

## Catch Word #66 – Look on the bright side

### Transcript

Robin: Hello everyone this is Robin.

Maura: And Maura.

Robin: And we're here at Culips.com...

Maura: ...with the Catch Word podcast, where we look at expressions or idioms and we give you examples, we give you related expressions.

Robin: If you want more information, go to our website, where you can find the Lipservice, which includes the transcripts and detailed explanations.

Maura: Yeah, and while you're there you can also check out our blog, where we all update and tell you, kind of, what's going on with us or something new that's happening in the English-speaking world.

Robin: So Maura, what are we going to talk about today?

Maura: Well, we're going to talk about looking for the good things in a bad or unfortunate situation.

Robin: OK. Looking for good things in a bad situation.

Maura: OK, so Robin, what is the expression today?

Robin: The expression today is ***to look on the bright side***.

Maura: Right. ***To look on the bright side***.

Robin: Yup. ***To look on the bright side***, and what this expression means is when you have a bad situation, stay positive, stay happy.

Maura: Right. So when something negative happens, you try to find something positive in it.

Robin: Absolutely.

Maura: Right. So, it's a nice, happy, friendly expression.

Robin: Can you give us an example of when we can use this expression, Maura?

- Maura: Well, you would definitely use it if you had a friend that was in a bad situation, something negative had happened to them recently. Then you might try to make them feel better by telling them **to look on the bright side**.
- Robin: So for example, if I failed a test, you might say, "Well, **look on the bright side**. Now you have a chance to study some more with that cute study partner that you had."
- Maura: Exactly, yeah. So you say this to someone when they're in a bad situation and you're trying to give them hope and to make them feel better. So to tell someone **to look on the bright side** is really a comforting thing to say to someone when something bad happens.
- Robin: OK, let's do a dialogue.
- Maura: I don't know what to do.
- Robin: **What's the matter?**
- Maura: Well, I've been looking for a job for months. Every day I send my resume, but I just can't get a job. I think I'm going to be unemployed all summer.
- Robin: Hey, hey, hey, hey. **Look on the bright side. At least** while we're in the office, working away, you can sit outside and enjoy that beautiful weather.
- Maura: Yeah, you're right. The weather has been nice lately.
- Robin: So yeah, **look on the bright side. At least** you can do that.
- Maura: OK, great. So that was a good example of someone who is in a bad situation, right?
- Robin: Absolutely. And their friend tried to **cheer** them **up**, tried to make them happy by telling them what they could do with this bad situation to make it better.
- Maura: Right. They found something positive in the bad situation.
- Robin: Absolutely. We have other expressions that are related, that are similar.
- Maura: Yeah, another similar expression is **every cloud has a silver lining**.
- Robin: **Every cloud has a silver lining**.
- Maura: Yeah, this expression is also a proverb, which is a really old expression.

- Robin: So Maura, I know what a **cloud** is, but what do you mean by **silver lining**?
- Maura: Well, **the silver lining** is the sun behind the cloud. And even though the cloud is dark and grey, you can still see a little bit of sun, right around the edge of the cloud, and it's really beautiful and you know that the sun is there.
- Robin: OK, so it's that little outline, that little bright outline around the **cloud**.
- Maura: Exactly. So the **cloud** is the negative thing that happened, but you know that something positive is there: the sunshine behind the **cloud**. **Every cloud has a silver lining** means that in every difficult situation, which is like the dark **cloud**, there is a silver lining, which is something positive or something good.
- Robin: OK, shall we do a dialogue? I can't believe I have to move to a new city for this job. This really ... this really sucks!
- Maura: Well, I know it wasn't your first choice, but **try to see the silver lining**. You may meet some exciting new people and you get to discover a new city, so that's pretty fun.
- Robin: I think you're right. Yeah, I should probably **look on the bright side**. And, you know, there's going to be some good things about this move.
- Maura: You're right.
- Robin: Thanks a lot for the help, Maura.
- Maura: So we can say **every cloud has a silver lining** or we can also say **to see the silver lining**.
- Robin: **To see the silver lining**.
- Maura: Right. So you can say to your friend, something like, *you should **try to see the silver lining***, you can give them advice like that.
- Robin: OK, so it's used very much like **to look on the bright side, to see the silver lining**.
- Maura: Right. You would say it to a friend when they find themselves in a bad situation.
- Robin: OK.

