

Simplified Speech #170 – The little joys in life

AD-FREE

Episode description

Daily life can often feel hectic and stressful. It's easy to get caught up in the chaos and focus on your responsibilities and the future. However, it's also important to slow down once in a while and reflect on the little joys in life. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne do just that—they chat about the small but lovely things they enjoy during daily life, such as the smell of coffee in the morning and gazing at a bouquet of fresh-cut flowers.

Fun fact

My Favorite Things is a song about the little joys in life from the classic 1965 musical drama *The Sound of Music*. Look it up on YouTube and practice your listening comprehension with the help of Julie Andrews' soothing voice!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To get [something] going
- To venture into/out into
- To poke around
- To slam back
- In the dark
- To crack [someone] up



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 number 170, the little joys in life, featuring Andrew, and Suzanne.

So, Suzanne, today we have what I think will be a very wonderful topic to discuss. And today's topic is the little joys in life.

Suzanne: Yeah, the little joys in life. I really love this topic. In this episode, we're going to talk about the smaller things in life that can bring us a little moment of happiness. And I think they can really vary a lot from person to person.

Andrew: Yeah, I think you're right about that, Suzanne, and I can't wait to hear about the little joys on your list. Would you like to go first? Would you like to kick us off?

Suzanne: Yeah, of course, I'd love to go first. One of my favourite little joys is when you don't have anything the next morning. And you can sleep in like a little bit extra, just a little bit more sleep that next morning, and you can wake up a little later. That's just a really nice little joy in life.

Andrew: So, when you have a clear schedule the next morning and you can spend a little bit of extra time in bed. Yeah, that's a great one, Suzanne. I love that feeling as well.

Suzanne: Yeah. And of course, that extra time equals more cuddles with the pup, right? With the doggie in the bed. If you allow your dog to go into the bed, so it always equals more cuddle time.

Andrew: Suzanne, a similar feeling that really brings me a lot of joy in life—and I hadn't thought of this until you mentioned yours and I was like, "Oh yeah, I do really like this!"—is if you have to get up in the night to maybe go to the bathroom or something, and you look at the clock, and maybe it is only like 1:30 or 1:00 in the morning or 2:00 in the morning and you still have a lot of sleep in front of you. I love that feeling. You're like, "Ah, I can still go back to sleep for another 6 hours or something!" That's an amazing feeling.

Conversely, if you have to wake up, I don't know, let's just say that you wake up at 7:00 a.m., but you have to wake up at 6:00 maybe to go to the bathroom, then you're like, "Ah, should I even go back to bed? I'm already up!" It can go either way when nature calls.

Suzanne: Totally. That's the worst. I'll ask you, Andrew, if you have another little joy that you have in your life.

Andrew: Yeah, so, sure, maybe we'll continue throughout the day. If we're talking about waking up, one of the first things that I do when I do wake up in the morning is to brew my morning cup of coffee. And that is one of the biggest joys in my life. I love the ritual around it, you know, I always go through the process of filling up my grinder and grinding some fresh beans. And then, you know, sometimes I prepare the coffee in a different way. But these days I usually just use my coffee machine because I'm kind of lazy. But I love the aroma, like the smell of the coffee in the air is so great. And I usually wake up first in my house. So, my wife and dog are still sleeping when I wake up. So it's a quiet time in the morning, usually. I can have a little solo time in the morning and just enjoy a cup of coffee.

And these days, usually what I've been doing while I drink my cup of coffee is play the word game Wordle which I've talked about on the podcast before with Kassy. And, yeah, that's just like a nice little way to start the day. It doesn't take long. I wouldn't say it's like my morning routine every day. But whenever I can, I enjoy just making the coffee, sitting down, taking 5, 10 minutes to solve a puzzle and enjoy a cup of coffee before I start my day.

Suzanne: That just sounds so divine. I agree, I also love to put the beans in the grinder and like **get that aroma going**. And I also enjoy a cup of coffee. And I have a pour-over system because I'm the only one in my house who drinks coffee, so I kind of find ways of single-serve coffee. And it's really fun, the ritual of heating up the cup, then grinding the beans, and pouring it in, and slowly creating that coffee. I agree to that. That's a lovely morning ritual and pleasure. And I think the ritual of it also helps wake us up, maybe? Because it's kind of autopilot. So it's not something we have to think about too much. And it really helps to wake us up.

