

Close Up #7 – Favour

Transcript

Hello everyone, this is Maura with the Close Up podcast at Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Here we listen to real conversations and look at them closely. If you want to see the transcripts, go to our website and click on Lipservice. You'll also find more explanations and quizzes.

In this episode we're going to listen to a conversation where a friend asks another friend to help him out. This happened to me the other day. One of my friends was moving, so she asked me for a **favour**. She asked me to help her move. Of course I didn't mind doing a **favour** for her and I helped her out last weekend.

So let's listen to Rick ask Chris for a **favour**.

Chris: Hey, what's up?

Rick: How's it going?

Chris: Ah, pretty good, pretty good, you?

Rick: Oh, not bad, but I'm calling to ask you for a **favour**.

Chris: OK.

Rick: I don't want you **to go out of your way**, but would you mind helping me pick up some groceries?

Chris: Sure, **but can I ask why?**

Rick: Yeah, it's just that, well, I broke my leg yesterday.

Chris: **What?** What happened?

Rick: Well, actually, I was **on my way** to get some groceries myself. I was in a bit of a rush and **slipped** on some ice right next to my car.

Chris: That must have been **some** fall!

- Rick: Yeah, it really hurt and I **made** a bit of a **scene**. It **drew such attention** that **a few** people came over to see if I was all right.
- Chris: Well, that's good. You obviously needed the help.
- Rick: True. No one wanted to move me because they **didn't know** how badly I **had hurt** myself. Someone called 9-1-1 and then waited with me until the ambulance **showed up**.
- Chris: Well **that sucks**. I'm sorry to hear that. And yes, I can help you pick up some groceries. In fact, why don't you just give me your grocery list and I'll go out after work and **grab** what you need.
- Rick: That would be really great. I really need to **take it easy**.
- Chris: No problem. Email me your grocery list and I will **be by** with them, say, after 7 tonight. Is that OK?
- Rick: OK, yeah. Thanks again. I really appreciate it.
- Chris: No problem.

Our conversation starts off with one person asking another person to do something for him. And that is the reason for such polite expressions. When we want to be polite we are less direct, which often involves more words.

He asks:

- Rick: But I'm calling to ask you for a **favour**. I don't want you **to go out of your way**, but would you mind helping me pick up some groceries?

"**To go out of your way**" is to do something that requires extra effort, usually done for another person. Literally, if your way home is from north to south and someone wants you to go west, then west is **out of your way**. In reality, we use this expression when someone does something special for us that they do not usually do.

Some examples are:

Can you give me a ride home, if it's not **out of your way**? OR

I really **went out of my way** for him, and he didn't even thank me. OR

Thank you for this lovely birthday cake. I hope you didn't **go out of your way**.

In those three examples, we use the negative before “**out of your way**.” To be polite, we say we *don't* want a friend **to go out of their way** to do something extra to help us. This is how we are polite.

Chris replies:

Chris: Sure, **but can I ask why?**

Again, he is being polite. Instead of asking directly “**Why?**” he asks “**but can I ask why?**” It is more polite because it could be a personal question.

Rick responds:

Rick: Yeah, it's just that, well, I broke my leg yesterday.

Chris: **What?** What happened?

Chris is surprised and uses the word “**what**” to show that. We use “**What?**” to ask people to repeat information. “**What?**” is used in disbelief. It is like he didn't understand what Rick said because he found it so surprising.

Here's an exciting and surprising example:

Guess what? I won a trip to Hawaii!

What!? How did you win it?

Then Rick says:

Rick: Well, actually, I was **on my way** to get some groceries myself. I was in a bit of a rush and **slipped** on some ice right next to my car.

If a person is “**on their way**” somewhere, it means that they are in progress of travelling to a specific place. In this conversation, Rick was going to the grocery store when he broke his leg.

Rick also says that he **slipped** on some ice. “**To slip**” is when a person loses their balance and slides, usually because of a smooth surface. It’s very easy to **slip** on ice or a wet floor. When you lose your balance and **slip**, sometimes you can fall, just like Rick did.

Chris: That must have been **some** fall!

Rick: Yeah, it really hurt and I **made** a bit of a **scene**. **It drew such attention** that **a few** people came over to see if I was all right.

