaning can depend on the rest of the sentence and what you are talking about. As Jeremy mentions in this episode, the core definition of **to take** is to physically pick up something and bring it with you. But in expressions like **to take** a bullet, it means to receive, accept, or absorb.

Other expressions that use this meaning of **to take** are **to take** a call, **to take** someone's advice, **to take** the blame, **to take** responsibility, **to take** a bribe, **to take** a bet, **to take** someone's word, **to take** the credit, and **to take** first place.

Here are a couple more examples with **to take**:

Lars: Did you watch the game last night?

Stefan: I did! It was a good one. Our team is going to win this year.

Lars: I'll **take** your word for it.

Stefan: No, man, I'm serious. This is their strongest team in years, and they've got better stats in the first half of the season than any other team in the division. They're going to get the trophy for sure.

Lars: I hope you're right. The team really needs a win. Oh, hold on, I need **to take** this call.

Stefan: Ah, cool. You do that. I've gotta go anyway. See ya!

Nazim: Did you talk to Lucy yesterday? How did she react?

Quang: Oh, yikes. She **took** the news hard. Started crying and I just sat there ... I didn't know what to do!

Nazim: Thanks for **taking** that bullet, man. No one else had the nerve.

Quang: Well, she deserved to know, you know? We couldn't just leave her in the dark.

To question someone's sanity

Phrasal verb

To question someone's sanity means you think that person might be crazy or weird for a specific reason. Sanity is the ability to think and behave in a normal way. If you **question someone's sanity**, you question whether they're acting in a normal way. For example, in this episode Andrew says he would **question the sanity** of someone willing to take a bullet for a couch. Taking a bullet for an inanimate object is not a normal thing to do.

Note: This phrase is only ever used as a joke, an exaggeration, or in frustration. You would not say this if you think or know someone is mentally ill.

Here are a couple more examples with **to question someone's sanity**:

Ming: Oh yeah! I was talking to Pritha, and she said she and Yuri are moving in together. Did she tell you?

Ivanna: What? Already? They've only been dating for a few months. Should she really be doing this so soon?

Ming: She seems sure, though I definitely **question her sanity**. I mean, we've only known Yuri since they started dating. That's not enough time to really know someone.

Ivanna: I hope she doesn't regret this. It's so hard to find an affordable apartment nowadays.

Ming: Well, she could stay on my couch if it doesn't go well.

Ivanna: Now I'm **questioning your sanity**.

Benett: A bunch of us are planning on going skydiving next month. You in?

Nazar: No, no, thank you. I **question the sanity** of anyone who wants to jump out of a plane with a sheet on their back.

Benett: Ha, come on, man. It's going to be awesome. You only live once!

Nazar: And I'd like to make sure that I live as long as possible.

To throw yourself in front of a train or bus for someone

Expression

As explained in this episode, **to throw yourself in front of a train or bus for someone** is an expression that shows how much you care for them. It is a unique way to say you love someone so much you would be willing to die for them.

Other ways to say this are **I would jump out of a plane for you**, **I would jump out of a moving car for you**, **I would jump in front of a bus for you**, and **I would die for you**.

Here's one more example with **to throw yourself in front of a train or bus for someone**:

Ayesha: I saw the pictures of your new puppy on Instagram. He looks so cute!

Lee: He is! I picked him up from the pound last weekend.

Ayesha: What's his name? How old is he?

Lee: His name is Rufus. He's 6 years old and he's a rescue dog.

Ayesha: Was he on the streets?

Lee: I don't know. Maybe a bad owner. He was so scared when I brought him home.

Ayesha: Poor little thing.

Lee: I love him so much already. **I would throw myself in front of a bus for him.**

Ayesha: I would, too, and I've only just seen pictures!

In a bind

Idiom

When someone is **in a bind**, it means they're stuck in a hard, awkward, or annoying situation. They usually have trouble getting out of the situation. Most often, they need some help. In the example conversation, one of the friends says he's **in a bind** and asks for some money. This makes it a financial **bind**. You can be **in a bind** for all sorts of reasons.

