

Chatterbox #42 – Stress

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone! It's Maura.

Harp: And Harp!

Maura: And we're here with another free Culips English learning podcast.

Harp: Yes. Check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can become a member, and when you become a member you have access to the transcript, detailed explanation, and even a quiz.

Maura: Right. And by becoming a member, you really support us here at Culips and let us keep making more and more interesting podcasts.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So this time, we are going to do a Chatterbox episode, where we get to chat about some interesting topic that's going on in English Canadian culture.

Harp: Yes. Today we're going to talk about **stress** and dealing with **stress**.

Maura: Oh, **stress**, even the word just **stresses me out**.

Harp: I agree. Doing research for this podcast was **stressful**.

Maura: **Stress** is a really sensitive topic, but we'll try to have fun talking about it in this episode.

Harp: Yes.

Maura: So, first, we're going to talk about the things that cause **stress**, so **stress** factors. Right?

Harp: Yeah. What causes people to feel **stress** in Canada?

Maura: You know, **stress** can come from so many different things depending on the person, but there are generally some things that **stress people out** more than others. So, sometimes people get **stressed out** from a big event in their lives, like planning a wedding or planning a big trip.

Harp: Or moving to a new house.

- Maura: Right. So, actually, those three events involve a lot of planning, a lot of details. And that's probably what **stresses people out**.
- Harp: Yes. Remembering everything, getting all the details right, organizing everything.
- Maura: Exactly. And for all of those things, you're spending money when you're doing it, so that's also **stressful**.
- Harp: Yes, because one of the biggest **stressors** in Canada is money.
- Maura: Woo, I think that that has got to be one of the biggest **stressors** anywhere in the world.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: Yep. A lot of people are worried about where their money's going to come from, or if they're gonna have enough money to pay for something, or they have debt they need to pay. It's just endless, really.
- Harp: Yes, I agree. And related to money as a **stressor** is work.
- Maura: Yeah, work is very **stressful** for many people.
- Harp: Yeah, especially now that the economy is a bit in rough times, some **layoffs** in some companies and it's just not that **bright** yet.
- Maura: Right. And sometimes, when the **layoffs** happen, the rest of the people, who are still working, have to do the work of all the people that were **laid off**. So they have to work extra hard. Sometimes one person does the work of two people.
- Harp: Yeah, people are taking work home.
- Maura: Yup, they're staying later or going in early to try to **catch up on** work. And you know, I remember when email started to get really popular and the Internet became popular. And people were saying that we were going to work less because of all this technology, but I think we've actually started to work a lot more because of it.

- Harp: Yeah, I agree. I have a phone. I'm checking my email all the time, sometimes at midnight or 3:00 in the morning, I just see, "Oh, do I have any new emails?" And then if something bad comes in, I start thinking about it and then I get **stressed out**.
- Maura: Yeah, thinking about emails is **stressful**!
- Harp: Yeah, and responding to the email and checking voice mail and, oh, having to respond to people.
- Maura: Yeah. Some people get **stressed out** at work because they're **burning the candle at both ends**.
- Harp: ***Burning the candle at both ends.***
- Maura: Right. And this expression means that you're working all day, and you're not going to sleep early, you're working at night, and then you have to wake up early in the morning as well. So, when you're staying up late and getting up early, and working all the time, we can say that you're **burning the candle at both ends**.
- Harp: Yeah, you're **drowning in work** if you're doing that.
- Maura: Yeah, that's another expression. So, if you're **drowning in work**, it means you have so much work that you're drowning; you're having trouble surviving and **keeping up**.
- Harp: Yeah, 'cause you have to do work all the time.
- Maura: It's really a horrible feeling and I'm sure people feel **stressed out** about that very easily.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: And if you're not working yet, then you might be a student. And going to school in university or college or some post-secondary education can also be **stressful**, because you have a lot of assignments, you're always working, you're always reading, and if you're a full-time student, you're not working, so you're **stressed** about money too.
- Harp: Yes, for sure. I have to say, I'm happy I'm not a student anymore. I like not having to study every evening and on the weekends.

