

Close Up #5 - **Blind Date Part 2****Transcript**

Hello everyone, this is Maura with the **Close Up** podcast at Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. In this podcast we listen to a real conversation very closely. In this episode we are going to listen to a conversation between Jen and Rick. They already talked about Jen's blind date, now they're going to talk about Rick's night. Now, Rick didn't do anything special, so this conversation is a bit like talking about nothing. Which seems funny but people talk about nothing a lot. "Hey what did you do last night? Nothing much..." It's quite common. So let's listen in to see what Rick actually did.

Jen: So what about your night?

Rick: Well, I didn't do anything special. I didn't **get lucky** like you did.

Jen: No, no, nothing happened. But really, I thought you were **supposed to** go out last night.

Rick: No, actually that's tonight.

Jen: Oh, I guess I got it **mixed up**.

Rick: Yeah. Last night I just **stayed in**. I watched some TV and I **straightened up** my place. I was pretty much a **couch potato**.

Jen: Hey, did you watch *American Idol*? I missed it.

Rick: No I didn't. **Are you into** that?

Jen: Yeah, I **can't help it**. I **got into** it because of a friend of mine. She told me it was funny, so I **checked it out**, and now I can't stop watching.

Rick: Yeah, I try not to tune into those reality shows, they're quite **addictive**.

Jen: For sure!

So, here the conversation continues from our last episode. Jen then asks Rick about his night.

Jen: So what about your night?

Rick: Well, I didn't do anything special. I didn't **get lucky** like you did.

Rick makes a little joke here. When Rick says **get lucky** he is referring to Jen's date and implying that something exciting happened between Jen and her date. To **get lucky** means that something good happened.

Here's another kind of example, "I thought I was going to be late for the meeting but I **got lucky** and caught the bus on time".

Jen then replies to Rick's little joke:

Jen: No, no, nothing happened. But really, I thought you were **supposed to** go out last night.

I just want to quickly mention **supposed to**. **Supposed** is very often followed by **to**. We use this to talk about a plan. To say, "I am **supposed to** go to a concert," I am saying that it is my plan to go to a concert.

In this case, Jen used **to be supposed to** in the past. When this is used in the past, it often means that there were intentions or plans to do something, but that they probably didn't actually happen. To **suppose** actually means to believe to be true. It is not certain.

I could say, "I was **supposed to** go the party but I got sick". I wouldn't use **supposed to** if I had gone to the party. I would just say, "I went to the party". Do you get it? If you're having trouble, check out **Lipservice** at Culips.com.

So Rick didn't go out like Jen thought. He clarifies:

Rick: No, actually that's tonight.

Jen: Oh, I guess I got it **mixed up**.

To **mix** without the **up** is to combine things together. You **mix** the ingredients in a recipe together. When you **mix** things it is usually to integrate them into one.

Jen says she got **mixed up**. This means **confused**. It's exactly the same as **confused** but maybe a little bit less formal sounding.

I could say, “I tried to do my homework but I am all **mixed up**”. Or, “I had two recipes to follow but I **mixed** them **up**”.

So Jen was **mixed up** because she thought Rick went out last night but he didn't. And because Jen got Rick's plans **mixed up**, he goes on to tell her what he did the night before.

Rick: Yeah. Last night I just **stayed in**. I watched some TV and I **straightened up** my place. I was pretty much a **couch potato**.

The first thing he says there is: “Yeah. Last night I just **stayed in**”.

To **stay in** means to **stay inside**. It means that you did not go out. We often don't need to say where you **stayed in**, because it simply implies that you did not do any activities away from where you live. Actually, to **stay in** can be used if you go outside, just as long as you stay on the land where you live.

Rick then continues:

Rick: I watched some TV and I **straightened up** my place.

To **straighten up** is like to **clean up**. Rick didn't get out the cleaning products but he organized things and put them in their proper place. To **straighten up** is to put things into a better condition. Rick made his apartment look nicer.

And the last thing Rick says:

Rick: I was pretty much a **couch potato**.

I think this is a pretty well-known expression in English. A **couch potato**. A **couch potato** is someone who sits on their couch and watches a lot of television. We call this kind of person a **couch potato**, because a potato is a vegetable. It doesn't move or do anything. A **couch potato** also doesn't move or do anything, except for watching TV.

