

## Real Talk #059 – How to deal with noisy neighbours

### Episode description

Andrew and Kassy discuss how to handle noisy neighbours in this Real Talk episode. Dealing with noisy neighbours can be challenging, but with the right approach you might be able to solve the problem without losing your cool. This episode features several useful expressions for bringing up topics that aren't easy to discuss and for addressing conflict.

### Fun fact

There are often local laws called noise ordinances. These limit how much noise you are allowed to make at certain times of day, such as between 10 PM and 7 AM. You should always try to communicate with your neighbours and solve noise problems among yourselves first. However, in extreme cases, you may be able to file a complaint that your neighbour is violating your area's noise ordinance.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To bother [someone]
- I wanted to talk to you about something
- What's on your mind?
- To wind down
- To appreciate [something]
- Don't hesitate to [verb]



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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:** Real Talk #59, How to deal with noisy neighbours, featuring Andrew and Kassy.

Hello, Culips listeners. Welcome back to another edition of Real Talk. I'm Andrew and I'm here today with my cohost, Kassy. And today, we're going to be exploring a topic that I think many of us have encountered at some point in our lives. And that is dealing with noisy neighbours. Maybe it's neighbours who are playing loud music, or having a late-night party, or perhaps even construction noise. Noisy neighbours can be a real challenge. But don't worry, we've got some practical tips here that will help you navigate this situation without losing your cool.

So, as I mentioned, Kassy is here today to help me with this episode. So we should say hello to her. Hey there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew. And hey, listeners. I'm excited to talk about this topic. I've been pretty lucky to not have noisy neighbours in my life. But I know some friends and family who have had horror stories in the past dealing with their noisy neighbours.

**Andrew:** Kassy, you've never had a noisy neighbour your whole life?

**Kassy:** Yeah, I'm very lucky, very lucky.

**Andrew:** Kassy, you are very lucky indeed. I've had that situation happen to me several times in the past. And I gotta say, it's not too pleasant.

**Kassy:** OK, now let's get into today's topic, noisy neighbours. We have got some practical tips for you all today on how to navigate this situation with dealing with your noisy neighbours without losing your cool.

**Andrew:** Kassy, I love that expression, without losing your cool or to lose your cool. And I think one way that we could think of this expression is that the emotion anger is usually associated with being hot, right? We sometimes say when you're really angry, you blow your lid, to blow your lid. And that always makes me think of like a boiling kettle or a boiling pot of water. And the water is just boiling so hot that it makes the lid come off the pot or the lid come off the kettle. And often when you're watching, you know, cartoons and a cartoon character gets angry, they'll turn really red and hot, and you might see steam coming out of their ears or something. And even when a person like me, I mean everybody's different, but at least when I get really angry, then my face turns red as well and sometimes I even get hot in temperature.

So, anger is often associated with being hot. Now on the other hand, calm and relaxed, that is often associated with being cool, right? You're cool, you're calm, you're collected. So, they're opposite feelings and opposite temperatures, right? So if you lose your cool, that means that you lose that calmness, that relaxed state and instead you become angry.

So, yeah, this is a great expression to know that you can use whenever you change from having that calm demeanor, that calm personality to becoming very angry.

**Kassy:** I can't imagine you losing your cool, Andrew. You always seem as cool as a cucumber. So calm.

**Andrew:** It doesn't happen very often. But from time to time, I do lose my cool.

**Kassy:** So, in this episode, we're gonna be talking about ways and phrases that you can use to let your neighbours know how you feel without causing bad feelings in the relationship between you two, because the only thing worse than a noisy neighbour is a neighbour that hates you.

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. And this is a difficult situation, Kassy, right? We're going to share some tips, we're going to share some expressions that people can use if they're dealing with this situation. But it's not a magic bullet, right? It's not like these are guaranteed to work in every situation. If your noisy neighbour is a reasonable person, maybe if they didn't

know that they **were bothering you**, then I think this kind of advice and these expressions could be really, really practical. But you know, the world is composed of many different kinds of people. Some are kind and understanding, and others are just jerks. And no matter what you say, or no matter what you do, will not stop them from behaving the way that they want to behave. So of course, I think everybody knows that this is a touchy situation sometimes, when you have to approach somebody and ask them to change their behaviour for you. But, yeah, if you keep that in mind, listeners, then I think you'll be able to learn a lot from this episode. And it's just something to keep in mind.

