

AD-FREE

Simplified Speech #165 – What were you like as a teenager?

Episode description

We all have stories about our teenage years – some funny, some awkward. In this episode, Andrew and Kassy take a look back at their teenage selves and share their personal stories. Tune in to find out more!

Simplified Speech is the Culips series designed for beginner and intermediate English language learners. The series features natural, easy-to-understand conversations between two native speakers. By following along, you'll increase your vocabulary and improve your listening skills in English.

Fun fact

Did you know that just like humans, animals go through a rebellious phase during their teenage years as well? Elephants and monkeys have been observed showing similar behaviors as human teenagers, such as disobeying their parents, showing aggression, and being more adventurous.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Angsty
- Slob
- To go [your] own way
- To blossom into
- Social butterfly
- Make it up as [you] goes along



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Simplified Speech episode 165. What were you like as a teenager? Featuring Andrew and Kassy. Hey, Kassy. How's it going?

Kassy: I'm doing great, Andrew, and you?

Andrew: I'm good too, Kassy. And I'm excited for today's topic. Also, a little bit nervous about today's topic, but excited, I suppose. We're going to be hopping into a time machine to go back and revisit our teen years. And we're gonna talk about our memories of what being a teenager was like.

Kassy: Sounds like a fun topic, Andrew. I can't wait to hear about some of your really awkward **angsty** stories. The good, the bad, the ugly, everything that comes with being a teenager. I'll kick off the conversation here, Andrew by asking you the first question.

Andrew: All right, shoot, what would you like to know?

Kassy: OK, I'm curious. How did you spend your free time as a teenager?

Andrew: How did I spend my free time as a teenager? Well, to be honest, I don't think there's a huge change between now and then, except for the amount of free time. So, how I spent it is very similar. I liked music. I loved playing music, I spent a lot of time playing music, like guitar, piano, drums, any musical instrument I was really interested in. So, playing music was a huge thing for me when I was a teenager. Also, video games, I was a massive gamer too. I loved to play video games, Nintendo 64, Sega Dreamcast, and Sony

PlayStation. Those are the three consoles that I remember. Plus, playing PC games. My favourite game was Age of Empires. So, playing online games, and just games with my friends in general. Something that I did a lot when I was a teen that I don't do now, really. But yeah, I mean, I just remember having so much free time when I was a teenager. And now I have not very much so that really, really has changed.

Kassy: Yeah, if only we can have those years back of endless free time.

Andrew: I also remember spending a lot of time with my friends. Like every day, you would see your friends and hang out with them every day, at school or after school or on the weekends, like all the time you would be spending time with your friends. And now unfortunately, I don't get to see my friends too often. It's like everybody's busy with their family life and professional life. And in fact, just before we started recording here Kassy, we're recording in early January right now, I'm not sure when this episode will come out. But we're in early January. I was texting with my friend, and she was like, "Let's meet up in March." So, we're scheduling already for two months in the future to try and hang out.

Kassy: Yep.

Andrew: It's just really difficult. So that's a huge change from when I was a teenager and my current life. How about you? How did you spend your time when you were a teen?

Kassy: I think I spent it pretty similarly to how I do now. I was a huge bookworm back then, so a lot of books. I did sports practice every day. So, I think I exercised more. I wasn't really any more fit. I've never been great at sports. I just like participating in them.

Andrew: What sport did you do?

Kassy: I did cross-country running in the fall, swimming in the winter, and track and field long-distance running in spring.

Andrew: Really all this time? You know, my hobby is running.

Kassy: Yeah, I don't do it anymore.

Andrew: We could have been running together this whole time, Kassy. I had no idea that you were also into running. I guess back in the day, not anymore?

Kassy: Yeah, yeah. What else? I really liked sleeping. I would come home from school and take the best naps.

Andrew: Yeah, it's true. Teens need to spend a lot of time sleeping it's really important for your development and growth. And I think teenagers need just like tons of sleep, right?

Kassy: They don't get enough of it. I can tell you as a high school teacher myself, they are like walking zombies all the time.

