

## Simplified Speech #176 – Quality or quantity?

AD-FREE

### Episode description

Do you prefer quality over quantity, or the other way around? Your answer will probably vary depending on the situation. In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Kassy talk about the idea of quality versus quantity when it comes to making choices in life. They share their preferences and discuss when quality matters more than quantity, and vice versa. Listen in to find out more and learn useful vocabulary to express your thoughts on quality and quantity in English!

### Fun fact

When it comes to studying English, you will achieve better results if you focus on the quality of your learning over how much—or the quantity—you are learning. Spending shorter, concentrated study sessions on specific language skills is usually more effective than studying for long hours without a clear goal.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To slip through the cracks
- To come down to [something]
- More bang for your buck
- It goes to show
- The real deal
- When/if push comes to shove



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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:** Simplified Speech episode 176. Quantity or quality? Featuring, Andrew and Kassy.

I am joined by my trusty sidekick, Kassy. Hello, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew. And hey, listeners. Hope you're all doing well. Excited to be here today.

**Andrew:** So, Kassy, when we were talking back and forth a little earlier this week, you know, just to set up a time to record, I asked you if you had any ideas about what we could talk about, and you suggested a really cool idea for an episode. I loved it. I thought it's so surprising that we haven't covered this on Culips before. But yeah, sometimes those good ideas just **slip through the cracks**, I guess. But you came up with an awesome idea and that's what we're going to talk about. Since it's your idea, I should let you introduce it. So, could you tell our listeners what we'll be talking about today?

**Kassy:** Sure. So, the topic today is, quality versus quantity. And I thought we could talk about our preferences about when we prefer quality over quantity, or vice versa, quantity over quality.

**Andrew:** And Kassy, with that being said, let's get started with our main topic for today. And maybe we should break this down and talk about exactly what quality and quantity means. So quality talks about how good something is, right? A product or an experience could be very low quality, not so good, or very high-quality. And especially when I think of

objects that are high-quality, I think of like the material that it's built with is really, really good. Or maybe a lot of time and effort went into making it. For example, maybe a table that is very high-quality would be handmade by a carpenter.

**Kassy:** Yeah. And this doesn't necessarily have to be cheap versus expensive, because expensive things could be kind of low-quality. It really depends on as Andrew said, materials, how it was made, the love that went into making it.

**Andrew:** Exactly, the design behind it as well. There are many things that can go into making a high-quality product. And what do we mean by quantity, Kassy? That's kind of a mathy word, and you're kind of a mathy person. So, I'll let you break that one down.

**Kassy:** Quantity is how much of something there is. So, if you have a small quantity means you don't have very much of something. But if you have a large quantity, you'd have a lot of something.

**Andrew:** Exactly. And so, when we are talking about quality versus quantity, I guess we're asking, would you rather have many things? Or would you rather have just like one thing or two things that are really good quality? And although you said Kassy, that high-quality items don't need to be expensive, and I agree with that. Really, price doesn't factor into it exactly. At the same time, usually something that is higher quality is more expensive, right? And so, when we're debating this, I think, at least in my mind, I'm always thinking about something expensive. Would I rather have one really, high-quality expensive item, or would I rather have many, many, many lower quality, cheaper items instead? And maybe the easiest way to segue into this topic would be to talk about clothes, because that's what popped into my head first. It's like thinking about shoes—actually, this is kind of an example that I've read about online often on this really geeky website that I read about personal finance.

**Kassy:** Go on Andrew?

**Andrew:** Well, actually, what I've read on this website before, is that often it is more expensive to be poor. This is one of the things that I've read on this website, is because if you are a rich person, for example, and you need to buy a pair of boots, you could buy a really high-quality pair of boots that lasts for, I don't know, 10 years or 15 years if you take care of them correctly. And I don't know if you would want to wear the same pair of boots for 15 years. But let's just take this as an example, OK? You buy a pair of boots, super high-quality, they're amazing, and you take care of them, and they last that long. While on the other hand, if you don't have the money to buy that very expensive, high-quality pair of boots, then maybe you have to buy a cheaper pair of boots, and the cheaper pair of boots maybe only last for one winter season. And then the next winter you have to buy another pair and then another pair and then another pair. And then after 15 years, you've actually paid more money for those 15 pairs of poorer quality boots than it would have cost you just to buy one high-quality pair of boots in the first place. But because you don't have the money upfront to pay for that high-quality pair of boots, you can't do that. And so yeah, in the end, it's more expensive to be poor. And this is one of the things that I read about on that personal finance website.