- Maura: Right, that's true. You don't have very much time for yourself when you're a student.
- Harp: Yes, definitely.
- Maura: And, really, there are some other really sad life events, too, that could **stress people out**, like divorce, which is more and more common, and a death in your family can cause **stress**. Oh, there's so much that can cause **stress**, Harp!
- Harp: You're **stressing me out**.
- Maura: I'm sorry. But we can also think about the things that we can do to help us feel better, to not **stress us out**, or to get rid of the **stress** that we have.
- Harp: Yeah, let's talk about techniques of how to **cope** with **stress**.
- Maura: Good. So tell me some right now, Harp, because I'm already **stressed out** after talking about the first part.
- Harp: I think that we should meditate.
- Maura: Some people do that, and it really is becoming more and more common in North America, where meditation has not been popular in the past.
- Harp: No, for sure. People take maybe even just 5 or 10 minutes to themselves and just breathe and meditate and they feel less **stressed**.
- Maura: You know, I think that's really important, because people today are always doing something. They're cooking, they're cleaning, they're going to work, they're at work, they're taking care of their kids, or they're studying. They're always busy. So just the idea of taking some time to do nothing, I think, is important.
- Harp: You know, it actually really **stresses me out** when I have nothing to do.
- Maura: Right, 'cause you're not used it.
- Harp: Yeah. I am always thinking "OK, I should do this, I should do that." I never take the time. So I'm starting to learn that.
- Maura: Yeah, you kind of have to remind yourself, "OK, I'm gonna take 15 minutes and I'm just going to lie down and relax."
- Harp: Exactly, not watch TV, not read a book, just lie down and turn the brain off.

Maura: Exactly, not do anything else. Because that's something that I was talking about, just before we started this episode, to Harp. I was telling her about what I decided to do to help de-**stress**. And one of the things is to not go on the Internet as much and not be so connected to technology. Now, when I come home from work, of course I like to check my email and then I check Facebook, and then I have some blogs or websites I like to check out and this can go on for, like, 1 hour sometimes.

Harp: Yeah.

Maura: And what **stresses me out** a lot is I don't have enough time to do things, and so if I get rid of the technology, then I can have a bit more time.

Harp: I agree. My big thing for reducing **stress** is that I feel **stress** at work because, again, I don't have enough time. So whenever I feel overloaded with so many tasks that I need to complete, I slow down and I think, "One thing at a time," because if I think about everything I have to do and try to do a million things at once, I'm not gonna finish anything, I'm gonna be **stressed**, and so I just do one thing at time. That's my method of **coping** with **stress**.

Maura: That's a good method, I think, too, to take kind of take a deep breath and relax. And some people might even create a list of all the things they need to do, and that kind of clears up the **stress** in their mind, and they don't have to think about it as much. So what are some other techniques that people might use, Harp?

Harp: I think exercise is a really important one.

Maura: Mmhmm. I forget that one sometimes.

Harp: Yeah, because if you exercise, you are relieving **stress**, you're gonna feel more tired so you sleep better, and you're just gonna feel healthier if you exercise.

Maura: That's true. And I've heard there are just a lot of benefits to exercising, even before you get **stressed**, it can help prevent it, because you're being physically active, which helps stimulate your brain, and all this other scientific stuff.

Harp: Yeah. And you know, a trend that I'm noticing at my workplace is that a lot of my colleagues are taking kickboxing, or Tae Bo, or something that helps them, kind of, get rid of any of their frustrations.

Maura: Yeah, those seem like more aggressive classes, where you're moving

quickly, and kind of punching bags and kicking things.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: But for me, what I do is I take yoga classes.

Harp: Oh, that's a good **stress** reliever.

