

Chatterbox #165 – Interview With Morag

Episode Description

In this episode, Andrew interviews Morag, the newest member of the Culips team. Join Andrew as he gets to know all the nerdy details about our newest co-host!

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- Rookie mistake
- Edgy
- To stick with it
- To let something slide
- Trial and error



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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, everybody. I'm Andrew and you are listening to Culips.

Morag: If you want to learn English for everyday use, you've come to the right place. At Culips, we help make English understandable.

By listening to our podcast, you can learn natural expressions and conversational structure. If you're interested in learning more about Culips and what we do, check us out on Facebook, Twitter, or our website, Culips.com.

Thanks for listening. We hope you enjoy this episode.

Andrew: On today's episode, I will be interviewing the newest member of the Culips family, Morag. Morag will be helping co-host with me, and I couldn't be happier about this, and I can't wait to introduce her to you. So that's what we'll be doing today.

Before we start, I'll tell you a little story about the problems I had recording this episode. It really turned out to be quite the ordeal. Morag and I recorded this interview, actually, several weeks ago. But then when I tried to edit that episode, I realized that I made a mistake—and this is actually quite a **rookie mistake**.

I forgot to hit the record button. And so I ended up with blank audio files, and that was disappointing. So what you'll hear today is the make-up interview that Morag and I rescheduled. But, while we were recording this interview today, suddenly my microphone died and I had to switch microphones half-way through the interview.

So you'll notice a change in the quality of the audio when this happens. And I apologize for that. It's less than perfect sounding. But I think you'll be able to hear and understand me OK. So, please, **let it slide** just this once.

OK, so now it's time for the interview. Here it is: Introducing the new Culips co-host, Morag.

Hi Morag, how are you?

Morag: I'm doing pretty well, Andrew. And how about you?

- Andrew: I am good. I am super excited to have you on Culips.
- Morag: Oh, thanks so much. I'm excited to be here.
- Andrew: Yeah. And the reason that I'm talking to you today is because you are the newest member of the Culips team. You are going to help me co-host some episodes in the future. So this is very exciting for me.
- Morag: And for me, too. I'm really excited to start out and get to know all you guys.
- Andrew: Awesome, awesome. OK, so, since you are new, I am going to interview you today, if that's OK, so that our listeners can get to know you a little bit.
- Morag: Absolutely.
- Andrew: Very good, OK. So I have a lot of questions for you. I'm a very curious person.
- Morag: Well, that sounds like fun. I've never been interviewed before.
- Andrew: There's a first time for everything.
- Morag: Yes.
- Andrew: OK, so Question One: Your name is very interesting to me. I've never met anybody with the name Morag before. So could you tell me a little bit about your name?
- Morag: I definitely can. It's quite normal to not have met a Morag before. It's a Scottish name. So it's not actually English language at all. It's Scottish Gaelic. And I have it because my mother is Scottish.
- Andrew: OK, I was thinking it might be Scottish. Interesting.
- Morag: Apparently, it used to have an H on the end. So... used to be even more confusing.
- Andrew: I was curious about that, because it looks like a word that would have an H on the end. I just thought that in my head, and I was almost going to ask you that question. And do other family members, like, I don't know if you have a brother or sister, do they also have interesting Gaelic names?
- Morag: I actually think that I'm one of the only ones on the actual Scottish side of the family with a Gaelic name. Well, I guess there's my mom, Fiona, but that's not actually... that's not Gaelic. That was made up in the 19th century in a romance novel, so.
- Andrew: Funnily enough, my mom is also named Fiona.

Morag: Really?

Andrew: Yeah.

Morag: That's quite odd.

Andrew: Yeah, the Scottish connection. But that's interesting. I didn't know that that's where that name came from.

Morag: Yeah, no, it sounds like it could be Gaelic, but it is not.

Andrew: Yeah, interesting. I'll have to tell that to my mom. I'll see if she knows.

Do people call your mom Fi?

Morag: Yeah, her family does. My grandmother definitely calls her Fi.

Andrew: That's my mom's nickname too.

Morag: Yeah, very, very Scottish.

Andrew: Cool, OK. So we know your mom is from Scotland, but where are you from originally?