“**To make a scene**” or “**to draw attention** (to something)” is when you do something that causes everyone around to look at you. Usually, the thing you did was noisy or embarrassing and you don’t want people to look.

People can **make a scene** when they argue loudly in public or have some kind of accident, like Rick.

Then Chris responds:

Chris: Well, that’s good. You obviously needed the help.

Rick: True. No one wanted to move me because they **didn’t know** how badly I **had hurt** myself. Someone called 9-1-1 and then waited with me until the ambulance **showed up**.

When Rick tells the story of what happened he mostly uses the simple past tense, “**didn’t know**,” but we can see the past perfect in “**had hurt**.” We use the past perfect when there are two actions that happen in the past. The action furthest in the past, or that happens first, takes the past perfect. I’ll explain this a little more in Lipservice, if you like grammar.

Rick also said:

Rick: Someone called 9-1-1 and then waited with me until the ambulance **showed up**.

“**To show up**” is a very common and casual way to say “to arrive.” Rick could have said, “Someone called 9-1-1 and then waited with me until the ambulance arrived.”

Then Chris comments on Rick’s story:

Chris: Well **that sucks**. I’m sorry to hear that. And yes, I can help you pick up some groceries. In fact, why don’t you just give me your grocery list and I’ll go out after work and **grab** what you need.

Saying that something **sucks** is a very informal and an impolite way of saying that something is “unfortunate” or “too bad.” Only use this expression with good friends. It is also mostly used by younger people. In this case, Chris is expressing sympathy for Rick’s broken leg.

Chris also says:

Chris: In fact, why don’t you just give me your grocery list and I will go out after work and **grab** what you need.

“**To grab** something” is a casual way of saying “to get” something or to “pick it up.” It literally means to use your hand to get something fast. We use it in a slang way which means “to get something casually and quickly.”

We can **grab** some lunch at noon, or we can **grab** our coats before we go outside.

Chris is going to the grocery store quickly to get the food that Rick needs.

Rick then thanks Chris:

Rick: That would be really great. I really need to **take it easy**.

After breaking his leg, Rick needs to stay home and not move too much. “**To take it easy**” means to rest and relax. And I have to admit it’s pretty easy to relax!

Chris confirms the plans:

Chris: No problem. Email me your grocery list and I will **be by** with them, say, after 7 tonight. Is that OK?

Chris tells Rick that he will bring the groceries to his house. **“To be by,”** also “to drop by” or “to pass by,” means to go to a place for a short visit. Chris will go to Rick’s for a short time to deliver the groceries.

Rick: OK, yeah. Thanks again. I really appreciate it.

Chris: No problem.

No problem. That conversation’s done. Now let’s listen to it one more time.

(Conversation)

Don’t forget to visit our website, Culips.com, for any further explanations, or transcripts, or quizzes in Lipservice. If you have any questions you can always email us at questions@culips.com. We would love to hear from you!

I hope you learned something today. This is Maura at Culips and I’ll talk to you again soon.

Detailed Explanation

To go out of your way

“**To go out of your way**” for someone is to make an extra effort for them, or to do something for them that you would not normally do.

I don't want you to go out of your way

We used this as a fixed expression, “**I don't want you to go out of your way,**” when we ask someone for a **favour**. We could also say, “**If it's not too much trouble...**” or “**I don't want to bother you, but...**”

Here are some examples with those expressions:

If it's not too much trouble would you mind picking me up tonight?

I don't want to bother you, but I could really use your help right now.

To **bother** or to **trouble** someone or to make someone **go out of their way** is not something we want to do when we ask someone for a **favour**. We use these expressions before we ask for the **favour**.

Polite ways for asking before you actually ask

We often say “**Can you do me a favour?**” before the person knows what the **favour** is. We also do this to be polite.

If you have to ask someone an important or personal question, you can also say, “**Can I ask you a question?**” before you ask the actual question. This is a way to get someone's full attention before you ask.

In this episode Chris also asked “**But can I ask why?**” He indirectly asks the question, and being indirect is always polite.

On my way

“To be **on your way**” means that you are in transit, you are travelling somewhere. If you are **on your way** you are between point A and point B.