So, Kassy, I can see that you have a couple of tips prepared for us. And maybe we should talk about those tips before we listen to the key example conversation for this episode.

**Kassy:** Sounds good. So, tip #1 is to research your building's guidelines. So if you see that there's already written rules about quiet hours or noise levels in the building, then you can use that as evidence when you go and talk to your neighbour, say, like, "Hey, buddy, we're supposed to be quiet after 11 PM. But I can still hear you stomping all over the ceiling at midnight."

**Andrew:** Exactly. So, especially if you live in an apartment building, right? Often there will be some rules that everybody in the building has to follow. So it really depends on the kind of noise too, right, Kassy? If somebody in an apartment building is blaring their music really loud after midnight, or 11 PM, or whatever the quiet hour is, well, that can be a really easy situation to follow, because the rule is very black and white. But in the case of hearing some footsteps, you know, depending on how the apartment building is built, sometimes people can just be walking around regularly. And actually, it causes a lot of noise for the people who live below.

I lived in one apartment when I was a university student going to the University of Victoria in Victoria, Canada. And I lived in this old character house and a character house, at least in Canada, this is what we refer to as a character house, is like an older house built around 100 years ago. So this was an old house, lovely house, beautiful house, but it had been divided into several apartments. So the main floor of the house was where the owner

lived with his family. And then on the upper floor, it had been divided into three or four different apartments, I can't remember exactly how many, but I had one of them. However, the family and the owner that lived on the ground floor were quite noisy, and we could never tell if they were being noisy on purpose or if it was just because, you know, the house was over 100 years old and wasn't built with soundproofing in mind, so to speak.

And the owner had two boys that were you know, I don't know, maybe grade five, grade six age. So, they're always running around, lots of energy, playing soccer, playing basketball, playing hockey in the house. So it was loud. But I remember my neighbour sometimes would get this big broomstick and bang on the floor, trying to get the landlord, because he was the owner of the house, so he was the landlord on the ground floor, you know, to be quiet at night because the boys were playing.

I never thought that was the greatest strategy, I think it's better to be a little more direct and maybe just talk one on one, instead of just, you know, being passive aggressive like that and banging a broom on the floor trying to get them to be quiet. I guess that neighbour was giving them a taste of their own medicine, so to speak.

**Kassy:** That's true. But what you just said leads into tip #2, which is to be friendly when letting your neighbour know that you're a bit too loud. So, just like you said earlier, instead of passive aggressively banging on the floor or rushing downstairs and demanding that your neighbour turn it down, approaching them in a respectful and calm manner will probably help things go a whole lot faster and smoother.

**Andrew:** Mmhmm. Completely agree. All right. And we have one more tip, what is tip #3?

**Kassy:** Tip #3 is to keep a record of all the messages or conversations that you've had with each other about the noise issue so that if your neighbour doesn't follow through with the conversation that you had with each other, you could bring it up to the superintendent of your building and tell them, you know, "I tried to solve this problem on my own, but they ignored me. What should I do now?"

**Andrew:** Yeah, that's a really good point. Often, we don't really know the contact information for our neighbours, right? Like, you know, the way that society is these days, usually, we're not really too close with people in the apartment building that we're living in, at least when I lived in a big apartment building, I knew my immediate neighbours by sight. If I saw them, I recognize them and I'd wave hello, it's not like we're close or anything. But people a few doors down, I didn't even really know who lived in those apartments. So it would be very difficult these days to write a message instead of actually talking to somebody face to face. I think often in this kind of situation, you do have to have a face-to-face conversation at first. However, if possible, Kassy, what you said is exactly correct that I think emailing or sending a text message is actually better than speaking face to face. Just because you have proof of the conversation, you have evidence of it. So I know that it's really almost impossible to do that at the start. You could like knock on your neighbour's door and be like, "Hello, what's your email address? I want to message you." But that's a little weird. I don't know if I would give my email out to a stranger knocking on my door in that kind of situation. But you're right, if you can have a record of this, it could just be helpful down the line, you never know when you might need a record of that conversation.

