

Simplified Speech #033 – Fear

Episode description

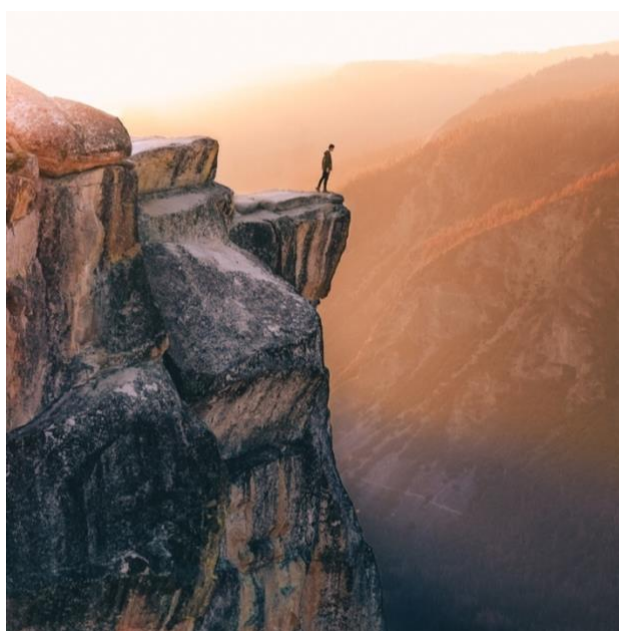
Andrew and Morag talk about fears and how to get over them in this Simplified Speech episode.

Fun fact

Twenty-four percent of Americans are afraid of speaking in public. This makes public speaking America's number one phobia.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To break a fall
- To take the brunt
- To listen in
- To smoke your [body part] on [something]
- To be ahead of your time
- A rite of passage
- To be on edge
- To break down
- To face your fear
- To get over [something]





Transcript

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.

Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com. C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips. Hey, Morag.

Morag: Hey, Andrew, how's it going?

Andrew: I'm doing not bad, how are you?

Morag: I'm also all right.

Andrew: Also all right. Right on.

Morag: Yeah, is anything new with you?

Andrew: Morag, I have an embarrassing story to share with everybody.

Morag: Oh.

Andrew: My new obsession, if I can call it an obsession, my new hobby is mountain running, trail running. So, I've been a jogger for several years now, but I've just started to run on some mountain trails that are in my neighbourhood. And, I've been loving it! It's great. It's really fun and it's nice exercise, and it's good to get into the woods and experience nature firsthand, you know?

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Anyways, I actually went mountain running today but I realized I'm not as athletic and agile as I used to be, because I tripped.

Morag: Oh.

Andrew: And I completely smashed my phone.

Morag: Oh no! Not the phone.



- Andrew: The phone.
- Morag: At least it wasn't one of your body parts. If you'd completely smashed your face, I mean the phone is worth a lot, but I think the face would have been worse.
- Andrew: It's true, the phone **broke my fall**.
- Morag: Oh.
- Andrew: So, I was running downhill and you know how people say just before they get into a car accident or they get into any sort of accident that time feels like it's going in slow motion?
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: This totally happened to me, I was running, going fast, then all of a sudden it felt like I was just paused in the air. And the next thing I knew, I was on the ground and I kinda checked myself out to make sure that I was OK. And then I looked at my phone and realized oh no, my phone took the **brunt of the fall**. But, you're right, I have to be thankful that I didn't really injure myself.
- Morag: That could hurt your hobby a lot.
- Andrew: Totally could prevent me from doing it, and now I'm questioning like, hmm, do I really wanna keep doing this? I'm not sure, but.
- Morag: Well, at least you had a bit of fun, before you broke your phone.
- Andrew: I don't know, this is also new for me, to do something that I like and then have a bad experience and then be afraid of it, and not want to do it again. This is new. Have you ever experienced anything like this?
- Morag: I definitely have, especially in the being afraid of injuring yourself issue. I've experienced that before, or thinking something is really fun, some physical activity, and then early on hurting yourself and then never going back to it.
- Andrew: Right.
- Morag: Even though it doesn't necessarily make sense—you're not going to hurt yourself all the time—there's that fear that gets locked in your head as part of that activity. You know that it's dangerous because you hurt yourself. I did that with some, like, aerobics classes. I was having a great time, but then I twisted my ankle and was, like, no more aerobics. Never again. Yeah.

