

## Simplified Speech #089 – Personal style

### Episode description

Regardless of what magazines and articles say about fashion, everyone has their own unique, personal style. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne describe their personal styles and talk about how they've changed over the years.

### Fun fact

Men's clothing has the buttons on the right side. Women's buttons are on the left and sometimes the back. This is because some women used to be dressed by servants. As most people are right-handed, having the buttons on the left made it easier for the servants to button up the clothes.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To make an impact
- To set your intention
- V-neck
- Downsize
- Do [someone] a solid
- To pare down



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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. My name is Andrew.

**Suzanne:** And my name is Suzanne.

**Andrew:** And you're listening to Culips.

**Andrew:** Hello there, everyone. This is Simplified Speech, the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations, but we talk just a little bit slower than we do in our everyday lives. And, everyone, there is a study guide for this episode. It's available on our website, Culips.com, and it includes a transcript and some detailed vocabulary explanations and examples of the interesting vocabulary that we'll use here today, as well as a quiz and some prompts you can use for speaking practice or writing practice. It's a great resource and we highly recommend that you check it out. And to do that, just visit Culips.com.

**Andrew:** Today, I am not alone. I am joined by my cohost Suzanne. Suzanne, hey, how are you?

**Suzanne:** I'm well, Andrew. I am well, a little tired. But doing well. How are you?

**Andrew:** I am I doing well, actually kind of similar to you, Sue, a little bit tired. Suzanne, just before we started recording, we were talking about how busy we've been this week. So I think that's why we're both a little bit exhausted, but we're OK. And we've got a great episode planned here for our listeners today, which is all about personal style.

**Suzanne:** Oh, yeah.

**Andrew:** Personal style. Suzanne, I can see you are wearing a very bright red sweater today.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, it's actually orange. But it is kind of that, like, it does look red in in this lighting I think, but—

**Andrew:** I'm pretty colour-blind.

**Suzanne:** But also, it's, it is, it's, like, a red-orange. But when I wear it, I definitely feel like, you know, you can see me coming from far away because it's very bright.

**Andrew:** Bright and bold, yeah. And actually, Suzanne, before we jump right into this conversation topic, let's help our listeners focus on today's conversation by asking some comprehension questions. So, guys, we have three listening comprehension questions for you. Please keep your ears open for the answers while Suzanne and I chat here, and we will tell you what the answers are at the end of the episode, after the closing music.

1. What colour of clothes did Suzanne wear when she lived in New York City?
2. What do Andrew and Suzanne both not like to display on their clothes?
3. How does the clothing store Madewell recycle old jeans?

**Andrew:** So, Suzanne, you're wearing this kind of bright, bold orangey-red sweater and this **makes a big impact**, a big statement. Would you say that your personal style is usually like this, kind of bold and exciting?

**Suzanne:** Hmm ... You know, I think for a long time, when I was living in New York City, I wore so much black, I wore a lot of black clothing. And I would say about 1, maybe 2 years ago, I started to be tired of wearing only black. I became tired of just black. So I started to purchase clothes that had more colour and more vibrant, vibrancy, I would say, in them and made me happy. And I found they, when I wore bright colours now and again, like, you know, from time to time—you don't feel maybe colourful every day—but sometimes it really helped me to, kind of, I don't know, wake up or be happier. Like, for example, today it was raining here. It was very grey and rainy here in Montreal. And so today I wore a bright colour and it helped me to kind of stay awake and give me energy and keep me going. So, yeah, I started wearing brighter colours. But I wouldn't say it's every day. I wouldn't say that. Yeah, I guess if you look at my, I'm looking at my closet now. I'm like, there's a lot of blue and grey and black in there, too.

**Andrew:** Wow. So that's interesting. It's kind of like a way that you can take charge of your mood, right? You're kind of **setting your intention** at the start of the day: I'm going to have a good day today, I'm gonna be positive. And I'm going to wear these bright colours to reflect this.

