

Catch Word #256 – The different ways English speakers use damn

Episode description

Damn! I can't wait to listen to the new Culips episode. This is just one of the many ways you can use the word damn. You may have heard people say this word in films, TV, and music, but never truly understood all of the many meanings of the word. Listen to this Catch Word episode to learn some of the different definitions and how you can use the word like a native English speaker.

The Culips Catch Word series teaches you how to use everyday expressions, idioms, and slang to improve your speaking and listening skills. Sit back and listen to Kassy and Andrew explain four different ways to use damn in natural conversation.

Fun fact

The word damn originates from the Bible and it means to condemn someone. Therefore, in a religious context, saying this word means that you should be condemned by God to suffer eternal punishment in hell! Of course, we don't use it to mean the same thing in our everyday conversations.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Damn
- I'll be damned
- [I] Don't give a damn
- Damn [adjective]
- To shy away from [something]
- In the slightest



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.

Kassy: Hey, everyone, it's Kassy here. I just wanted to make a quick announcement before Andrew and I get started with this episode today. We just added two new features to our website that I want to tell you guys about. The first is the comment section. Now you can directly comment on an episode right on our website. How cool is that?

The second feature is a discussion forum. You can find the forum by going to the membership menu and then selecting the Forum option. Here you can talk with other members of the Culips community and with the Culips team as well. If you have a question or want to suggest a topic for an upcoming episode, please let us know by posting in that forum.

And please help us make sure these features become successful by using them as much as you can. We hope that we can create a greater sense of community among Culips listeners around the world and the Culips team too. So, make sure to visit Culips.com after you listen to today's episode and let us know your thoughts by leaving a comment. Now. Let's get started with today's episode. Here we go.

Andrew: Hello there, everyone. My name's Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Welcome back to Culips, everyone. This is Catch Word, the series for intermediate and advanced English learners where we teach you idioms, phrasal verbs, and expressions that will help improve your English listening and speaking. Today, of course, I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

Kassy: Hey, Andrew. So, everyone, in this episode, we're gonna teach you a few of the many different ways you can use an English curse word, **damn**. This topic was suggested to us by one of our listeners, Mohamed Jibraeel. Mohamed wrote, "I listen to your podcast every day. I learn new phrases and idioms, and I really enjoy using them in conversation. You guys are amazing. I'm fond of watching Hollywood movies and one of the words I hear frequently is **damn**. Most of the movies contain this phrase. Could you please explain how to use it?" Well, thanks for the suggestion, Mohamed, and we will try our best to teach it to you in this episode.

Andrew: Yeah, thanks for the great episode idea, Mohamed, we really appreciate it. We'll get to our lesson about **damn**, our **damn** lesson, Kassy, in just a moment. But before we do that, listeners, I want to let everyone know that there is a study guide available for all Culips members for this episode, and you can download and access the study guide by visiting our website, Culips.com.

In the study guide, you'll find a full transcript, along with detailed vocabulary explanations and examples, a quiz, and prompts that you can use for speaking and writing practice. Our study guides are designed to help you get fluent faster and to help you reach your English goals. So to become a member and to get the study guide, just visit Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

So, Kassy, let's get into it. This is a very interesting question about the word **damn** and there are so many ways that we can use it in English, it's going to be impossible for us to cover all of the different ways to use this word. Like many curse words in English, there are literally, like, hundreds of different ways that we can use it. English speakers are very creative, I think, with their cursing. But we'll try to cover some of the more popular ways.

First of all, we should spell this word, I think, for our listeners, probably most of our listeners are familiar with it, but just in case it's new. The spelling is actually interesting because it has an N that is silent at the end of the word, right? So the spelling is D-A-M-N. Kassy, in general, what does this word mean, **damn**?

Kassy: There's so many things but, in general, it's something you exclaim when you are either frustrated, annoyed, disappointed, surprised, or even maybe even excited.