I think another possible reason for using **potato** could be the association with potato chips. When we think of someone not moving and watching a lot of television we also think of

someone who is unhealthy, someone who likes to eat junk food, like potato chips and chocolate.

Rick calls himself a **couch potato**, but only as a joke. He just means that he watched a lot of TV last night.

Jen then asks:

Jen:                Hey, did you watch *American Idol*? I missed it.

*American Idol* is a television show where people compete to be the winner of a singing performance contest. The people at home watching vote for the winner. There are many versions of this show in different countries. In Canada we have *Canadian Idol*. Maybe there is even one in whatever country you are listening from.

Rick responds:

Rick:                No, I didn't. **Are you into** that?

What **are you into**? This is simply asking about interests. It is a casual way to ask about what someone is interested in. In fact, the questions mean the same thing. **Are you into** movies? Are you interested in movies? They are the same. You can always answer like, "I **am into** movies, but I **am not into** horrors", or whatever your preference may be.

After Rick asks if Jen **is into**, or interested in, *American Idol* she responds:

Jen:                Yeah, I **can't help it**. I got into it because of a friend of mine. She told me it was funny so I **checked it out**. And now I can't stop watching.

This first thing Jen says is: "Yeah, I **can't help it**".

Here we have an expression with **help**. It doesn't have the traditional meaning of "**Ah! Help me!**" This expression is a fixed expression. I mean that it is always negative and always used with **can't** or **couldn't** in the past.

When I say, "I **can't help it**," it means that there was something that I had to do. I cannot do the opposite. It takes the blame or fault away from the person as if they were forced to do something, or had no choice but to do it.

I will give you a couple of examples:

Let's say that I am holding on to a rope and I am not **supposed to** (Remember **supposed to**?) I am not **supposed to** let go of the rope. But it is hard to hold or too heavy and so the rope slips from my hand. I might say, "I let go of the rope, but **I couldn't help it**". By this I mean that I tried to hold the rope but I let go and it wasn't my fault because I tried my best.

Another more fun example: "I am trying to quit eating junk food, but my friend offered me some of my favourite chocolate. I had some. **I couldn't help it**." In this case, it really was my own fault for eating the chocolate, but I use it to say that the desire for chocolate was bigger than me! I couldn't control it.

Jen uses the expression in the same way. She **can't help** but watch *American Idol*. The desire is too strong; it is not her fault.

She also says:

Jen: I **got into** it because of a friend of mine.

I just wanted to quickly point out, "**I got into**" because it is related to something we just talked about in this episode. We had the question "**Are you into** that?" And here it is to **get into** something. To **get into** is to become interested in. So Jen is saying she became interested in *American Idol* because of a friend.

Jen then talks about how she started watching the show:

Jen: She told me it was funny so I **checked it out**. And now I can't stop watching.

To **check something out** is a very casual way to say I looked at something for a short time to see if I liked it. So, Jen watched the show to see if she would like it.

People also often **check out** music. People **check out** restaurants or stores. When you go out at night with friends, people are **checking** each other **out**.

After Jen **checked out** *American Idol*, she kept watching it because she enjoyed it. Now she cannot stop watching the show because she liked it so much.

Rick then gives his opinion of reality shows:

Rick: Yeah, I try not to **tune into** those reality shows. They're quite **addictive**.

To **tune into** is to **listen to**, or in this case to **watch**, a show. It could be a radio show or a television show or even an ESL podcast. Literally, to **tune into** is to turn the dial to the show you want to watch and make sure that it is coming in clearly.

Rick also says:

Rick: They're quite **addictive**.

**Addictive**. This is actually a more serious term but we use it to mean we really love something. An addiction is actually a physical or even emotional dependency on something.

The most popular addictions are addictions to alcohol or drugs. So an addiction to drugs means that you must take drugs often. **Addiction** is the noun and **addictive** is the adjective.

People often say chocolate is **addictive**. This is used in the more casual way. It is not a serious addiction. But by saying, "chocolate is **addictive**," you are saying that it is something you love and you want to have all the time.

Rick thinks reality shows are **addictive**. He means there is something in reality shows that gets your interest and so it is hard to stop watching them.

So let's listen to that conversation one more time.

Jen: So what about your night?

Rick: Well, I didn't do anything special. I didn't **get lucky** like you did.

Jen: No, no, nothing happened. But really, I thought you were **supposed to** go out last night.

Rick: No, actually that's tonight.