**Suzanne:** Since we've been, you know, in confinement and self-quarantining, I'm doing a lot of online teaching and seeing myself on the screen quite a bit. So it's affecting me. Normally I don't see myself when I'm teaching. I'm just teaching and looking at everyone else. But I've been seeing myself quite a bit. So it's helping me to boost my mood when I see a brighter colour on the screen, I think.

**Andrew:** OK, I really like that decision that you've made to brighten up your wardrobe. And, you know, Suzanne, I'm kind of like you were when you used to live in New York, I guess. You can see the colour of my shirt right now.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, it's, like, it's nice, though. It's, like, a dark grey, kind of.

**Andrew:** Dark grey. Yeah. I would say that I have two kinds of styles. I have my professional style, like my work lifestyle, and then my personal lifestyle. So, like, what I actually choose to wear. And for work clothes, and for going to my job at the university, I actually try to dress—on purpose—as boring as possible. Like, I don't want to really have to think about, you know, looking cool or being stylish. Any of those boxes, I'm not trying to tick those at all. I'm not trying to be, like, the cool prof on campus. I just want, you know, I want to look nice, of course, but I have just very functional clothing that I wear that's just usually, like, a collared shirt and some slacks and that's kind of it. It's like, almost like a uniform, you know?

**Suzanne:** Yeah, it's true.

**Andrew:** And so that's my work style. But my personal style. I like to try and keep as clean and plain as possible. So this kind of T-shirt that I'm wearing now, just a plain grey T-shirt? This is very standard. I think almost every day, I will choose to wear something like this, or maybe I will alternate and change to a black colour.

**Suzanne:** OK. So it's really like a standard kind of ... But doesn't it help you sort of take the pressure of making choices out of your day?

**Andrew:** That's exactly why I do it. Exactly, because I don't have to think about what I'm going to wear or stress out about what I'm going to wear. Of course, I do have some nicer clothes for certain occasions. And in the winter, you know, I wear sweaters and hoodies, but usually the sweaters and hoodies reflect kind of the similar style. You know, they're usually pretty plain, no logos. I don't really like logos or brands.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, I'm not a logo person. I just never have been. Yeah, me neither.

**Andrew:** There was a sale recently. It's a company that I like to buy clothes from online. Kind of a smaller, smaller company that supports their workers and has, you know, high-quality products. So I like to support them when I can and they had a big sale, so I bought a lot of clothes from them at the same time. And when I got—

**Suzanne:** Like Christmas.

**Andrew:** Yeah, kind of.

**Suzanne:** Happy birthday to me.

**Andrew:** When I got the box and I opened up to look at all of the new clothes that I had bought, and pretty much it was, like, the clothes that I'm going to be wearing for the next year or two, essentially. I was laughing at myself because they were all the same. I'm, like, why did I buy so many of the same shirts? They're all black. There's like two grey ones, so.

**Suzanne:** Hey, when you find what works, sometimes it's fine, you know? I do that. I'll find a really, maybe, just like a cut of a T-shirt, you know? That's, like, the perfect **V** and it, like, fits me really well and falls off my shoulder really well or whatever. And I'll just buy, like, two in white, two in grey, two in black, two in, you know, whatever, red or something and so I have, like, my kind of uniform.

**Suzanne:** You know, I find that spring, summer, and fall are more interesting to dress for as far as, you know, it, like, I dress in, I don't know, I guess. I mean, I wear women's clothes, but I don't always dress totally feminine. Like, I don't wear a lot of dresses, though I do have a bunch and I do have skirts, but, you know, I probably would say I wear pants and jeans mostly.

**Suzanne:** And in the winter, though, in Montreal, I find that it's literally like that as I have a bunch of different colour sweaters, a bunch of different coloured T-shirts, and then jeans, like black and blue, like, maybe two kinds of black, two kinds of blue. And it's just about jeans, a T-shirt, and a sweater, like, every single day, in the winter. It's the same uniform. It's just different colours, you know?