Andrew: Yes, we can use it in all of these situations. And as we mentioned, Kassy, **damn** is a curse word in English. A curse word or a swear word—we also call them swear words—are words that are taboo and that we don't really use in very polite or professional situations. They're very informal and we usually only use them amongst friends. Or maybe if we're mad at other people or very, very angry and we can't control our emotions, then maybe in that kind of situation, we would swear as well.

I want to get your feeling on the severity of this word, Kassy. If you were to look at the spectrum of English curse words or swear words, where would you rate **damn**? Is it like a very strong curse or a very light curse, in your opinion?

Kassy: This one is super light, in my opinion. I think you can find this word in religious texts. I mean, not used as a swear word, of course, but if you can find it in a religious text, it's usually not something that's super severe.

Andrew: Yeah, I would say that this swear word is probably one of the lightest in the English language. I would still say that it's a curse or swear, but it is as light as it comes in that regard. And because of that, I think it is OK for us to cover on Culips. Usually we kind of **shy away from some of the ruder language**, but this is OK, to talk about **damn**.

So, let's do it, let's get into it. In this episode, we are going to talk about four different ways that English speakers use **damn** or similar expressions. And we'll also give some usage examples so that people can hear how to use it in kind of a real-life context. And we'll also break down the meaning as we go along.

So, let's get to the first way that we can use this and that is just by exclaiming the word, OK? We're not using, like, we're not making a full sentence. We're just saying the word itself like **damn**. Or sometimes we say, **damn it**, **damn it**. We add an I-T to the end of the word. So, then the spelling is D-A-M-N-I-T. The pronunciation of that is **damn it**. **Damn it**.

Kassy: Yeah, that's right. There's two different variations of this, but I would say they're kind of distinct. **Damn** and **damn it**. **Damn** could be used in any situation, but I feel like **damn it** is only used when you're frustrated or angry about something, while **damn** could be used when you're frustrated, angry, excited. Like wow, **damn**, you know? So, **damn it** is only, yeah, **damn it** is only used for the bad things, **damn** can be used for good and bad.

Andrew: Right. So, we usually say these words whenever we have, like, a kind of strong emotional reaction to some situation, like we're really frustrated, or really annoyed, or disappointed, or surprised, or excited, right? But, like you said, Kassy, we can use **damn** in all of these situations, but **damn it** only in the negative ones. Like maybe if you are, I don't know, you buy some groceries from the supermarket and you come home and you are putting them in your bottom cupboard, OK? You're taking your groceries out of the bag, you're putting them in the cupboard, and then you stand up and you bump your head on your kitchen counter. In that kind of situation, if I did that, I'd be like, ah, **damn it**, like it hurts, right? You have like pain. You're a little bit annoyed, frustrated. So, you would say something like this.

Kassy: Yeah, a lot of people do that when they lose at video games as well. **Damn it**, I just died.

Andrew: Exactly. Or, you know, I love to watch ice hockey and every time my team, which is currently in last place right now, they're really terrible this year. Every time they let in a goal, you know, I'm like, ah, **damn**, come on, team. Like, why are you guys so bad this year? So I'm disappointed by my team and I just express my disappointment with this word.

Kassy, I think we're ready to listen to an example with **damn**. So why don't we do it?

Kassy: Let's do it.

Wife: Shouldn't you be getting ready for your dentist appointment?

Husband: It's not until 4:00. I've got plenty of time.

Wife: No, your appointment is at 3:00. I told you that yesterday.

Husband: Are you serious? **Damn**, I'm gonna be late! I gotta run. I'll see you later this evening.

Wife: OK, bye.

Andrew: So we just heard an example where a couple is talking, and a guy is late for his dental appointment. He thought his appointment was at 4:00 in the afternoon but it turns out that it was at 3:00 in the afternoon. He got his times confused. He was all mixed up about his schedule and when he realized that he was late, he exclaimed, "**Damn**, I'm going to be late." It's like, oh no, oh my God. This kind of feeling, this kind of meaning, right?