Jen: Oh, I guess I got it **mixed up**.

- Rick: Yeah. Last night I just **stayed in**. I watched some TV and I **straightened up** my place. I was pretty much a **couch potato**.
- Jen: Hey, did you watch *American Idol*? I missed it.
- Rick: No I didn't. **Are you into** that?
- Jen: Yeah, I **can't help it**. I **got into** it because of a friend of mine. She told me it was funny, so I **checked it out**, and now I can't stop watching.
- Rick: Yeah, I try not to tune into those reality shows, they're quite **addictive**.
- Jen: For sure!

So Jen got it **mixed up (for sure)**, but Rick does have special plans. What are those special plans? **Check out** a future episode to find out.

So that's the end of this conversation. Don't forget to visit our website (Culips.com) for more explanations and transcripts and quizzes at **Lipservice**. If you have any questions you can always email us (questions@culips.com). I hope you learned something new today. This is Maura at Culips and I will talk to you again soon. Bye!

## Detailed Explanation

### Lucky

This seems to be a term that most ESL students know. We describe someone as **lucky** when good things happen to them, usually unexpectedly.

For example: “I got the award but it wasn’t **luck**. It was hard work.”

In this case we would not say you were **lucky** because you worked hard to get something. You are **lucky** if you win the lottery or if you receive something unexpected without any effort.

### Get lucky

Like I said in the episode, **get lucky** implies something exciting. In this case, it implies something sexual happened between Jen and her date.

### Suppose

To **suppose** can be used like to **think** or to **believe**.

For example:

I **suppose** I will be able to see you this weekend.  
(I **think** I will be able to see you this weekend.)

I **suppose** that is the best idea.  
(I **believe** that is the best idea.)

In this episode we used **suppose** like, “I am **supposed to** go to the doctor’s after school but I am feeling better now”.

### Mix up

Jen was **mixed up** because she thought that Rick was **supposed to** go out the night before, but he didn’t. To **mix up** or to **be mixed up** in this case means to **be confused**.

We can also use **mix up** in another way. We can use **mix up** just like **mix**, to mean to **combine** two things.



For example:

**Mix up** those ingredients!

**Mix** those ingredients!

We also use **mix up** to mean to **change things**. To **mix** something **up** can mean to change something or make it different and more varied.

Example:

I hate this music. Let's **mix it up** a bit.

### Stay

This word can be used in a variety of ways, but it always generally means to **stop** or to **keep** in a position for some amount of time.

It is also the command we use for dogs when we want them to **stay** in one place. We say, "Stay!"

### Straighten up

Rick talked about **straightening up** his apartment.

First, let's look at **straight**. When something is **straight**, it has no curve or angle. It is proper and perfect, without fault.

Here is an example of a **straight** line:



This, of course, is the more literal term.

We also use it to give directions.

Example:

Don't turn left or right. Go **straight**.

Here are some other uses of **straight** with examples:

I can't get it **straight**!  
(I can't **understand** it!)

We are going to be late, we need to go **straight** there!  
(We are going to be late, we need to go **directly** there.)

He is **straight**.  
(He is **heterosexual**.)  
She drank **straight** vodka last night.  
(She drank **pure** vodka last night.)

Of course there are more, but I wanted to give you a little list of the most common examples.

Now, let's look at **straighten**. Here we have **straight** with an **-en** on the end. This is a verb which means to **become straight** or to **make straight**. This is possible with a lot of words. Put a **-en** on the end and it means to become more of whatever it is.

Here are some other examples with **-en**:

dark : **darken** (to become dark)

light: **lighten** (to become light)

short: **shorten** (to make short)

length: **lengthen** (to make long)

And finally to **straighten up** means to **make clean** or **proper**. Rick used it to talk about his place. You can also use it to talk about a person's appearance.

Example:

He just went into the bathroom to **straighten himself up**.

I want to stress again that it is to **clean**, but only a little bit. If he were taking a shower, we would probably not use **straighten up**.

#### Couch potato and other vegetables

The definition in this episode is the only one for **couch potato**. One of the theories about how the expression started was that **potatoes** don't move. They sit and do nothing.

Another similar expression is **vegetable**, or rather, **a vegetable**. To call someone **a vegetable** means that they cannot move and are not conscious. We talk about people

who are in the hospital in this state as **vegetables**. This comes from the original term **vegetative**. We can also say, in a more proper way, that someone is in a **vegetative** state. Be careful not to use this expression in sensitive situations, for example, if someone is sick and in the hospital it would be rude to call them a **vegetable**.