Maura: Yeah, I really do like it, because I need to slow down and relax. And yoga helps you do that and helps you focus a lot, too.

Harp: Good plan. That's a good idea.

Maura: That's something that's also become really popular in North America the past few years.

Harp: One of my friends has the best technique for **stress** relief.

Maura: Hmm, I'm so curious. What is it?

Harp: It's so good. I might actually start using this technique.

Maura: Tell me!

Harp: She does karaoke.

Maura: That actually sounds pretty awesome.

Harp: Yeah, 'cause you're having fun, you're singing, you're getting all your **stress** out, you feel so good after. I think I'm gonna start doing karaoke when I feel **stressed**.

Maura: Well, give me a call and I'll go with you.

Harp: Excellent.

Maura: So, if people feel **stressed** and then they don't deal with it properly, it's become a serious problem in North America and in Canada.

Harp: Yeah, it's leading to a lot of **burnout**.

- Maura: Right. So, some people feel so **stressed out** about, most of the time, their work, or maybe they're too busy with their work and their personal life that they can't **keep up**, that they go to see their doctor and their doctor gives them permission to not work anymore. This can go on for months, too, people can have a **burnout** and not work for months.
- Harp: People can go on **burnout** for years, actually.
- Maura: It's really serious.
- Harp: It is very serious. That's why you need to make sure you take care of yourself, so when you feel **stress**, you use techniques to reduce your **stress** level.
- Maura: Mmhmm. I would love to hear from a listener who's listening in a country where there's a low **stress** level.
- Harp: Yeah, you know. I saw a survey on CBC, which is the national news in Canada, which had interviewed people in 10 countries about **stress** levels and Canada was #3.
- Maura: That's kind of depressing, Harp.
- Harp: I know, we're really **stressed out** here, apparently.
- Maura: Well, with all of the things we talked about earlier in the episode, I guess it makes sense. And the cold winter!
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: That's a whole other story of why Canadians would be **stressed**, because it's cold and dark and they don't wanna go outside, or their car is covered in snow.
- Harp: Yeah, I agree. Winter is **stressful** and depressing.
- Maura: Yes. So maybe that's the reason why we're the third highest. So who was #2?
- Harp: Australia.
- Maura: Hmm, that's surprising.
- Harp: I know, 'cause they're warm and they have beaches.
- Maura: Right.

- Harp: **There goes** our winter theory.
- Maura: I've never been there, but because it's so beautiful, you'd think that people would be more relaxed.
- Harp: That's what I thought. We'll have to travel there to see what it's like there.
- Maura: Good idea. And #1?
- Harp: Do you know which country had the most **stress**? Guess. South Korea.
- Maura: South Korea, eh?
- Harp: It's interesting. I can understand that, because I lived there for a year, and people are working really hard in school, at their jobs. It's... There's a lot of competition. So I can see that there would be **stress** there.
- Maura: And they have cold winters sometimes, too?
- Harp: Not as cold as Canada but, yes, they do have cold winters.
- Maura: OK. So, it seems that no matter where you go in the world, in so many different countries, you can find **stress**.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: So, the best thing, like we said, is to learn how to deal with it properly and relax, **chill out**.
- Harp: Oh, **chill out**, that's a good expression. We did that in one of our episodes. Go to our website and find it.
- Maura: So, do you wanna go do some karaoke now?
- Harp: I think we need some karaoke.
- Maura: Me too. So, we hope this episode didn't **stress you out**.
- Harp: I hope not.