Kassy: Exactly.

Andrew: OK, good. Kassy, let's move to the second way that we can use **damn**. And it is with a bigger expression this time, and that is **I'll be damned**. **I'll be damned**. And usually, actually, we say it with the word well, like, well, **I'll be damned**. Well, **I'll be damned**.

Kassy: You hear this a lot on TV shows and movies. Especially, like, dads, I feel like dads say this a lot.

Andrew: Now, this is an expression we use, not necessarily when we're angry or frustrated, it's more like we're surprised or like, really, really surprised, right? Like, whoa, amazing. Like, I didn't think that would happen. I'm shocked, I'm surprised, this kind of situation.

Kassy: For example, maybe you go to a circus and you see a really cool circus act, like the acrobats or something. And you're really surprised by how good they are. You could say, like, well, **I'll be damned**. That's amazing. Something like that.

Andrew: Yeah, it just means, like, you're really shocked, really surprised. It's this kind of feeling.

So, Kassy, that was a great example. And I think if we listen to another example, then our listeners can really get a feel for the kind of situation where you can use that expression, well, **I'll be damned**. So why don't we take a listen to that example now?

Friend 1: Guess what?

Friend 2: What?

Friend 1: You know that stock I was talking about last week?

Friend 2: Yeah. Did you end up buying some?

Friend 1: I did. And it doubled today.

Friend 2: No way, it doubled?

Friend 1: Yeah, I totally just made, like, \$500 today.

Friend 2: Well, **I'll be damned**. Wow, that's great.

Friend 1: Bet you wish you would have listened to my stock tip now, eh?

Friend 2: Yeah. Next time you have a good feeling about a stock, let me know.

Kassy: In this example, we have two people and one of them has amazing news. They found out that their stock has doubled overnight and the other friend replies by saying, "Well, **I'll be damned**." Like, wow, that's so exciting. That's so amazing. When you hear really surprising news or really amazing news, well, **I'll be damned** is a perfect expression to use.

Andrew: Exactly. Now, again, it's a perfect expression to use in situations where you're very tight or close with the other person, but I wouldn't say that in, like, a business meeting. You know, like, Kassy, if you're in like a small staff meeting and your boss says, "I've got some terrible news, we have to close down the overseas office because sales are down by 25% from last year." You wouldn't want to say, "Well **I'll be damned**" in that situation. Even though you might feel very surprised. That could be like a little too casual for that important situation. So, again, you really have to make sure that you're in the right environment to use these expressions, but among friends or people that you're very close with, it should be OK.

All right, Kassy, let's go into the third way that we can use this word, **damn**. And it is with the longer expression **I don't give a damn**. **I don't give a damn**. And, really, to be honest with you, you could exchange **damn** for almost any curse word in the English language and this would still work. It would have the same meaning. Kassy, what does it mean if someone says **I don't give a damn**?

Kassy: I don't care at all. I don't care.

Andrew: Yeah, it means I don't care. Like, doesn't bother me at all. Now, usually, I think this kind of comes across as rude. It's, like, not exactly the same as I don't care because, Kassy, you could maybe ask me like, "Andrew, could you do me a favour? Could you like, meet with me for a couple of minutes and help me fix my phone?" Maybe you had a broken phone or a problem with your phone or something. So you asked me to help you with your phone. I could say "Yeah, I don't care. I don't mind. I can help you with your phone." That's all right. But I wouldn't be able to say **I don't give a damn** in that situation.

Kassy: Wow, Andrew, did I make you angry about something?

Andrew: Right. It has like a very strong feeling to it and it can't be exchanged. It can't be substituted for I don't care in every situation. But when we do use it, that is what it means, it means I don't care.

Kassy, could you maybe give us a couple of more situations where you might be able to say **I don't give a damn** and it would be OK to use?