Morag: I am originally from the West Coast of Canada, on Vancouver Island, little place called Victoria.

Andrew: Victoria, yeah. I like Victoria.

Morag: It's a very nice place. It's quite beautiful. I mean, right now, this time of year, April, it's going to be beautiful and lots of flowers and all kinds of lovely things, as opposed to the lovely snow that we have in Montreal right now.

Andrew: Yeah, so you took the words right out of my mouth. You're in Montreal now.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: And so why did you leave the lovely flowers of Victoria to go to the "lovely" snow of Montreal?

Morag: It actually is lovely snow right now. It's the stuff that you can make really good snowballs from. So that's not so bad, not so bad.

Andrew: Packing snow.

Morag: Packing snow, yeah. It's one of the best kinds but, anyway, to answer your question, I spent the first 24 years of my life in Victoria. And I was ready to discover something new. That's pretty much the reason.

- Andrew: OK, so I've had a lot of friends that have done this. They grow up in a small town. They spend their whole life there. And they just want to see the world and have a new experience. And so this is your story, too?
- Morag: It's some of my story, yeah, yeah. I don't know if seeing the rest of Canada counts as seeing the world, but it's seeing something and that's nice.
- Andrew: Yeah, well, at least Montreal is a little bit different than other parts of Canada.
- Morag: Absolutely. And I have lived in Toronto and I lived in a couple of other places as well. So, you know, I'm figuring out my place.
- Andrew: Cool, very cool. And so what do you like the best about living in Montreal?
- Morag: I think it's—if this makes sense—it's the general quality of life here. There's a lot of, sort of, attention paid to the arts and to music and to outdoor festivities and parks and food and drinks. It's all the good stuff in life seems to be what this city culturally values. And it's nice to be in a place where the cultural values are similar to your own. Now if only I could actually get the French down, that would be...
- Andrew: I agree with your description of Montreal, I think. It's not that other cities in Canada don't value the things you mentioned like music and outdoor activities and food. But there just seems to be a greater appreciation for these things in Montreal.
- Morag: It's a more public appreciation, I would say.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, yeah, yeah. Montreal's a great place.
- Morag: Yeah. I'm enjoying it quite a lot. It's going to be even better when the summer comes.
- Andrew: Summer in Montreal is undeniably great. It's just a great summer city.
- Morag: Mmhmm, yup, yup.
- Andrew: So, about you a little bit. What are your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?
- Morag: I love to do crafts of pretty much any kind. So I knit a lot, I sew, I cross-stitch, and all that kind of slightly older, feminine stuff. I love to, I guess in the same, around the same line, I love to cook and bake and then play video games. Actually, that's probably my most frequent leisure activity.
- Andrew: OK. What game are you playing currently?
- Morag: I'm playing Bloodborne.

Andrew: Bloodborne?

Morag: Yeah, I don't know if you know the Dark Souls series, but it's from Japan and they're punishingly difficult.

Andrew: Oh. Is it for a computer or a phone or Xbox?

Morag: The Bloodborne one is an offshoot of that series, but very similar. It is only for the PS4, which my roommate has.

Andrew: Nice.

Morag: Right? I know, profiting off others—it's lovely.

Andrew: My last roommate had a big projector, which was great. So we could watch movies the size of a wall.

Morag: I have a friend like that, too. It was amazing.

Andrew: Yes, it's great. OK, interesting. So video games and?

Morag: Video games and girly stuff.

Andrew: And how did you learn to knit? I'm always curious to learn how people learn these skills.

Morag: Well, I just learned from a book. I found a book one day when I was shopping on how to knit, and it was really cool. It was kind of, it had some neat stuff in it. I remember there was, like, a skull pattern scarf and stuff, and I thought it was, like, really **edgy** and cool. So I wanted to learn how to do that, and I just taught myself how to knit.

Andrew: That's really cool. I'm always jealous of people that can learn things from just reading a book.

Morag: Well, it was definitely **trial and error**, but it was really well explained. And if you just **stick with it**, you can learn a lot from diagrams and hard work.

Andrew: There you go, cool. Awesome. So I'm going to ask you a question that's a little bit different than the last one. But now that you're a Culips co-host, you can officially call yourself a podcaster.