In a more casual way, we can turn this into a verb **to veg**. There is no E on the end, so it looks like it should have a hard-sounding G, but it comes from the word **vegetable** and so it keeps the soft G sound, like **vege**. I have heard this used to talk about watching TV.

Examples:

She is **vegging** in front of the TV in the other room.

Last night I **vegged out** in front of the TV.

#### Are you into that?

I think everything you need to know about this expression is in the episode. It is a really common expression to use.

But for those of you who come from cultures quite different from English, North American or western cultures then there is an additional note for you. When we meet new people, we are usually not so direct as to ask someone, “What **are you into?**” It is not natural to be very direct with a new person in that way.

#### I can't help it

Like I said in the episode, the expression **can't help** means that you are unable to stop yourself from doing something. In this episode Jen said, “**can't help it**”. If we want to explain it we need to use a gerund, which is the ING word form. A gerund is a noun acting as a verb. (See *Lipservice Close Up #1* for a more detailed explanation).

Here are some examples:

From the episode: “**I can't help** watching *American Idol*.”

She **can't help** eating chocolate every time it is offered.

This expression can also be used with the word **but**. The meaning doesn't change.

Here are a couple examples with **but**:

I **can't help but** look at her.

Or Jen could have said: “I **can’t help but** watch *American Idol*”.

### Check it out

To **check**, without **out**, means to **verify** or to **see if something is correct**.

To **check something out** is to look at something and see if you like it. It can be used in a spontaneous moment also. For example: “Hey, **check out** that plane!”

There are other meanings for **check out**. I worked at a grocery store as a teenager and the place where you pay for the items can be called the **checkout**.

You can also **check out** of a hotel. When you leave and give back your key, it is called **checking out**.

### Addictive

The best examples of **addictive** things that I mentioned in the episode were drugs and alcohol. There are other forms of the word too, like **addiction**, **addict**, or **to be addicted**. These are all different ways to talk about the same thing.

**Quiz** (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)**1. Which one of the following can be substituted for the underlined part of what Charlie said?**

Charlie: I had a date last night with Naomi!

Indira: Really! How did it go?

Charlie: Not so bad, but all we did is go to dinner and take a walk.

- a) I didn't straighten up
- b) I didn't mix up
- c) I didn't get lucky
- d) couch potato

**2. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Indira: My place is incredibly messy. My parents are coming to visit me next week too.

Franz: Indira, you really should \_\_\_\_\_ your place before your parents get here.

- a) mix up
- b) straighten up
- c) check out
- d) get into

**3. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Yohan: Do you like baseball?

Joan: No, not really. I \_\_\_\_\_ that.

- a) get into
- b) can't help it
- c) am not into
- d) am supposed to

**4. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Yohan: Did you watch the last football match?  
Joan: Of course! I \_\_\_\_\_ earlier on.

- a) stayed in
- b) mixed up
- c) checked it out
- d) tuned up

**5. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Joan: My girlfriend is really lazy. She does nothing all day!  
Sally: My boyfriend is the same. He's a real \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) stranger
- b) tune in
- c) supposed to
- d) couch potato

**6. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Martin: Have you tried the new candies that the company started selling?  
Claude: Yeah, I can't stop eating them. They are really \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) couch potato
- b) addictive
- c) can't help myself
- d) couldn't help it

**7. Which expression can be used to fill in the blank?**

Avril: Did you tell Vlad about the new job?  
Thomas: Yeah, I did.  
Avril: I told you not to tell him!  
Thomas: I am sorry, \_\_\_\_\_. He pressured me until I told him.

- a) I am supposed to
- b) I couldn't help it
- c) I couldn't supposed to
- d) addicted

**Answers:**

- 1.c To **get lucky** usually means that people get a little more intimate (that is, they get a little closer to each other).
- 2.b To **straighten up** a place means to **clean up** a place.
- 3.c Remember, to **be into** something means that you are interested in it or you like it.
- 4.c To **check something out** generally means to watch it.
- 5.d A **couch potato** is a lazy person.
- 6.b If something is **addictive**, it is very hard for you to resist. In this example the speaker cannot resist or stop himself from eating the candies.
- 7.b **Couldn't help it** suggests that the person speaking didn't have any other choice.