You could also say you're **in a fix**, **in a box**, **in a hole**, **in a jam**, **in a tight spot**, or **in a tight corner**.

Here are a couple more examples with **in a bind**:

Yang: I heard we've got a lot of people coming in for interviews. What's up with that? Aren't we fully staffed right now?

Delia: We are right now, but things get really busy during the holiday season and we often end up **in a bind**. I think the boss wants to make sure that won't happen this year.

Yang: Ah, so he's planning ahead?

Delia: Yeah. Also, if we have a few more staff on hand, we can take a break during the holidays for once.

Yang: Ah, you're right! Yay! I might actually get to spend Christmas with my boyfriend!

Jolanda: What's going on with that project? The client has been calling me for updates every hour since we opened.

Raul: Sorry, Jolanda. We're really behind this week. One of our designers quit without giving notice and now we're really **in a bind**.

Jolanda: OK, that sucks for you guys, but what am I supposed to tell the client? Today's the deadline for the project.

Raul: We're going to be late on that. We'll have something for him hopefully tomorrow, maybe Friday.

Jolanda: All right, I'll let him know.

Loaded Slang

Loaded is slang that means someone is rich and has a lot of money. When **loaded** describes a person, it is always about money. When **loaded** describes an object or thing, it means to have a large amount of something. A store can be **loaded** with goods, an essay can be **loaded** with errors, and cars can be **loaded** with features.

Note: If someone gets **loaded**, that means they're getting drunk, not rich.

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

Kerri: You know, I realized the other day that we haven't been on vacation in, like, forever.

Nadia: I know. I really want to go relax on a beach somewhere warm, but it's so expensive!

Kerri: Ha, what if we invited Onin and got her to pay for it? She's **loaded**, so a few nights in the Caribbean is nothing to her!

Nadia: I'm pretty sure you're only joking, but don't tempt me. I would invite the whole office if I thought it would get me a free trip.

Kerri: Yeah ... But that isn't right, is it? I can dream, though, can't I?

Elias: Man, I can't stand Greg anymore. He keeps complaining about money, even though he's **loaded**.

Ryuu: Tell me about it. Last week, he was whining about how much his lunch cost ... And he had a coupon!

Elias: Ugh. The guy makes 10 times what we do, but to hear him talk, he's on the brink of poverty.

Ryuu: At least he doesn't try to ask us to pay for his food.

Elias: Nah, I don't think he'd ever do that. He knows we're broke.

Ryuu: I think that might make it worse.

Quiz

1. When someone is in a tough spot and needs help, what might they say?

- a) I'm in a binder
- b) I'm in a bin
- c) I'm in a bind
- d) I'm in a bindery

2. I'd take a bullet for you and I'd throw myself in front of a bus for you both show how much you _____ a person.

- a) love
- b) hate
- c) trust
- d) fear

3. What does it mean if you question someone's sanity?

- a) you think that person might be normal and rational for a specific reason
- b) you think you should ask that person questions when he is behaving normally
- c) you think that person might be crazy or weird for a specific reason
- d) you think you might be crazy or weird for a specific reason

4. In the expression to take a bullet, which definition of to take is used?

- a) to pick up and carry
- b) to receive, accept, or absorb
- c) to pick out or choose
- d) to feel or experience

5. Which adjective could you use to say someone is very rich?

- a) generous
- b) frugal
- c) lavish
- d) loaded

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the best way to tell or show someone you love them?
2. The expressions covered in this episode are variations of I would die for someone. Why do you think this is a common way to express love?
3. Describe a time when you were in a bind and someone helped you out.
4. How would you spend your money if you were loaded?
5. Have you ever seen someone doing something so unusual that you questioned their sanity? If so, what were they doing? If not, make up a story about something that would make you question someone's sanity.

Quiz Answers

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

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