**Andrew:** Right, right. Yeah, well, it does take a lot of the pressure off when you have just a simplified wardrobe. Yeah, I think that's one of the reasons that I choose this style. You know, I, when I was preparing for this episode, I was thinking about this topic a little bit last night, and I remembered something that my girlfriend mentioned to me when we first started dating and I took it as, like, one of the biggest compliments that I've ever received. And we were talking about our kind of ideal types. What is our ideal type of partner. And she said that her ideal type of guy is a good dresser, and that she could never be with somebody who is, like, a sloppy dresser. That would just drive her crazy. And so the implication was that I was not a sloppy dresser and that I was a good dresser. And I was like, wow, that is like the biggest compliment I've ever received, I think?

**Suzanne:** That's awesome. Yeah. It is a nice compliment. It is. And I know that, also, there's not as many options for men. So, like, I find, you have to almost be more creative because there's, I think, more and more things are becoming more kind of genderless. Like you can really, you know—things can be male or female, and I really appreciate that because like, even this, what I'm wearing, this kind of sweater and collared shirt. I dress kind of tomboy a little bit sometimes. I would say like a tomboy, tomboy chic. That's my style.

**Andrew:** Tomboy chic. I like that.

**Suzanne:** Right, Skoshi? Wouldn't you say? Skoshi is here with me.

**Andrew:** Skoshi in the background.

**Suzanne:** I think he would agree. But I think having that kind of, like, simple accessibility and simplicity is for sure something that is important to my personal style.

**Andrew:** That's cool. Sue, where do you usually buy your clothes? Do you go to a shopping mall? Do you shop online? Do you buy new clothes, used clothes? Do you go to clothing swaps?

**Suzanne:** Oh yeah, I've done all of these. I've done all of these. I've done clothing swaps. I've done malls and also stores. I mean, when I lived in New York City, I for sure would go shopping to locations more often. Now, there's no shops open right now so I'm not really shopping outside, so I'm ordering things online. I like places that are more eco-friendly, I would say, but in the sense where, you know, they have fair work conditions and materials are sourced, you know, in a conscious way. But that doesn't always happen. So, I find that if I could do, like, 80% of the more globally conscious shopping and 20% of the cheaper, quick, quick shopping, quick fix, then I'm OK.

**Suzanne:** There is a store, though, that I really love that's called Madewell and they recycled jeans and stuff and use them, your old jeans, for insulation in building homes. Which is really cool, because I feel like we always throw out jeans. But they're not in Canada. They're only in the US. So it's frustrating because anytime I ordered from them, it's like the price of the shipping is like the price of the actual clothing, like, it's basically just double.

**Andrew:** Yeah, the cross-border shopping is insane, then the shipping and the prices that you have to pay when buying outside of Canada. For me, personally, I'm trying to make an effort to not buy as many clothes because, yeah, just trying to **downsize** and de-clutter my life in general, and it's kind of been a trend over the last year or two for me.

**Andrew:** You know, when I'm in Canada, I love to go to thrift stores and buy vintage clothes and used clothes. You know, I said that I mostly wear just a plain, coloured T-shirt and almost always just plain jeans. But you can find other cool things at thrift stores that sort of can accentuate your personal style. Like you might be able to find cool vintage jackets, or a hat. I have no hair, so I'm a big hat wearer, usually. When I go out, I wear a hat. So you might find something like that or a cool belt or, you know, lots of accessories. So, I love Value Village. Yeah, sunglasses. Value Village is one of my favourite stores. It's a big thrift store. And, yeah, it's also good for the Earth to recycle the clothes, right? Instead of just manufacturing and making more, more, more, more, more, we can **do the Earth a solid** and recycle.

**Suzanne:** Reuse it and recycle. Yeah, there's actually, I went through some of my clothes to kind of **pare down** and I started to find some things that I thought, you know, could maybe be repurposed into masks, possibly, like, because I have a sewing machine. And I was, like, maybe I'll make some masks out, like, you know, doubling up on these materials, but making them, you know, a sturdy and everything, but more recycled. Could be, could be good.

