

## Real Talk #042 – How to respond to good news

### Episode description

Good news, everybody! In this Real Talk episode, our hosts Andrew and Kassy discuss the many ways you can respond in English when you hear good news.

### Fun fact

In this episode, our hosts talk about having drinks to celebrate good news. Apparently, after winning the US Open, famed tennis player Andy Murray treated his entourage to \$9000 worth of food and drinks in one night. What did Mr. Murray have? One lemon soda—for \$6!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- A sidenote
- For real?
- A celebration is in order
- I'm so happy for you
- [One's] hard work pays off
- Drinks on me



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello, everyone, this is Andrew.

**Kassy:** And I'm Kassy.

**Andrew:** And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

**Andrew:** Hello, friends. Welcome back to Culips. Today we have a Real Talk episode prepared for you. If you don't know what Real Talk is, well, it's the series where we teach you the English that you need to know for real-world situations. Today, I am joined by my cohost Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew, how's it going?

**Andrew:** I'm doing great, Kassy. Happy to be here with you today. Could you let everyone know what our theme for today's episode is?

**Kassy:** Yes. Today's episode is how to react to good news.

**Andrew:** Right. How to react to good news. And, everyone, there is a study guide for this episode available for all Culips members. And we recommend following along with the study guide while you listen to us here today. If you're not a Culips member yet, but you want to be, then just visit [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) to sign up, and then you'll be able to get the study guide.

**Andrew:** So, Kassy, as you mentioned, today we are going to teach everyone how to sound natural and like a native speaker when you respond to good news. So, for example, maybe, you know, your friend tells you that they passed an exam or they got a promotion at work, this kind of situation. Then, you know, how can you say congratulations? How can you say good job? What expressions and what language should you use for this situation? That's what we're going to learn about today.

**Kassy:** As a **sidenote**, I think it's really great that we're doing this together as male and female, because I think the way males react to good information and females react is a little different sometimes. Like, girls get more higher pitched or, like, excited. I don't know.

**Andrew:** Yes, it's true that, I think, especially among guys, we're a little more reserved with our emotions, right? So although we're still happy to see our friends succeed and to hear about good news from our friends, maybe we aren't as enthusiastic about expressing that emotion. So, Kassy, you're right, it's good. We'll give everyone a very well-rounded look at how different speakers handle this situation.

**Kassy:** Great.

**Andrew:** So, everyone, let's break down what exactly we'll cover today. We're going to start by listening to a conversation between two friends. One of the friends has some good news to share. And then after we take a listen to the conversation, Kassy and I will break it down and take a close look at the expressions that you need to know when you are responding to good news in a natural way.

**Kassy:** Sounds good. Why don't we get started and listen to that conversation now?

**Andrew:** All right.

**Friend 1:** So, I got some good news today.

**Friend 2:** Really? What is it?

**Friend 1:** I got the job.

**Friend 2:** **For real?** Congratulations! That's great news.

**Friend 1:** Thanks. Yeah, I'm really excited.

**Friend 2:** You must have really impressed them during the interview.

**Friend 1:** Yeah, I guess so.

**Friend 2:** **I'm so happy for you.**

**Friend 1:** Thanks. Yeah, it feels great.

**Friend 2:** Well, I think a celebration is an order. Shall we celebrate over dinner?

**Friend 1:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Andrew:** All right, so in that conversation, one of the friends makes an announcement. That announcement is that he got a new job. And we hear the other friend congratulate him on that achievement. And there are many different ways that she does this. And I think, Kassy, what we should do now is just go through that conversation again and break it down. And look at how she congratulated him and reacted to that good news.

**Kassy:** Yes. That sounds like an excellent idea.

**Andrew:** All right, so the first thing that she said was a simple congratulations. Congratulations. That's great news.

**Kassy:** Yes. And usually when we reply to such great news, we use a lot of exclamations, like you want to make your face shine, you want to have big hand gestures to go along with this, as well.

**Andrew:** Right. And, actually, Kassy, let's listen to that again, because the friend really spoke with a high-pitched voice. And I think it's important for our listeners to hear exactly how our pitch changes and rises when we're responding to good news. So let's listen to that one more time.

**Friend 2:** Congratulations! That's great news.  
Congratulations! That's great news.

**Andrew:** Kassy, are you more likely to say congratulations or congrats?

**Kassy:** I'm more likely to say congratulations. How about you?

**Andrew:** I think I say congrats when it's, like, a little thing. Or if I'm a little bit upset, like if I'm playing chess with my friend and I lose. I respect that I lost, though. You know, I'm not a bad loser. So I'll say congrats, good job, but I'm still bitter about losing.