Andrew: Suzanne, I've got another little joy in life that I want to talk to you about, and I think this one is kind of unique. Probably many people like drinking a cup of coffee in the morning. But I think not as many people can say that they like doing this activity. And I really have to thank my wife for it because if she wasn't around, then I wouldn't be able to do this.

But my wife is a great gardener. And she's got lots of houseplants, and also, she has many cacti. And one thing that's cool is the way that they are set up in our house is that they're kind of behind our kitchen table on a patio, but the patio is enclosed with glass. So if I'm sitting at the dinner table and I just turn around, then I can look out the window and see all the cacti there. And one thing I like to do, sometimes I even do this while I'm drinking my coffee, maybe after playing a game of Wordle, is I kind of just shift in my seat and turn my body around so I can look out the glass toward the patio at all of the little cacti.

And she's got some really interesting, unique, different ones from all over the place, and there's some really cool ones from Africa, as well. You know, she's got them all displayed really nicely with grow lights and everything. And I just like admiring them. I know that sounds a little bit weird, but like admiring the cacti, looking at them.

They have lots of cool patterns, and some of them flower. And they each have different thorn types and patterns on them. I don't know. It's just really cool. And I really like looking

at them. And every time I look at them, I just think, “Wow, it’s such a cool plant.” And I’m appreciative of all the different kinds of life forms that we have on the planet. And, yeah, I just really enjoy checking out her cacti from time to time.

Suzanne: Wow, that’s so cool. I wonder if it gives you that feeling that you’re in nature also.

Andrew: Yeah, you know, I’m right in the middle of a huge city. So it is kind of like an escape into nature right in the heart of my own apartment.

Suzanne: Yes, that’s fantastic. That inspires me to maybe **venture out into** more cacti buying.

Andrew: Suzanne, do you have another little joy you could share with us?

Suzanne: Yeah, I really enjoy going on a walk with my dog most of the time. If it’s bitter cold here or the wind is really windy or icy rain, not so much. But I really do enjoy walking my dog, especially when the sun is shining. And there’s a street that I really love walking down, or up I should say, because I walk north. It’s a kind of commercial street, meaning there are a lot of stores and shops along the way. And there are about five or six places where you can bring your dog in with you.

And it’s really fun to just stroll and stop in or pop into a store. Quickly say hello, and maybe pick up more coffee beans or a candle or some yummy fruit, and just kind of pop in here and there along that street and say hi to the shop owners, and everyone always wants to pet my dog, and just sort of feel that sense of community and belonging. And it’s great when the dog is allowed to come with you. So, I really do enjoy that whenever we walk along that street.

Andrew: That’s awesome. I wish I could share in that joy with you. You know, sometimes my wife and I will go to pet-friendly cafés in our neighbourhood. My dog Pinky, he just doesn’t know how to chill. So he’ll never sit down and just relax. He’s always walking

around and **poking around** and we have to chase after him, and we can't relax. We can't just sit and enjoy a coffee. So, unfortunately, we can't do that. But I could imagine that it's very nice. I would love to be able to do that.

Suzanne: Yeah, it's funny to me, because you're such a chill person. You're like one of the chilliest people I know. And so, I can't imagine that your dog would not be that way.

Andrew: Yeah, he's not hyper. It's not like he's causing a scene or, like, disturbing other customers, he's just gets really anxious, I think. He just can't relax because he's too nervous. So it's that kind of situation. And then we feel bad, like, "Oh, we shouldn't have taken him out!" Like, "Oh, we gotta go." So, whenever we do that, we always end up just **slamming back** our hot coffees very quickly and going home.

Suzanne, as a music lover, I have one more little joy. We could go on forever and ever about little things in life that make us happy, but I've got one more that I'll share. And when I have some free time, especially on the weekend, what I really like doing is kind of like digital digging, if I could say, digital digging. So, you know, like, you can go to a record store and you could dig for vinyl records, try to find some hidden gem, right?