So, amazing tips, Kassy, thank you for sharing those with us. And now that we know about all of this background information, why don't we get to the main part of today's episode, which is listening to an example conversation.

So, in this conversation, we're going to hear two neighbours talking. And one of the neighbours is having a difficult time because her apartment is very noisy, because her other neighbour has a brand-new puppy, which is making a lot of noise and keeping her up at night. So let's take a listen in and see how she confronts that neighbour, or maybe I should say approaches that neighbour, how she approaches that neighbour to deal with that situation. So, here we go. Let's take a listen now.

**Sarah:** Hey, Brian.

**Brian:** Hey, Sarah, what's up?

**Sarah:** I hope I'm not **bothering you**, but **I wanted to talk to you about something**.

**Brian:** Yeah, yeah, sure. **What's on your mind?**

**Sarah:** Well, first off, I wanted to say that I'm really happy for you and your new puppy.

**Brian:** Thanks. I **appreciate that**.

**Sarah:** Yeah, he's adorable. However, I've noticed that he seems quite excited during the evenings and the barking and playing noises have been a bit loud, especially when I'm trying **to wind down** after work.

**Brian:** I'm really sorry about that. I didn't realize the noise was causing any issues. You know, Teddy's still adjusting to his new home, and I guess he gets a bit restless in the evenings.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I totally understand. Puppies can be a handful, and I'm glad you're giving Teddy a loving home. I just wanted to bring it up because I wake up really early for work. And I've been having a bit of trouble falling to sleep listening to Teddy's nails pitter patter across the floor.

**Brian:** Yeah, I could imagine that that would be pretty difficult to fall asleep like that. I really **appreciate your understanding**. And I've been trying to crate train Teddy, but it seems like he's more active during those hours at night. So, maybe I could buy some rugs to dampen the sound of his nails or something like that.

**Sarah:** That sounds like a great idea. And maybe you could try to schedule his play time a bit earlier in the evening so that he's calmer later on. That way we could both enjoy our evenings in peace.

**Brian:** Yeah, that's a great idea, too. You know, I don't want to be a nuisance to anyone or risk Teddy being unwelcome in the building. So, thanks for bringing that up.

**Sarah:** Yeah, thank you so much for understanding. It really means a lot to me.

**Brian:** Yeah, of course. And if it ever gets too noisy again, then just let me know. And hey, if you ever want to meet Teddy or, you know, if you need anything, **don't hesitate to ask.**

**Sarah:** I'd love to meet Teddy sometime. Thanks, Brian. Well, we'll talk soon. Give Teddy a scratch behind the ears for me.

**Brian:** Yup, will do, see you later.

**Andrew:** All right. So, we just listened to a conversation where two neighbours, Sarah and Brian, had a conversation, and the conversation was about Brian's new puppy named Teddy. And so, I think anybody who has had a puppy in the past knows that they are quite active, they have lots of energy, they run around, sometimes they even bark and, you know, in an apartment situation that can cause a lot of noise for the neighbours. And this is what happened in this exact situation.

So, Sarah went over to Brian's apartment, knocked on his door and had a conversation, asking Brian to keep things down a little bit and to try and control the amount of noise that Teddy creates. And, Kassy, I have to say, I think like that character, Sarah, she seemed almost like a dog trainer. She had a lot of good advice for Brian.

**Kassy:** Yeah, maybe she has a dog herself, but her dog is old, like your Pinky. So they're not as noisy anymore.

**Andrew:** Yeah, perhaps that was the case. And, yeah, it seemed like they were also friendly with each other, like they knew each other's names and their conversation was quite casual. So I think that does make things a little bit easier, right? If you need to approach a neighbour in this situation, if you know the neighbour already, then it is easier than just talking to a stranger, essentially.

But what I'd like to do now, Kassy, is to go back through this conversation, and let's find some of the key sentences and repeat them for our listeners and explain them in a bit



more detail. So, I'm wondering what popped out to you, Kassy, when you listened to that conversation?