**Kassy:** I've heard of that concept before too. I think choosing between quality versus quantity in terms of clothes, at least, also **comes down to personal preference and style** as well. For example, I have a friend who is a bit of a fashionista. And she would be so sad if she had to have a minimalist closet. Like if she had to have only a few quality pairs of clothes, it wouldn't make her as happy as if she could buy, you know, fast fashion type of clothes, \$5, \$10 pieces in a variety of colours and styles and patterns. That's something that brings her so much joy.

**Andrew:** And that's really interesting because I'm totally the opposite. I think I would rather have just a few high-quality pieces of clothing rather than to have a lot of different pieces of clothing that are lower quality. But that's what makes the world interesting, right, is that there are different shapes and sizes and characteristics of people. And it makes

things interesting. Kassy, are there any other examples where we could talk about quality versus quantity that pop into your head?

**Kassy:** Food is a big one. Restaurants for sure, but also ingredients, like, do you want to get quality ingredients, or do you want to get the most amount of groceries **for your buck** that you can? Or when you go to a restaurant, would you rather go to a buffet where you can buy a lot of low-quality food for one price? Or would you rather go to more of a fancier upscale restaurant where you can get a small serving that is out of this world amazing tastes?

**Andrew:** Actually, hearing you talk about that jogged a memory from last night. I had a situation where I was at the grocery store with my wife, and we were debating whether we should buy some tortilla chips to make nachos at home. And we decided, yeah, let's do it. And then we had to pick the brand of tortilla chip. And there was a higher quality brand that had, actually, yeah, it was a higher quality brand, it was more expensive, and the quantity was smaller as well. So, it was higher quality and smaller quantity versus the cheaper, more generic brand that came in a bigger bag, had a lower price and had more grams in the bag, you know? And so, we debated back and forth. And at the end of the day, we selected the higher quality chip, even though it was more expensive. And I think that was due to the sodium content in the cheaper one. We opted for the less salty version. But yeah, it just **goes to show** that it's not always money that's involved. Of course, like a bag of chips, there wasn't a very huge cost difference between the two. But sometimes there are other factors that go into play as well.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I had a similar experience. I love cereal, Andrew. It is one of my favourite foods just for snacking on. I don't usually eat it for breakfast, which is hilarious.

**Andrew:** OK, do you have a favourite kind of cereal?

**Kassy:** I have many favourites, but I feel—don't judge me for this, but every once in a while, I just really want a really sugary crazy cereal. And my favourite go to is Lucky Charms.

**Andrew:** Oh, Lucky Charms! Nice.

**Kassy:** Yeah. For listeners who don't know, there's a little leprechaun in the front and there's these cute little marshmallows shaped in various, yeah, leprechaun themes. So, a shamrock hat and a rainbow and shooting star. They're the best.

**Andrew:** Kind of an Irish themed cereal.

**Kassy:** Yes, but as you know, I live in Bangkok now and it is very expensive to buy this cereal compared to back in the States like two or three times more. But I went to the store just like you and your wife and I debated between that cereal and this other one. That same story, it was higher quantity of cereal in the box and a lower price. And unlike you and your wife, I decided to forego the Lucky Charms and I got the other cereal. And I can tell you it was so disappointing. In that case, quality over quantity was definitely the winner.

**Andrew:** Ah, too bad. Well, lesson learned, right? Next time you have to go for the real deal.

**Kassy:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** OK, so Kassy, we've been talking about some kind of easy life decisions, right, about buying higher quality clothing or higher quality food or more pieces of clothing or bigger bags of cereal or chips, something like that. But let's get into some more difficult choices. I wonder about friends—friends in life—quantity versus quality? If you had to choose between having like just one or two really close friends, and having a super small but tight and supportive social circle, would you rather have that? Or would you rather

have a big network of friends and an active social life, but nobody who you really felt extremely close to?