Morag: Well, that's pretty cool.

Andrew: Yeah, your new title: a podcaster. So I'm wondering if you listen to other podcasts and, if so, which one is your favourite?

- Morag: I do listen to some other podcasts. And I think this one counts, but definitely my favourite radio-type program is NPR's Ask Me Another, which is an hour of quizzes, games, trivia, all that kind of stuff. It was very silly and very fun. I listen to it a lot when I'm making dinner or something like that.
- Andrew: Sounds fun. I like the podcasts from NPR. They're usually high-quality productions and very interesting and informative.
- Morag: Or they just, like this one, contain a crazy amount of puns, which is pretty great.
- Andrew: OK, so my last question that I have for you here, since Culips is a podcast where we teach people about the English language and about Canadian culture: I'm wondering if you study a second language?
- Morag: I do. I'm currently studying French. As we spoke about earlier, I'm living in Montreal, which is a, well, sort of, technically Francophone place. And there are a lot of English speakers here, but it is a French-speaking part of Canada. So I'm learning how to speak French right now. I took some French in school like everyone in Canada has to, really. But I never developed the muscle to actually speak. So that's what I'm working on right now.
- Andrew: I see, very cool. So then, what, for you, what is the most effective way to study? Is there a technique or a tip that you have that works especially well for you?
- Morag: For me, it's reading, honestly. That's where I got a lot of my English vocabulary. I read a lot of books when I was a kid, pretty much constantly. So that's what I'm trying to do with French right now, is I'm reading some Harry Potter books, actually, because I already know what's going to happen and I can really focus on getting into the language. But just absorbing and listening and reading as much as possible is really good for me.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, yeah, I think a great way to study is by reading because you can sort of relax and enjoy a story at the same time.
- Morag: You can actually have fun and feel like a part of it. So I'd say, yeah, listening and reading are the two things that I would say are the most effective.
- Andrew: OK, so we're almost, almost, almost done, but I always like to do five rapid-fire questions at the end of my interviews.
- Morag: Oh, that sounds like fun.
- Andrew: So just give me a quick and short reply to these questions, just so our listeners can get a sense of your personality.

Morag: OK, let's go.

Andrew: OK, so Question One: what's your favourite thing to do on a summer day?

Morag: Read in the shade.

Andrew: Read in the shade. In a park?

Morag: Yeah, I'd say in a park, or go for a bike ride.

Andrew: Perfect.

Morag: There you go.

Andrew: What website do you use the most?

Morag: Reddit.

Andrew: Reddit.

Morag: Definitely Reddit.

Andrew: Aha. Do you know how to swim?

Morag: I do know how to swim, and I enjoy it quite a lot, although I'm not that good.

Andrew: How did you learn?

Morag: Swimming lessons when I was a kid.

Andrew: Nice. What language is your favourite in terms of the way it sounds?

Morag: I would say it's a tie between German and Japanese.

Andrew: OK. And I think I already know the answer to this last question from our conversation here, but would you rather read a book or watch a movie?

Morag: Strangely enough, I would probably pick the movie.

Andrew: OK, you surprised me.

Morag: Yeah, if you were to give me an option, I guess I assume that once the movie was done I'd just read a book anyway.

Andrew: Very good, good answer.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: OK, well that wraps it up today. Morag, thanks a lot for answering my questions, and we'll catch you next time. We'll speak to you next episode.

Morag: All right, thanks very much, Andrew. It's been a lovely time.

Andrew: So there it is. That concludes my interview with Morag. Before I let you go, I'm going to remind you to visit our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Many people have been wondering how they can support Culips, and there are several ways.

First, you can tell your friends about us. If any of your friends are learning English, let them know about us. Secondly, you can leave us a review on iTunes or like our Facebook page, which is [Facebook.com/culipspodcast](https://www.facebook.com/culipspodcast). And, finally, you can consider signing up and becoming a Culips member. And you can learn all about how to do that at Culips.com.

That's it for now. Thanks for listening, everyone. We'll catch you next time. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Rookie mistake

The original meaning of *rookie* comes from professional sports, where someone who is in their first year on a professional team is called a rookie.