**Kassy:** I think the starting sentence that Sarah used was really useful, because the way she approached Brian was one, polite, and two, approachable. What she said was, "I hope I'm not **bothering you**, but **I wanted to talk to you about something**."

**Andrew:** I hope I'm not **bothering you**, but **I wanted to talk to you about something**. Yeah, that is a nice way to say that you have something to say, right? You're trying to tell the person that you want to have a conversation about something. And what does it mean, exactly, **bothering you**? I hope I'm not **bothering you**, to **bother someone**. What does that mean?

**Kassy:** Yeah, it means I hope, I'm not interrupting something important, or you know, you might be relaxing at home and I'm bringing this situation upon you. So sorry for the inconvenience, for **bothering you**, for taking up your time.

**Andrew:** Exactly. And we can also see in this sentence, **I wanted to talk to you about something**. And sometimes English learners get a little bit confused about this kind of sentence, because want is actually in the past tense, **I wanted to talk to you about something**. But that just is something that we do in English, when we want to make our language sound softer and we want to make our requests sound even more polite than they would if we used it in the present tense. So we put it in the past tense just to create some distance and make it feel more polite. So a nice expression to know, to add to your vocabulary, and a great one to use in this situation, "I hope I'm not **bothering you**, but **I wanted to talk to you about something**."

And so then the neighbour, Brian, he goes, "Yeah, of course. **What's on your mind?**" **What's on your mind?** And this is one of the expressions that popped out to me, **what's on your mind?** And it's just another way of saying, "What's the problem? What do you want to talk about? What's up?" Right, all of these expressions you could use in that

situation. I really like this one, **what's on your mind?** And if something is on your mind, it means you're thinking about it, right?

**Kassy:** Exactly. I think Brian could clearly see that Sarah was a little bit anxious about something, she was thinking about something a lot. So that's why he asked her, "**What's on your mind?**"

**Andrew:** Yeah, and this is actually just a nice question that you could ask whenever you notice, maybe one of your friends is acting a little bit different than normal. Maybe they seem like they're deep in thought, like they're thinking about something in particular, then, you know, you want to reach out and ask like, "Oh, what are you thinking about? Like, are you OK, **what's on your mind?**" It's a nice question to ask in this kind of situation.

Kassy, what else jumped out at you?

**Kassy:** This is a phrase that isn't about noisy neighbours, but Sarah said that she was having trouble **winding down** after work because of Teddy's noise. **To wind down** after work is to relax. When you are at work, you know, you're kind of tense, you have a lot of things going on. Maybe your shoulder muscles start to hurt, and you just feel exhausted. So **to wind down** means to relax.

**Andrew:** Yeah, if you're **winding down**, it's like the last little bit of your day, maybe before you go to sleep. So, most people **wind down** after finishing work. But you could even use this expression too when you're talking about many different situations, like maybe a store, for example. Let's just say the store is open from 10 AM until 8 PM. And then maybe you want to go into the store and it's like 7:55 PM and you go into the store and the staff are like **winding down** and getting ready to go home. And then you could be like, oh, actually, maybe I'll come back a different time, once you notice that the store is almost closed, right? So, even things like the store could be **winding down** for the day and it just means they're getting ready to close. So, it's a very nice expression to use when you are getting ready to stop doing an activity.

Another expression that I noticed when listening to this conversation was the way that Brian, the neighbour reacted. So the character Sarah, you know, said “Aw, your puppy Teddy, he’s adorable. But at the same time, he’s really making my life miserable, because he is loud at night and I can’t sleep very well. I’m having problems trying to fall asleep because of Teddy’s nails scratching across the floor.” So when Brian heard that, then he reacted by saying, “I really **appreciate your understanding**.” Meaning, like, I’m glad that you approached me and you talked about this. And I’m also glad that you didn’t really get angry at me, like you came and approached me like a rational adult, and you didn’t, you know, lose your cool with me. You just came and talked to me, like, on a personal level. So that is why he said, “I really **appreciate your understanding**.”

Kassy, would there be any other situations where you would use an expression like this?

