

Chatterbox #152 – An interview with Luke

Episode Description

Today's episode features an interview with one of Andrew's best friends, Luke. Join them as they talk about how they met, Luke's experiences living in Asia, and his hilarious stories about travelling in Australia!

Sample Dialogue

Andrew: Now, you're teaching at an interesting school in China. It's not a Chinese school **per se**. What is special about this school?

Luke: The good thing about the school for Chinese students is that they can graduate with a Dogwood Diploma, which is the same as what we got when we went to high school and graduated.

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- To dig something
- Court shorts
- To rock
- Per se
- Joined at the hip
- To jump out at you
- On pins and needles
- A good call / a bad call
- To flare up
- To hype something up
- There's more to something than meets the eye
- Quick-fire



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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.

Transcript

Andrew: Hey everyone. Andrew here. You're listening to the Culips Podcast, and we've got another great episode in store for you today. But before we begin, I want to remind you to check out our website at Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And while you're there, why don't you consider signing up and becoming a Culips member? Membership gives you access to our Learning Materials, which are designed to help take your English studies to the next level.

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Today we have a Chatterbox episode for you. This was a really fun episode to record, because I interviewed one of my best friends, Luke, while he was visiting me here in Montreal a couple of weeks ago. So I won't spoil the interview. We'll just get right to it. I hope you **dig it**. Here it is: my interview with Luke.

Hey Luke.

Luke: Hey.

Andrew: Thanks for coming on the show. I appreciate it.

Luke: Yeah. No problem.

Andrew: So you're here in Montreal visiting me.

Luke: Yes, I am.

Andrew: That's awesome. I'm so glad you could make it.

Luke: Yeah. It's great to be here.

Andrew: Yeah. And we've had a pretty fun time together so far.

- Luke: Yeah. We've been exploring the neighbourhoods.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. And what have we been doing a lot of?
- Luke: We've been going to the park and running a lot.
- Andrew: Yeah. We've been running a ton. I think this is the most I've ran in my entire life.
- Luke: Yeah, me too, sadly. Only 5 days in a row.
- Andrew: That's still pretty good; 5 days in a row of exercising, that is exciting.
- Luke: Yeah. It's a good habit.
- Andrew: Yeah. And why do you think we've been doing this, aside from the obvious fact of, like, it's good to be healthy and it's good to be in shape? But there's one real motivating factor that's been pushing us.
- Luke: Um... Probably this app that I got.
- Andrew: Yeah, this app, this Internet app that we have on our phones.
- Luke: What's the name again?
- Andrew: Uh... It's called Strava. If anybody's a runner or a cyclist, we don't work for Strava, but we've been using this app and it's been really motivating to help us exercise, so check it out.
- Luke: Mmhmm. Every time I come back, I look at my personal records. It's good.
- Andrew: Yeah. We can see how far we've gone and all that fun stuff. Cool. Um... So, I guess we should introduce you to our listeners. And we've been friends for a long time.
- Luke: Mmhmm. Since 1994.
- Andrew: Since 1994. So how many years is that, quickly, on the spot?
- Luke: Oh, I'd say... Let's see...
- Andrew: So that's '94 to 2004, that's 10 years, so it's 21 years. Wow.
- Luke: You're good at math.
- Andrew: We even took math class together.
- Luke: That's true.

Andrew: Yeah, back in the day, Math 11. OK, so we've been friends for 21 years. And we met in elementary school, in grade 4.

Luke: Yes.

Andrew: And what do you remember about our first meeting? Do you remember when we first met?

Luke: Not really.

Andrew: Yeah. I don't remember either.

Luke: I've heard stories about it, from our parents.

Andrew: So what I remember is that we both moved to Kelowna from different parts of British Columbia at the same time.

Luke: Mmhmm.

Andrew: You moved from Prince George and I moved from Langley, two other cities in British Columbia, and so we were both the new kids in school at the exact same time.

Luke: That's right.

Andrew: And so probably we were both big losers. Nobody else knew who we were. We were probably just, you know, the lonely new kids in the class and we probably met each other that way.

Luke: Yeah. Well, from what, I think, either my parents or your parents said, was that I saw you were wearing some type of clothes. I must have been into basketball or something at the time, and you were wearing some Nike **court shorts**.

Andrew: I was always fashionable.

Luke: Yeah. So I thought, "Oh, this guy, he's got the same style as me, because I also **rock** the Nike **court shorts**."

Andrew: OK, so we hit it off.

Luke: Yeah. So I thought, "Oh, he's probably got similar interests or something."

Andrew: It was love at first shorts.

Luke: That's true.

Andrew: So we met in grade 4 and we were friends all through school, and we've maintained a friendship up until now, which is kind of unique.

- Luke: Easy to always come back and you kind of just get into the routine, even if you haven't talked to the other person for a while.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, and that's, I think, the sign of a good friendship, is that it's easy, right? You can start things exactly where you leave them when you see each other again.
- Luke: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And so this is one of those instances right now, because you're living in China and I'm here in Montreal, and we don't speak to each other often and we don't hang out often, obviously. But you're back in Montreal and we're right back in it.
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: And so I'm curious. Why are you living in China? You're a Canadian. Why are you on the other side of the world in this foreign land?
- Luke: Well, I used to live in Korea, but after I came back, I decided that I would get my teaching certificate, so I went to school for a year and got that. And by the end of the year, I was starting to think, "Oh, where can I get a job?" I didn't really like the idea of going around to different schools and having to go to new places every day and meet new students, so I thought... I had an opportunity in China to get a full-time contract there.
- Andrew: Ah, right. Because this is a problem for a lot of new teachers in Canada. When you start, it's often difficult to get a full-time, permanent job, right?
- Luke: Yeah, that's true. It's almost impossible.
- Andrew: So you have to start by being a substitute teacher, and that's when you're sort of on call, so you'll get a call at 6 in the morning and the principal of the school will say, "Oh, one of our teachers is sick. We need you to substitute for this teacher. Can you please show up at 8:00?" And that isn't really that great of a job. It's difficult, right? Because you don't know the students and you're only there for one day, so...
- Luke: Yeah. It can be a little stressful.
- Andrew: Yeah, for sure. It's very stressful and it's kind of something that all teachers in Canada have to go through these days. But you decided, "I'm not gonna do that. I'm gonna have my own class. I'm gonna have my full-time students, but I'm gonna do it in China."