Andrew: Well, Morag, we're going to continue to talk about this topic of fear today in this Simplified Speech episode. Simplified Speech is the series where we let you guys **listen in** on completely natural English conversations. But we speak at a slightly slower pace than we do in our everyday lives. Now, guys, if you really wanna take advantage of this episode, we recommend that you study along with our study guide. And you can get the study guide on our website, which is Culips.com. So, pause the episode now, head on over to the website, get the study guide, and then continue listening to us.

So, Morag, do you think you really were just put off from going to aerobics again or you just actually didn't wanna go exercise?

Morag: Hey now.

Andrew: That's how I would think.

Morag: Yeah, no, I mean it is a fear thing, 'cause you get this idea that it's dangerous or that the negative experience will happen again, you know?

Andrew: No, I know exactly. Actually, as you were telling me that story, I remembered a similar thing that happened to me. And that's when I was a high school student. I was really into skateboarding, but then one day when I was skateboarding, I fell off my skateboard and fell backwards and hit my head on a curb really hard. And I didn't have a helmet on because, you know, cool kids don't wear helmets, right?

Morag: Oh.

Andrew: So I **smoked my head quite hard** and ...

Morag: **Smoked it on the pavement?**

Andrew: On the pavement, yeah. And I just didn't really skateboard again after that. I transitioned more to a bicycle after that 'cause I was just like, ah, it's not worth it to hurt myself like that.

Morag: Yeah, skateboarding is dangerous. Actually, the real lesson there is not wearing a helmet is dangerous.

Andrew: These were simpler times. People didn't wear helmets back in the 90s.

Morag: I don't know, man, there's some fun pictures of me as a small child riding a bike with a helmet on. Like a cool kid, yeah.

Andrew: Like a cool kid, you were **ahead of your time**, Morag.



- Morag: Yeah, well, I actually, I have been in one kind of intense bike accident when I was living briefly in Toronto. And I don't know if any of our listeners will know what a streetcar is?
- Andrew: What is a streetcar?
- Morag: A streetcar is something that they have in some cities, they're in Toronto and San Francisco, for instance.
- Andrew: Right, right.
- Morag: They are little, kind of, bus-train things that run on tracks on the street and they're usually electrically powered, most of the time.
- Andrew: Right, so there's a bunch of wires hanging over the street and the streetcars actually have these weird arms that hook up to the wires to get their energy to move forward.
- Morag: Exactly, and they go along the street in these little grooves that are in the regular road. They don't have their own lane, they travel like a bus. But they can't go off of their tracks.
- Andrew: They can't turn.
- Morag: They can't turn unless their tracks turn.
- Andrew: I'm already anticipating what you're gonna say here, and I'm cringing already.
- Morag: Well, in Toronto, it is known as a bit of **a rite of passage** for bikers that you get one of your tires stuck in the streetcar track and you get thrown off of your bike. 'Cause the streetcar tracks are about exactly the width of a tire. This happened to me.
- Andrew: Oh no!
- Morag: And luckily—it was bad too, 'cause I was completely thrown off my bicycle—and luckily, though, I went in the opposite direction from the oncoming traffic. But I hit my head, I landed on my head. Luckily, I was wearing a helmet and it cracked, all the way down.
- Andrew: It cracked the helmet?
- Morag: Yup, I might have died.
- Andrew: Wow.