Kassy: Yeah, I think if maybe someone's gossiping about you. And people are like, "Oh, aren't you embarrassed? Or don't you want to tell them to stop?" And if that person really just doesn't care, they can say, "Oh, **I don't give a damn**. They can say whatever they want about me. I don't care." That's a good example, I think.

Andrew: Yeah, that's a good example. Or maybe you're a student and you're taking a class and the class is really boring and you've just lost interest in it. I know that when I was a student, I took a political science class, and political science we often call poli-sci. So, I took a poli-sci class and it was about Canadian political history.

Kassy: Sounds exciting.

Andrew: Yeah, it was terrible. My professor was bad. The subject was very dry and boring. And about halfway through the class, I lost all my motivation and **I just didn't give a damn** about the class. I didn't care if I passed or failed. I just wanted it to end. It was too painful. So in that situation, I think probably I said to my classmates often, like, **I don't give a damn** about this class. Like, I don't care at all about it.

Kassy: I just want it to be over.

Andrew: Yes, end the suffering, please.

Kassy, why don't we take a listen to a conversation example where we can hear **I don't give a damn** used in a kind of natural conversation setting?

Kassy: Yes. Excellent idea.

Roommate 1: Do you think it would be OK if I invited some of my friends over for a dinner party next weekend? Would you mind at all?

Roommate 2: Nah, **I don't give a damn**, that's fine by me. I'm actually gonna be out of town next week. So, yeah, I don't mind at all.

Roommate 1: OK, great. Thanks.

Roommate 2: And have fun with your friends, by the way.

Roommate 1: Will do.

Andrew: So, in that example, we heard two roommates talking. And one roommate was asking for permission to invite some of her friends over for a dinner party on the weekend, which is very thoughtful of her to ask her roommate to see if that's OK. I think that was a nice thing to do. And her roommate said, "Yeah, that's fine, invite your friends over. **I don't give a damn**, I don't care. Go ahead." He's actually going to be out of town, so he doesn't care at all. That won't bother him **in the slightest**.

If you had a roommate, and you asked that roommate, "Can I invite my friends over, do you mind?" And your roommate responded, "**I don't give a damn**." How do you feel with that answer? Is it, like, too strong of an answer? Is it OK? What would your reaction be?

Kassy: I think it depends on the intonation. So, if you say, like, **I don't give a damn**, then maybe it's all right but instead, I would just say, oh, like, no problem. Honestly, **I don't give a damn** is fine in this case, but in my opinion, I would prefer no problem.

Andrew: Yeah, I feel like it's a little bit aggressive of an answer. Like, maybe the relationship between the two roommates is not great. Like you could do whatever you want. I don't care. Just leave me alone. **I don't give a damn**. Maybe I get that nuance from it. So it does mean I don't care, but like so many words in English, especially swear words and curse words, it's really your attitude, your intention, your voice, your tone that can be the difference between something being offensive or inoffensive.

Kassy, we have one more way that we are going to look at the word **damn** today and that is using it as an adverb, which is a fun way to use it. So we can use **damn** to describe different adjectives, really. So, we could say, for example, if we are describing something that happened or occurred very quickly or very fast, we could say, "Wow, that was **damn quick**." Like maybe you ordered a pizza and the pizza arrived at your door, like, 5 minutes after you ordered it. You'd be, like, "Whoa, that was **damn quick**." That was really, really fast.

Kassy: Yeah, or likewise, if you're waiting for your computer to turn on, and it's taking forever, you can say, "Wow, why is this so **damn slow**?"

Andrew: Yes. Or maybe you buy a new video game and you start playing the video game and you pass the game, you beat the game very quickly. That game is like too easy for you. You're a pro gamer and the game was just too easy. You'd be like, "Yeah, that game was **damn easy**, like, it was really, really easy." So we can just use **damn** as this kind of adverb that really just means, like, really, or very, or to a great extent. And we can use it to modify many different adjectives related to speed or difficulty, that kind of thing.

Kassy: And you can use it with pretty much any adverb. The sky's the limit.