- Luke: That's right. I think it was a good choice because some of the people from my program decided to stay in Canada and some of them just waited tables for a whole year, so...
- Andrew: So they didn't even find a job.
- Luke: No.
- Andrew: Hmm. Now, you're teaching at an interesting school in China. It's not a Chinese school **per se**. What is special about this school?
- Luke: The good thing about the school for Chinese students is that they can graduate with a Dogwood Diploma, which is the same as what we got when we went to high school and graduated.
- Andrew: I didn't know that. They get a Dogwood?
- Luke: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Yeah, so the Dogwood Diploma is what students in British Columbia get when they graduate high school. So the school that you are teaching at in China is accredited by the British Columbian government, so the curriculum and all the educational materials are the same. Are all the teachers from Canada too?
- Luke: Yeah. All of them should have some sort of Canadian certification. They might be from Ontario and they have a BC teacher's licence, but all of them are from Canada.
- Andrew: Huh, very interesting. So this is essentially a school that is exactly like a school you would find in any city in British Columbia, but it's just placed in China.
- Luke: Mmhmm, basically, with the one exception that they do take some Chinese courses as well, just to get their Chinese credit. But they don't get the full-on Chinese certification so you have to complete our course, otherwise you can't go to university in China.
- Andrew: Ah, very interesting.
- Luke: Because you have to take a gaokao to pass, kind of like the SATs.
- Andrew: Ah, OK. Well, that would make sense. You wouldn't wanna not take any Chinese at all.
- Luke: No. You've gotta keep up.

- Andrew: Yeah, for sure. OK, so that's cool. So I think maybe, you know, some of our friends and family members think we're **joined at the hip** a little bit because, like we said, we went to school together, elementary school and through to high school, and then we actually spent some time teaching in Korea together at the same time.
- Luke: Right.
- Andrew: We worked at different schools, but we were both English teachers in Korea, and you mentioned this earlier. So I'm wondering now: You've lived in China and you've lived in South Korea. What are the differences between the two countries that you've noticed?
- Luke: It's hard to notice any huge difference because I haven't... I felt like I haven't got to know China that much within the 1 year. I've been busy with work and I haven't really hung out with many Chinese people because there are so many Canadians at the school. But one difference might be, obviously, the food. I prefer Korean food more so than Chinese food, I think, because Chinese food is a little bit more oily and not quite as healthy, I feel like.
- Andrew: So right now you have just made all of our South Korean listeners ecstatic, and all of our Chinese listeners are disappointed.
- Luke: Yeah. Well, there are some good dishes that I like. The problem is it's very regional, the food is very regional, so I like a lot of Shin Jung food, which is from the west, and I also like Szechuan food, but I can't really find that very often in my area so I'm kind of stuck eating the same things over and over again, so it gets a little bit boring but I still like it.
- Andrew: And what area of China are you in?
- Luke: I'm in Jiangsu Province. My city is in between Nanjing, basically, and Shanghai. Shanghai is not in the province, but it's very close by train.
- Andrew: Cool. So there's, I guess, probably a lot of differences between the two countries, but the one that's the most noticeable to you, the one that **jumps out at you**, is the food.
- Luke: Yeah. I think that spending 4 years in Korea, I got to know it a lot more than China, so right now it's hard to make a comparison between the two. Oh, another difference would probably be the language. I studied Korean a little bit and I found it a lot easier to pick up than Chinese, because Chinese has the different tones and a lot more complicated writing system.

- Andrew: Mmm. Very interesting. Yeah. It's true. We spent time studying Korean together, and I think we both still have an interest in the Korean language. I still study and I know that you still study as well. And when I think about learning Chinese, I think it seems almost impossible, because, like you say, you have so many challenges. You have the tones in the language, which is something that's totally foreign to me. You also have the Chinese characters, which seems totally impossible to learn. So you're proof of this. You're saying that Chinese is harder than Korean.
- Luke: Yeah, I think so. I definitely think you need some classes to go to. It's quite hard on your own.
- Andrew: Right, yeah. I would think that instruction would help, for sure. So two big differences between China and Korea: food and language. Those are the most noticeable to you.
- Luke: Yeah, so far.
- Andrew: Right on. And so, I know that one of your hobbies is travelling, and you've gone to many different countries all over the world.
- Luke: Yeah. I like travelling. It seems that I end up always in Asia, though.
- Andrew: Always in Asia. Why is that, do you think?
- Luke: I'm not sure. It just sort of happened, in a way. When I was 19, I travelled to Singapore and we travelled up Southeast Asia through Malaysia and Thailand and Laos.
- Andrew: Who is... Who did you go with? Because I wasn't on the trip, unfortunately. As fun as it sounded, I wasn't on this trip. So you went with...?
- Luke: I went with another guy that I guess I kind of met in grade 4. He was in our class.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's funny. This is another guy that we met in elementary school and who we both still know.
- Luke: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Yeah. So you went with him and I stayed behind, but you guys went to Singapore, you said?
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: And Thailand.