Andrew: Right. Yeah, yeah unfortunately, a lot of students these days don't get enough sleep. But I remember getting my fair share when I was younger. Like on the weekend, it would be very, very common for me to wake up at like 1pm.

Kassy: Yep.

Andrew: You know, just miss the whole morning.

Kassy: Now, you can't even fathom that. You're like, it is my weekend. I'm getting up early and enjoying every single second.

Andrew: But yeah, I remember like often waking up and it being 1pm and it's not like I was going crazy. You know, I was never one of those like party teens that would go out

and drink or anything like that. I was a very kind of goody two shoes type teenager, I think, for the most part. But just playing video games until like, 2am, and then sleeping until 12pm. That was like a typical Friday, Saturday for me.

Kassy: Yeah, same except instead of the video games, it was probably reading books or watching movies or something.

Andrew: Kassy, what was your fashion like when you were a teenager? Were you like one of the cool kids? Were you on the cutting edge of fashion or?

Kassy: I was so shy in middle school. So early teen years. I don't know why but I just hated anything besides sweatpants and sweatshirt. I was such a **slob**. I don't know what the word for it is, I was so lazy. But in high school, I branched out more and I don't know, I would call myself like "comfy casual." The sweatpants turned into jeans. The sweatshirts turned into like cute tops. I don't know. I didn't try very hard. How about you?

Andrew: I don't think I tried too hard either. I'm trying to remember. When I was like, early teens, definitely sportswear was big. I remember wearing a lot of Nike, a lot of Adidas, lots of athletic-type clothing. And then when I was a bit older, I started getting into going to thrift stores. And like thrifting, going to buy like old and vintage clothes. I remember some of my friends really had no idea. Like why are you wearing that shirt? It's like, from the 70s.

Kassy: It's cool, man, come on. Get with it.

Andrew: So, I think to some extent I was on my own, I wasn't really following the trends. When I look back you know, every once in a while, you'll see on social media like, "things that every kid who grew up in the 2000s will recognize" and I see a lot of the fashion trends that look so terrible in retrospect like one big thing was frosted tips.

Kassy: Ah, that was a little bit before me, but yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, my generation like guys dyeing the tips of their hair, especially at the front dyeing it blonde.

Kassy: Didn't Timberlake start that, Justin?

Andrew: Yeah, probably some pop star. Anyways, I never did that but looking back, I'm like glad I didn't do that. It looks terrible. I thought it did then and I do now and there was some other fashion trends like that that I didn't really follow at all.

Kassy: Yeah, wearing a Hollister and Abercrombie were huge in middle school, high school.

Andrew: Yeah, big brands. So yeah, I didn't really follow the fashion trends too much. I'm not trying to say that I was fashionable at all. I probably looked terrible in retrospect, but I wasn't following the trends. Kassy, what about your relationship with your family as a teen? You know, for a lot of teens, it's a time of angst. Get a little bit angry. Maybe rebel against your parents. Were you an **angsty**, rebellious teenager?

Kassy: I was pretty bad at age 13 or 14, kind of earlier, I think. I was pretty good by high school. My mom barely remembers my **angsty** phase because my sister was a terror. She came three years later than me, so my mom only remembers her bad stuff and remembers me as being the older angel daughter.

Andrew: Nice. You got out of it because of her?

Kassy: Yes. How about your family?

Andrew: Yeah, in my family there wasn't really any big rebellion or anything. My brother and sister were pretty well behaved, and I think I was as well. But maybe if I did start to rebel, and I wouldn't even say rebel, but just maybe not want to live the same life as my

parents have exactly, probably happened a little later like 17-18-19. From my younger teen years, I was like I said, pretty goody two shoes, but then a little bit later that's when **I went my own way**. I found my own path in life.