**Kassy:** I think the first part, I really **appreciate something**, for example, I often say, “I really **appreciated your help today**.” If you had a big task that you couldn’t finish by yourself, you might ask a friend or a colleague for help. And if they help you, after you’re both done, you could say, “I really **appreciated your help today**, I really needed it.”

**Andrew:** This is an expression that I use with my students a lot, actually, is when they complete a project for me and I can tell that they’ve worked hard on that project, no matter what their grade is. You know, sometimes you can work really hard and still get not a great grade, right? Unfortunately, that’s life. But I always say, “Oh, I really **appreciate your hard work**” because I know how much work and effort they put into it. So, yeah, this is a great flexible expression that you can use whenever you want to express your appreciation, your thanks for somebody else doing something for you.

**Kassy:** All right, the next phrase. After Brian says his appreciation, “I really **appreciate your understanding**,” Sarah gives some advice and then Brian says, “Thanks for that advice. And thanks for coming and talking to me in person. Thanks for bringing that up.” This phrase, thanks for bringing that up, is really useful. It’s someone that is acknowledging that you took the time to come and talk to them in person and try to solve the problem one-on-one.

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. So to bring something up can mean different things in different situations. But it is an expression that we use often when we're talking about bringing a topic of conversation up, about starting a conversation about something. And Kassy, I heard this expression last night, actually, when I was watching an episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, that old TV show. I don't know if you've ever seen it before or not. But it's one of my favourites. And I was recently talking about it with a coworker, so I decided to go back and re-watch the show. And so the situation in the show was the main character, Larry, was having a conversation with his wife. And it was a little bit of an embarrassing situation that they were talking about. And then later, his wife, you know, this is a few days later, his wife had one of her friends over to the house. And they were talking about that embarrassing situation. And when they both started talking to Larry about that embarrassing thing, then he lost his cool, he blew up, he got really angry. And he said, "Why did you have to bring that up? Why did you have to talk about the embarrassing thing in my life with your friend as well?" So yeah, a very, very, very common expression that we can use to talk about starting a conversation or talking about a certain topic.

**Kassy:** All right, Andrew, we have one more phrase from this conversation today. Can you introduce that one to us as well?

**Andrew:** Yeah. So right towards the end of the conversation, we hear the two characters kind of wrapping things up and ending their conversation. And Brian says, "If you ever want to meet my puppy, or if you ever need anything, then **don't hesitate to ask, don't hesitate to ask.**" And again, this is a perfect expression for many, many, many different situations in English, but it's a great one to use in this kind of context as well.

And let's break it down. So to hesitate means to stop and think before going forward with an action, or maybe you decide to abort and cancel the action that you want to do, right? You kind of stop to think about something. So, if you don't hesitate, that means you don't even think about it, you just do it right away. And you **don't hesitate to ask**. So it's a kind of expression that we can use when we want to say, you know, like, I would use this kind of thing with you, Kassy. Like, if you ever need help, if you ever need something, then

**don't even hesitate to ask** me, just ask right away, because I'm always willing to help you. So it's a very polite and kind thing. And if somebody says this to you, then you know, they've got your back.

**Kassy:** Exactly, yeah. For example, if Sarah went down to Brian, and said, you know, "Your dog's a little noisy." And Brian went, "Well, who cares? It's just a dog." Then she would maybe hesitate to ask him for help later, because he wasn't very approachable.

**Andrew:** But you know, if there is some other kind of issue in their relationship down the road, well, now she knows that he's a pretty relaxed and open-minded guy and isn't really going to get too upset. He can deal with problems in a rational way. So, in the future, if she did have an issue, then she could approach him and talk to him right away. He's expressing that, you know, he's open-minded to that in the future.

We're almost at the end of today's episode, everyone. But before we go, we should summarize what we covered. So, Kassy, would you break it down and do the summary for us?

**Kassy:** Yes. So today, we learned about ways that you can bring up a complaint to your neighbour without causing tension. And we learned some useful expressions when doing that.