Luke: Yeah.

Andrew: And Laos?

Luke: Laos.

Andrew: Is it Laos, or Lao?

Luke: I think... I always say *Lao*. I feel like that's what they called it so I just go with that pronunciation.

Andrew: OK, interesting. If you're listening from there, let me know. Is it *Laos* or *Lao*? Because I've always been curious about this. And did you go anywhere else?

Luke: Yeah, I mentioned, I think, Malaysia, and then after that, we had booked a ticket to Australia, and we went to Australia and found that it was just too expensive for us.

Andrew: Oh, really?

Luke: And it didn't help that I had lost my wallet beforehand and I had to share money with my friend, which caused a lot of different arguments between splitting money and such.

Andrew: Yeah. That's a disaster right there.

Luke: Yeah.

Andrew: Oh, and I actually remember this trip, because you were in Thailand in 2004 and this is when the big tsunami hit, right?

Luke: Mmhmm.

Andrew: And I remember everybody in our hometown was a little bit worried because it was just after Christmas and we got the news that there was this big tsunami in Thailand, and the Internet wasn't as accessible back then, right? You would have to go to a special Internet café, so it was harder to communicate and we didn't hear from you for many days and so everybody was **on pins and needles** and we were waiting to hear what happened to Luke. And what happened? Where were you during the tsunami in Thailand?

- Luke: Well, originally I was in Malaysia; I was in Kuala Lumpur. And we were thinking... My friend and I were thinking, "Where are we gonna go next?" And we thought of two different places: Phuket and Ko Pha Ngan. And we thought, "Oh, well, we'll just... We'll go... We wanna go to an island. We kind of wanna hang out on an island." So we went there instead of Phuket, and that's where we were during the tsunami, which was lucky, because Phuket was struck by a wave and I think somewhere around 2,000 people had died during that time.
- Andrew: Yeah. So it was a very lucky decision that you decided to avoid Phuket.
- Luke: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Yeah. **Good call.**
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: In retrospect.
- Luke: Yeah, definitely. But it didn't really seem like much was going on when I was there, because you don't really watch the news when you're travelling and you don't have access to Wi-Fi or anything.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's what I remember, actually. Your mom was angry at you because she was trying to get in touch with you, and then finally, several days after the tsunami, she got in touch with you and you said, "Oh, what happened? I don't even know. There was a tsunami? I wasn't even aware." Because I guess when you're travelling in a foreign country, you can't hear the news on the radio, or you don't hear what people are talking about. It's all in a foreign language, so you didn't even know that it happened, right?
- Luke: Well, I did know that something happened. I knew that there was a tsunami somewhere but I didn't really know where, and when I saw it, there were about 200 people or 250 people, so I thought, "Oh, it's not very good," but it didn't really affect me. I didn't think it was major news or anything. I wouldn't expect my family to be worried about it. So we just kind of went on our daily, sort of, tour of the island to do whatever we wanted, and then eventually, yeah, we ended up at an Internet café with some scathing emails from my parents looking for me.
- Andrew: Yeah. They were mad.
- Luke: Yeah. I kind of ruined Christmas, pretty much, because it was right around Christmas.

- Andrew: But that's an interesting thing about travelling abroad and living abroad. Even when we were in Korea. Some things, you know... There's bad relations between North Korea and South Korea and occasionally there would be some tension in the region and things would **flare up**. And I feel like my parents were always much more worried about these incidents than I was in Korea, because in Korea, it wasn't a big deal. These are things that happen all the time and it's just kind of a way of life and you adjust to that way of life. But in North America, the ways that these news stories are reported are very sensationalized and they're trying to get the most viewers possible on the news and they're really **hyping the story up**, and so my parents would get worried and they would email me saying, "Oh no. There's gonna be World War III. Are you OK?" And I'd say, "Yeah. It's chill. It's no problem." So maybe that happened a little bit with this incident, too.
- Luke: Yeah, possibly. I think it did affect a lot of people, but maybe not so much in Thailand, and we were on the opposite side so it wasn't really anywhere close.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Now, when you were travelling in Australia, you made a little bit of a documentary.
- Luke: Yeah. Well, we started filming from, I think, Singapore, or on the plane, actually, before we even left, because our goal was to make some sort of TV show out of our travels.
- Andrew: Cool. Yeah. And this was sort of, like I said, back in 2004, right when reality TV was kicking off, so you had the visionary idea of creating your own documentary/reality TV series.
- Luke: Yeah, and I don't think... I never really had cable or watched it very much, I guess, and I don't think there were that many shows about travel or a couple of people travelling or that kind of informal show.
- Andrew: Is it on the Internet? Can people see this, if they want? Or you don't wanna plug it?
- Luke: Um... Yeah, I wouldn't give the actual address because it's pretty embarrassing.
- Andrew: Fair enough. Fair enough.
- Luke: Yeah. We did have 30 hours of footage, though. I'm sure there's something in there.
- Andrew: Yeah. So if you're a real Internet sleuth, you could probably find this, but we won't directly plug it. But an interesting incident happened when you were in Australia. You had purchased a car and I believe you decided to sleep in the car overnight because you didn't have a place to stay.