Well, I like going to YouTube and searching just for rare or obscure or weird music that I've never heard before. It doesn't even have to be weird or obscure or rare, rather, it could just be some music that I've never heard before. I love trying to search and find interesting music that I've never heard. And I get a lot of joy out of finding something cool. If I find like a new song or a new band or a new artist—and when I say new, I mean new to me—like the song might be 50 years old, but if it's the first time I've heard it, and I really connect with it, and like that song, then that brings me a ton of joy. And recently what's happened is I found some cool songs that I've sent to my friends. And then my friends have also been like, "Oh, the song is so good!" And they really enjoy it as well. And, you know, they're not just saying that, like, "Oh, yeah, it's good, thank you." You know, they actually really enjoy it. And that brings me also a lot of joy is when I can share that good music with

my friends. And they actually enjoy it as well. I think that's a great feeling. And that's one of the little pleasures in life, in my world at least.

Suzanne: Yeah, that's really cool. I admire that so much, because I don't actively search out music enough. And I rely quite a bit on algorithms that feed me, hey, maybe you would like this song? And sometimes I do, but sometimes I don't.

Andrew: But the algorithms are great. I mean, the algorithm leads me to a lot of stuff as well. I'm not just like walking around **in the dark**, per se. The algorithm is learning about what I'm clicking on and predicting what it thinks I will like and, yeah, it's really helpful. So I would be lost without the algorithms these days.

Suzanne: But I also do like to mess with them a little bit where, you know, I'll be going in one direction for a while and then I just throw in a musical theatre song or two, and then I'm listening to some country and they're like, "What?" That algorithm gets confused.

I have one more, too, if that's OK, if we have time.

Andrew: Yeah, sure. We'll make it the last one. What's your last little joy?

Suzanne: Actually, something that came up first was baking. I really love baking delicious things, but something that brings me joy: going and buying and bringing home fresh-cut flowers, like a bouquet of flowers and then putting them in my house and trimming them. And it's similar to having plants, just having a fresh bouquet of flowers. And then as I walk by them throughout the week, I'm, like, "Oh, I love that so much." And I'll stop and smell them. And they remind me to, you know, take care of myself, and maybe inspire me to take a bath or something like that. I love seeing fresh-cut flowers, they just always bring so much joy.

Andrew: Whenever we have fresh-cut flowers in the house, I always think to myself, we have to have this in the house all the time. And then maybe the flowers will die and it's time to throw them out. And then, yeah, we go for a time without them. But then whenever

we do get them in the house again, it's always so lovely. I can't say it's something that happens regularly. But when it does happen from time to time, it's lovely. And, yeah, you're absolutely right, it really can bring a smile to your face, right, or make you feel good. Like, it just warms up your house so much to have some beautiful flowers in the home. I couldn't agree more.

Suzanne: Absolutely. It's totally one of those things, like, why don't I do this every week? I should get flowers every week.

Andrew: I think I'm inspired, Suzanne, maybe I will go and get some flowers for my wife. I'll be a nice guy, a nice husband.

Suzanne: Yeah, oh my gosh, that's the best.

Andrew: But then I can benefit, too. It's one of the sneaky gifts where it's like, it's for you, but I can benefit as well.

Suzanne: You'll benefit in more ways than one because you get to enjoy the flowers and the happiness of your wife, too.

Andrew: OK, I got to do it. It's a great idea. I love it.

We've decided to keep our conversation going just a little bit longer for all of our members as a way to say thanks for supporting us.

So, Suzanne, I've got just three fun questions here about joy and happiness, just in general that I thought we could talk about briefly. So, let's do it. Question #1. And I hope you have a good answer for this. It might be hard to answer, but I'll ask anyways. Do you remember the last time that you laughed uncontrollably? Or the last thing that made you laugh uncontrollably?

Suzanne: Oh my gosh. I remember the scene. And I was like in pain. I was like crying so hard. But I can't remember what it was about. I do remember this. I do remember that I was laughing at myself, like something I did. It was something that I said or did that was silly, and maybe it was in French. And I **was like cracking up** about my mistake, but it was so funny I couldn't stop laughing. Yeah, but I think it's funny that I can't remember exactly what it was. Yeah. What about you? Can you remember?