**Andrew:** So, we learned expressions like **what's on your mind**, a way to ask somebody what's up or what they're thinking about. Also, I really **appreciate your understanding**, which you can use when somebody accepts what you say without really losing their cool. And we also learned about **don't hesitate to ask**, another great expression to add to your vocabulary when you want to communicate to someone that if they have a question or need help in the future, then they can ask without even thinking about it, because you will be willing to help them.

**Kassy:** And we also learned some interesting expressions that you could use in a variety of different conversations, such as losing your cool, **to wind down**, and to bring something up.

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**Andrew:** That is it for us for today, everyone, we have made it to the end. So congratulations on, well, making it all the way to the end of this episode. That's amazing. And we hope that you learned a lot with us today. We'll be back soon with another brand-new episode, and we'll talk to you all then. Goodbye.

**Kassy:** See ya!

**Andrew:** That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye!

## Detailed Explanations

### To bother [someone]

Verb

The example dialogue in this episode features two neighbours, Sarah and Brian. Sarah approaches Brian in order to talk to him about the noise his dog has been making in the evenings. She starts out her conversation with, “I hope I’m not **bothering you**.”

**To bother someone** means to disturb or annoy them. Many things can **bother you**—for instance, a coworker’s behaviour, anxious thoughts, unpleasant smells, or sore muscles. In the example dialogue, however, Sarah says “I hope I’m not **bothering you**” as a way to politely say that she needs to talk to Brian about something or make a request.

Abruptly making a request or asking a question can seem a little rude in English. If you aren’t super close with someone, it’s a good idea to use an introductory phrase to preface a request. For instance, you might say, “I hope I’m not **bothering you**, David, but can you turn down the volume on the TV?” Another example is “I hope I’m not **bothering you**, but I’d like you to take a look at this email draft when you have time.”

There are lots of variations of this expression, including “I don’t want **to bother you**, but ...” and “Sorry for **bothering you**, but ....”

Here are a couple more examples with **to bother [someone]**:

**Kristy:** I hope they finish constructing that new apartment building soon.

**Matt:** Me too. They make so much noise.

**Kristy:** Yeah, all the noise really **bothers me** when I’m having a meeting on Zoom and trying to focus.

**Paula:** Hey, Tim. Sorry **to bother you**, but can I ask you a quick question?

**Tim:** No problem, Paula. What’s up?

**Paula:** I was wondering if I could take the day off next Friday. I need to take my dog to the vet in the morning and I have a doctor’s appointment of my own in the afternoon.

**Tim:** That should be fine. Thanks for asking ahead of time. Best of luck with your appointments!

## I wanted to talk to you about something

### Expression

After Sarah says, “I hope I’m not bothering you,” she follows up with “**I wanted to talk to you about something.**”

Just like “I hope I’m not bothering you,” **I wanted to talk to you about something** is a polite introductory phrase you can use before getting to your main point. As you can see, sometimes you can combine two of these kinds of expressions to really soften your request or complaint. For example, you could say, “Sorry to interrupt you, Rebecca, but **I wanted to talk to you about my upcoming vacation.**”

Andrew explained that we can use the past tense to create a little bit of distance and politeness between us and the request. You can use this with a lot of verbs, not just “want.” For example, you could say, “I was wondering if ...” and “I was hoping that ....”

When you use these expressions with the past tense, it makes it sound like you have given your request or question some deep thought and consideration. If you approach your boss and suddenly say, “I want a day off tomorrow,” it can sound too abrupt. However, if you say, “**I wanted to talk to you about taking the day off tomorrow,**” it sounds like you have thought about the topic and might have a good reason for it.

Here are a few more examples with **I wanted to talk to you about something**:

**Jeremy:** Good morning, Emily.

**Emily:** Hey there, Jeremy.

**Jeremy:** **I wanted to talk to you about something.**

**Emily:** Sure, what is it?

**Jeremy:** I’m going out of town for a couple weeks. Do you think you could water my plants a few times while I’m gone?

**Emily:** Yeah, I can definitely do that!

**Olivia:** I hope I’m not disturbing you, but **I wanted to talk to you about our meeting** this afternoon.

**Chris:** What about it?

**Olivia:** Do you think we could reschedule it to tomorrow? Something urgent came up.



## What's on your mind?

### Expression

In response to Sarah's polite request to talk to Brian about something, he warmly asks, "Sure, **what's on your mind?**"

When someone says, "I have a question" or "Can I talk to you about something?" the simplest way to respond is, "What?" However, "**What's on your mind?**" is a really nice way to ask what the other person is thinking. Using this expression indicates that you care about their thoughts or concerns.