Andrew: Yeah, you're absolutely right, Kassy. Like if you saw a beautiful sunset, you might say, "Oh, that sunset is **damn gorgeous**." Or if a sporting game was really intense and exciting and you're sitting at the edge of your seat watching the game, you might say, "Wow, this game is **damn exciting**." So, we can really use it with so many different adjectives to intensify the meaning of them.

Kassy: Well, Andrew, should we take a listen to our last example conversation?

Andrew: Yeah, let's do it.

Friend 1: So, you want to go golfing this weekend?

Friend 2: Golfing? Have you ever gone golfing before?

Friend 1: Nope, never, but it looks fun. I think we should try it.

Friend 2: Golfing is pretty **damn hard**. It looks easy, but it's much more difficult than it seems.

Friend 1: Ah, should we take lessons then?

Friend 2: If you want to go golfing, I'm definitely down to do it with you but, yeah, I think that's a good idea. We should probably take some lessons first.

Friend 1: OK, I'll call the golf course and see what options are available.

Kassy: All right. In this example conversation, we have two friends who are talking about golfing. One really wants to try it and the other one is a little bit skeptical. "I don't know about that, it's pretty **damn hard**. It's not easy, it's very difficult. Are you sure you want to try it?" So they talk about what options would be the best way to start this new hobby.

Andrew: Exactly. Well, Kassy, that brings us to the end of today's episode. Thanks again to Mohamed for the great suggestion. And we hope that now when you're watching movies in the future, you can understand this word **damn** and the many different ways that we can use it when you encounter it again. And because this word is so, so, so, so common, I can guarantee that you will hear it. Maybe the next time you watch a movie, even?

Kassy: Yeah, maybe now that you have heard about it in Culips, you're going to hear it everywhere now. I almost guarantee it.

Andrew: For sure. So, we want to thank everyone for tuning in and listening to this episode today. Congratulations on making it to the end. You got your English listening practice in for today. So you can pat yourself on the back and feel good about that, everyone.

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So we'll leave it at here for now, everyone, but we'll be back soon with another brand-new episode, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

Damn Exclamation

Damn is a curse word that is used to express anger, frustration, excitement, or surprise. In this context, it is only used in exclamation and therefore it doesn't need to be preceded or followed by any other word. **Damn** has a similar meaning to **oh my god** or **Jesus**, which are also used to express surprise or annoyance.

As Andrew and Kassy mentioned, the word **damn** is one of the lighter swear words, which means that it isn't as offensive as other curse words in English. Therefore, you can use this word in both formal and informal situations without causing offense to others.

Damn it is a variation of **damn**. While **damn** on its own can be used in positive and negative scenarios, **damn it** is only used to react negatively to something. For example, you could say "**Damn!** That food was amazing." But you couldn't use **damn it** in response to something good. Instead, you might say "**Damn it!** My food is already cold."

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

Loren: **Damn!** I've locked my keys in the car again.

Fraser: Not again! What are you going to do?

Loren: I'll have to call a locksmith. This sucks.

Ishwa: Make sure you leave enough time to defrost the car before you leave for work.

Natalia: **Damn it!** I haven't got time for that, I'm going to be late for work.

Ishwa: Don't worry, you can borrow my deicer. You'll be off in no time!

Paige: Did you watch the soccer game last night?

Jacqui: I sure did. What did you think of the new recruit?

Paige: I thought, "**Damn**, he's handsome!"

Jacqui: You're not wrong about that!

I'll be damned

Phrase

I'll be damned is an expression used to show surprise in response to shocking or unexpected news. This is usually used in good situations to show amazement about something that may seem impossible or miraculous. For example, in response to someone surviving a nasty car crash, you could say, "**I'll be damned**" to express your surprise and delight that the person survived.

I'll be damned can also be used to indicate strong feelings for a negative turn of events or to say that you will not or cannot do something. For instance, if you said, "**I'll be damned** if they think I'm going to work overtime," this means that you would be astounded and would react negatively to being asked to work longer hours. By using **I'll be damned** in this scenario, you are also implying that you are unwilling or unable to work overtime and you would be offended if anyone thought otherwise.

