

## Chatterbox #50 – Embarrassing Moments

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone. It's Maura!

Harp: And Harp!

Maura: And we're back with your Culips English podcast. And at Culips, we always try to teach you fun, natural expressions that you can use every day.

Harp: Exactly. Check out the website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there, you can listen to all our older episodes.

Maura: You can access our transcript and more detailed explanations about the vocabulary we use and even a quiz.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So, today's episode is the Chatterbox episode, and this is where we chat about all different kinds of topics, things that are going on in Canada, different cultural aspects, and sometimes funny stuff, like today.

Harp: Yes. Today we're going to talk about **embarrassing** moments.

Maura: **Embarrassing** moments.

Harp: The funniest is that we started this episode with an **embarrassing** moment from you.

Maura: Yeah. We just recorded another episode, and while we were recording, I was sitting kind of strangely on this little bench we're sitting on, and I fell over. I lost my balance. But I wasn't that **embarrassed**, because everyone here is a friend. I would be more **embarrassed** if I was with strangers.

Harp: No, exactly. We all just **laughed it off**.

Maura: Yeah, yeah. It was funny. I laughed too. So, we're going to start today's episode by talking about some typical **embarrassing** moments that lots of people experience and lots of people would be **embarrassed** by.

Harp: And then we're going to talk about how people react to **embarrassing** moments.

Maura: Right. Some people get more **embarrassed** than others, so we'll talk about that. And the last thing we're going to talk about is our own **embarrassing** moments.

Harp: And we have quite a few **embarrassing** moments.

Maura: OK. So let's first start with some classic **embarrassing** moments. The one that comes to my mind first is **to be flying low**.

Harp: **To be flying low**. I love it.

Maura: Right. So this is when you forget to do up the zipper on your pants. So, most pants and pretty much all jeans have a little part that you need to zip up or button up and that part is called a fly. So, if you're **flying low**, it means that you forgot to zip up or do up that part of your pants.

Harp: Exactly. You know, I have a friend who says that to me all the time. He says it to me all the time, "Oh, **flying low**!" I'm always checking, oh no is my zipper down? It never is.

Maura: That's a funny joke.

Harp: Funny maybe once or twice, but not all the time.

Maura: Yeah. I remember one time I was at a show that my friend was giving and he was up on the stage talking to everybody, and we noticed that he was **flying low**.

Harp: Oh, that is so **embarrassing**, poor guy.

Maura: Yeah, it was pretty funny. But he was being kind of **goofy** on stage, so it wasn't that bad. But you could definitely see he was **flying low**.

Harp: That's funny. Another typical **embarrassing** moment is when you have something between your teeth.

Maura: Yeah. You might have something stuck in your teeth, or some food on your face, or something strange going on. And if you're with someone that you don't know very well, it's a bit **embarrassing**.

Harp: Yeah, I agree.

Maura: It's funny, because in those situations, too, some people will tell you that you have something stuck in your teeth and other people will feel too **embarrassed** to say anything.

- Harp: I know. I've had this conversation with friends. Like, if you're talking to someone and they have, let's say, spinach in their teeth, do you tell them or do you not tell them? I tell someone.
- Maura: I only tell people if they're a friend. If they're not a good friend, I feel too shy to say anything.
- Harp: I guess it depends on the context and the situation. I usually try to tell them, but discreetly.
- Maura: Yeah, maybe try **to play it down**. Like, it's not really a big deal; you maybe have a little something here, something like that.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Maura: Hmm, what are some other **embarrassing** moments?
- Harp: Well, if you have a **booger** in your nose.
- Maura: Yes, if you have a **booger** in your nose! Anything, really, around your nose, hanging down that can be seen, is not generally something to be proud of.
- Harp: Not at all.
- Maura: Often, people will try to tell you just by touching their nose, or making a gesture around their nose, hoping that you'll respond and touch your nose too.
- Harp: Yeah. Sometimes I find if someone is touching their nose, everyone around automatically starts touching their own noses to make sure that there's nothing there.
- Maura: It's a funny kind of technique, but it does work.
- Harp: It's much more discreet.
- Maura: A big one that I think a lot of people would be **embarrassed** about is **passing gas**, or **farting**.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely **embarrassing**.
- Maura: Yeah. And also **burping** can be **embarrassing** too. Especially if you're, again, not around people you know very well.