Andrew: You kind of **cracked me up** recently when we recorded the episode about table manners, and you were telling me the story about your house guest putting his feet on the table. That **cracked me up**, I thought that was really funny. And also yesterday, I was on Reddit, the social media community, and people were discussing their favourite comedy movies.

And one of my generation's top comedy is Dumb and Dumber. And I also really love that movie Dumb and Dumber. And people were just quoting lines from the movie. But as I was reading them, like, I could hear the characters' voices in my head and see the scenes in my head and it **was just cracking me up**. Like I haven't seen that movie in so long, but just as I was sitting on the subway reading that I was laughing, actually laughing out loud, just at reading people quoting famous lines from the movie. So, yeah, that got me laughing.

Suzanne: That is awesome. Oh my gosh. That's really good, yeah. Something that we've been doing is rewatching Seinfeld from the beginning. And the other day, he said something so funny. Like, you know, in Seinfeld, how he does his stand up throughout the episode, he'll have a beginning, a middle, and an ending sort of stand-up section. And it was something he said in the stand-up section and we were laughing so hard. And I feel terrible, guys, because I keep saying it was so funny, and then I can't remember what I was laughing at. But, as we know, Seinfeld talks about stupid things, like he usually brings up very obvious things that we all do. And it was something like that, something so dumb, but very relatable. So rewatch Seinfeld. I think it was like in season 3.

Andrew: OK. It's only 22 episodes to go through. But I think every episode is funny of Seinfeld, so you really can't go wrong with it.

Suzanne: Yeah, and you don't have to watch it in order, to be honest, you can just jump in.

Andrew: Yeah, it's true. OK, Suzanne, question #2. Do you have a go-to song that always pumps you up or changes your mood for the better? Lifts your spirits, so to say.

Suzanne: Yeah, I mean, it changes I would say throughout my life, I think a lot of Lizzo songs just always make me start dancing, like *About Damn Time* or *Special* or you know, just like dancing in my kitchen. But I also think, like, songs from Queen. Yeah, like, it just gets you up and moving or *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Like, it's just, you can't be down in the dumps and listen to those songs, I feel like.

Andrew: Yeah, that's a good one. That is a good choice, Queen. Yeah, very nice. I don't have a particular song. Like you, I'm sure there are hundreds of songs that would put me into a good mood. But when I wrote this question, Daft Punk came into my head. I was like, if I heard them right now, in this moment, I'd be, like, yeah, here we go. I'd feel better. So I'm gonna say any song by Daft Punk, but they have a big catalog as well. So probably not every song, but most of them I think would do that.

Suzanne, last question here. And we kind of talked about this in the main episode. What is your favourite activity to do on a lazy day that brings you joy?

Suzanne: Hmm. I would say, watching HGTV shows and doing sudoku.

Andrew: Nice.

Suzanne: Now, I'm saying that this is like a lazy day where I can't really go outside, right? Like if it's cold out or something, like that's my go-to indoor activity, because I just really like home renovation shows. And sudoku. Yeah.

Andrew: Lovely. I like it. Mine would be similar, I guess, probably sleeping in, like you mentioned before, and then just lying around, watching something on TV guilt-free, and playing some chess online. I love doing that as well. So similar to you, watching something and solving a puzzle or playing a game, something like that would be awesome to do on a lazy day.

Suzanne: Yeah, you feel like you accomplished something after you do some puzzles.

Andrew: Now I can't wait for the next lazy day.

Suzanne: I know.

Andrew: Don't know when it will happen, but I can't wait.

Suzanne: Me neither.

Andrew: Well, I think that will bring us to the end of this episode for today, everyone. Thank you so much for listening. And congratulations on getting in an English study session here with Suzanne and me today.

Suzanne: And now we'd like to throw things over to you. You've heard what Andrew and I have to say about some of the little joys in life. But we'd like to know what you think. So, you can share your opinion with us and the Culips community by leaving a comment on our website, Culips.com

Andrew: Take care, everyone, and we'll talk to you soon. Goodbye.

Suzanne: Bye, guys.