- Luke: Yeah. It was a pretty common thing. We would sleep in the car because we wanted to save money. And, like I said, I didn't have my wallet so I only had access to one bank account, so if you're buying a car and also travelling, you start running out of money.
- Andrew: And so, what happened when you were sleeping in the car one evening in a ditch?
- Luke: Well, we parked our car in a ditch. We thought that was a good spot.
- Andrew: Yeah?
- Luke: The reason being is that you can park on an angle and you can put your chair back and it kind of feels like you're almost lying down or something. It's a bit more comfortable. So we thought that was a good idea, and before we went to bed, we were just kind of eating our cheap snacks and things, and one of us said, like, "Oh, it would be funny if..." Because we parked in a rain ditch. We said, "Oh, it would be funny if we woke up and it was just, like, pouring rain." And it turns out that's what happened. We woke up and I had put my foot down. I was just kind of tossing and turning, like, in the car, because it wasn't very comfortable, and I'd put my foot down on the ground and I immediately lifted it up because there was something wet or cold. So I woke up, obviously, and I checked the car and there was water just running everywhere, like, through the car.
- Andrew: Oh no.
- Luke: Yeah. And we had all our stuff in there and it wasn't good.
- Andrew: So the car was flooding.
- Luke: Yeah. The car was flooding. It appeared... It was pitch black. There were no street lights or anything. It appeared that we were in a river of some sort.
- Andrew: Oh my gosh.
- Luke: Yeah. So we decided, "OK. We've got to get out of here, obviously," so my friend was in the driver's seat and he started the ignition. He turned over the ignition and he was trying to get the car started but nothing would work. It'd just rev.
- Andrew: It died.
- Luke: It died, yes, because I think probably the exhaust was in the water and it couldn't really – I don't know – circulate the air. I'm not really a car person.
- Andrew: Yeah. Something was wrong.

- Luke: Yeah, something was wrong. So then he kept turning it over and it wouldn't work, and then eventually we got out of the water, out of the ditch, onto the road. And I was kind of like, "Oh no. What's going on?" I think I told him, for some reason, to turn it off, or I don't know, for whatever reason, and as soon as we did, the car wouldn't start again. So we were just stuck in the middle of kind of a highway in the pouring rain.
- Andrew: So you doomed yourself.
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Luke: I think I kind of messed that trip up, but... So we had to basically stay awake all night so no cars would hit us as they were travelling in this pouring rain.
- Andrew: So our friend must have really hated you at that time, because not only was he supporting you because you lost your wallet, but you also wrecked the car.
- Luke: Yeah, true. Well, technically he lost my wallet, so yeah.
- Andrew: OK, **there's more to this story than meets the eye.**
- Luke: There's a bit more, yeah.
- Andrew: OK.
- Luke: But yeah, he did blame me. He told me I shouldn't have stopped... told him to stop.
- Andrew: I see. So yeah, you had some very interesting experiences in Australia then.
- Luke: Yes, but we eventually wound up at someone's house and he was very hospitable and took us in, let us stay there for 3 days. We ate food there, barbequed, everything.
- Andrew: Right on. So the kindness of the Australian people saved you.
- Luke: That's true. It saved our friendship.
- Andrew: Thanks, Australia.
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: OK, I have five random questions for you left. These are sort of **quick-fire** questions that I ask all of the guests that I interview here on the show, and I think I have some fun questions prepared for you.

Luke: OK. Sounds good.

Andrew: Are you ready?

Luke: Yes.

Andrew: OK, so question number one: Do you use social media at all?

Luke: I do use social media.

Andrew: So are you a Facebook guy or a Twitter guy?

Luke: I'm more of a Facebook guy. I haven't really looked at Twitter for a couple of years. The only problem is that Facebook is banned in China.

Andrew: Oh, so what do you do when you're in China then and you want to use Facebook?

Luke: I don't really use it that often because of that, but I have a VPN so I can...

Andrew: A virtual private network?

Luke: A virtual private network.

Andrew: OK.

Luke: So I can use that. I can turn it on and go on Facebook, but I just tend not to use it as much.

Andrew: Yeah, it's interesting. I've heard this about China before, that the government doesn't really enjoy people using Facebook so they block it.

Luke: Mhmm. And as well as a lot of other websites and apps.

Andrew: Interesting. OK, so you're a Facebook guy. Do they block...? Oh, I know they block Twitter.

Luke: Yeah, they block Twitter, Instagram, Google. Anything Google.

Andrew: But they have, I believe it's called... I want to say Weibo?

Luke: Yeah, they have Weibo, and the thing about that is they come up with their own version of that software or app, so you're not really missing anything.

Andrew: But you're just not getting, maybe, the international experience.

Luke: Right.

- Andrew: Yeah, interesting. OK. Question number two: Can you recommend a band for us to check out? I know you're a music fan. What is something you've been listening to lately that's really gotten your attention?
- Luke: I find being abroad that I don't really keep up with music that much, but the last album that I listened to was Alabama Shakes.
- Andrew: I listened to Alabama Shakes today, too.
- Luke: Oh yeah?
- Andrew: Yeah. It was really good.
- Luke: *Sound & Color* is the album.
- Andrew: Yeah. I recommend this one as well. Very interesting, maybe I would say Southern Gospel, R&B music.
- Luke: Mmhmm. Yeah. I couldn't really think of it. Soulful, maybe? I don't know.
- Andrew: I don't know. I was really into it, so I... You can tell we're friends because we listen to the same music, but this is a cool band. Check 'em out: Alabama Shakes. All right, question number three: Imagine you're trapped on a desert island and there's only one food source on the island, only one type of food that you can eat. Which food would you like it to be?
- Luke: So something growing on a tree or some sort of plant or something?
- Andrew: Yeah. Well, we're imagining, so it could be a pizza tree. It could be, you know, like – I don't know – a burrito cave. What would you choose?
- Luke: Are there different types of toppings?
- Andrew: Sure.
- Luke: OK. I might go for... That's a tough choice. I might go for burritos because I haven't had them for a while.
- Andrew: Yeah, burritos. I could probably eat a burrito every day. Why not? They're delicious.
- Luke: Yeah. Switch it up. Put different stuff inside.
- Andrew: Yeah, you can have different types of meat or different types of vegetables and many different types of sauces and fillings. Good choice. Burrito. I'm behind it 100%. Question number four: And maybe I know the answer to this already, but what is your favourite app on your phone?