Not only can you use "**What's on your mind?**" as a response, but you can also use it to initiate a conversation. For example, if your sister looks sad, you might say, "Hey, Stephanie. **What's on your mind?** You look a little down." This sounds gentle and caring. It's a nice way to encourage someone to open up and talk to you.

Be careful with your prepositions, since there is a similar-sounding expression, "What do you have in mind?" which means "What do you prefer?" or "What are you thinking of doing?" Don't mix up "in" and "on" with these two expressions!

Here are a few more examples with **what's on your mind?**:

**Cynthia:** Robby, you seem kind of anxious. **What's on your mind?**

**Robby:** Oh, is it that obvious? Yeah, I'm thinking of breaking up with my girlfriend today and I'm feeling really nervous about the whole thing.

**Cynthia:** Oh no, that sounds really stressful. Do you want to talk about it?

**Harry:** Hey, Nina. I was hoping to ask you a favour.

**Nina:** Sure, Harry. **What's on your mind?**

**Harry:** Do you think you could lower the bass on your speakers a little bit when you watch movies? I can hear it even in the next room. I have trouble getting to sleep when it's so loud.

**Nina:** Oh, I had no idea it was so loud! Yeah, of course I can.

**Harry:** Thanks so much, Nina.

**Nina:** No problem!

## To wind down

### Phrasal verb

In the example dialogue, Sarah explains to Brian that the noise from his puppy is making it hard for her **to wind down** in the evenings after work.

As Kassy and Andrew explain, this phrasal verb means to relax and become less active, especially after a busy period like the workday. People can **wind down**, but so can events or businesses. For example, a housewarming party could **wind down** by 11 PM.

**To wind down** can also be used as a way to indirectly ask for some alone time or for a guest to leave your home soon. For example, you could say, "I'm getting pretty tired. I think it'll be time for me **to wind down** soon." If the other person is perceptive, they will realize you are trying to say that you want them to leave soon.

A similar expression to **wind down** is its antonym, **to get wound up**. This means to become tense, excited, or stressed out about something. You probably don't want to drink a cup of strong coffee when you're **winding down**, because you might **get wound up** instead!

Here are a few more examples with **to wind down**:

**Josie:** It's finally Friday! What do you want to do tonight?

**Eric:** I'm feeling really wiped out from work. Can we just **wind down**, drink some wine, and watch a movie on the couch?

**Josie:** Sounds perfect to me!

**Karl:** I've been really stressed recently. Even on my days off, I can't stop thinking about my responsibilities. Do you have any suggestions?

**Annika:** It sounds like you need to clear your mind and relax. Try to separate your work life from your home life. **Wind down** after work by turning off your work email notifications, dimming the lights, and taking a bath. Make it a ritual.

**Karl:** Does that really work?

**Annika:** Yes, definitely. Relaxing activities like meditation, taking a bath, or going for a slow walk around the neighbourhood will tell your mind and body that it's time **to wind down**. It will help you to stop thinking about everything you have to do the next day.

## To appreciate [something]

Verb

Sarah doesn't just ask Brian to stop making noise at night. She says that she understands how difficult a new puppy can be and that they have a lot of energy. Brian says that he **appreciates Sarah's understanding** and promises to try and adjust their routine so that the dog will make less noise at night.

**To appreciate something** means to notice and feel gratitude for something. We often use this verb to acknowledge someone else's kindness. In the sample dialogue, Brian says he **appreciates Sarah's understanding**. He means that he is grateful that she understands his situation with the new puppy.

If someone gives you a homemade gift, you can say, "I really **appreciate the gift**." If your coworker assists you with a difficult task, you can say, "I **appreciate all of your help**." It's like you are thanking them. In fact, sometimes we just say, "**Much appreciated**" instead of "Thank you."