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

Detailed Explanations

To get [something] going Idiom

Many people would say the very first cup of tea or coffee in the morning is one of the little joys in life. Suzanne and Andrew firmly agree: in the beginning of the episode, they discuss the joy of making pour-over coffee. Suzanne says that she likes to grind up the coffee beans herself and **get the aroma of coffee going** first thing in the morning.

To get [something] going is another way of saying to start or initiate something. It's often heard in business contexts; for example, someone might say, "I need to **get this sales report going** by the end of the day." This means "I need to start and make some progress on this sales report by the end of the day."

You will also hear it used to refer to activities, responsibilities, or events. The hostess of a dinner party might try **to get the party going** by putting on some lively music and serving cocktails. You can also use it for food- or sense-related nouns, just like Suzanne did with "aroma." For instance, you could say, "I'd like to **get dinner going** before we take the dog for a walk," or "If you add some lime juice, it'll really **get the flavour going**."

If you replace "something" with "someone" in this expression, it changes the meaning a little bit. **To get someone going** means to cause someone to be in a heightened emotional state, such as excited, motivated, talkative, or angry. For instance, a friend might warn you, "Once **you get my boyfriend going**, he won't stop talking about cars." This means that once the boyfriend starts talking about cars, he becomes so excited that he has a hard time switching topics. Returning to the topic of coffee, you could say, "A good cup of coffee really **gets me going** in the morning," meaning that a good cup of coffee makes you feel energized and productive.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get [something] going**:

Tony: Want to see a movie with me tonight?

Lila: Sorry, babe, I've **got to get this sales pitch going** before the big meeting tomorrow. How about we see a movie this weekend instead?

Patricia: How was your date last night, Reggie?

Reggie: Not bad! It took some time for us **to get the conversation going**, but once we discovered some mutual interests, we really connected. I'd definitely like to see her again.

To venture into/out into

Phrasal verb

Andrew tells Suzanne that looking at his wife's collection of cacti and houseplants on their patio is one of the little joys in his daily life. He enjoys gazing upon the variety of different plants and getting the feeling of being in nature even though he's in an apartment in the middle of a city. Suzanne tells him that his story has inspired her **to venture out into** buying some cacti herself.

To venture into and **to venture out into** mean to take your first steps doing an unfamiliar and potentially risky activity. For example, a rescue team might **venture out into** the snowy wilderness to rescue a lost boy. In this case, the risk is physical: the environmental conditions are dangerous. The risk could also be emotional or psychological. For instance, your friend might confide in you, "I'm thinking of downloading Tinder, but I'm not sure if I'm ready **to venture into** the world of online dating." By using **venture into** instead of a more neutral verb like "enter," your friend makes online dating sound more exciting, risky, and dramatic.

In this episode, Suzanne uses **venture out into** with something a bit more mundane—buying new houseplants. While it's most common to use this phrasal verb to talk about risky new things, you can also use it for anything that you find exciting and unfamiliar. For example, after finishing a 2-week quarantine for COVID-19, a woman might tell her roommate, "Let's **venture out into** the park!" While there's nothing really risky about going to the park, saying **venture out into** shows a feeling of novelty, like it's an unfamiliar journey.

Here are a few more examples with **to venture into/out into**:

Rob: Wow, do you hear that rain? I'm glad I don't have to commute today.

Wendy: It's nice of your company to let you work from home when there's bad weather! Unfortunately, there isn't a bite to eat in the house. I think I'll have to **venture out into** the storm to get some groceries.

Rob: Drive carefully!

Sarah: Mmm, it smells great in here! Are you making something?

Drew: Well, ever since we started watching that baking competition show, I've been inspired to **venture into** the world of baking. Last night I made cookies, and right now I've got croissants going in the oven!

To poke around

Phrasal verb

Suzanne and Andrew are both dog owners. Suzanne mentions that one of the little joys in her life is taking her dog for a walk and stopping by some dog-friendly shops in her neighbourhood. Andrew says he wishes he could do that with his own dog, Pinky, but Pinky is a bit too nervous to spend time in a café; he's always **poking around** and won't sit still.