- Harp: Or if it's really quiet.
- Maura: Or really smelly.
- Harp: I remember an exam when someone **farted**, and so it was really quiet and someone let out a really big **fart**, and then it stank really bad. Oh, it was not good. I was **embarrassed** for the girl.
- Maura: Yeah. And everyone's looking at each other. But sometimes in big groups like that, you don't know who did it, so if the person can act cool and calm and not **embarrassed**, they can **get away with it**.
- Harp: No, she **turned completely red**. That's the only reason why we knew who it was.
- Maura: It's a **dead giveaway**.
- Harp: Another **embarrassing** thing is if you trip or fall.
- Maura: That's not very fun. Especially if you fall really hard, right down.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Maura: And in the winter in Canada, you really have to be careful when you're walking outside, because so often the sidewalks are covered in ice, so every step could be an **embarrassing** moment.
- Harp: Definitely. I walk much slower in the winter than in the summer.
- Maura: Yeah, me too. So, now let's talk about how some people react when they find that they're in an **embarrassing** moment, because so many people react differently.
- Harp: Definitely, and they react differently depending on who they're with.
- Maura: Right. Like we've already mentioned, depending on if you're with friends or strangers can make a big difference of how **embarrassed** you feel.
- Harp: Yeah, like when you fell off the bench, you just laughed.
- Maura: Yeah. I don't really get that **embarrassed** with friends, because I have nice friends and I know it's not gonna be a big deal, everyone just laughs. But with people I don't know, I feel so awkward.
- Harp: Yeah, me too.

- Maura: I hate it.
- Harp: Yeah. Another way people react to **embarrassing** situations is they **turn really red**.
- Maura: Yes. Like you just said with the girl who **farted** in your class, when you **turn red**, you show that you're **embarrassed**, and everyone knows that you feel **embarrassed** about it.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely.
- Maura: Because if you just laugh about it, then maybe people think you're not that **embarrassed**, because you have a sense of humour. But when you **go red**, they know that you feel bad about it.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely.
- Maura: So I usually like to laugh, too.
- Harp: I try to laugh, but usually I'm just too **embarrassed** and I just try to get out of the situation as soon as possible.
- Maura: Yeah. Getting out of the situation by leaving the area or changing the topic is a way that people deal with **embarrassing** moments.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely.
- Maura: Yeah. I think before, when I fell off the bench, I started talking about something else right away, so the focus was no longer on my tumble.
- Harp: Yeah, you changed the topic, which is a good technique.
- Maura: Yeah. See? I distracted you.
- Harp: I still think it's funny and I'm laughing about it.
- Maura: Another thing that people might do is just **brush it off** like it's no big deal, almost like ignoring it.
- Harp: I think this is a good tactic sometimes, because if you just **brush it off**, then you're not emphasizing it. You're kind of being laid back and cool and pretending it didn't bother you.
- Maura: Right. And maybe in that case, no one else noticed, so you can **get away**

**with it** and no one knows that anything happened.

Harp: Yes, definitely.

Maura: OK, now, Harp, are you ready for this last section?

Harp: I'm feeling **embarrassed** talking about this.

Maura: Hmm, who should go first?

Harp: One of my most **embarrassing** moments is when I was on a conference call with my boss and one of my colleagues. And my boss was talking and he was being very serious and talking about how there's something going on that's wrong and we were trying to think of a solution and he was in the middle of his thought, and I **farted**.

Maura: What did you do?

Harp: It was so **embarrassing**, because then he said, "Harp, did you have something to say?"