When you're trying to resolve a conflict or a problem, mentioning that you **appreciate someone else's actions** is a great way to show them that you aren't angry.

Here are a few more examples with **to appreciate [something]**:

**George:** Tessa, can you pick Amy up from school today? I know I was supposed to do it today, but something really urgent came up at work.

**Tessa:** Sure, I can pick her up.

**George:** Thank you so much. I really **appreciate you doing that for me**.

**Tessa:** No problem!

**Denise:** I'd like to make a donation to your animal shelter. How can I do that?

**Kevin:** That's wonderful! You can go to our website and click on the Support tab. There should be a link to our PayPal where you can donate.

**Denise:** OK, I'll do that.

**Kevin:** We **appreciate your support** for our organization.

**Denise:** Of course. I wish I could volunteer, but I just don't have the time. I'm so glad you're finding homes for these poor cats and dogs.

## Don't hesitate to [verb]

### Expression

After Brian and Sarah come to an agreement about the noisy puppy, Brian tells **Sarah not to hesitate to ask** if she needs anything.

To hesitate means to pause before doing something. This is usually because you're unsure or nervous. For example, someone might hesitate before getting into the swimming pool because she was afraid it would be cold. **Don't hesitate to [verb]** is a polite and friendly way to say, "please feel comfortable" or "feel free."

When Brian says, "**don't hesitate to ask**," he means "You can feel comfortable asking me. Feel free to ask me." By saying this, he shows that he cares about Sarah's concerns and is open to talking about the noise issue again. Brian is willing and eager to communicate with her.

Other common verbs used with this expression are call, reach out, contact, etc. For example, you could say, "Please **don't hesitate to reach out** if you have any questions." You could also say, "I'm available anytime. Please **don't hesitate to call** me, even after 5 PM." As you can see, we often say "**don't hesitate to**" with verbs related to initiating communication.

Here's one more example with **don't hesitate to [verb]**:

**Rudy:** It's great to have you on the team, Wanda.

**Wanda:** Thank you! I'm excited about this new role.

**Rudy:** Everyone is excited to have you here. My office is in the corner near the water cooler. If you have any questions, please **don't hesitate to ask**. If my door is closed, just knock.

**Wanda:** OK, I will. Thanks!

**Becky:** Does anyone have any ideas for the holiday party theme?

**Nicholas:** Umm ...

**Becky:** Nicholas, did you want to say something? **Don't hesitate to share.**

**Nicholas:** Uh, I was thinking we could have a Mardi Gras theme for the party.

**Becky:** That's a great idea!

## Quiz

**1. What does it mean to wind down?**

- a) to turn off your electronic devices
- b) to stop working and relax
- c) to prepare for an event
- d) to throw away or donate old items

**2. Your mother asks you, “What’s on your mind?” What does she mean?**

- a) what are you thinking about?
- b) what are your plans?
- c) what are you reading?
- d) what are your goals?

**3. You want to ask your roommate to turn down the volume of the video game he is playing. What’s a good way to start your request?**

- a) what’s on your mind?
- b) I hope I’m not bothering you, but ...
- c) don’t hesitate to ask me anything
- d) thanks, I appreciate your understanding

**4. What’s a good synonym for “to appreciate”?**

- a) to not care
- b) to be irritated
- c) to consider
- d) to be grateful

**5. Your sister tells you, “If you ever need someone to talk to, don’t hesitate to ask.” What does she mean?**

- a) she wants you to talk to someone else
- b) she doesn’t have time to listen to you
- c) she is available and willing to listen to you
- d) she wants you to listen to her problems

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had a noisy neighbour? How did you handle the situation?
2. What are some of the ways you usually wind down after work or school?
3. If you were making a lot of noise and your neighbour wanted to ask you to stop, would you prefer that they ask you in person or send you an email or text? Why?
4. Have you ever lived with a roommate? Did any of their habits or behaviours bother you? If so, which ones?
5. What advice would you give someone who wants to ask a neighbour to stop doing something that's bothering them?

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## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.a    3.b    4.d    5.c

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### Episode credits

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