**Andrew:** So that's an awesome idea. Guys, if you're listening and you're wondering why in the heck are we talking about quarantine and masks, it's because we are in the middle of the COVID-19 situation pandemic right now. So if you're listening in the future, I'm sure you remember COVID-19. And if you're listening in the present, yeah. This is why it's on the forefront of our minds, talking about quarantine and wearing masks and all of these new realities that we're faced with.

**Andrew:** Suzanne, I think we should probably wrap things up. But that was a very fun conversation, to talk about our personal style. If we had to summarize, if you had to use just one adjective to describe your personal style, Suzanne, how would you describe it?

**Suzanne:** I want my style to be effortless. That's what I'd like. That's what I'd like it to be. Now, whether or not it is, I'm not totally sure. But that's what I'm going for.

**Andrew:** OK, effortless. And I'm going to say simple. Simple style for me, effortless style for you. Love it.

**Suzanne:** Perfect. Now we just need like a runway.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So, thanks, everyone, for tuning in and listening today. We hope that you learned a lot here with us. If you would like to stay up to date with all of the news here at Culips, you can do so by following us on social media. We are on Facebook, on Twitter, on Instagram, and on YouTube. And we are also contactable. You can contact us and get in touch. If you have a suggestion, or an idea for an upcoming episode, you can email us, Suzanne: quiz question. Do you remember our email address?

**Suzanne:** I think I do. It's [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com).

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

**Suzanne:** Bye.

**Andrew:** And here are the answers to the listening comprehension questions.

1. Suzanne wore black clothes when she lived in New York City.
2. Andrew and Suzanne don't like to wear clothes with logos on them. They don't like to display logos on their clothes.
3. Madewell recycles old jeans by turn turning them into housing insulation.



## Detailed Explanations

### To make an impact

Phrasal verb

**To make an impact** is a phrase used to say that you have had an effect on someone, something, or even a situation. When you **make an impact**, you're more noticeable and memorable. In this episode, Andrew says that Suzanne's bold sweater "**makes a big impact**, a big statement." This means that her sweater is noticeable and memorable.

There are a few other phrases that mean the same, or close to the same, as **to make an impact**. These are: **to have an impact**, **to create an impact**, **to make a statement**, and **to make an impression**.

**To have an impact** or **to create an impact** are also used when someone has done something to change the end result. For example, if a company **has an impact** on the environment, they could be polluting (so **having a bad impact**) or cleaning up garbage (so **having a good impact**).

Here are a couple more examples with **to make an impact**:

**Isaiah:** Did you have fun at the dance last night?

**Syeda:** I did. Wait, how'd you know I went to the dance?

**Isaiah:** I was there, too. Saw you across the room.

**Syeda:** Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't see you.

**Isaiah:** No, don't worry about it! Your amazing red dress really **made quite an impact** and is probably the only reason I saw you. Next time I'll wear something red, too.

**Dewei:** Wow, that speaker was fantastic. I didn't know there was so much going on in the environmental science industry.

**Mike:** I hear that. Did you know that guy will **have a huge impact** on whether or not our company invests in the environmental market next quarter?

**Dewei:** Really? How so?

**Mike:** His company is in talks with ours right now!



## To set your intention

Phrasal verb

**To set your intention** means to decide to act, think, feel, or be a certain way. An intention is an aim, a purpose, or an attitude that a person wants to have. In this episode, Suzanne mentions that she'll wear bright colours on rainy days or days when she wants to be happy. Andrew comments, "You're kind of **setting your intention** at the start of the day: I'm going to have a good day today, I'm gonna be positive. And I'm going to wear these bright colours to reflect this." So Suzanne's intention is to be positive and have a good day.

**Setting an intention** is used in yoga and meditation. When someone starts a daily yoga or meditation session, they will **set their intention** for that practice. This is different from setting a goal. A goal is usually focussed on what you want but don't have. An intention is focused on the present moment and how you feel.