Kassy: Yes. I don't know, I feel grateful for my family. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was a teenager. I even had like a crisis where I was like, "Do I even want to go to university? Maybe I'll just join the military." So glad I didn't do that. I was like directionless, but I was very independent. My family are all like very smart and very supportive. And they're all super financial savvy. So, we didn't grow up with like, a crap ton of money. They were not rich, but we never wanted for anything. And my mom never gave us an allowance. Like, she'd occasionally give us money if we wanted to go with our friends to the movies. But like if we wanted to do anything extra, we had to earn it. And my- my first job I got when I was 14 or 15. And I think that really helped me grow in my teenage years and **blossom into** a successful adult.

Andrew: Yeah, I also had a job when I was in high school, maybe not quite, well, I was doing some work. Actually, at a recording studio was kind of the first thing I remember doing. My piano teacher, I was taking piano lessons and he set up this little recording studio in his home. And I would do some very basic audio related tasks. This is so far back in the day, but he would record on audio tape actual tape, audio tape, called ADAT and I would transfer that ADAT tape to the computer. Make a digital copy of it. That's the first thing I remember getting paid for that was probably around 13 or 14 years old. And then later on when I was maybe 16, or 17, I got my first real job at a drugstore. Kassy, I think that's one thing that I've noticed that is a difference between life for me here in Korea. And maybe it's like this for you in Thailand, where you live now as well, is that in Canada, in the USA, it's really common for high school students to have part time jobs. It's not something that everybody does. I had many classmates who didn't have part time jobs. And I was jealous of them that they could just spend their weekend very leisurely while I had to work. But I've noticed that here in Korea, it's like the job of a student, high school student, is just studying. And they study a ton. They're always studying, but they're not working like that.

Kassy, from your experience growing up in the States, how many of your classmates had part time jobs? Would you say it was like 50/50?

Kassy: Our classes were separated by skill level, like honors were the advanced kids and then college prep, were like the level below that. And then the lowest level. I feel like the honors kid mostly, a lot of them either had summer jobs only, or they didn't have jobs at all. And then the college prep kids, they usually had summer jobs and also maybe like jobs during the school year. So, it just depended on, I guess, economic levels and then also rigor of classwork.

Andrew: I see. What about your social life as a teenager? Were you a **social butterfly**?

Kassy: Yeah, I was not very popular. But I was cool with that, I didn't like the pressure. I- I would call my- my teenage years a transformation. I went from a really shy caterpillar to a more confident, happy version of myself in high school. And I was going to touch on that actually, it was because of my friends. You mentioned earlier how you hung out with your friends so much more than you do now. And it is amazing how much friends influence you, right? Like a lot of people say you know if you come from a good family that will determine how successful you are. But I think that's just as true for friends if not more so. If you're a part of a really outgoing, dedicated, diverse and interesting friend group. You're going to be really successful in life. You get skills, you get confidence, you have like a cheer squad with you. But if you're a part of a friend group that, you know, does a lot of drugs, or is kind of lazy or depressing, you know, that's going to influence your outlook on life as well.

Andrew: Right.

Kassy: So, I think I was lucky. And from what I hear from you are really lucky to have really great supportive friends.

Andrew: Kassy, you quickly touched about this before we hit record, but I wanted to go back to it. And that was talking about what your dream was when you were a teenager. You said you'd never thought you would end up being a teacher. But now you're a teacher. Did you have like a dream career that you wanted to achieve when you were younger?

Kassy: You know, when I was in elementary school, I had lots of weird, unique dreams. But by the time I got to high school, I really didn't know. I don't know, you learn so much at that point. And you think, wow, I could do anything but how could I possibly pick right now? It's a stressful situation. But, I was not one of those kids that was like, I'm going to major in this and get this career four years after I graduate." You know, like, I did not have that plan set. But I did have a passion that I found senior year of high school, I really, really, really fell in love with physics. And that's why I decided to major in it. Had no idea what I was going to do after, but. How about you?

Andrew: Yeah, I think I was the same way. I didn't really have a career goal or plan. And in fact, I kind of didn't even know if I wanted to go to university or not until maybe my final year of high school. And I didn't even really think too deeply about going to university. I just kind of like, threw out some applications and saw what stuck. So yeah, I was kind of like an aimless teenager, I wasn't one of those students who's really focused and trying to achieve a goal from a young age. I just had no idea. I was kind of **making it up as I went along**. And I think I found my path eventually, but it took a while.