Now, however, anyone who is new to an activity or organization can be called a rookie.

So if a rookie is an inexperienced person, a **rookie mistake** is a mistake that comes from a lack of experience. In other words, a **rookie mistake** is an error that someone with lots of experience doing an activity should be able to avoid.

Here are a couple more examples with a **rookie mistake**:

Angie: Hey Steven! How was your first day of classes?

Steven: Not too bad. I didn't get to my first class, though.

Angie: Why didn't you make it to class?

Steven: I couldn't find the room! It's in the Cornett building. That place is a maze!

Angie: You're in what, your third year of university? Not finding the room ahead of time is a total **rookie mistake**. I have no sympathy.

Steven: I know, I know.

Elphie: Good morning! How are you doing today?

Robert: Oh my god, I'm so tired.

Elphie: Oh dear, are you OK? Did something happen to you last night?

Robert: My older sister is coming to visit today. Last night, I realized that my place was a total mess. She is so judgemental and would never let me forget it if I didn't clean up for her arrival. So I drank a bunch of coffee at 9:00 and cleaned my whole apartment in an hour!

Elphie: Let me guess, you drank the coffee too late at night and couldn't sleep?

Robert: Yeah, you got it. It was a **rookie mistake**. I should have known not to drink a pot of coffee so close to bedtime.

Elphie: No kidding!

Edgy

In this episode, Morag says that she liked a scarf pattern because it was **edgy**. In this context, **edgy** means new and different in a way that would be uncomfortable for some people. This sense of **edgy** means that something has an exciting quality that comes from it being different from what is normal or accepted.

Edgy is a quality that is neither positive nor negative on its own. Some people like **edgy**, challenging things, and some people don't.

Context is important for **edgy**, as it can also mean nervous and tense. This definition of the word only applies to people, and not objects. If someone is **edgy** in this sense, they are volatile and easily upset.

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

Paul: Whoa, Tara. That's a crazy new look for you.

Tara: I just got this haircut yesterday. Do you like it?

Paul: It's quite something.

Tara: What, you don't like the side forehead Mohawk?

Paul: It's pretty **edgy**, but maybe too weird for me. I mean, it looks great on you, though!

Tara: Whatever, Paul. You're just can't recognise cool when you see it!

George: How was work?

Ursula: Not great. The office has been a really stressful place lately.

George: Oh yeah? What's going on?

Ursula: My boss has been super **edgy**. We're behind on a couple of projects, so it's not without reason, but today was just nuts. Every time someone went in to talk to her, she ended up yelling. I was afraid to talk to her all day.

George: That sounds awful!

Ursula: I really hope things calm down soon. It's not fun working for someone who is so easily upset.

To stick with it

When you **stick with it**, you continue doing something even if it's difficult.

In this episode, Morag says that she learned how to knit by following diagrams from a book. She mentions that it wasn't easy, but she managed to learn by continuing to try hard. In other words, instead of giving up, she decided **to stick with it**, or keep on trying until she successfully taught herself to knit.

So, **to stick with it** means to keep trying until you succeed.

You can also use **stick with it** in the imperative, as a piece of advice. If you tell someone **to stick with it**, you are saying that they shouldn't give up!

Here are a couple more examples with **to stick with it**.

Petra: Hey, Thomas, how's it going?

Thomas: Oh, I'm not too bad.

Petra: Yeah? Last time we talked, you mentioned you were starting yoga classes. How's that going?

Thomas: Honestly? It's pretty rough. I've always been pretty fit, but I had no idea I'm so prize-winningly inflexible. I've been doing yoga classes for a month and I still can't touch my toes!

Petra: That sounds really difficult. It's important that you **stick with it**, though! You'll feel so much better if you don't give up.

Thomas: Maybe I'll be able to touch my toes in another month or two, eh?

Petra: That's the spirit!

Simone: Wow, Allen, thanks so much for inviting me over to have dinner with your folks. That was an amazing meal!

Allen: You're welcome. I'm glad you liked it.

Simone: Where did you learn to cook like that?

Allen: I watched my grandma in the kitchen when I was a little kid. I learned a lot from paying attention to what she did. Most of learning to cook is just practice, though. You just have **to stick with it**. Don't get discouraged by a couple inedible meals—that happens to everyone when they're learning to cook.