- Luke: Right now, it might be that running app.
- Andrew: Yes. That was what I was gonna predict that you would say: Strava.
- Luke: Yes, it's pretty good. One reason is that you don't need Wi-Fi.
- Andrew: Yeah, you don't need... And this is good for Canada because, maybe in other parts of the world it's different, but in Canada, a lot of apps require Internet connectivity, obviously, but data is very expensive, so to download any information when you're away from your Wi-Fi network is not desirable. It's something I don't wanna do. But Strava, you don't need an Internet connection.
- Luke: Yeah, it's true, because I don't even have any sort of data or phone plan or anything in Canada so it's useful. I can even use the map when I'm walking around, even though it's not connected to the Internet.
- Andrew: Before Strava, what else did you like? What were your other favourite apps?
- Luke: Since I moved to China, I think one of the most useful apps for me is WeChat.
- Andrew: WeChat? And what is that?
- Luke: It's kind of like Kik or some sort of messaging app. In Korea, they have KakaoTalk. It's sort of similar to that, but one of the neat features with that is it has – at least for Chinese – it has a translation device, so if you're chatting with a Chinese person and maybe they don't know how to say something in English, they could type it in Chinese and you can have an automatic translation within the app.
- Andrew: Ah, very interesting. So that helps you just understand things.
- Luke: Yeah, it just makes life easier, especially if you... I don't know, if you're out and about and you don't know where you are, you can maybe add them to that app and have a conversation that way.
- Andrew: Aha, cool. OK, so WeChat.
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: I'll have to check it out next time I'm in China.
- Luke: Yeah.
- Andrew: OK, so our final question. Question number five: This is a would-you-rather-type question, and it is: Would you rather have no one show up to your wedding or no one show up to your funeral?

- Luke: Hmm. Seems kind of dark.
- Andrew: Yeah, this is a dark question. It's kind of a depressing one.
- Luke: Yeah. Well, I think if no one showed up to your funeral, you probably wouldn't have made that many connections throughout your life, I guess. Either that or you outlived everybody, which would be great.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Luke: And it wouldn't matter, in that case.
- Andrew: Yeah, and it doesn't really matter because you're dead. You'll never know.
- Luke: Exactly, yeah. So that's what I was thinking. It might not matter. As far as a wedding goes, I don't really care either because I don't necessarily want a big wedding. I just went to one and I thought it was kind of strange; it was so formal and it just seemed very weird. There were 150 people there just staring at the bride and groom. I don't really like a lot of attention so I might rather them not show up to a wedding.
- Andrew: But, to me, the first impression I had when I was thinking about this question is that if nobody showed up to your wedding, you must have made some sort of mistake in your life. Either you personally made a mistake and alienated all your friends and family, or you are deciding to commit the rest of your life to a woman, or a partner, who has done exactly the same thing, who has alienated all your friends or all your family, as well as all of their friends and family. So I don't know. Do you want to be making a big mistake or do you just want to outlive all your friends? I don't know. It's interesting.
- Luke: Yeah, that's true. I didn't really think about her side of the family, but for me, at least, I can control who comes.
- Andrew: OK. So your final answer?
- Luke: My final answer is still wedding. If no one showed up and I invited a few people, I'd be a little bit upset, but...
- Andrew: Yeah. If I had to answer this question, I would say I'd rather have no one to show up to my funeral because I wouldn't know and I wouldn't care.
- Luke: Yeah. It makes more sense.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Cool. All right, Luke. Well, we'll stop it there. Thanks for agreeing to do this interview.
- Luke: Mmhmm. Thanks for having me.

Andrew: And we'll talk to you next time.

Luke: All right.

Andrew: So that's that, everyone. Thanks for listening. I hope you enjoyed the interview with Luke. Stay tuned! We've got more great Culips episodes coming up real soon. We'll talk to you then. Bye bye.

Detailed Explanations

To dig something

When you **dig something**, you like it. In this episode, Andrew says that he hopes Culips listeners will **dig** listening to the interview with Luke. In other words, Andrew hopes listeners will like the episode.

The origins of this slang expression are unclear. However, it started to become popular in the early 1940s and was frequently used by jazz musicians and beatniks. **To dig something** went out of fashion in the 1960s, but these days people are using the expression again.

Because **to dig something** is a very casual expression, it should be avoided in formal contexts.

So, when you **dig something**, you like or enjoy that thing.

Here are a couple more examples with **to dig something**:

Sue:	Hey, nice sweater. Is it new?
Diego:	Thanks! Yeah, I bought it yesterday.
Sue:	It looks great. I really dig it.
Diego:	Awesome. Thanks for the compliment.

Danny:	I visited a great new downtown restaurant last week.
Kevin:	Oh yeah? What kind of food?
Danny:	Indian. I had a curry that was unbelievable.
Kevin:	Sounds amazing.
Danny:	Yeah. You need to check it out. You'll dig it for sure.
Kevin:	Cool. Thanks for the recommendation!