- Maura: But maybe informed you about what Canadians are being **stressed** about and how Canadians are learning to deal with their **stress**. So feel free to leave a comment and tell us how people in your country deal with **stress** or what they might be **stressed** about.
- Harp: We wanna hear from you all, all around the world.
- Maura: Yeah. And if your country is really not very stressful to live in, let us know so we can start making plans to move there.
- Harp: Good plan.
- Maura: OK, so remember to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and check us out.
- Harp: Yeah, become a member.
- Maura: Yeah, and if you don't wanna become a member, you can support us by giving us a donation. Thank you very much.
- Harp: Bye everyone!
- Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Stress/to stress

The word **stress** is related to the word *distress*, which means great anxiety, pain, or sorrow. **Stressing** is the act of worrying about something, and usually it will interfere in some tangible way in a person's life. **Stressing** is more severe than just worrying; it can cause trouble sleeping or make it difficult to feel joy. We can talk about **stress** to indicate how worried we are about an event. Here are some examples:

Cody: Are you all right? You look tired.

Cara: I'm a bit **stressed** right now. I have some tight deadlines to meet at work.

Janelle: I'm worried that we won't make it to the airport on time. There's more traffic than I expected.

Darren: I know. I'm really starting **to stress** about it.

In the example above, Darren shows that his concern about missing the flight is more than just worrying, **stressful**. Each of these words—*concern*, *worry*, and **stress**—conveys similar emotions, but the impact of each one is different, with **stress** being the most serious.

There are some physical symptoms that are associated with **stress**, so when Darren says that he's starting **to stress**, he might be feeling anxious and his heart might be beating fast. **Stress** can cause tension or strain.

The word **stress** can be used in other contexts, too. Harp and Maura mention that **stress** can cause burnout in people, but you can also put mechanical **stress** on an object, leading to breaking (like burnout!) of that object. For example, if an adult stands on a child's stool, it might break. The weight of the adult would put too much **stress** on the stool.

The verb **to stress** can also mean to put added emphasis on something that's especially important. For example:

Therese: Our pharmacology professor really **stressed** that we have to learn to spell medication names correctly. He said it could be a matter of life or death for our patients.

To stress out

In the verb **to stress out**, the word **out** just adds emphasis. If you say you're really **stressed out**, it indicates that your stress levels are especially high.

You could be **stressed out** about not finding a job when you graduate from university, or you could be **stressing out** over the high credit card bill you expect after going on a shopping spree. However, it would also be correct to just say *stressed about* or *stressed over* without using the word **out**.

Both of these words, *about* and *over*, can be used to qualify exactly what is causing you stress.

Layoffs

We've talked about **layoffs** in previous episodes. **To be laid off** means to lose your job because there's not enough work or not enough money to pay you to do your work. You can refer to the previous episode for more on **layoffs**.

Bright

In this episode, Harp and Maura talk about the economy not being all that **bright** right now. They could also have said that job prospects are dim in the current economy or that these are dark economic times.

Bright and *dark* are words that literally tell us about how much light there is. It's usually **brightest** outside around noon, when the sun is highest in the sky. It's darkest on a cloudy night when even the moon can't be seen.

In the context of this episode, Harp and Maura use the word **bright** in a different way. They're saying that the economy isn't doing well, it's not **bright**. Let's look at another example of the word **bright** being used in this way, but in the affirmative:

Adam: Things have been going really well for me lately. I think my girlfriend might be "the one" and I'm probably going to get a promotion at work soon!

Kim: That's so nice to hear, your future sounds **bright**!

If we think of the word **bright** in the literal sense, it wouldn't make sense to say "your future sounds **bright**." But Kim is responding to what she's just heard from Adam and she's saying that everything sounds positive. This is how Harp uses the word **bright** in this episode, except that she says that the economy is not **bright**, not positive.

To catch up (on)

The use of the word **catch** in this verb seems a little strange. When one person throws a ball, the other person catches it. But if we look at the verb **to catch up**, it makes more sense. If two people are racing and one person is in the lead but the other person is coming close, you can say they are **catching up**. Now let's think of how the verb **to catch up** is used in this episode. Maura says that people might bring work home or go in to the office early **to catch up on** work. **To catch up on** work means to get things completed that you might be falling behind on. Here are some more examples:

Elysha: I can't wait until exams are over. I've been studying night and day for the past two weeks!