- Maura: And we have one more expression that is similar to ***to look on the bright side*** and ***to see the silver lining***.
- Robin: And the expression is ***when life gives you lemons, make lemonade***.
- Maura: Yeah, this one is also a proverb. So you can say it just like this: ***when life gives you lemons, make lemonade***. So what does this expression mean?
- Robin: This expression means the same thing as the other two expressions. It means to be positive in a negative situation. The only way it's a little bit different, however, is it suggests that when you get something that's bad, you try to actively do something to make it better.
- Maura: Right, so ***life gives you lemons***, and the lemons are the bad things, because, you know, they're **sour** and people generally don't like to eat lemons. But you make something great with it, like **lemonade**, which many people like to drink when it's hot outside.
- Robin: So, for example, if your favourite plate breaks, it falls on the ground and shatters into pieces, you might take that and do some really creative art with it. So you've taken your lemon and you've made lemonade. You've taken that bad experience and you've made something good with it.
- Maura: Right, good. Another example might be if your trip is cancelled. Maybe you're planning a trip to Florida, but you hear that there's going to be a hurricane. So you're a little bit sad, but then you find a cheap ticket to go to Las Vegas, so you take the opportunity to travel to another fun destination.
- Robin: Absolutely, you take that bad situation and you turn it into something good.
- Maura: So, shall we do a dialogue?
- Robin: Why not?
- Maura: Oh man, I just broke my leg. I don't know what I'm gonna do.
- Robin: Are you going to be OK?
- Maura: Yeah, yeah, it's fine. But I'm just gonna be so bored sitting at home all the time.
- Robin: But Maura, this is great! I mean, you've been looking for time to work on that new novel, so now here's your opportunity, here's your chance.

- Maura: Hmm, maybe you're right.
- Robin: Think about it. You can sit down and write all day, no distractions.
- Maura: Yeah, and there'll be nothing else to do. All right, yeah! I'm gonna get to work on that novel.
- Robin: Remember: **when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.**
- Maura: You're right; I should try to **look on the bright side.**
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Maura: OK, great. So let's go over these optimistic, happy expressions one more time.
- Robin: The first one was ***to look on the bright side.***
- Maura: Yeah, and the second expression was ***every cloud has a silver lining*** or ***to see the silver lining.***
- Robin: And the last one: ***when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.***
- Maura: So remember, if someone you know is going through a bad situation, you can try help them feel a little bit better by using these expressions. OK, so remember, you can go to our website, Culips.com, become a member and then you can check out the transcripts for this episode, more explanations, and even a quiz.
- Robin: We hope you enjoyed it. For now this is Robin signing off.
- Maura: And Maura.
- Robin: And we'll see you next time.
- Maura: Bye!

## Detailed Explanation

To look on the bright side

**Bright** means full of light, and is also connected to happiness and other good things. For example, we can say that the future looks **bright**. So **to look on the bright side of a situation** is to look at the positive aspects of that situation. There's also a longer version: **to look on the bright side of life**, but this is not used as often.

We can say **to look on the bright side** or we can be specific and say **to look on the bright side of something**. Here are a couple more examples with this expression to compare the two variations:

Ken: I can't believe I lost my job today.

Travis: Yeah, that's too bad. But try to **look on the bright side**.

Ken: I know, you're right. Now I can go back to school like I've been talking about doing.

OR

Ken: I can't believe I lost my job today.

Travis: **Look on the bright side of losing your job**. You've been talking about going back to school and now you can finally do it.

What's the matter?

**What's the matter?** is a question that one person asks another when they do not seem happy or healthy, or as they normally are. It's just like asking someone, "What's wrong?" When someone asks this kind of question, they assume that the person does not feel good. So be careful using it because it can be rude or awkward if the person *is* feeling good.

In the examples in this episode, Robin asks Maura, "**What's the matter?**" He was sure that something was not right with Maura, because she said, "I don't know what to do" and her voice sounded sad.

Here are a few more examples with asking **what's the matter?**

Lennie: Oh, hi Jane.

Jane: Hey, **what's the matter?**

Lennie: I'm just not feeling well today. I think I'm getting a cold.

(Remember that something about Lennie made Jane think that he was not feeling well.)

Paula: **What's the matter**, Suzanne?

Suzanne: I'm feeling a bit sad because a good friend of mine is moving away.

Paula: Oh, that's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that.

Christopher: **What's the matter?**

Aidan: Nothing. Why?

Chrsopher: Oh, sorry. I just thought you looked sad.

Adian: No, I'm fine.

(This last example shows that when you ask someone **what's the matter** and nothing is wrong, it can be awkward.)

### At least

**At least** is used to express something good when other aspects are not good. For example, Jon took a day off of work on Monday to see some friends, but the friends cancelled the plans on Monday morning. We could say, "**At least** the weather is nice." This is not a good situation for Jon, but we are trying to find something positive.

In this episode, Robin tries to get Maura to **look on the bright side** by saying "**at least** the weather is nice." In the example, Maura does not have job, but **at least** she can enjoy the nice weather. Not having a job is a bad situation, but a positive thing is that you can spend time enjoying the nice weather outside.

Here are a couple more dialogue examples with **at least**:

Juan: I can't believe my girlfriend left me.

Mike: **At least** you have a great family and friends to help you out.

Pascal: The airline I was using for my flight to Hawaii just went bankrupt! My trip is cancelled.

Nathan: Oh no. Well, **at least** you have travel insurance.

Pascal: Yeah, **at least** I won't lose my money.