Kassy: You know, even there's a lot of adults out there who are still wandering, you know this path is good for now, but I could do something else later. It's part of life.

Andrew: It's part of life. Yeah. And sometimes, you know, we work with students, right, Kassy? I work with university students, you work with-

Kassy: High school.

Andrew: High school students. OK, so we're both working with young people and sometimes I'm really impressed with how focused students are and how much ambition and drive they have. And sometimes they tell me, like, "Oh, I'm worried about my future." And I'm like, "You're worried about your future? When I was your age, I had no idea at all about what I was going to do." And so, I see them with so much drive and ambition. It's really inspiring, and I laugh at them almost, you know, I'm still kind to them, but inside, I'm laughing at them because I think well, you guys are so much farther ahead than I was at your age. So, for them to be worried or concerned is kind of funny to me because I think these guys, they have it figured out they'll be fine.

Kassy: Yeah, they just gotta work out the details.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. Kassy, we can't wrap this episode up without talking about some kind of awkward or embarrassing teen- teen moments. I'll go first, when I was a teenager, I had to wear braces. Did you have braces when you were a teen?

Kassy: I did not.

Andrew: No. So actually, one of our Culips members left a comment on our website recently, and she was talking about wearing braces. And it made me remember back to that time of having to wear braces and having this big metal contraption in my mouth and how awkward it was to talk and eat. I used to hate eating lunch at school because you're worried about getting little pieces of food stuck in the braces. Just overall bad time wearing them. I think maybe these days the technology has improved a lot.

Kassy: You can get the Invisalign.

Andrew: Yeah. Lucky. Modern people are so lucky. I didn't have any of that. I had like the classic big, metal braces, and I remember them cutting my mouth often like I'd have little cuts on the inside of my cheeks and just very uncomfortable. I remember that being a

really awkward phase of my life. What about you is there like a moment or some phase that you went through or some memory that you have from when you were a teenager that makes you kind of cringe when you think back on it?

Kassy: Probably a lot. But a similar thing to you, not braces, but I still have this now, but I've learned to accept it. I told you I ran a lot after school sports and I get like the reddest tomato face every time I run, and everybody else in the team just looked so cool and put together. And every time I ran, I just looked like I was dying. But it made me so embarrassed. Now I just tried to embrace it, but maybe that's why I don't run as much anymore.

Andrew: At least your embarrassment would be hidden behind your red face.

Kassy: Yeah, great.

Andrew: Well, that's not too bad, though. I think that's all right.

Kassy: I think when you're a teenager though, everything is embarrassing. Everything.

Andrew: You know, it's interesting the expression that you just used, you said you had the brightest red tomato face. And I'm bringing that up because I was recently talking with one of my Korean friends. And they were talking about a similar situation, and they said the biggest, brightest apple face. So, in the Korean language for that kind of situation, you use apple to describe the colour of your face, you're red like an apple.

Kassy: Oh that's interesting.

Andrew: Yeah in English we say red like a tomato.

Kassy: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah. Kassy, it is our members-only bonus content time.

Kassy: Let's do it.

Andrew: I've got some lightning-round style questions prepared for you. Lightning round is like just very quick questions with quick answers. Not too many details. I've got three questions prepared.

Kassy: OK.

Andrew: Let's start with number one. Who was your teenager celebrity crush? Did you have like a celebrity movie star or singer, somebody that you had a crush on as a teenager?

Kassy: That's hard. I was not a Justin Bieber fan, even though everybody else was. Maybe the Jonas Brother?

Andrew: Jonas Brothers. For me, who was it? I think Natalie Portman, the actress.

Kassy: Yeah, she's pretty.

Andrew: I think I still have a crush on her to be honest. I don't think it ever went away. Kassy, what was your favourite TV show or movie as a teenager?

Kassy: This TV show is not good. But I watched every single episode and that would be *Lost*.