**Kassy:** It's such a good question. As I get older, this is weird, but I think I'm gonna go for the second one, which is not what I would usually say. The second one being more not as close friends, so a larger quantity. The reason why I say that is because I think the older you get, the harder it is to get closer friends, and also the busier you are so it's harder to meet them. So, if you have more friends who are not necessarily your BFFs, but they're people you enjoy hanging out with. You have more opportunities to meet those friends than with, you know that one or two close friends that the schedule never works out. "Oh, sorry, I'm busy this weekend. I'm busy this weekend." And you know, so yeah, I think more friends at this point in my life.

**Andrew:** More friends. OK, interesting. I think in my life... what would I do? Well, I'm going to choose the same as you, but for a different reason. And that is because right now I feel like I am option one, like I have a few really close friends. And I don't have a super huge wide social circle, which is fine, because I feel like I am kind of like the person that you mentioned Kassy, where I don't have a ton of time to be social anyways. So, this kind of fits my lifestyle. But the grass is always greener, right? So, because I have option one right now, already, I have really good friends. And I have a close group of people who are important to me. And I'm kind of wondering like, what would it be like to have a ton of acquaintances? And maybe not really close friends, but just lots of people I know. And maybe that would mean I'd have a busier social life? I don't know if that's a good thing or not. But yeah, the grass is always greener. So, I'll select that one.

**Kassy:** It's interesting. Yeah, I wouldn't imagine either of us selecting that one. But **when push comes to shove**, that's the one we pick.

**Andrew:** Yeah. And, you know, if I were in that situation where I didn't have any close friends, then probably I'd choose the other answer, right? But it's hard to, like, put yourself

into the situation where you don't have that person you can confide in or something. And yeah, so I think probably your current situation causes you to want the opposite situation.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I would say I would totally pick the one or two close friends if I was not married. Now that I have my best friend. I'm set for life, so.

**Andrew:** I totally agree. I think maybe that has a lot to play into it. You have that emotional support already. So, having a wider social group seems better.

Kassy, I want to talk to you about music for a second. And there's a really popular Canadian singer songwriter. He's kind of in the indie music world. His name is Mac DeMarco. And Mac DeMarco released an album probably a month or two ago. I'm not exactly sure when it came out but it's recent. And the name of the album is, *One Wayne G.* And that album has 199 songs on it. Yes, listeners, you heard that right, 199 songs. And it's not necessarily an album where he wrote and polished 199 perfect songs and released it. But it's more like snippets and ideas and demos that he's worked on over the years. And he just kind of released this behind-the-scenes album, I guess where you can look into his creative process and see how he makes his music. And I think that's a kind of cool idea. But the album has been getting really bad reviews generally because there are too many songs. People are just saying, "Wow, this is just like overwhelming." I guess you could put it on in the background. But it's hard to pay attention to almost 200 songs, right? And many of the songs are just named the date of when he was working on that idea in his studio. So, it made me think that maybe there's too much of a good thing, right? Even though Mac DeMarco is really popular. He's got a lot of fans. Many people love his music. Still at the same time, you know, the people who listen to his music and are fans are criticizing him for saying it's too much, I can't really get into this album. I don't know, what do you think about that?



**Kassy:** Yeah, I think it would be overwhelming to open an album and see 199 songs in it. I wouldn't know where to start. Or I'd be like, how long will this take me to finish, a week, two weeks, a month?

**Andrew:** I think it's over nine hours total.

**Kassy:** You know how, like, when you listen to one song on repeat, you start to hate it after a while? I wonder if I listened to the same singer on repeat for 199 songs, even though I might love him or her at first. I'd start to resent them, hearing their voice for nine hours straight.

**Andrew:** Or I'd be worried that most of the songs are just so-so and you kind of have it on in the background while you're working but then one of the songs is amazing. And then later, you're like, maybe you have that song in your head. You're like, "Oh, I want to listen to that song again. And they're like, oh, which one was it?" On a regular album, you could just go through all of the 10 or 12 tracks, but on an album of 199 songs, probably you couldn't do that, right?