To let something slide

When you **let something slide**, you don't make a big deal out of it. This is an easy idiom to picture: If you **let something slide**, it's as though you physically let go of something and allow it to slide away from you.

Usually we talk about **letting problems or mistakes slide**. In this episode, Andrew mentions a problem with the audio quality and asks that you **let it slide**. In other words, he is asking that you don't pay too much attention to the mistake he made, and instead enjoy the episode.

So, **to let something slide** is to forgive a mistake, problem, or error.

Here are a couple more examples with **to let something slide**:

Aldus: Here's your burger. Enjoy!

Caitlin: Thanks! Wait—is there cheese on this?

Aldus: Yeah. Cheeseburgers are the best.

Caitlin: Dude, I'm lactose intolerant!

Aldus: It can't be that bad. Can't you **let it slide**?

Caitlin: No, I can't **let it slide**! If I eat this burger, I'll get sick!

Aldus: Fine, I'll make you another one. Jeez.

Colin: Hey, did we get our grades back for the term paper yet?

Mary: Yeah, if you go to the main office you can pick up the graded paper. I just did.

Colin: How did it go?

Mary: Better than I thought! I was really worried because I totally forgot to include a title page. I thought I was going to get marked down, but the prof **let it slide**!

Colin: Lucky!

Trial and error

Trial and error is a way of solving a problem by trying different methods and learning from the mistakes you make.

When solving a problem by **trial and error**, you don't expect to get it right on the first try. If you're solving by **trial and error**, you expect to make a lot of mistakes. The point is to learn why something that you tried didn't work, and to try again with the knowledge you gained from your earlier errors.

In addition to solving problems by **trial and error**, many skills are learned by **trial and error**. While solving a problem by **trial and error** means you don't already know the solution and are trying to figure out a new method, learning by **trial and error** means trying and making mistakes until you get better.

Here are a couple more examples with **trial and error**:

Jennifer: Wow, Geoff, these are some amazing photographs on your walls. Where did you get them?

Geoff: I took all the pictures myself.

Jennifer: I had no idea you were so talented!

Geoff: It's not talent so much as **trial and error**. When I started taking photos, they were really terrible. But occasionally I would take a good one, and I studied those and tried to figure out what made them better than the rest.

Jennifer: Clearly you found a good method eventually, because these are superb!

Djuna: Hey, Terry, you look kinda sad. What's up?

Terry: I'm upset because I crashed my bike earlier today. The gears aren't working properly anymore, but I don't have enough money to get it fixed at the bike shop!

Djuna: You could totally fix it yourself! I taught myself how to do tune-ups on my bike.

Terry: That sounds pretty difficult. Weren't you afraid of messing up your bike?

Djuna: Bikes are pretty simple machines. You can look stuff up on the internet or just go with **trial and error**. It's fun to figure out how something works!

Quiz

1. If someone tells you to stick with it, what do they mean?

- a) They're telling you to give up.
- b) They're telling you to try one last time.
- c) They're telling you to keep trying until you succeed.
- d) They're telling you that your problem could be solved with a stick.

2. True or false: Solving a problem by trial and error involves making mistakes.

- a) true
- b) false

3. What kind of person should be able to avoid a rookie mistake?

- a) someone who is trying something for the first time
- b) someone who is talented
- c) someone who is very good at sports
- d) someone who is very experienced

4. What does it mean to be edgy?

- a) to be normal and expected
- b) to be new and different in a challenging way
- c) to be fun and outgoing
- d) to be loud and annoying

5. What are you doing if you have a problem and you let it slide?

- a) You're talking to all your friends about the problem.
- b) You're thinking about how to solve the problem all day.
- c) You're asking someone else to solve the problem for you.
- d) You're forgetting about the problem and focusing on other things.

Quiz Answers

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

Episode Credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Morag St. Clair
Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates
Audio editor: Andrew Bates
Transcription: Transcript Divas Transcription Services
Learning materials writer: Morag St. Clair
English editor: Stephanie MacLean
Webmaster: Hussain Mohammed
Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima
Project manager: Jessica Cox