- Morag: If I hadn't been wearing a helmet, and I will never bike without a helmet now.
- Andrew: Yeah, that's very good, it's too sketchy to ride without a helmet. I always ride with my helmet now, as well. But, that sucks that that happened to you, Morag.
- Morag: Yup, so some fear, though, is warranted.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Morag: Fear can be good. It can tell us how to keep ourselves safe.
- Andrew: Now, have you ever been in the situation where you were able to **get over a fear**?
- Morag: This is a fun story.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: Also in Toronto.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: But I was much younger, I visited Toronto with my father when I was about 12. And he and one of my uncles took me up the CN Tower.
- Andrew: OK, the CN Tower is the tallest skyscraper in Canada, actually, I think?
- Morag: Yeah, although it's a, not a building, it's more like the Eiffel Tower or something. It's a structure, it's not an office building or anything.
- Andrew: Right, I should clarify there, it's not a skyscraper, exactly. It's a tower.
- Morag: Yeah, just a tower, it's a stranger tower.
- Andrew: Yes.
- Morag: But they took me up the CN Tower and, at the time, I was really afraid of heights.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: And, so **I was a little on edge**, but I, you know, wanted to **get over that fear** and confront it. Now, the fun bit is that up the CN Tower, there's a section which is a glass floor.
- Andrew: Oh, I don't know if I would like that either.



- Morag: Yeah, a glass floor, and when you step onto it, you can just see straight down to the city.
- Andrew: Wow.
- Morag: I did not choose to step on it though, my dad put me on it. Which is a terrible decision, no one do that. But it worked.
- Andrew: It worked?
- Morag: Yup, I had two choices. One option was to totally **break down** and totally freak out. And the other one was to **get over it**, and so I **got over it**. Still, bad parenting.
- Andrew: Well, we have that expression in English: **face your fear**. To **face your fear**, and a lot of people recommend that if you're afraid of something, you should just **face that fear**. Look it in the eye and try to conquer it that way. And sounds like that's what you were forced to do.
- Morag: Yeah, you **face the fear** and it either gets the best of you or you **get over it**.
- Andrew: Very, very cool. Well, you know, I think maybe a lot of our listeners—well, not our listeners, because our listeners are awesome at English—but, English and other language learners, in general, can have this deep fear about learning a language. 'Cause it's a scary thing, trying to speak with people that are usually maybe from a different culture than you are or, you know, you're afraid of making mistakes. And this is something that we should apply to language learning, too. We should not be afraid, we should just go for it, because we can **get over that fear** and we can actually do it. We can speak in English.
- Morag: Speaking with other people in a second or third or fourth or wherever you are language is terrifying at first.
- Andrew: It is scary.
- Morag: It's really scary, but it's definitely a fear that should be conquered. Everybody can do it.
- Andrew: And I think that, you know, we're doing it right now, everyone. We're studying English, we're listening to English, this is a step in the right direction. But don't give up, if you feel nervous or a little afraid of English, just keep going, 'cause it will get better and better, easier and easier every day.



Morag, I think we will leave it at that for today. And I wanna thank everybody for listening and thanks, Morag, for sharing those great stories with us—and I'm glad you didn't die on the streets of Toronto.

Morag: Oh thank you.

Andrew: Our website is Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. That's the place where you can check out all of our past episodes. And, as well, that's the place where you can download the study guide for this episode that you just listened to. We are on social media; our Facebook page is Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast. We will be back soon with another episode, so stay tuned for that, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Morag: Bye.

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Detailed Explanations

To break a fall

Verb, idiomatic

To break a fall means to soften the impact of something or someone when it falls and hits the ground.

Dialogue examples:

- Lane: When I was younger, I used to build treehouses in the forest with my friends.
- Jean: I used to do that too.
- Lane: It was really fun. One time, I fell out of the tree and landed on my head.
- Jean: Oh no! Were you OK?
- Lane: Yeah, luckily a pile of leaves **broke my fall**.

- Kevin: That looks like a pretty nasty bruise on your arm.
- Chelsea: Yeah, I tripped down the stairs last night.
- Kevin: Ouch, that musta hurt.
- Chelsea: Yeah, I was lucky I didn't break my arm. I was carrying a basket of laundry and my clothes **broke my fall**. I still got this big ol' bruise, though!