Court shorts

In this episode, Luke says that he used to wear **court shorts** when he was in elementary school. **Court shorts** are a kind of athletic clothing worn when playing basketball. They are knee length and are baggy so that when you wear them, you can easily run and jump. The word *court* in the name refers to a basketball court. So, **court shorts** are shorts you wear when you are on the basketball court.



Another name for **court shorts** is basketball shorts.

Here are a couple more examples with **court shorts**:

Brett: I'm super excited for the staff retreat this weekend.
Naheed: Me too. It should be a great time!
Brett: Apparently, there is a basketball court at the resort we'll be staying at.
Naheed: No way! We'll have to get a few games in.
Brett: Absolutely. Don't forget to pack your **court shorts** and sneakers.
Naheed: I won't!

Jonny: Excuse me.
Ariane: Yes?
Jonny: I'm looking for my son. I not sure where he went off to.
Ariane: What does he look like?
Jonny: He's 11 years old and is wearing a red T-shirt and black **court shorts**.
Ariane: Ah. He just walked by about 30 seconds ago. It looks like he was headed to the park down the street.
Jonny: Oh, that's a huge relief. Thanks so much!
Ariane: No problem.

To rock

When you **rock** a piece of clothing, you wear it with pride and confidence. In this episode, Luke says that he **rocked** court shorts when he was a kid. In other words, he proudly wore court shorts because he thought they looked good on him and they gave him confidence.

This expression is very casual and should be avoided in formal contexts. **To rock** is often used as a compliment. If you tell someone that they are **rocking** it, it means that you think they look great.

So, when you boldly and confidently wear an outfit, piece of clothing, hairstyle, etc., you are **rocking** that style.

Here are a couple more examples with the expression **to rock**:

Robyn: How do I look in this outfit?

Alex: You look awesome!

Robyn: Really? It makes me feel fat.

Alex: No way. You look great. You're totally **rocking** it.

Robyn: Cool!

Lucy: What are you wearing to the party?

Tim: I was thinking of dressing up fancy. I might **rock** a suit.

Lucy: That would be so great.

Tim: Yeah. I like getting all dressed up. What are you going to wear?

Lucy: I might dress up too. I'll probably wear my black dress.

Tim: Perfect!

Per se

Per se is an expression that entered English via Latin. It means in and of itself. When it is used in the negative (for example, **not per se**), it means not precisely or not accurately. In everyday English, **per se** is almost always used in the negative form.

In this episode, Andrew says that the school Luke teaches at in China is not a Chinese school **per se**. In other words, although it is a school located in China, it doesn't follow the regular curriculum of the average Chinese school. The school is not exactly a typical Chinese school.

So, the expression **not per se** means not precisely or not accurately. Because this expression is borrowed from Latin, it sounds formal. Indeed, it is often used in formal contexts. However, it is also frequently used in casual conversations and is a common expression.

Here are a couple more examples with the expression **per se**:

Jamie: What do you do for a living?

Brian: I'm a chef.

Jamie: Oh, cool. Do you own your own restaurant?

Brian: Well, **not per se**, but I am part of an investment group that owns several restaurants.

Jamie: That's amazing!

Deanne: You met with the sales director from the New York office last week, right?

Tony: Well, **not per se**. We organized a meeting but the sales director had to cancel at the last minute because he was sick.

Deanne: That's unfortunate. Were you able to reschedule?

Tony: Yes. We're meeting on Thursday.

Deanne: Fantastic. It would be very helpful if you could prepare a short report that summarizes the points you discuss.

Tony: Sure. No problem.

Deanne: Thanks!

Joined at the hip

When two people hang out a lot together or spend a lot of time together, we can say that they are **joined at the hip**. In this episode, Andrew says that Culips listeners will probably think that he and Luke are **joined at the hip** because they have many shared experiences and have spent a lot of time together.

This idiomatic expression uses imagery of conjoined twins. Just like conjoined twins are attached to each other and are always together, people who are **joined at the hip** spend a great deal amount of time hanging out with each other.

Here are a couple more examples with **joined at the hip**:

Mario: What are you doing on Tuesday? Want to see a movie with me?

Herb: I'd love to but I already have plans to hang out with Greg.

Mario: Really? Greg again? Didn't you guys hang out last week, too? It's like you're **joined at the hip** or something.

Herb: He's just a cool guy to chill with. What are you doing Thursday? Want to watch a movie then?

Mario: OK. That works for me.

Herb: Great. See you then.

Marilyn: Guess who I ran into last night?

Liza: I don't know. Who?

Marilyn: Jenny!

Liza: Oh, that's so funny. I haven't seen her since high school!

Marilyn: Really?

Liza: Yeah. I haven't seen her in years.

Marilyn: That's hard to believe. You guys were **joined at the hip** back then.

Liza: She was my best friend back then, but after I moved away to go to university, we fell out of contact.

Marilyn: That's too bad.

Liza: Yeah. I should give her a call sometime to catch up.

To jump out at you

When something **jumps out at you**, it becomes very noticeable and evident. In this episode, Luke says that the things that **jumped out at him** about the differences between China and Korea were the foods and languages. In other words, it was the major differences between Chinese and Korean cuisine and the Chinese and Korean languages that were most notable to Luke.

So, if something is very obvious and is easily noticed, then that thing **jumps out at you**. For example, marketers always try to create advertisements that **jump out at people**. This is because ads that **jump out at people** are the most effective at generating sales. The most noticeable advertisements are often the most successful.