**Kassy:** Exactly. And this is happening a lot these days in entertainment industry. Music and movies in particular. I feel like certain genres, there's an influx of superhero movies, for example. And they're not quality anymore. It's just quantity, the same exact storyline over and over and over. But you change the character's name and face.

**Andrew:** Right? Movies like *Fast and the Furious* come to mind as well. How many there's like over 10 of them, probably now? I don't know, I've kind of lost track with that series ever since I saw the first one and then never saw any of the others.

**Kassy:** It dissuades you from watching them because you're like, "Oh, there's 10 of them. They can't be that special." While if there's just one or two of a series, you're like, "Wow, the whole story is in just that one thing. I have to watch it. I gotta see what it's like."

**Andrew:** Kassy, I know you're a bookworm. If you were to get a recommendation from one of your friends and your friend said like, "Oh, this book is so amazing. It's only 200 pages long. You're gonna love it, you have to read it." Versus a recommendation that was like, "Oh, my God, Kassy, you have to read this series. It's only 14 books long. It's so amazing. You're gonna love it." Which recommendation would you be more likely to follow? Like, would you rather just have a short, quick read maybe a book that you can get through in a week? Or would you rather like dive into this fantasy world of this, like, huge story arc that takes place over 10 or 15 books?

**Kassy:** That's also a good question. I think it would depend on the genre. Like, if you tried to recommend me a really amazing book on a character that has a disease. I'm sorry, I probably wouldn't read it. I just hate sad books. And so, this might be an award-winning novel. But if the character dies at the end, I refuse to read it. So yeah, again, I think it comes to even if the writing is quality, I might take quantity if my preference is go towards like a 15 volume fantasy series.

**Andrew:** 15 volume fantasy series, OK. So, it really is case by case and depends on the genre and the story. OK, that makes sense.

So, I've got one final question here for you before we wrap up this episode, and it is about learning and education, which is fitting for us since we are both educators and in this field. So, I guess it's not necessarily about teaching as much as it is about learning, however, and I'm wondering if you were a student, would you rather learn many things at school, like learn a little bit about many, many different fields and topics and be exposed to many different kinds of ideas? Or would you rather focus and specialize on just one or two or three things and get to know them very, very deeply?

**Kassy:** It's also a really good question. You're full of them today. Yeah. For my personality, I would pick the general knowledge of many things. I just have a lot of interests and I don't have any interest in being a master at anything. I think it's so cool for

people who do want to be kind of niche in their studies because they can delve so much deeper than I would ever get. But yeah, for me, quantity versus—it's not really quantity versus quality, quantity versus specialized niche. How about you?

**Andrew:** I think I'm the opposite of you on this one, because I feel like I'm gonna repeat my answer here again, but I feel like I'm already kind of a generalist. Like I know how to do a lot of things OK, but I don't know how to do anything really, really well. And I'm always very, very jealous of specialists. I have so much respect for people who are extremely niche in their knowledge and their skills. I think that's so awesome how somebody can dedicate their whole life to like one little thing and become an expert in it. So, because I'm not that kind of person, the grass is always greener, I'm going to repeat it again, like, oh, it'd be cool to be an expert or like a master at your trade, you know, that would be really awesome. So, I would say, if I could go back in time and repeat my education again, I would probably try to just focus on one thing. Although, you know, there is some basic knowledge you need to get maybe from like, kindergarten to high school, you should be generalist, and then once you get to university become as specialized as possible. But I didn't do that. I just was a generalist almost my whole way through from, you know, elementary school on through university as well.

**Kassy:** Me too, but I don't regret it. I would do it all over again, I'd probably go even broader.

**Andrew:** Even more quantity? OK, good.

So, we've decided to keep our conversation going for a little while longer as a thank you to all of you members out there. Thanks, guys, for your support. Hope you enjoy this bonus conversation.