To poke around means to explore or investigate, often with the intention of finding something specific. For example, you might **poke around** in your grandmother's cluttered attic to see if there are any valuable treasures hidden away. Dogs are curious creatures and often **poke around** in the kitchen or other places they aren't supposed to, like the garbage! You can physically **poke around**, such as in the library or in the closet, but you can also figuratively **poke around** by doing research online or through conversation.

Poke around can be used neutrally, but you can also use it in a negative way to describe the actions of someone who is nosy or trying to get involved in someone else's personal affairs. A girl might complain to her sister, "I wish Mom would stop **poking around** our room! I think she's trying to find my diary and read it."

Here are a couple more examples with **to poke around**:

Samantha: You'll never believe what I caught Jamie doing.

Chris: What? What did he do?

Samantha: I found him **poking around** in my phone while I was cleaning up the backyard! I guess he didn't hear me come back inside. I got really mad at him. Like, doesn't he trust me? Does he think I'm cheating on him or something?

Chris: Wow. That's a total breach of privacy.

Samantha: Right? I would never go **poking around** in his phone like that.

Rosalie: Hey, what are you doing **poking around** in the closet?

Damon: I'm looking for my old baseball mitt. Have you seen it?

Rosalie: No. If you can't find it in there, why don't you go check the garage?

Damon: Good idea.

To slam back

Phrasal verb

Continuing with his story about Pinky the dog, Andrew says that he and his wife don't like to take Pinky out to dog-friendly cafés very often. Whenever they do, they feel nervous that Pinky is disturbing the other customers or isn't comfortable being there, so they end up **slamming back** their coffees and leaving as soon as they can.

To slam back is a phrasal verb meaning to drink something quickly and forcefully. It can also be used for eating, but it is much more commonly used for drinking. For example, you might **slam back** some tequila shots at a bar with your friends. Or a runner who has just finished a race will likely **slam back** a bottle of water. **To slam back** is the opposite of verbs like to sip, to savour, or to nurse a drink.

To slam back and **to chug** or **to chug down** are very similar in meaning. However, chugging gives the impression of drinking something quickly but with many gulps, and **slamming back** gives the impression of consuming something all in one go. **To slam some back** can also be used to simply mean to drink alcohol or to get drunk. For example, a college student might invite his friend to drink with him by saying, "Hey dude, let's go **slam some back** with Dave and Mike at the pub later!"

Here are a few more examples with **to slam back**:

Brenda: Carl, what are you doing? Why aren't you dressed yet?

Carl: Huh?

Brenda: Did you forget about our appointment with the realtor today?

Carl: Oh no, I completely forgot. All right, just give me 5 minutes. I'm gonna **slam back** the rest of this coffee and get dressed.

Frank: How did your sister's half-marathon go?

Amy: It went great! She beat her personal best and came in third place. Our parents and I were waiting for her at the finish line.

Frank: That's wonderful!

Amy: Yes! She's happy today, but she was just so exhausted after the race. The moment she crossed that finish line, we handed her a sports drink and she **slammed it back** without a word. Personally, I can't even imagine running 13 miles on a hot day!

In the dark Expression

One of the last little joys that Andrew mentions in the episode is discovering new music. He loves to poke around on YouTube and find songs he's never heard before. The algorithms that YouTube uses to help people find content suited to their interests are especially helpful for this. Andrew says that these algorithms help him look for new music so he doesn't have to just walk around **in the dark**.

In the dark is a handy expression usually used for when someone has no information about a particular topic. For instance, low-level employees at big corporations are usually completely **in the dark** about company secrets. If you're preventing someone from learning secret information, you can say you are keeping them **in the dark**. For example, when you're planning a surprise birthday party for someone, it's essential to keep them **in the dark** about any info related to the event.

However, the way Andrew uses **in the dark** is a little bit different. Although you could say that he is **in the dark** about what new music he might like, he uses "walking around **in the dark**" to describe the process of finding new music without any clues or leads to help him. **In the dark** can also describe a situation where it feels as though you're moving around in darkness and it's hard to make progress. For example, an employee might complain, "I wish the boss would give us clearer instructions on what she expects of us for this project. It feels like we're fumbling around **in the dark** here!"

Here are a few more examples with **in the dark**:

Josie: Did you see the company newsletter this morning?