Maura: So, did he realize that you **farted**? Was he **making fun of you**?

Harp: I don't know, but I couldn't stop laughing. And I said, "No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. No, I have nothing to say." But I was laughing and trying not to laugh. I was so **embarrassed**.

Maura: Was anyone else laughing with you?

Harp: My colleague knew what I did, and she was laughing and trying not to laugh as well, so that was making me laugh more. It was such a bad situation.

Maura: Oh, yeah. But it sounds like your boss didn't know.

Harp: No, thank goodness.

Maura: That's so funny. Well, mine has to do with tripping and falling, like we talked about earlier. When I was in university, I was at a party and the floor inside was really wet, because it was winter and everyone was wearing their **boots inside**. And I was standing in a circle, just talking with some friends and some people I didn't know all that well. And suddenly, my two feet came out from under me and I fell on my butt.

Harp: You were just standing there and you fell?

- Maura: Yeah, that was the funniest thing, because I wasn't even walking. I was standing, and then suddenly I was on the ground.
- Harp: Oh no. That's so **embarrassing**.
- Maura: Really, I was so **embarrassed** because a guy that I thought was cute was there. But luckily, I also had friends and we were all laughing so hard, so it just made the situation funny. But I'm sure my face was **beet red**.
- Harp: I'm sure. That's so funny.
- Maura: Oh, man. It's funny now. In the time, it's so **embarrassing**, but as time passes, then it's just a funny memory and it's good for laughs.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: So, I would love to hear from any of our listeners about their **embarrassing** moments or maybe something that is **embarrassing** in their culture that isn't **embarrassing** here, or something like that.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. It would be great to hear about your **embarrassing** moments, since we shared some of ours.
- Maura: Yes. And we can all laugh about it together because it's in the past, and now it's a funny story.
- Harp: And we're all friends.
- Maura: Yes. OK, so, if you want to know more about some of the expressions we used in today's episode, remember, go to our website, check out the more detailed explanations and we'll explain them for you there.
- Harp: Yes, and that's about it for us today.
- Maura: That's it. Have a good day and I hope that nothing **embarrassing** happens to you.
- Harp: No, I agree. Or that you can **laugh it off**.
- Maura: Yes. If something does, just **laugh it off**. OK, we'll talk to you later.
- Harp: Bye everyone!
- Maura: Bye!

## **Detailed Explanation**

### **Embarrassing!**

Here's a fun little fact: The word **embarrass** is a word that many native English speakers have difficulty spelling. This is mostly because people forget whether there's one or two R's and one or two S's. There's actually a fairly long list of words that people are likely to misspell.

Here are a few of the more common words:

accommodate	believe
independent	judgment
separate	jewellery (which has more than one spelling)

### **To laugh it off**

When you feel embarrassed, it can be a good technique to just **laugh it off**. **To laugh it off** means that you laugh about the incident that is embarrassing instead of feeling sad or bad about it. You can **laugh off** anything negative that happens, like an insult. **To laugh it off** means that you don't take the negative incident seriously, but choose to laugh about it instead.

Here are a couple of examples with **to laugh it off**:

Mary: My boss got really mad at me at work the other day.

Mike: So what'd you do?

Mary: I stayed serious at the time, but later I just **laughed it off** with my boyfriend.

Paul: Did you see that easy shot that Mitchell missed at our last basketball game?

Jerome: Yeah! It was so bad it was funny. It's a good thing he just **laughed it off**.

### **To be flying low**

If the zipper on the pants you are wearing is not zipped up, then you are **flying low**. As we explain in this episode, *the fly* is the part of the pants in the middle where the zipper is. Sometimes the fly might also be buttons instead of a zipper. When you are in a rush or just thinking about something else, you might forget to zip up your fly. Walking around like this is embarrassing, especially when other people notice it!