Here are a few more examples with **I'll be damned**:

Nassim: I saw on TV that a lion escaped from the zoo this morning and they still haven't found him.

Meredith: Well, **I'll be damned**. How does that even happen?

Nassim: I have no idea. I just can't believe they haven't found him yet. He's probably roaming the streets somewhere.

Parker: We're thinking of going to the new sushi restaurant. Do you want to come?

Karim: No, thanks. **I'll be damned** if I have to eat their food again.

Parker: Wow, was it really that bad?

Karim: I really wouldn't recommend it. I'm pretty sure I got food poisoning from that place.

Indi: Have you heard about the new smart suitcases?

Bruna: No, what are they?

Indi: They're powered by artificial intelligence so your suitcase follows you. That means you don't have to carry it around. It just travels along next to you.

Bruna: **I'll be damned**. I wonder what they'll come up with next.

[I] Don't give a damn

Phrase

When **someone doesn't give a damn** about something, it means they really don't care about it or it isn't important to them. This expression emphasizes how little you care about something and, as such, this phrase can be perceived as rude unless it is used in an informal, friendly setting.

In this episode, Kassy and Andrew give an example to show how this can be used casually with friends. When the roommate asks if they can invite friends over and in response the other roommate says, "**I don't give a damn**, that's fine by me," this shows they don't mind at all. As Kassy and Andrew mentioned, **I don't give a damn** can also be quite rude depending on how you say it. In this instance, if the roommate said, "**I don't give a damn**" rather aggressively, then it would be very rude. If they say it calmly, though, then it wouldn't be rude.

For example, it would be rude if you asked someone for their opinion on your new clothes and they responded by saying, "**I don't give a damn**." From this, it's very clear that the person doesn't care at all about the thing that you care about and is very dismissive of your concern.

Here are a few more examples with **[I] Don't give a damn**:

Giuseppe: That top you're wearing is a bit revealing, don't you think?

Sammi: **I don't give a damn** what you think!

Giuseppe: Whoa, fine. I just didn't want you to feel uncomfortable.

Jermaine: You might want to wear a coat today. It's freezing out there!

Surini: It's cool, **I don't give a damn**. My outfit looks great as it is and I don't want to cover it with a coat.

Jermaine: No problem. Just thought I'd let you know.

Aicha: I am so fed up with being treated disrespectfully at work by patients.

Hayden: It must be tough. Nurses deserve a lot more respect for the work they do. Especially you, you work so hard.

Aicha: It sucks. **Nobody gives a damn** about us.

Damn [adjective]

Adjective

When damn is used before an adjective, it emphasizes what you are saying or feeling. For example, if a task is **damn hard**, then it is extremely difficult. If the task is **damn simple**, then it is extremely easy.

Damn well is a common use of damn with an adjective, which intensifies the meaning of well to show that something is certain or without a doubt. For instance, if you say, "I know **damn well** that you haven't been studying," this means that you are completely certain that the person hasn't done any work.

Here are a few more examples with **damn [adjective]**:

Yusenya: The people next door are having a party again. They are so **damn noisy**.

Kimberley: You should call the cops on them!

Yusenya: No, I don't want to ruin their fun. I might just ask them to keep the music down next time.

Oscar: So, two people called in sick this morning and all the computers are down. We have clients arriving soon for a meeting and I don't know what we're going to do.

Fatima: This is a **damn nightmare**. I think we should postpone all meetings until tomorrow.

Oscar: Great idea. Hopefully we'll have more staff and everything will be working by then.

Jules: I passed my test!

Milly: Congratulations! I'm sure you worked hard for it.

Jules: Actually, I didn't. I barely did any revision, but the exam paper had all the topics I knew really well.

Milly: Sounds like you were just **damn lucky**!