Here are a couple more examples with **to set your intention**:

**Fen:** You look happy today.

**Renard:** Thanks! I feel good. I **set an intention** this morning to be positive today and it actually worked.

**Fen:** **Set an intention?** Do you meditate now?

**Renard:** No, nope. I read somewhere that **setting your intention** is actually really good for you, psychologically, and so I decided to give it a try.

**Fen:** And it works? Even without meditation?

**Renard:** Surprisingly, it does, yeah.

**Saffi:** And the yoga instructor was all, like, "**Set your intention**" and I was all, like, what does that even mean? Like, I intend to do yoga?

**Leyla:** I know, right? I didn't get it either at first. Now I'm all, like, I'll focus on my breathing today. Or I'll focus on thinking before speaking. Just these little things that you try to do throughout the day. It's supposed to be good for you or something.

**Saffi:** That's so weird. Like, I don't how to do that. I'm just gonna do yoga without it.

## V-neck

Noun/adjective

A **V-neck** is a shirt style where the neckline makes a V shape. This term is usually only used for short-sleeved T-shirts or long-sleeved T-shirts. You can use it as a noun (I'm wearing my favourite **V-neck**) or as an adjective (I really like his **V-neck** shirt).

In this episode, Suzanne shortened the term to just **V**. She states: "I'll find ... A cut of a T-shirt, you know? That's, like, the perfect **V** and it, like, fits me really well and falls off my shoulder really well." When she says "perfect **V**," she means a perfect **V-neck** shape.

Here are a couple more examples with **V-neck**:

**Linus:** I really need to get some new shirts. All my T-shirts are from at least a decade ago.

**Farida:** Oh, what size are you? My husband bought a bunch of **V-necks** on sale online and they're all too small for him. We were going to return them but, if you want, and you like them, I could see if he'd want to sell them to you.

**Linus:** Hmm, I'm usually a medium. But I don't really like **V-necks**. They don't really fit my style.

**Farida:** Oh, no problem. We'll return them. If you change your mind, let me know.

**Yong:** Excuse me, do you have this shirt in another colour?

**Store employee:** No, sorry. We just have the one colour for that style. But if you'd like, our **V-neck** shirts here come in six different colours.

**Yong:** Oh, thanks! I'll take a look.

## Downsize

Verb

**Downsize** means to make something smaller or to reduce in size. In this episode, Andrew uses it when talking about reducing how much clothing he owns. He says: "For me, personally, I'm trying to make an effort to not buy as many clothes because, yeah, just trying to **downsize** and de-clutter my life in general."

**Downsize** is most commonly used in companies or organizations to mean that they are firing people to make their company smaller. It is also used by people who are moving into a smaller house because their current home is too large or too expensive.

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

**Bao:** Hey, I hear you're looking to sell your house.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, we put it on the market last week. Now that the kids are married and have families of their own, my wife and I want to **downsize**.

**Bao:** It must be a pain right now, cleaning and maintaining your mansion.

**Jeremy:** It's not a mansion, Bao, but yeah. My wife says she won't clean the whole house anymore, so we're looking for a little two-bedroom house closer to the grandkids.

**Bartram:** Sara! What's all this on the floor? What are you doing?

**Sara:** My office is too cluttered, so I'm just **downsizing** a bit.

**Bartram:** Seriously, this is a mess!

**Sara:** Can you grab the recycling box for me? I'll tidy it up a bit.

**Bartram:** Sure thing ... And I'll help. I think your **downsizing** may take a while.

## Do [someone] a solid Idiom

**Do [someone] a solid** means to do something nice for someone as an act of kindness or as a favour. Essentially, you're helping that person. That being said, you can replace the [someone] with a [something] when talking about organizations or objects that often have a persona attached to them. For example, in this episode, Andrew said, "We can **do the Earth a solid** and recycle." The Earth isn't a person, but it is an object that is often given a personality or persona. So Andrew means that we could be nice to the Earth, do it a favour, and recycle.

Here are a few more examples with **do [someone] a solid**:

**Antonie:** Nima? Can I get your help on something?

**Nima:** Of course! I haven't forgotten you **did me that solid** when you found me that beautiful dress for Chantel's wedding!