If something **jumps out at you**, then it is immediately noticeable and obvious.

Here are a couple more examples with **to jump out at you**:

Pascal: How was your trip to Mexico City?

Danica: Amazing!

Pascal: What was the best part?

Danica: I loved lots of things, but the thing that really **jumped out at me** was just how nice the people of Mexico are.

Pascal: Yeah. I found them to be very welcoming when I visited Mexico too!

Frieda: Why did you decide to move to London?

Lee: Well, I was living in a small town at the time and I just hated it. One day, it just **jumped out at me** that I could move away if I wanted to.

Frieda: Wow! So you left just like that?

Lee: Exactly. I quit my job and sold my house. One month later, I found myself living in London.

Frieda: What a great story. Do you have any regrets about your decision?

Lee: None at all! I love living here!

On pins and needles

If you feel very anxious or nervous about something and are eagerly waiting to hear the result of that thing, then you are **on pins and needles**. In this episode, Andrew says that Luke's family was **on pins and needles** while waiting to hear from him after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. In other words, Luke's family felt very anxious about his safety after the tsunami hit Thailand. They didn't feel relieved until they heard from him several days later.

This idiomatic expression is easy to visualize. When you feel anxious about the result of something, you feel very uncomfortable. You are unable to relax and feel calm. Well, if you were standing on actual pins and needles, you would also be uncomfortable and unable to relax. Your feet would be constantly pricked by the pins. Ouch!

So, just like someone who was actually standing on pins and needles would feel very uncomfortable, someone who is **on pins and needles** is unable to relax because they are anxiously waiting to hear news or an update about something.

In UK English, the expression *on tenterhooks* is used instead of **on pins and needles**. Both expressions mean the same thing, but when you speak to someone from North America, it is best to use **on pins and needles**.

So, if you're ever worried about how something is going to turn out in the end, then you can say that you're **on pins and needles**.

Here are a couple more examples with **on pins and needles**:

Ricky: This baseball game is so exciting!
Elise: I know! I hope the Yankees win.
Ricky: Me too. Watching it makes me feel anxious!
Elise: Same! I'm **on pins and needles**!

Jay: How did your job interview go?
Cindy: Good, I think!
Jay: That's great.
Cindy: Yeah. I hope I'll find out if I got the job soon.
Jay: They should get back to you shortly.
Cindy: I hope so! I'm **on pins and needles**. The wait is killing me.

A good call / a bad call

In this episode, Andrew says that Luke made **a good call** to avoid Phuket while he was travelling in Thailand. If he had visited Phuket, he may have been caught in the deadly tsunami. An informal way to talk about your opinion on a decision someone else made is by using the expressions **a good call / a bad call**. In other words, Andrew thinks that Luke made a good decision to avoid travelling to Phuket.

These expressions, like many English idioms used in North America, have their origins in baseball. The expressions were first used to either encourage baseball umpires after they had made a good decision or to criticize them if they had made a bad decision. For example, if a pitcher threw a pitch that he thought was a strike, but the umpire decided it was not a strike, then the pitcher could express his disapproval of the umpire's decision by telling him that he had made **a bad call**.

Because **a good call** and **a bad call** are very informal expressions, they should be avoided in formal environments.

So, when you want to share your opinion about a decision that was made by someone else, you can pass judgment on the decision by saying that it was either **a good call** or **a bad call**.

Here are a couple more examples with **a good call / a bad call**:

Allie:	What should we do for dinner? I'm getting hungry.
Sandra:	How about Thai food? There's a great little restaurant just down the street.
Allie:	Oh, good call . I love Thai.
Sandra:	Sweet. Let's do it.

Dee:	What did you get up to last night?
Patrick:	I ended up going to a free concert in the park.
Dee:	How was it?
Patrick:	Oh, going there was a bad call . The band wasn't good and the sound was horrible. The PA system kept feeding back. Overall, it was a horrible experience. What did you do?
Dee:	I had a few friends over and we played cards. It was fun.
Patrick:	Sounds much better than my evening!

To flare up

When something **flares up** (like a conflict, fight, argument, or pain), it becomes active or violent after a period of calm and peace. In this episode, Andrew talks about the disputes between North and South Korea and how they frequently **flare up**. In other words, the hostility between the two countries becomes active every year or so, in between periods of peace.

So when a situation suddenly becomes violent or aggressive, it **flares up**.

Although this expression is mostly used to talk about conflict and war, we also use it when talking about a sudden burst of pain. For example, if you had belly ache for a few hours and it went away but then suddenly the pain came back, then you could say that the pain **flared up**.

This expression is easy to visualize. Just like a fire **flares up** and becomes bigger when you add more fuel, a situation that suddenly becomes more violent or active **flares up**.

Here are a couple more examples with the expression **to flare up**:

Christina: How are you feeling these days?

Frank: My back has been giving me problems lately.

Christina: Oh, that's too bad.

Frank: Yeah. Last week the pain **flared up** without any warning and I had to go to the emergency room. The doctor told me I should get lots of rest.

Christina: If you need anything, let me know. I'm happy to help.

Frank: Thanks. I will.

Deb: Did you hear the news about the Middle East?

Gene: Yeah. I heard that riots have **flared up**.

Deb: Yeah. That's what I heard too. Scary stuff!

Gene: Indeed. I hope things calm down soon.

Deb: Me too!