To take the brunt of [something]

Verb

To take the brunt of [something] means to receive the majority of the negative effects of something. For example, in this episode, Andrew's phone **took the brunt of his fall**. His phone took most of the damage caused by his fall. Andrew wasn't hurt, but his phone was.

Dialogue examples:

- Rex: Rough day on the stock markets.
- Jacky: That's for sure.
- Rex: The sad thing is that it's all the small investors who will **take the brunt of the losses**. The big banks will be fine.
- Jacky: Yeah, it's true.

- Grace: Did you read the editorial in the newspaper today? People are really upset with the mayor right now.
- Trevor: Yeah, even though this scandal isn't his fault, he is taking the **brunt of the criticism**.
- Grace: It's not fair, but that's politics.

To listen in

Phrasal verb, inseparable

To **listen in** means to listen to a conversation that other people are having. Usually, **listening in** to a conversation is a bad thing, because it is rude and inconsiderate. However, when you **listen in** to a Culips episode, it's great because you can hear how native speakers talk in English and you can learn how to speak like them.

Maybe you're wondering: What's the difference between **listen** and **listen in**? To listen means to hear. **To listen in** means to focus your attention and listen to a conversation that other people are having.

Dialogue examples:

- Dora: I read in the newspaper that flip phones are making a comeback.
- Rhys: Really? Why's that?
- Dora: Some people think that their smart phones are **listening in** to their conversations and using that data to advertise products to them.
- Rhys: Scary stuff if true!



Lucas: How was dinner last night?

Seymour: The food was great, but this nosey couple at the table next to us kept **listening in** to our conversation.

Lucas: That's annoying.

Seymour: Yeah, I had to tell them to mind their own business!

To smoke your [body part] on [something]

Verb, very informal

To smoke your [body part] on [something] means to hit a part of your body against something very hard. In this episode, Andrew says that he **smoked his head on a curb** after falling off his skateboard. In other words, he hit his head very hard against the edge of the sidewalk in a skateboard accident.

Dialogue examples:

Angela: Did you hear that Chris is in the hospital?

Bryce: No, what happened?

Angela: He **smoked his head on a rock** during a snowboarding accident.

Bryce: Yikes! Will he be OK?

Angela: Yeah, he'll be OK, but he has to stay in the hospital for a couple of weeks.

Rina: Ouch!

Eddy: What happened?

Rina: I just **smoked my toe on the door!**

Eddy: Are you OK?

Rina: I don't know. I think I might have broken it.

Eddy: Oh yeah. That doesn't look too good. I'll take you to the hospital. Come on, let's go.

To be ahead of your time

Phrase

When you are **ahead of your time**, you do things or think things before other people. In this episode, Andrew says that Morag was **ahead of her time** because she wore a bike helmet at a time when many people considered wearing a bike helmet to be uncool.

Dialogue examples:

Max: Do you remember the first time you connected to the internet?

Talia: I do! It was way back in 1991.

Max: 1991? Wow, that's early. You were **ahead of your time**.

Julianna: What do you think of my new coat?

Rose: Honestly, I don't like it. It's too bulky or something.

Julianna: I'm just **ahead of my time**. Next year, everyone will be wearing coats like this. Just you wait and see.

A rite of passage

Noun

A **rite of passage** is a ceremony or an event that marks an important change in your life. Graduating from high school and getting married are considered **rites of passage**. In this episode, Morag jokes that crashing your bike on Toronto's streetcar tracks is **a rite of passage**. In other words, it is a ritual that everyone needs to do if they want to be considered a true Torontonian.

Dialogue examples:

Ben: What was the first band you really loved?

Travis: The Smashing Pumpkins, definitely. They were like a **rite of passage** for me. After listening to them, my whole world changed. What about you?

Ben: For me it was Oasis. They were my favorite band when I was in high school.

Jasper: I missed class last week. What was our homework?

Marine: We have to write a three-page research report on a **rite of passage** ceremony from an ancient culture.

Jasper: Sounds difficult. When is it due?