We also say we are **on our way** to express that we are coming quickly.

Here is an example. I am at home one night and my friend calls me because she feels sick and needs someone to bring her some medicine. I can tell her, “**I'm on my way.**” I am still

at home when I say this, but it means that I am leaving right away and that I will be there soon.

In the way

We talked about going “**out of your way**” and to be “**on your way**,” so I wanted to mention another expression that is close, “**in the way**.”

Examples:

I can't park my car in the driveway because your truck is **in the way**.
(The truck is in the driveway preventing me from entering.)

I can't see the sky because the tall building is **in the way**.
(The tall building is blocking the view of the sky.)

Slip

The literal meaning of the verb “**to slip**” is to slide your feet and lose your balance. You can do this when you walk on a **slippery** surface. When you **slip** there is nothing to stop you from sliding. This can cause you to lose your balance and fall. A **slippery** surface is usually hard and smooth, or wet. In this episode Rick **slipped** on ice.

We can also use “**slip**” to talk about speech. For example, “I didn't mean to tell the secret. It just **slipped** out.” This means that I said it accidentally.

There are a lot more ways to use “**slip**” with slightly different meanings.

The examples above are negative. I will give you one more to show you how we can also use “**slip**” in a positive way.

Let's look at a more positive example.

I **slipped** the file into my bag and everything fit.

In that example “**slipped**” was good because you wanted the file to go into your bag easily.

Some fall

This is not the most common way that we use the word “**some**” in English. Here we use “**some**” to mean that a thing is especially impressive.

When Chris says it was **some** fall, he means that it was a *big* fall.

I saw a great concert last night. Meaning the same thing, I could say, "That was **some** show last night."

To make a scene

We can say "**to make a scene**" or "**to cause a scene**." This means that you do something in public which causes people to look and notice you. This could be something as simple as talking loudly in public or an accident, like when Rick fell.

People use this expression when they are embarrassed about the **scene** they are **causing**. For example, imagine a couple arguing in a mall. The woman is yelling at the man and the man says "Don't **make a scene**." He wants her to speak quietly so that people do not watch them.

To draw attention

This is very similar to the expression "**to make a scene**." However, when you **make a scene**, you **draw attention** to yourself in a negative way. The verb "**to draw**" in this expression means "**to attract**." It is not the same as "to draw a picture."

When you **draw attention** to something, you want people to pay attention to it.

Here is something a businessperson might say during a presentation:

I would like to **draw your attention** to the new budget.

This is formal language for getting everyone's attention and moving the focus to something new and important.

I would like to **draw your attention** to the next point in this detailed explanation.

Few

This is a great word to use when you are estimating or when you don't know exactly how many people or things there are.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| A couple | Generally 2 or 3. |
| A few | At least 3, but maybe more. |
| Several | More than a few, but it is not clear how many. I like to think that several is closer to 7. |

Past perfect

And now we have a bit of grammar. “**Had hurt**” is the past perfect verb tense. We don’t use this one that often, but all verb tenses are good to know.

“**Had**” + Past Participle = Past Perfect Tense

We use the past perfect when we have two actions that happened in the past, and one action happened before the other. The action that happened first is in the past perfect tense.

So when Rick says, “They **didn’t know** how badly I **had hurt** myself,” he hurt himself first and then they didn’t know. We know that he hurt himself first because he used the past perfect.

Another example:

I **loved** the restaurant I went to last night. I **had** never **been** there before.

We use the past perfect to say the first action is that I **had** never **been** to that restaurant and then I went and loved it.

We don’t use this verb tense very often because we can show which action happened first by saying “**before**” or “**after**.”

I went to the party **before** I ate dinner.
(I went to the party and then ate dinner)

She saw the movie **after** she went for a walk.
(She went for a walk and then saw the movie)

Show up

“**To show up**” is “to arrive” or “to get (to) (a place).”

They **showed up** late.
(They arrived late.)
(They got here late.)

“**To show up**” also means “to appear” or “to show” in a certain way.

This blue **shows up** well against this black background.

My neighbour’s cat is always outside. Some mornings he **shows up** at my door.

And you can also **show up** a person. When you **show up** someone, you do something better than them.

I am good at tennis, but my brother always **shows me up**.