Andrew: *Lost*.

Kassy: It was like seven, eight seasons.

Andrew: Yeah, a very popular show.

Kassy: Also shout out to *Veronica Mars*, that show was amazing.

Andrew: *Veronica Mars*. For me, I would have to say I liked watching TV shows that everybody will know, *Friends* and *Seinfeld*. *Seinfeld* is my favourite and then *Friends* after that. But also, there was a channel in Canada called MuchMusic. And I loved watching MuchMusic. Every Friday, they had a top 10 videos. And they'd do a countdown, the *MuchMusic Countdown*. I loved-

Kassy: Was it like MTV?

Andrew: Yeah, but Canadian. So, a lot more like Canadian singers and music videos from Canadian artists. So, I loved the *MuchMusic Countdown* every Friday, super fun to watch. Kassy final question, if you could go back and give yourself one piece of advice as a teenager what would it be?

Kassy: That is a hard one, so much advice I could give. I would advise you to.

Andrew: No, not me.

Kassy: Oh, I would advise myself?

Andrew: Yeah, advise yourself.

Kassy: I would advise myself to, this is so generic. But, don't sweat the small stuff.

Andrew: Don't sweat the small stuff, the little things that are not really important. Don't dedicate too much of your time and energy worrying about them. That kind of thing?

Kassy: Yes, exactly.

Andrew: For me, what I would tell my younger self now is to start learning Korean when you're like 11 or 12.

Kassy: You would never know.

Andrew: Because learning it when I was 11 or 12 would have made my Korean learning journey much, much easier. Also, I was always into computers, and I did a lot of like web programming, but I never got into more advanced programming. And wh- again, when I was younger and my brain was more malleable, pliable, I should have dedicated more time to studying math and programming. I think those skills would be really useful in today's economy.

Kassy: I disagree with the math one. I learn math so much better now as an adult than I ever did as a kid.

Andrew: But don't you think you were probably always good at math, and you learned some very key concepts when you were young that are helping you to this day?

Kassy: Maybe.

Andrew: I think that's what I would do, I would say be a little more studious when it comes to studying foreign languages, math, and technology. That's the advice that I would give my younger self, if I could give that advice to me.

Kassy: And you also just know that if you gave that advice to yourself, you wouldn't listen to a second of it.

Andrew: Exactly, yeah, whatever, man. What's this old guy talking about?

Kassy: The beauty of being a teenager.

Andrew: That's right. Well, that wraps it up for today's bonus content, everyone. Thank you for listening, and we'll talk to you next time. Take care. Bye.

Kassy: See ya.

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

Detailed Explanations

Angsty

Adjective, informal

Angsty means anxious, worried about a situation or about life in general. If someone is angsty, they're deeply concerned with their problems, which often results in them being irritable or moody. They are unable to relax and have control over their emotions.

This word is commonly used to describe teenagers who are going through their adolescent phase and can be emotionally unstable. However, angsty can also describe people of any age who are experiencing anxiety or distress.

In this episode, Andrew asks Kassy if she was an angsty, rebellious teenager. In other words, he asks if she experienced that feeling of anxiety during her adolescence. When answering, Kassy uses the phrase "angsty phase," referring to the period of her life when she was going through the challenging transition from childhood to adulthood.

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

Ashley: I don't mean to be rude, but you've been so irritated lately. Is everything okay?

Chris: I don't know, I just feel so **angsty** all the time, I can't relax. I'm stressed out with everything that's going on at work. It's been so busy. Endless projects, lots of pressure... I'm missing all the deadlines.

Ashley: It sounds like you're going through a pretty tough time.

Chris: Yeah. I'm definitely taking a couple of weeks off as soon as I'm done with it all.

Ashley: Sounds like a good idea.

Jessica: I don't know how to talk to my son these days. He's acting so strange.

Joe: What do you mean?

Jessica: We used to be so close, he used to tell me everything. Now he ignores me and never shares anything. I'm worried about him.

Joe: He's just going through an **angsty phase**. It's totally normal, just give him some time.