Marine: At the end of the month.

To be on edge

Adjective, informal

If someone feels **on edge**, they feel nervous and stressed. In this episode, Morag says she felt **on edge** when she went to the top of the CN Tower, because she was afraid of heights.

Dialogue examples:

Elliot: Wanna go out for dinner tonight?

Ruth: I can't, sorry. I've got a big project deadline coming up and I'm feeling pretty **on edge**.

Elliot: That's OK. We can go out together a different time.

Waylon: How's Zack doing these days? I heard he's been really **on edge** after losing his job.

Su-Jin: Yeah, he isn't doing too well. If you could give him a call, I think that would really cheer him up.

Waylon: No problem. I'll call him later this week.

To break down

Phrasal verb, inseparable

When someone **break downs**, they lose control over their emotions. They are unable to contain how they feel and often start to cry.



Dialogue examples:

Xavier: Hearing this song makes me want to **break down** and cry.

Arthur: Why?

Xavier: It just reminds me of a really sad point in my life when I was going through a breakup.

Arthur: Oh, OK. I'll change the music. We can listen to something else.

Tina: What's the hardest part of your job? HR is a difficult industry to work in, I've heard.

Beth: It can be. Definitely the hardest part of my job is letting people go.

Tina: Have you ever had to do that before?

Beth: Yes, and this one time I had someone **break down** right in my office. He begged me for his job back, but I just couldn't do anything about the situation. It was out of my hands.

To face your fear

Verb, fixed expression

If someone **faces their fear**, they do something that scares them. In this episode, Morag shares that she **faced her fear** of heights by going to the top of the CN Tower and standing on its glass floor.

Dialogue examples:

Dane: Let's go white water rafting this summer.

Isabelle: No way! You know I'm scared of that.

Dane: It's time to **face your fear**, Isabelle! The only way to stop being scared of it is to do it!



Kathleen: I have to fly to New York tomorrow, and I'm freaking out.

Maya: Are you afraid of flying?

Kathleen: Yeah, I'm super afraid of it. It's a bit embarrassing, but I've actually never flown on an airplane before.

Maya: Well, this is great. It will give you a change to **face your fear!** I think once you actually fly, you'll realize that it's not so bad.

Kathleen: I hope so.

To get over [something]

Phrasal verb, inseparable

To get over [something] means to overcome a difficulty. In this episode, Morag says that she **got over her fear of heights**. In other words, Morag overcame her fear and she is not scared of heights any more.

Dialogue examples:

Cliff: Have you heard from Sara lately? Ever since her breakup with Paul, I haven't seen her around.

Trisha: Yeah, she's just taking a bit of time to herself to **get over him**. I'm sure she'll be back out and about in no time.

Ron: We got invited over to the Smiths' house for dinner on Saturday. What should I tell them? Would you like to go?

Rebecca: Tell them we're busy. I still haven't **gotten over** how rude they were last time we hung out with them. I need more time before we can get together again.

Quiz

1. What does to listen in mean?

- a) to prepare to hear something
- b) to listen to something private
- c) to listen carefully
- d) to pay attention

2. How do you feel if you are on edge?

- a) excited
- b) happy
- c) nervous
- d) depressed

3. What is something you CANNOT get over?

- a) a break up
- b) a coupon
- c) a cold
- d) a fear

4. Which of the following is a rite of passage?

- a) wedding
- b) birthday party
- c) Christmas
- d) Halloween

5. Which is a synonym for smoke a [body part] on [something]?

- a) light on fire
- b) hit
- c) scratch
- d) touch



Writing or Discussion Questions

1. What are you afraid of?
2. Have you ever had to face a fear?
3. What can people do to get over their fears?
4. What are some of the most common fears in your culture?
5. In this episode, Morag and Andrew both talked about getting injured. Have you ever been in an accident that caused an injury?
6. What rites of passage exist in your culture?
7. Describe a time where you or someone you know freaked out.

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.c 3.b 4.a 5.b

Episode credits

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