**Kassy:** So when you feel, like, good for them, but kind of a bittersweet ... Congrats.

**Andrew:** Exactly. But when I'm really excited for someone, then I will use congratulations. And we also heard the friend say that's great news. That's great news. And I think we really like to use this kind of expression in this situation, right? And we could replace it with any adjective. That's great. That's great news. That's awesome. That's fantastic.

**Kassy:** Yeah, there's a lot of variations for this. Especially in America, we really like to use awesome, amazing, or super.

**Andrew:** Super. Yeah, I think those are the three most common adjectives that people around our age, Kassy, would use.

**Andrew:** This is a really important expression to know. **I'm so happy for you. I'm so happy for you.**

**Kassy:** Yeah, **I'm so happy for you.** That means, like, because you got good news, my emotions are also lifted. Like, because you're happy, I'm also happy, so I'm giving my extra happiness to you.

**Andrew:** Right. **I'm so happy for you.** I feel like this one is really, really common. Anytime **congratulations are in order** or we wanna encourage someone on doing something well.

**Kassy:** So she did say that she was happy for him. But it's also common in English to tell someone, like, how proud you are of them or why they deserved that congratulations. So he got this great new job, so a phrase that you could use to show that you're proud of them would be you deserve it. Oh yeah, you really deserved that job.

**Andrew:** Exactly. If you know that that friend has been really putting in a lot of effort, looking for a job for a long time. It might not just be looking for a job, right? It could be passing an exam or graduating from university. Any situation where somebody has been working really hard and you know it and they get success because of that hard work, then you could say, oh, you deserve it or **your hard work really paid off**. That's another common expression, **your hard work really paid off**.

**Kassy:** Yeah, yeah, it's a great phrasal verb. It's, like, somebody put in that hard work for a job or for a test and their reward for that was, you know, getting a new job, getting an A+. They deserved it. **Their hard work paid off**.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it means that it wasn't in vain, that it was worthwhile, right? You got a good result and that means that all of that effort was not a waste of time, not a waste of effort. If something doesn't pay off, then maybe it would be, like, you studied really hard for an exam and then failed, right? Then it doesn't pay off, but if you pass, then it does pay off and it was worth the effort.

**Andrew:** Now, Kassy, there's another type of expression that we use often in this situation. And those are situations where we are kind of imagining what the other person feels like, OK? So even though the good news didn't happen to us, it happened to one of our friends or our colleagues, but we have to respond to that good news, right? So we're trying to imagine, oh, I wonder what this person would feel like. And in this kind of moment, we use expressions with you must very often, OK? You must.

**Andrew:** So we heard in the example, the friend say you must have really impressed them during the interview. You must have really impressed them during the interview. So this means, like, that person probably did a very good job, right? Because the result is they were hired. We use this when you are inferring or guessing how somebody feels or how somebody performed in a certain situation, right? So, like we heard, you must have really impressed them. Or we could also try and guess how the person is feeling, right? Kassy, if you told me some good news, I could say, oh, you must feel so good. You must feel so great.

**Kassy:** I actually use this phrase a lot. I say, oh, you must be so happy, or you must be so excited.

**Andrew:** Exactly. Or we could say you must be so relieved. You must feel so relieved.

**Kassy:** Oh, yeah.

**Andrew:** Right. If the good news—

**Kassy:** The stress is gone

**Andrew:** Right? Like if you're looking for a job, that's really stressful. If you're studying for an exam and you have a big test to take, that's really stressful. So when it's finished, you feel relieved. And we can congratulate people that way, too, by saying, oh, you must be so relieved. That's so great. It's like the connotation is that you are happy for that person because they don't need to feel that stress anymore.

**Andrew:** Well, we're almost ready to wrap things up here, everyone, but before we do that, we're going to share some bonus expressions with you that you can use when you want to celebrate. All right, so you congratulate and then it's time to celebrate.

**Kassy:** Celebrate.

**Andrew:** Yes. And we heard in that conversation the expression I think **a celebration is in order**. I think a celebration is an order. What exactly does this mean, Kassy, a celebration is an order?

**Kassy:** It means that, like, we need to celebrate. This calls for a party, a celebration.

**Andrew:** Right. When something is in order or when something is called for, it means it is required.

**Kassy:** And instead of using in order, you could also say something like let's go celebrate. Or we should celebrate.

**Andrew:** Right. Let's go celebrate or we should celebrate. And a common way in Western countries to celebrate something with a friend is to grab a drink or to have a meal together. So if you want just a kind of quick celebration, you can grab a drink. And some expressions you could use to invite somebody out for a drink would be something like let's grab a drink to celebrate. Or should we grab a celebratory drink? Celebratory drink is to drink to celebrate a good achievement or some good news.

**Kassy:** I think we also use the expression, maybe, it's on me or my treat. Like, congratulations, **drinks on me**.

**Andrew:** Yeah, or dinner's on me, right? I feel happy for you. I want to celebrate your good achievement with you. So it's on me means I will pay for it. I will buy you a drink or I will buy you a meal. And that just means that you feel extra good, right? Not only did you get a new job, but you also get something for free from your friend.