Slob

Noun, informal

Slob is a noun that is used to describe a lazy or untidy person. If you call someone a slob, it means they're messy and disorganized in their appearance or habits. You can use this word when talking about people who don't clean up after themselves, don't take care of what they wear, or don't care if they're tidy.

In this episode, Kassy says that as a teenager she would only wear sweatpants and sweatshirts. She says, "I was such a slob." She means she was lazy and didn't really care much about her clothes. She calls herself a slob in a humorous and lighthearted way and she's making fun of herself.

It's important to note that the word slob might be considered offensive depending on the context and your relationship with a person you call a slob. However, just like in this episode, it's commonly used as a joke and isn't meant as an insult.

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

Mike: So how do you like your new apartment?

Chloe: It's great! Except for one thing. My roommate is so messy, he never washes the dishes, his clothes are over the place, and I don't think he ever washes his hair.

Mike: He sounds terrible. Why did you even agree to live with him?

Chloe: He seemed fine at first! I had no idea he was such a **slob**.

Sister: I'm going to get some groceries, are you coming?

Brother: Yeah, I'm ready. Let's go.

Sister: Are you going to wear that? Aren't those pajama pants?

Brother: Well, yeah. I just feel too lazy to change. And these pants are so cozy.

Sister: You're a total **slob**.

Brother: What did you call me?

Sister: I'm just kidding. Come on, put on some proper pants and let's go.

To go [your] own way

Idiom

To go [your] own way means to make your own decisions, rather than doing what other people think you should do. It means to act in a way that is different from what is expected. If a person goes their own way, they make independent choices that are not influenced by other people's opinions. These choices can refer to a person's career, personal relationships, or any other important aspects of their life.

In this episode, Andrew says that he didn't want to live the same way his parents did. He says, "I went my own way. I found my own path in life." He made his own decisions and choices instead of doing what his parents expected him to do or doing things the same way they did. **To find one's own path** is a similar expression. It is also used to talk about making your own independent choices in life and finding your own way to live, even if it goes against someone else's expectations.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go [your] own way**:

Olivia: How are things?

Sam: Pretty good. I'm looking for a job, and I got a couple of very good offers.

Olivia: Wait, aren't you working for your father's company?

Sam: I worked there for a year, but I didn't really like it. So, I decided **to go my own way**.

Olivia: Good for you! Hope you find what you're looking for.

Emily: The exam is in a week. We'd better start preparing now. I was looking at the guidelines at the end of the book, there're some really good tips there.

Cameron: I'm not planning to use them.

Emily: Why not? I thought we were supposed to.

Cameron: I always **go my own way** and never follow the guidelines. And it's always worked for me.

Emily: Well, suit yourself. I'll stick to the guidelines.

To blossom into

Phrasal verb

When talking about her teenage years, Kassy shares that working helped her grow and **blossom into** a successful adult. To blossom into means to develop and transform into someone or something better over time. The word "blossom" in its literal meaning is used to talk about trees that produce flowers, such as cherry trees. In its metaphorical meaning, it refers to someone's personal or professional growth and positive development.

This phrasal verb can be used when talking about both people and things, such as projects or businesses. For example, if someone becomes a famous athlete after years of hard work, you can say that they have blossomed into a successful athlete. If a small business grows and develops, you can say that it has blossomed into a big company.

Here are a couple more examples with **to blossom into**:

Kelly: Guess who I ran into today!

Mark: Who?

Kelly: Richard! You remember him, right?

Mark: Your neighbor who was always taking pictures of everything with his old camera?

Kelly: Exactly. Well, guess what? He works as a professional photographer now!

Mark: Good for him! It's amazing how a hobby sometimes **blossoms into** a full-time job.

Ben: Wow, this cake's awesome! You should really start your own baking business!

Grace: Yeah, I was thinking about that. I just don't know where to start. I love baking, but a business is a whole new level. I'm not sure I'd be good at that.

Ben: A friend of mine opened his own café. I'm sure he'd be happy to help you. Come on, you're so good, I'm sure your talent can **blossom into** something bigger. You should at least try.