### **Goofy**

Maura tells a story in this episode of when her friend was flying low on stage. She says that it wasn't so embarrassing because he was acting **goofy**. To be **goofy** is to be silly and not serious. Flying low at a serious or formal event might have been more embarrassing.



How embarrassing things are also depends on the person. Maura's friend was not a person who gets embarrassed easily. For other people, it might have been very embarrassing to be flying low in front of a crowd.

#### To play it down

**To play something down** is to act like it is not important. So if something embarrassing happens, people often **play it down** because they don't want to show that they are embarrassed. You can **play it down** by using some of the techniques we discuss in this episode, like changing the subject or laughing it off.

People can **play down** anything that they do not want to give attention to, either negative or positive. If someone does not want to receive attention for work that they did, they can **play it down** by saying that it wasn't that great or that they had a lot of help from other people.

Here's another example with **to play it down**:

Dean: Did you hear the rumour about Jocelyn?

Yasmine: Yes, but when I spoke to her about it, she **played it down**.

We can also use the opposite of this expression, **to play it up**. This is when you want to draw extra attention to something or you want to make something seem more important. Of course, when talking about an embarrassing moment, most people do not **play it up**.

#### Booger

**Boogers** are pieces of dried mucus found in your nose. Mucus is the sticky, liquid-like stuff that we all have in our noses. This can also be called *snot*. When you have a cold, you have more mucus than usual in your nose. If you have anything around or in your nose that is visible, it's usually embarrassing.

The word **boogers** can be seen as a gross word by some adults. Children use this word more often than adults, probably because they are more likely to be talking about this kind of stuff!

#### To pass gas/to fart

This is a hard one to explain without getting too gross! **To fart** is to expel intestinal gas from the body through the anus. **To fart** is the most common way to talk about this act, but a more polite way would be to pass gas.

This is generally considered a rude thing to do on purpose, but most people do not intend **to fart** around people they don't feel very comfortable with. Some people are almost always embarrassed when they **fart** and other people are almost never embarrassed! It is most often embarrassing with strangers for everyone. Some good friends would still also find this embarrassing.

There are tons of funny expressions meaning **to fart**. People might also say *to cut the cheese* or *to break wind*.

#### To burp

**To burp** is to expel gas from the body through the mouth. This is generally considered rude, especially with people you don't know very well or during a meal. This is generally less embarrassing than farting. To belch is **to burp** in a louder, deeper way.

#### A dead giveaway

**A dead giveaway** is something that's obvious without needing any more proof. Maura says that when there's a bad smell and someone looks red and embarrassed, it's **a dead giveaway** that that's the person who farted. It's obvious who farted because they look embarrassed.

When something is mysterious or unknown and then the mystery is solved easily, it can be called **a dead giveaway**. Another example of **a dead giveaway** could be when there's a group of children and someone has stolen some cookies. It's **a dead giveaway** which child took the cookies when you see that one child has cookie crumbs all around their mouth.

Here are another couple of examples with **dead giveaway**:

Irene: It was **a dead giveaway** who won the talent contest.

Karen: I know! Justino was the best!

Manfred: When you were watching the movie, did you know who the murderer was?

Andrew: Yeah. I thought it was **a dead giveaway**.

#### To turn red

When some people feel embarrassed, their faces **turn red**. This is a dead giveaway about how they're feeling. You could also say **to go red** or **to get red** and you don't need to say that it is their face, because that's already assumed.

Here's an example with **to turn red**:

Erica: We asked Shayne if he liked Cindy and his face **turned red**!

Luke: Oh! He must really like her then.

### Beet red

There are many colours in the world! Some of the many colours have particular names and others become more specialized by adding on words, like jet black or baby blue. **Beet red** means very red, and is often used when talking about people's faces turning red. A **beet** is a root vegetable that is red, pink, or sometimes even a bit purple.

So instead of hearing that someone turned red or went red, you might also hear that someone went **beet red** or turned **beet red**. For some reason, this phrase seems to be used most often when talking about the colour of someone's face when they're feeling embarrassed.