**Kassy:** I mean, you deserve it, right?

**Andrew:** That's right. That's right.

**Andrew:** Well, everyone, thank you for making it to the end of this episode. We hope that you learned a lot with us here today.

**Andrew:** If you would like to get in contact with us, you could send us an email. Our address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com) and we love hearing from you. So if you have any questions or comments for us, don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Andrew:** If you enjoy Culips, if you listen to us week in and week out, and if you learn a lot with us, then please support us. There are several ways that you can do that. You could tell your friends who are learning English about us. You could follow us on social media. We're on Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, and you can find us just by searching for the Culips English Podcast. You could leave us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. Or you can sign up and become a Culips member. Culips membership is a great way to get serious about taking your English to the next level and support Culips at the same time.

**Andrew:** We will be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

**Kassy:** See you later.

## Detailed Explanations

### A sidenote

Noun

Before getting into the main topic of this episode, Kassy says as **a sidenote** that it is good to have this discussion with a male and a female. **A sidenote** is when you want to briefly add a comment that is loosely related to your topic. The main topic of this episode is how to react to good news, and not how good it is to have male and female opinions. However, her comment adds to the overall discussion. **A sidenote** is like taking a detour when you are driving. You will still end up at your desired destination, but you will briefly go somewhere else first.

Here are a couple more examples with **a sidenote**:

**Laurie:** Take a look at this cooking video. They're making homemade pasta and meatballs.

**Pete:** Sounds great. I'm always looking for a new recipe.

**Laurie:** Oh, as **a sidenote**, I just bought a new book of recipes. If you want to check it out later, feel free to borrow it.

**Pete:** Cool. Thanks.

**Laurie:** No problem. All right, let's watch the video.

**Dale:** Did the boss like the new design of our poster?

**Melissa:** She did. It was a pretty positive review. She did wonder why there was so much green on the poster, though.

**Dale:** Oh, no. Do we need to change everything?

**Melissa:** No, no. She likes it. I think she just added that comment more as **a sidenote**.

**Dale:** OK, that's good.



## For real?

Idiom, informal

In the example used in this episode, a woman initially reacts to her friend's good news by saying, "**For real?**" This is an informal way of expressing surprise and even happiness at hearing good news. **For real?** is similar to asking:

- **Is that true?**
- **Really?**
- **Seriously?**

You can also use this expression to reaffirm a positive statement. For example, you can say, "I went to the store and it was packed. There were so many people, **for real.**" Saying **for real** at the end of the sentence emphasizes the truth of what you are saying. You want the other person to believe your story.

Here are a couple more examples with **for real?**:

**Dahlia:** I have a surprise for you.

**Marcie:** Oh, no. I don't like surprises.

**Dahlia:** Trust me. You'll like this one. As you know, we came into a bit of money recently, and so I'd like to pay for your college tuition this semester. Is that all right?

**Marcie:** **For real?** That's amazing! Thank you so much!

**Dahlia:** Of course, you're welcome! We think this will be good for you.

**Oscar:** Do you remember when you didn't think John's team was very good at volleyball?

**Marlene:** Yes. When I saw them play, they weren't doing very well.

**Oscar:** Well, they just won the championship.

**Marlene:** Really?

**Oscar:** Yeah. They won 3 games to 0, **for real.** It was a massacre.

**Marlene:** I stand corrected. I'll have to congratulate John the next time I see him.

## A celebration is in order

### Idiom

In the example used in this episode, the happy friend says that **a celebration is in order**. This means that she wants to celebrate with her friend. The in order part means that it is an appropriate time to do something. Perhaps she wants to throw her friend a party or maybe she just wants to have drinks together to celebrate. There are many variations of this expression. You can say **drinks are in order**, **this calls for a celebration**, **this calls for a party**, or **we should celebrate**.

Here are a couple more examples with **a celebration is in order**:

**Calvin:** Did you hear the good news? My son's hockey team won the league championship.

**Samira:** That's amazing.

**Calvin:** We're all very proud of him.

**Samira:** I guess **a celebration is in order**. Do you have any plans?

**Calvin:** We're looking into it now. Once we book a venue, I'll send you an invitation.

**Josh:** Hey, take a look at this.

**Devon:** What is it?

**Josh:** This is my acceptance letter from McGill University.

**Devon:** Wow! Cool. You know what that means, right?

**Josh:** No. What?

**Devon:** That means **drinks are in order**!

**Josh:** Good call. Let me get my jacket. I'll be right with you.

## **I'm so happy for you** Idiom

In this episode, our hosts offer the sentence **I'm so happy for you** as another way to react to good news. Saying **I'm so happy for you** is a way to share your happiness with the other person. You can also say **I'm so proud of you**. Parents often say to their children **I'm so proud of you** to encourage them and to reward them for a job well done.