Leo: No, was it something important?

Josie: They're saying that there's going to be some big changes happening to the company health insurance policy, but there was no information on when or what exactly.

Leo: What! We shouldn't have to be **in the dark** about our health insurance. I'll ask the boss about it later today.

Richie: Do you know what you're doing for your bachelorette party this weekend?

Emma: Nope. I have no idea. My sister and my best friend are planning all sorts of secret activities for me. They're keeping me completely **in the dark**.

Richie: That's so nice of them. I love surprises. You're gonna have so much fun!

To crack [someone] up

Phrasal verb

At the very end of the episode, Andrew and Suzanne reminisce about times when something was so funny that they laughed uncontrollably. Suzanne mentions **cracking up** when she made a really embarrassing mistake when speaking French. Andrew brings up a time when reading people quoting one of his favourite comedy movies **cracked him up**.

To crack up is a phrasal verb that means to laugh really hard or uncontrollably. It can be used as a transitive verb or an intransitive verb. When used as a transitive verb, you use it with a person's name, a noun, or direct object pronoun; for instance, you could say, "That comedy show totally **cracked us up**," or "It really **cracked me up** when the dog was rolling around on the floor and making a funny face."

You can also use **crack up** to describe someone going through an emotional breakdown. For example, you could say, "I started **to crack up** under all of the intense pressure at work. I would randomly burst into tears and it was negatively affecting all of my personal relationships." However, it's important to note that this usage can only be used as an intransitive verb. If you say, "The stress of the situation **cracked him up**," it sounds more like he started to laugh a lot, not that he started to have a breakdown. Instead, you could say, "The stress of the situation made him **crack up**," or "He **cracked up** from the stress of the situation."

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

Rudy: I love your Halloween costume. Did you make it yourself?

Jennifer: Yes, I sewed it together myself! My friend Tiffany helped me with my makeup, though.

Rudy: Is Tiffany the girl in the Mario outfit?

Jennifer: Yup, that's her.

Rudy: She's funny. It **cracked me up** when she did impressions of Mario's voice.

Kylie: Want to watch a movie tonight?

Jacob: Sure. Do you have something in mind?

Kylie: How about that Nick Kroll movie that came out last year? He always **cracks me up**.

Quiz

1. **Your manager asks you, “Would you please get the meeting going while I finish setting up the projector?” She wants you to _____.**
 - a) keep everyone busy before she starts
 - b) move the meeting to another conference room
 - c) begin the meeting
 - d) reschedule the meeting

2. **Your mother tells you, “It’s not polite to poke around in other people’s personal affairs.” What’s a good synonym for “poke around in” in this sentence?**
 - a) to bring up
 - b) to ignore
 - c) to think about
 - d) to investigate

3. **Which of the following would not usually crack someone up?**
 - a) a comedy show
 - b) a sad song
 - c) a dog chasing his tail
 - d) a really clever pun

4. **Your sister says she’s planning to quit her job soon, but she’s going to keep her coworkers and boss in the dark for now. She means that _____.**
 - a) she won’t tell them about her plans to quit
 - b) she’s going to keep the lights off at the office to save energy
 - c) she’s going to tell them about her plans to quit very soon
 - d) she wants to play a trick on them

5. **You notice your husband is slamming back his coffee. He’s probably _____.**
 - a) savouring the flavour
 - b) not enjoying the flavour
 - c) in a hurry
 - d) very hungry

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

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the little joys in your life? Please describe a few. Why do these things bring you joy?
2. When was the last time you cracked up about something really funny? Why was it so funny? Please explain.
3. If you had more time or money, do you think you would venture out into a new hobby? What would you like to do?
4. Have you ever planned a surprise party for someone? If yes, were you able to keep them in the dark about your plans? Please explain. If not, would you like to have a surprise party thrown for you? Why or why not?
5. Do you like to poke around on YouTube? If yes, what kinds of videos do you like to find? If not, what other websites do you like to poke around on?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Suzanne Cerreta

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Marshall Vaillancourt

Transcriptionist: Andrew Bates

Study guide writer: Indiana Brown

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Everton Vila (Unsplash.com)