### To brush it off

**To brush it off** is not to take something seriously. So in the example of an embarrassing moment, a person may choose to **brush it off** and not care and not act embarrassed. This expression can also be used to talk about not taking other things seriously or even not to take a person seriously.

Here are examples of a few different situations when you can **brush it off**:

Joan: We were told that the project was so important, but Donna has just **brushed it off**.

Pete: It's too bad that she isn't taking it seriously.

Fred: I got in trouble from my teacher today, but I didn't do anything wrong. It's not fair!

Ben: Just **brush it off**.

Katherine: I want to talk to Greg tonight, but I'm afraid that he'll **brush me off**.

Olivia: If he does, then he's crazy.

### To get away with something

**To get away with something** means that you did something, usually something not good, but no one knew and you didn't get in trouble for it. If someone steals something and doesn't get caught, they **got away with it**. If you play a trick on someone and they don't know it was you, then you could also say that you **got away with it**.

Here's another example with **to get away with something**:

Bob: I can't believe you **got away with handing the work in late**.

Greta: Me neither. The prof just wasn't looking, so I just added my report to the pile.

To make fun of someone

When one person **makes fun of another**, it means that they laugh at something about the person. A person can be **made fun of** because of how they look or act. Sometimes, friends do this together and everyone laughs, but other times, **making fun of someone** causes the person to feel hurt. Children **make fun of each other** often, but adults typically do it much less.

A person might **make fun of someone** for the funny way they walk or for something they said. This can be done as a joke, but you never know when someone might take it seriously and feel hurt.

Here are a couple of examples with **to make fun of someone**:

Lena: It was so funny. We were all **making fun of our performance**.

Kyle: It's good that you can have a sense of humour about it.

Chris: We were **making fun of Scott** and then he got mad and walked away.

Beth: Scott is a sensitive guy sometimes.

Winter boots inside

Maura's embarrassing moment happened at a party that was inside in the winter. She says that the reason she fell was that the floor was wet because everyone was wearing their **winter boots inside**. People in Canada do not normally wear their boots in their houses. They were doing it that time because it was a party at University and often at this time, young people do crazy things, like having big parties where people **wear their boots inside**.

In Canada, we almost never **wear our winter boots inside**. Some people might wear them inside for a few steps just to get their wallet or keys or something else important. It would be considered quite rude **to wear your winter boots** into someone else's home.

Most people in Canada do not wear their outdoor shoes in homes in other seasons either. Some people do, especially in more rural areas where people go in and out of their homes often. This is an individual choice, but generally people do not wear their outside shoes inside.

## Quiz

1. Which is the correct spelling of the following word?

- a) embarasing
- b) embarrassing
- c) embarassing
- d) embarrassing

2. Shelly: Victor forgot some of the speech he was giving yesterday. He just laughed it off and continued with the speech.

What did Victor do?

- a) He went red.
- b) He walked off the stage.
- c) He laughed.
- d) He got upset.

3. How can we describe someone whose zipper on their pants is down?

- a) flying low
- b) flying down
- c) flying up
- d) flying

4. What is some of the rude behaviour we talk about in this episode?

- a) laughing it off and playing it down
- b) burping and farting
- c) singing and dancing
- d) flying low

5. Tyler: I knew there was a surprise party planned for me because everyone said they were busy on my birthday and no one would make plans with me. It was a \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) dead giveaway
  - b) getaway
  - c) dead doornail
  - d) take away
6. What colour of red do people turn when they get embarrassed?
- a) orange-red
  - b) beet red
  - c) blood red
  - d) light red
7. If a man gets away with a crime, what does it mean?
- a) He does not get caught.
  - b) He gets caught.
  - c) He goes away to jail.
  - d) He did not actually commit the crime.
8. Do Canadians generally wear their winter boots inside their homes?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

**Answers:** 1.d 2.c 3.a 4.b 5.a 6.b 7.a 8.b