Another variation is to say **I'm so excited for you**. In this situation, you are happy for something that will happen in the future.

Here are a couple more examples with **I'm so happy for you**:

**Danny:** Are you still planning your trip to Spain? I heard you were thinking of cancelling it.

**Grace:** Yeah, we almost cancelled it. The waiting list for the tour we wanted was too long.

**Danny:** So what happened in the end?

**Grace:** Not only did we manage to get a spot on the tour, we got bumped up to first class for only a few dollars more.

**Danny:** That's great! **I'm so happy for you**. You're going to love Spain.

**Olive:** Remember when I was worried about that lump I found on my back?

**Jill:** Of course. I was worried, too.

**Olive:** I went to the doctor. The test results showed that it was benign. It's harmless.

**Jill:** Oh, **I'm so happy for you**.

**Olive:** I'm happy, too. But, really, I'm mostly relieved.

## [One's] hard work pays off

Idiom

In this episode, our hosts talk about congratulating someone for their well-earned success. For this, you can say **your hard work paid off**. Telling someone **their hard work paid off** is acknowledging that they deserve all their success precisely because they put in the work. You can also use this expression when referring to your own hard work. You can say, "I'm glad **my hard work paid off**."

As a general motto, **hard work pays off** is a common way to encourage people to work hard all the time. It is meant to remind people of the benefits of working hard.

Here are a couple more examples with **[one's] hard work pays off**:

**Harrison:** Did you hear about Peter? He just got his second promotion in 2 years.

**Eric:** Lucky guy.

**Harrison:** It's not luck! He puts in the hours. **His hard work is really paying off.**

**Eric:** I guess. Where do you want to go for lunch? I'm starving.

**Harrison:** Actually, you go ahead. I have some things I need to finish.

**Chloe:** Take a look at this.

**Louise:** It says 19 minutes and 55 seconds. OK, for what?

**Chloe:** I just broke the 20-minute mark for a 5-kilometre run.

**Louise:** That's great! I know how much effort you put into doing that.

**Chloe:** Thanks. **Hard work does pay off.**

## Drinks on me

Idiom

Near the end of this episode, our hosts discuss ways of celebrating someone's good news. As people often celebrate by having drinks together, you can say **drinks on me**. **Drinks on me** means you are offering to pay for celebratory drinks. Another common way of saying this is **drinks are on me**. However, this expression is not limited to drinks. You can also say **dinner's on me** or **it's my treat**. **It's my treat** can apply to any kind of gift, like buying concert tickets for someone or some other congratulatory gift. You can also say this if you want to celebrate your own success. You might be so happy about something good that happened to you that you want to buy other people drinks.

Here are a couple more examples with **drinks on me**:

**Nana:** How did the ultrasound go? Are you having a boy or a girl?

**Joel:** Funny that you ask. We're having both a boy and a girl. We're having twins!

**Nana:** That's incredible! We need to celebrate. **Drinks on me**.

**Joel:** I don't know if that's a good idea. I should stay at home. How about after they're born?

**Nana:** Probably a good idea.

**Abby:** You look like you're in a good mood. How come?

**Tim:** After 10 years of working in marketing, I finally got the promotion I wanted.

**Abby:** They made you general manager of marketing?

**Tim:** No. They made me vice president of marketing!

**Abby:** Wow, that's major news.

**Tim:** I know. I'm going to throw a little party. Can you invite our old gang? Tell them the **drinks are on me**!

## Quiz

**1. When would Andrew say congratulations, as opposed to congrats?**

- a) for a big thing
- b) for a small thing

**2. Which of the following does NOT have the same meaning as “for real?”**

- a) Seriously?
- b) Really?
- c) Is that true?
- d) That's wrong!

**3. What does “hard work pays off” mean?**

- a) working is difficult
- b) working hard will give you good results
- c) working hard is not worth it
- d) working hard is only for rich people

**4. When would you say “as a sidenote”?**

- a) when you want to change the subject entirely
- b) when you want to add related information to the conversation

**5. What does “drinks on me” mean?**

- a) someone spilled drinks on you
- b) you will pay for everyone's drinks
- c) you will pay only for the drinks you like
- d) you are invited to a party

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. How do you usually react when someone announces good news to you? What is your initial reaction?
2. Every culture has different customs around who pays the bill at the end of a meal. Who picks up the bill when you go out?
3. What is the biggest celebratory party you have ever organized?
4. When was the happiest you've ever been for a good friend's achievements?
5. Are you the type of person who lives by the motto hard work pays off? What are examples from your life when your hard work paid off?

## Quiz Answers

1. a   2. d   3. b   4. b   5. b

### Episode credits

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