Grace: I'd love to! Thanks for your support. It means a lot.

Social butterfly

Idiom

Social butterfly is an idiomatic expression used to talk about people who enjoy interacting with others. If someone is a social butterfly, they're outgoing, sociable, and can be often seen at social events. Social butterflies find it easy to make new friends and feel comfortable being around other people.

In this episode, Andrew asks Kassy about her social life as a teenager. He asks, "Were you a social butterfly?" He wants to know if she was a sociable teenager and if she spent a lot of time hanging out with her peers.

The expression "social butterfly" is commonly used in a positive way, just like in this episode. However, it can sometimes have a negative meaning, suggesting that a person is superficial and doesn't form very deep social connections with people.

Here are a couple more examples with **social butterfly**:

John: How is it going?

Natalie: Pretty good actually. I've met someone, a very nice guy.

John: Tell me more!

Natalie: Well, he's great, very open and outgoing. My favorite thing about him is that anyone he meets becomes his friend. People love him. He's a real **social butterfly**!

John: I'm happy for you! So, when do I get to meet him?

Natalie: He's on his way to pick me up, I'll introduce you when he gets here.

Sophie: Are you coming to the party on Saturday?

Matt: I'm not sure. I don't really know anyone there.

Sophie: Come on, you know me! It's going to be fun. You should come.

Matt: I'm **not really a social butterfly**. I don't feel comfortable around a lot of people.

Sophie: I see. Well, let me know if you change your mind.

Make it up as [you] go along Idiom

When someone **makes it up as they go along**, it means they improvise and make decisions depending on how the situation goes, without planning anything ahead. To make it up as you go along means to not think about what's going to happen, but to just do it as it happens and develops. When you make it up as you go along, you rely on your instincts and adapt to new circumstances.

When talking about planning a career as a teenager, Andrew says that he had no idea what he wanted to achieve. He says, "I was making it up as I went along." In this example, Andrew didn't have a career plan, instead he was figuring out what to do as he continued studying and making decisions according to the way things were developing in his life.

Another commonly used expression with a similar meaning is "to go with the flow." When you go with the flow, you don't plan anything, you let things happen the way they happen and adapt to any changes as they occur.

Here are a couple more examples with **make it up as [you] go along**:

Lauren: Have you already thought about where you want to go when you travel to Italy?

Nick: Not really. I guess I'll figure it out when I get there.

Lauren: What do you mean? You have to plan your trip.

Nick: I don't really like planning when I travel. I usually just **make it up as I go along**. Improvise, you know.

Lauren: I'd never be able to do that, I need to have everything under control.

Vanessa: Are you ready for the presentation?

Eric: What? No. Is it today?

Vanessa: Yes. Didn't you receive the memo?

Eric: I must have missed it. I haven't really planned exactly what I was going to say. I guess I'll have to **go with the flow and make it up as I go along**.

Vanessa: Good luck with that!

Quiz

1. If someone feels angsty, they feel _____.
 - a) tired
 - b) anxious
 - c) happy
 - d) calm

2. If everyone in your family is a doctor, but you're planning to work as a lawyer, you're _____.
 - a) following in their steps
 - b) going with the flow
 - c) going your own way
 - d) rebelling away

3. True or false? To blossom into means to become worse and less successful.
 - a) True
 - b) False

4. Which of the following describes an outgoing person who enjoys being around other people?
 - a) A social fly
 - b) A chatty caterpillar
 - c) A friendly dragonfly
 - d) A social butterfly

5. If you improvise and do something without a plan, you _____.
 - a) make it up as you go along
 - b) make up as you go long
 - c) make along as you go up
 - d) go it along as you make up

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What were you like as a teenager? Were you angsty and rebellious?
2. Do you know anyone who you would describe as a slob? How do you feel about this type of person?
3. Can you think of a time when you chose to go your own way instead of following what everyone else was doing?
4. Would you describe yourself as a social butterfly?
5. Do you tend to plan things out or to make it up as you go along? Give some examples.

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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