To hype something up

When you **hype something up**, you promote it and try to get other people interested in it, often by exaggerating how good or interesting that thing is. In this episode, Andrew says that news organizations **hype up news stories**. In other words, TV news stations sensationalize news stories and try to make them more serious and dramatic than they really are. By doing this, they hope to gain more viewers and get people more interested in the news.

This expression is often used before a new movie is released. Movie production companies spend lots of money on advertising and release film trailers in order **to hype the new movie up** and convince many people to go see it. Even though the movie might not be very good, the advertising and the trailers are designed to persuade people to go and see the film.

This expression is very informal and should be used only in casual contexts.

Here are a couple more examples with **to hype something up**:

Armando: Did you see the trailer for the new James Bond movie? It looks so awesome!

Ann: I haven't seen it but a lot of my friends have been **hyping the movie up**.

Armando: Yeah. It's getting a lot of buzz. Do you like action movies?

Ann: Sometimes I do.

Armando: Then do yourself a favour and check out the trailer. It really looks great.

Justin: I ran into Mike last week and he told me a story about you.

Kim: Really? What did he say?

Justin: He told me that you met Arnold Schwarzenegger last year.

Kim: Well, Mike might be **hyping that story up** a bit.

Justin: Oh yeah?

Kim: Well, it's true that I did meet Arnold Schwarzenegger, but only very briefly.

Justin: Did you get his autograph?

Kim: I did actually, yeah!

Justin: Awesome.

There's more to something than meets the eye

When a situation or a person is more complex or more interesting than you believe it/them to be, then we can say that **there is more to something/someone than meets the eye**. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression after he learns that Luke's friend lost his wallet while they were travelling together. Andrew originally thought Luke lost the wallet himself, but realized **there was more to the story than meets the eye** when he heard that Luke's friend actually lost the wallet. In other words, Andrew realized that the situation regarding the lost wallet was more complex than he originally thought.

We often use this expression when we make guesses and think that a situation or a person is probably more interesting or more complex than they seem.

When a thing or a person is more complex than it appears to be, then we can say that **there is more to it/them than meets the eye**.

Here are a couple more examples with **there's more to something than meets the eye**:

Rose: I just found out that Peter quit!

Steven: What? Really? That's unbelievable. I wonder why.

Rose: I heard that he was unsatisfied with his salary.

Steven: That could be true, but I bet **there's more to it than meets the eye**.

Rose: We'll have to talk to him to find out what really happened!

Cooper: What do you think of Paul's new girlfriend?

Heather: She seems nice, but a little boring.

Cooper: I thought so too. But, hey, Paul's dating her, so she must be great, right?

Heather: Maybe she's just shy. **There's probably more to her than meets the eye**.

Cooper: Yeah. I bet you're right.

Quick-fire

When a series of things occur **quick-fire**, it means that they happen immediately, one right after the other. In this episode, Andrew tells Luke that he is going to ask him five **quick-fire** random questions. In other words, the series of questions will occur in succession, with Andrew asking the next question as soon as Luke has finished answering the previous question.

A synonym for this expression that is also frequently used is rapid-fire.

The expressions *rapid-fire* and **quick-fire** both describe things that happen in a series, with no breaks in between where one part ends and the next starts. These terms are also used to describe guns or weapons (like machine guns) that fire ammunition very quickly.

So, things that occur **quick-fire** happen in a series, with no breaks in between events.

Here are a couple more examples with **quick-fire**:

Sharon: What are you watching?

Abe: A new game show.

Sharon: What do the contestants have to do?

Abe: They have to answer a set of **quick-fire** questions. The player who answers the most questions correctly in 2 minutes wins \$10,000.

Sharon: Sounds cool! Mind if I watch it with you?

Abe: Not at all.

Destiney: I have a big softball tournament this weekend. I'm really excited. I think my team has a good chance of winning.

James: Awesome!

Destiney: Yeah! On Saturday, we play a series of three **quick-fire** games. Then, if we win at least two of those, we get to move on to the next round. If we win that game, then we make it into the playoffs on Sunday.

James: Sounds great! Good luck!

Destiney: Thanks!

Quiz

1. **When you are anxiously awaiting to hear the result of something (like a job interview) we can say that you are on what?**
 - a) thin ice
 - b) pins and needles
 - c) hot water
 - d) a roller coaster

2. **Which expression do we use when something is more complex than we originally thought?**
 - a) There's more to it than meets the eye.
 - b) It's the sweet spot.
 - c) It's got an eye on you.
 - d) It's the more the merrier.

3. **Which expressions are used to evaluate a decision?**
 - a) a good choose / a bad choose
 - b) a good call / a bad call
 - c) a good connection / a bad connection
 - d) a good cry / a bad cry

4. **When two people spend a lot of time together, we can say that they are joined where?**
 - a) at the heart
 - b) at the heel
 - c) at the head
 - d) at the hip

5. **Which of the following adjectives describes a series of things that happens in rapid succession?**
 - a) hot-fire
 - b) fast-fire
 - c) quick-fire
 - d) speedy-fire

6. Which of the following phrasal verbs means to promote?

- a) to show off
- b) to panic something around
- c) to hype something up
- d) to demonstrate in

7. Aggressions between the two warring countries _____ again last night.

Fill in the blank.

- a) flared up
- b) sparked out
- c) shot out
- d) fired up

8. What does it mean when you dig something?

- a) You hate it.
- b) You like it.
- c) You think it is boring.
- d) You think it is funny.

9. Something that is immediately noticeable does what?

- a) jogs out at you
- b) skips out at you
- c) jumps out at you
- d) runs out at you

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.a 3.b 4.d 5.c 6.c 7.a 8.b 9.c

Episode Credits

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