To shy away from [something]

Phrasal verb

When you **shy away from something**, you are trying to avoid it, usually because you are scared, nervous, or unsure. If you are shy, this means you are nervous in the company of other people, so **shying away from something** implies that you are shy or nervous about doing something.

In this episode, Andrew says that in Culips episodes he tries to “**shy away from some of the ruder language**,” meaning that he avoids including ruder language in episodes. You could also use **to not shy away from something** to mean the opposite. So instead of feeling nervous about doing something, you are confident, good at it, or will do everything you can to complete a task. For example, if you say, “**I’m not going to shy away from the competition**,” this means you will give your best effort to overcome or win the competition because you feel competent.

Here are a few more examples with **to shy away from [something]**:

Debbie: It must be hard being a celebrity. I would hate having cameramen on my doorstep every time I leave the house.

Tor: Me too. Imagine just trying to do normal things, like going to the supermarket or taking your kids to the park.

Debbie: I wouldn’t choose that life. I need my own personal space.

Tor: You know, there are some celebrities who love it. Paris Hilton never **shies away from the cameras!**

Naomi: My boss told me that she thinks I’m lazy. Can you believe it?

Paola: That’s outrageous. You certainly aren’t one **to shy away from hard work**.

Naomi: Exactly! I’m really going to have to prove myself to her now.

Ricky: I am so busy with work that I’m never home anymore. It drives my wife crazy, but it makes it easier for me to not have to deal with our marriage problems.

Martha: Don’t **shy away from your problems**. That will only make them worse.

Ricky: You’re probably right. I should go home and talk to her.



In the slightest

Phrase

The phrase **in the slightest** is used to emphasize a negative statement or to mean not at all. The word slight is an adjective to describe something as very small or inconsiderable. Therefore, if you say you don't mind something **in the slightest**, that means it doesn't matter at all to you or it means very little to you.

In the slightest can be used to emphasize dislike or not wanting to do something. For example, if someone invited you to do something you don't enjoy, you could respond with, "That doesn't interest me **in the slightest**," which emphasizes how little the activity interests you.

Here are a couple more examples with **in the slightest**:

Zunaira: Would you mind picking the kids up from school today?

Kylie: I wouldn't mind **in the slightest**.

Zunaira: Thank you so much, Kylie. What would I do without you?

Beatrice: I'm really sorry, but I don't think I'll be able to make it to your party this weekend.

Joey: That's a shame. Why not?

Beatrice: I forgot I had already agreed to go to someone else's party.

Joey: Oh, right.

Beatrice: It's completely my fault. I didn't write your party in the diary and I didn't realize I had double-booked myself.

Joey: Don't worry. We all do it!

Beatrice: I'll make up for it, I promise. I hope you aren't mad at me.

Joey: It's cool. It doesn't bother me **in the slightest**. There'll be so many people there I could probably do with having fewer guests to worry about anyways!

Quiz

1. True or false? Damn can only be used when you are happy about something.

- a) true
- b) false

2. If a car is described as damn fast, it is _____.

- a) extremely fast
- b) quite fast
- c) not fast
- d) too fast

3. If you shy away from someone, what are you doing?

- a) looking at them
- b) talking to them
- c) avoiding them
- d) walking toward them

4. Choose the best response to the statement “He was dead but then he came back to life!”

- a) I don’t give a damn
- b) damn it
- c) I’ll be damned

5. Which of these is a synonym for “I don’t give a damn”?

- a) I am surprised
- b) I don’t care at all
- c) I am upset
- d) this bothers me

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of any moments in your life where “I’ll be damned” would have been the perfect response to something that happened?
2. How would you react if somebody said “I don’t give a damn” to you in an aggressive tone? What would you say to them?
3. Describe some things that don’t bother you in the slightest. Can you explain why they don’t matter to you?
4. What words could you use instead of damn to show that you are surprised?
5. Is there anything you tend to shy away from doing? What is it and why do you shy away from it?

Quiz Answers

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

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