That sucks!

Like I said in this episode, the expression “**That sucks**” is slang, and it’s not polite. It means that something is not good. You can say it simply as “**That sucks**,” or even as part of a sentence, “**It sucks when...**”

Here are a few examples:

Speaker 1: It’s raining so we can’t go to the beach.

Speaker 2: **That sucks!**

It sucks when people argue all the time.

Being sick **sucks**.

The literal definition of “to **suck**” is to draw in air and create a vacuum effect.

A baby who drinks from a bottle actually **sucks** from the bottle. When you have a milkshake, you drink from a straw and you **suck** from the straw. A vacuum cleaner **sucks** up the dirt from the carpet.

Another way we use “**suck**” as slang is by calling someone **a suck**. **A suck** is a person who is acting immature and whining and complaining a lot. It is not a compliment and is never a nice thing to say to someone. I will give you a mean example.



Speaker 1: I hate this cold weather.

Speaker 2: Stop being **a suck**!

There are also phrasal verbs with “**suck**.” I can’t explain them all here, but check them out:

- To suck up
- To suck in
- To suck at

Grab

Like I said in this episode, “to **grab**” is to suddenly and quickly take something. You can **grab** a person or a thing.

Examples:

He **grabbed** my hand.

I am going to **grab** my bag.

“**Up for grabs**” is a slang term that means that something is available to take. The host of the American reality TV show *Survivor* uses this expression every episode. A prize is taken back from the people in the show and then the host says that it is “**up for grabs.**” This means that now the people on the show will compete to have it again.

Another term I used with “**grab**” when I was a kid was “**grab bag.**” It is a tradition in North America for children to have parties with friends for their birthdays. At the end of the party the friends take home a little bag with candies or small toys. This is called a **grab bag** or a treat bag.

Take it easy

This means “to relax,” and we can use it in a sentence like, “Let’s **take it easy** tonight.”

It is also used when you are saying goodbye to someone. You can tell the person to “**Take it easy.**” In this case, you are telling the person to stay relaxed, calm and peaceful.

Here is an example where we use it just like “**bye.**”

Speaker 1: OK, I will see you later then.

Speaker 2: Yeah, see you soon.

Speaker 1: **Take it easy.**

Speaker 2: Bye.

Be by

In this episode, Chris said, “I will **be by** with them” which means that Chris will go to Rick’s place for a short time to give him the groceries. We can also say: “to drop by,” “to stop by,” “to go by” and “to pass by.”

I will **be by** your place around 3 pm.

I will **stop by** your place around 3 pm.

I will **pass by** your place around 3 pm.

I will **go by** your place around 3 pm.

We can also use “**to be by**” to talk about location, and in this case “**by**” means “close to” or “nearby.”

She will wait for us at the concert. She will **be by** the door. (She will be close to the door.)

When we record our episodes we **are all by** the microphone!
(The microphone is nearby when we are recording.)

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

1. Which expression is polite?

- a) Please go out of your way.
- b) No way.
- c) I don't want you to go out of your way.
- d) I want you to go out of your way.

2. Jon left his apartment and is going to a concert. Which is true about Jon?

- a) Jon is in his way.
- b) Jon is on his way.
- c) Jon slipped.
- d) Jon is making a scene.

3. Sam and Steve are arguing and yelling loudly on a busy downtown street. They are _____.

- a) drawing attention to themselves
- b) making a scene
- c) having fun
- d) a and b

4. Which is another meaning for "to show up"?

- a) to party
- b) to put on a show
- c) to wait
- d) to arrive

**5. Sue: Oh no, it's raining! I guess we can't go to the beach now.
Dorothy: _____!**

- a) Grab that
- b) That sucks
- c) That's easy
- d) Let's go

6. What does the expression “to take it easy” mean?

- a) to party
- b) to relax
- c) to be difficult
- d) to be fun

7. What does this mean? “I will be by your place around noon tomorrow.”

- a) I will pass your place tomorrow around noon.
- b) I will come to eat lunch tomorrow around noon.
- c) I will come to your place tomorrow around noon.
- d) I will try to come to your place tomorrow.

Answers: 1.e 2.b 3.d 4.d 5.b 7.c

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