**Antonie:** Oh my goodness, you're a lifesaver! Come, I'll show you what's going on.

**Yun:** Ugh, that girl in class wouldn't stop talking. I could barely pay attention to what the professor was saying.

**Terrance:** I know. I wanted to shout at her, "**Do me a solid** and stop talking," but ... I didn't.

**Yun:** No, man, you're too nice to embarrass someone like that. Maybe her friend, that girl she came into class with, will tell her.

**Ioanna:** Class was fun, right? I had so many questions, and the professor was so smart!

**Elizabeth:** Yeah. Smart.

**Ioanna:** Oh no, Lizzie! I think I messed up my makeup. Can you **do me a solid** and tell me if I have lipstick on my teeth?

**Elizabeth:** You don't.

**Ioanna:** Thanks! Oh man, I can't wait for next class. I'm going to do all the reading and have all my questions prepared beforehand. It's going to be great.

## To pare down

Phrasal verb

**To pare down** means to slowly make something smaller, often bit by bit. The phrase comes from the verb to pare, which means to shave off small pieces. For example, you pare the skin off of potatoes with a paring knife. So, when you're **paring something down**, and that thing is not food, you are making it smaller. In this episode, Suzanne mentions that she went through her clothes **to pare down**. This means she reduced the amount of clothing she had.

**To pare down** can also appear as the adjective **pared down**. When something is **pared down**, it is in its simplest form, with no unnecessary features.

Here are a couple more examples with **to pare down**:

**Mee:** All right, Aubrey. Today we're going clean out the storage unit.

**Aubrey:** Wasn't it cleaned out last week?

**Mee:** Yes, but we're going **to pare down** the number of supplies we keep back there. It's gotten too full and we really only need half of that stuff anyways.

**Aubrey:** Oh, yikes. That's a big job.

**Mee:** It is, which is why the two of us will work on this today and let everyone else handle the store. All right then, let's get started.

**Financial advisor:** So, Xaviera, I had a look at the spending habits form you filled out.

**Xaviera:** And? Is there anything I can do to save money?

**Financial advisor:** Yes, there's always something we can do. To start, you'll have **to pare down** your spending and expenses. I've put together a plan for your review. We'll separate your expenses into needs and wants. Here's the chart—I started it for you.

**Xaviera:** I see you've put books under wants. I'm not sure if I agree with you on that one.

**Financial advisor:** This is entirely up to you, though I do suggest that if you're looking for new books to read, you try the library before you go to the bookstore.

## Quiz

### 1. A V-neck is:

- a) A person with a neck shaped like the letter V
- b) A person with the letter V written on their neck
- c) A shirt with a neckline in a V shape
- d) A necklace that makes a V shape

### 2. What did Andrew say about Suzanne's bright sweater?

- a) It made an implication
- b) It made an impact
- c) It had a stain
- d) It had an image

### 3. Which of the following could be used to describe the actions of someone who is going through their belongings in order to reduce the number of things they own?

- a) Downslope, pair up
- b) Downside, pear seed
- c) Upside, paring knife
- d) Downsize, pare down

### 4. When you set your intention, you are:

- a) Deciding to act, think, feel, or be a certain way
- b) Planning to do an activity
- c) Making a shopping list
- d) Setting a goal

### 5. Which of the following could you say if you were asking for a favour?

- a) Could you do me a liquid?
- b) Could you throw me a solid?
- c) Could you give me a solid?
- d) Could you do me a solid?

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Describe your personal style and explain why or how it makes an impact.
2. What are some ways you set your intention every day?
3. Other than the V-neck, there are many different shirt styles. Which is your favourite and why?
4. If you were downsizing and needed to pare down your belongings, what are a few things you would throw out, donate, or recycle? Why?
5. Has anyone ever done you a solid before? If so, what was it? If not, describe a time when you wished someone had stepped in to help you.



## Quiz Answers

1.c    2.b    3.d    4.a    5.d

### Episode credits

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