**At least** is sometimes misspelled by native English speakers as one word: atleast.

### Cheer up

**To cheer up** is to become happy or to make someone else happy. Using one of the expressions from this episode is often an attempt to **cheer** someone **up**. Here are a couple of examples with **cheer up**:

Danny: Bob **cheered up** when he heard that we're all having lunch together on Friday.

Ned: Good. He's been down all week.

Shelly: **Cheer up**, Doug. We'll get the work done.

Doug: Yeah, I know. It just seems so difficult right now.

Every cloud has a silver lining

The proverb **every cloud has a silver lining** is used in the same way as the expression **to look on the bright side**, when someone finds something positive in a bad situation.

Here is a short list of some variations of this expression:

(To try) to see the silver lining (used in this episode)

There's a silver lining for every cloud.

There's a silver lining behind every cloud.

*Something* is the silver lining.

In this expression the **cloud** represents the bad situation and **the silver lining** is the positive part. **The silver lining** is actually the sunlight shining around the edges of the cloud. In general when we use **cloud** as a verb or adjective, *to cloud* or *to be clouded* or *cloudy*, it is negative.

Here are a couple more examples with the variations used in this expression:

Clive: I'm feeling so bad today. I'm still sick after two weeks.

Manuel: **At least** you have the day off of work.

Clive: **That's the only silver lining.**

Betty: My car broke down today!

Nancy: Oh no! What happened?

Betty: Well, I was on the highway, and a cute guy stopped to help me. Now we're going on a date next week!

Nancy: Wow, that's great.

Betty: Yeah, **there's a silver lining for every cloud.**

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

This expression is different from the other focus expressions in this episode. It means that if you find yourself in a bad situation, create something good from it. In this case, the person has to turn the situation into something good. **If life gives you lemons**, which are sour and undesirable, then make something good from them, like **lemonade**.

This expression is often shortened. People sometimes say only the first part, **when life gives you lemons**, because everyone knows the end. Sometimes people add more to the second part, for example, **when life gives you lemons, throw them back and demand lemonade**, or **when life gives you lemons, make lemonade and sell it, then use the profits to build a lemonade stand**.

Here's one more example with this expression:



Mary: I didn't get into school this year.

Vince: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Mary: That's OK. I think I'm going work extra hard this year to save up more money and apply again next year. **When life gives you lemons, you have to make lemonade.**

Vince: You're right.

### Shall

This old English word often generates questions from people learning English as a second language. **Shall** is not used as much as it once was, but you can still hear it (especially from Robin, he says it a lot!). **Shall** sometimes has a future meaning like *will*, and other times it is used as an obligation, like *must* or *should*. Sometimes you will find that both possibilities work. See the example below.

**Shall** we go to the show? This could mean *Will we go to the show?* OR *Should we go to the show?*

Here are some more examples with **shall**:

Kathleen: What should we do tonight?

Justine: **Shall** we go out?

Kathleen: All right. Let's do that.

Tyler: **Shall** I get you something to drink?

Nicholas: Sure, thanks.

Mandy: We **shall** finish the report by 3 p.m.

Luke: I will expect it then.

Remember that the word **shall** is an old word, and you do not need to use it to sound natural. In fact, trying to use the word **shall** might make you sound unnatural! It's good to know what **shall** means more for comprehension than for your own use.

### Novel

A **novel** is a book. It is a written copy of a long story that is not true (fiction), with characters and actions created by the author. A book that is true or actually happened (nonfiction) is not a novel; it is called a nonfiction book. You can also have a book of short stories. There are picture books and story books for children. There are also comic books. In the example in this episode, Maura is writing a **novel**.

**Quiz**

1. June: I feel really upset that my interview tomorrow morning was cancelled.  
Tryone: \_\_\_\_\_. Now you can sleep in tomorrow morning instead.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) Look in the bright side.
  - b) Look on the bright side.
  - c) Look on the right side.
  - d) Take on the bright side.
2. Which expression is the same as ***what's the matter?***
- a) What's this matter?
  - b) What's wrong?
  - c) What's right?
  - d) How are you?
3. If Paul is trying to cheer up Kelly, what is he trying to do?
- a) to make her happy
  - b) to give her a drink
  - c) to dance with her
  - d) to make a cake

4. Oscar: I can't eat much of the food at this party because I'm a vegetarian.

Brad: \_\_\_\_\_ you can eat this bread. It's delicious!

Please fill in the blank.

- a) If only
- b) Unfortunately
- c) At least
- d) At worst

5. *Every cloud has a silver lining.*

Which part of this expression represents the bad situation?

- a) Every
- b) cloud
- c) has
- d) a silver lining

6. \_\_\_\_\_, make lemonade.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) When you have lemons
- b) When life is a lemon
- c) When you live as a lemon
- d) When life gives you lemons

7. We shall be free.

Which sentence below is most similar?

- a) We won't be free.
- b) We will be free.
- c) We are free.
- d) We aren't free.

1.b    2.b    3. a    4. c    5.b    6.d    7.b