Annette: For sure! It'll be great **to catch up** on my sleep.

Elysha: I'm going **to catch up** on my reading! I have a novel I've been waiting to finish.

To burn the candle at both ends

Imagine if you were to hold a candle sideways and light both ends. The candle would burn out twice as quickly as usual! When we say that someone is **burning the candle at both ends**, it means they're working really hard and are likely to burn themselves out, too. And there's something more we can take from this expression: The extra light you might get from **burning a candle at both ends** doesn't really make up for how quickly it burns out. Similarly, if you're working late into the night and starting work again early in the morning, it probably isn't worth it. The amount of work you get done won't make up for the fact that you'll be stressed and will burn out quickly.

To drown in work

This is a very descriptive expression. It can be useful when you're feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to do. When you have too much work, it can feel as though you're **drowning in it**. When I hear this expression, I imagine a pool filled with papers with me stuck in the middle of it. Let's look at an example:

Thomas: How are things at the office?

André: I'm starting **to drown in work**. It's been so hectic this month.

To keep up

In the context of work, this expression means that you're able to complete the work as it comes. Whereas the expression *to drown in work* is used when there's just too much work and it seems that you'll never be able to do it all. The verb **to keep up** means to finish the work as it comes in, so that you're not falling behind. Here's an example:

Alice: How are you able **to keep up** with all the different readings we have for this class?

Bette: It's not easy. I have to set aside half a day every week just to get them all done.

To cope

Maura and Harp give us plenty of examples of things that are sources of stress in Canada and around the world. **To cope** with those stresses means to handle those stresses without letting them have negative effects on your life or cause you too much worry. We can't just avoid every single thing that's stressful, so we have to learn **cop**ing strategies. This episode gives some examples of **cop**ing strategies.

Burnout

When someone is working too hard or in a difficult job for too long, they might experience **burnout**, meaning that they feel unable to do their job and feel like they need a break. Imagine a fire burning brightly, but after a while it **burns out**. While it's burning, it's bright and strong, but once it **burns out**, it can't provide any more light.

There goes...

There are many different situations in which you can use the expression **there goes something**. In this episode, Harp says "**there goes our winter theory**" when she realizes that Australians are more stressed than Canadians, even though they have warmer weather. In this case, her theory has been contradicted by the survey, so it must not be true. The theory isn't really going anywhere, but she says "**there goes our theory**" because the theory is no longer valid.

Another example of the expression **there goes** is the case of a nice, quiet, family neighbourhood. If a house in the neighbourhood becomes occupied by a group of college or university students who party a lot and make noise late into the night, then the neighbours might say "**there goes the neighbourhood**." The neighbourhood hasn't really gone anywhere, but it's no longer the nice, quiet neighbourhood it was before.

To chill out

This expression means to relax. **To chill out** with friends is different than planning a night out; **chilling out** is much more relaxed and informal. We've previously done an episode about **chilling out**, so check it out!

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. Which of the following words is most similar to *stress*?
 - a) relaxation
 - b) worry
 - c) joy
 - d) tiredness

2. Which of the following expressions would you use when you're completing unfinished work that you didn't have time to do earlier?
 - a) chilling out
 - b) catching out
 - c) catching up
 - d) there goes...

3. What kind of strategies should a person use when they are stressed to reduce their stress?
 - a) coping
 - b) bright
 - c) burnout
 - d) catching

4. When someone is burning the candle at both ends, what are they doing?
 - a) relaxing
 - b) taking a vacation
 - c) feeling really cold
 - d) working too hard

5. Which of the following is not one of the coping techniques mentioned in this episode?
 - a) watching TV
 - b) meditating
 - c) exercising
 - d) making lists
6. Which of the following is least likely to lead to burnout?

- a) drowning in work
- b) burning the candle at both ends
- c) coping well with stress
- d) working until late and then starting early each morning

Answers: 1.b 2.c 3.a 4.d 5.a 6.c