And Kassy, let's get into it. We have a few rapid-fire questions that we are going to talk about. And they're kind of fun and silly. Kassy, question number one is going back to food,

which we talked about at the start of the episode. If you had a choice between one fantastic slice of pizza, extremely delicious, maybe the best pizza in the world. Or you could eat an entire large pizza to yourself and it's not terrible, but it's just, you know, it's just pizza. Which one would you choose?

**Kassy:** An entire pizza.

**Andrew:** Yeah, me too. Me too.

**Kassy:** Pizza is something you can't have just one slice of.

**Andrew:** Even bad pizza is still good pizza, in my opinion.

**Kassy:** Exactly. All right, Andrew, question for you. Would you prefer to have one fantastic vacation or several OK, like short weekend trips?

**Andrew:** I think one fantastic vacation a year would be better for me. What about you?

**Kassy:** That's so hard. I'm going on a fantastic one this year. So, I'll get back to you after.

**Andrew:** I think just because, you know, I'm in Korea, I could really only stay within Korea for weekend trips. So, if I had a fantastic longer vacation, then I could go to more exotic places or places that I'm not as familiar with. So, that's my rationale. Kassy, the next one is, would you rather have one high-quality gadget or electronic device versus several mediocre ones?

**Kassy:** 100% top-quality gadget. Electronics are so finicky and glitchy and they make you so angry if something happens to them. So, I would definitely pick the highest quality one so that I have the least amount of stress.

**Andrew:** Same here. My answer is exactly the same as yours.

**Kassy:** OK, Andrew, last one. Would you rather watch one outstanding movie or a whole season of an average TV show?

**Andrew:** This one's easy. I would hate to waste my time with an average TV show. Like you'd have to invest at least 10 to 15 hours for a whole season. So yeah, definitely one outstanding movie is the way to go. In my opinion.

**Kassy:** Same. I have never been so angry as when I invested my time in a TV show and it has the worst ending. Have you ever seen Lost? OMG worst feeling ever.

**Andrew:** Kassy, I think that will bring us to the end of today's episode. So, thanks for listening everyone and great job on finishing an English study session here with us today.

**Kassy:** You heard what Andrew and I have to say about quality versus quantity. Now it's your time to share your opinions with us. So, go on over to the Culips community and leave a comment on our website, Culips.com. What do you prefer quality or quantity?

**Andrew:** Take care guys, and we'll talk to you next time. Bye!

**Kassy:** See ya!

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

## Detailed Explanations

### To slip through the cracks

Idiom, informal

**To slip through the cracks** means that something or someone goes unnoticed or lacks attention. It happens when something or someone is missed or neglected, usually as a result of a mistake.

To visualize this idiom, imagine a floor made of wooden planks with small gaps in between. If you drop something small on the floor, it might fall through one of these gaps. Similarly, when used figuratively, this expression means that something or someone was missed or not properly dealt with, just like that small object that disappeared between the floor gaps.

At the very beginning of this episode, Andrew mentions that he was surprised that the topic for this episode hasn't been covered on Culips before. He says, "sometimes those good ideas just **slip through the cracks**." He means that sometimes good ideas go unnoticed and are forgotten about soon after they come up.

You might also hear variations of this expression, such as *fall through the cracks*, or *fall/slip between the cracks*. These are commonly used in American English, while in British English the expression *to slip through the net* is more common.

Here are a couple more examples with **to slip through the cracks**:

**Nicole:** Did you get your lab results back from the doctor?

**Jack:** No, I'm still waiting for them, and it's been three weeks.

**Nicole:** They might have **slipped through the cracks**; you know how busy clinics can be. Why don't you give them a call and find out?

**Sylvia:** I can't believe we forgot to invite your uncle to our wedding. Do you think he's going to be mad at us when he finds out?

**Walt:** Look, we didn't mean to. It was a mistake. I guess he just **slipped through the cracks** when we were making the guest list. I'll explain everything to him and hopefully he'll understand.

## To come down to [something]

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Andrew explains the concept of why being poor is more expensive, using the examples of shoes. In response to that, Kassy adds on that choosing between quality versus quantity in terms of clothes **comes down to personal preference and style**.

When we say something **comes down to a certain thing**, we mean that thing is the key, the most important factor that will determine how things turn out. When discussing issues with many factors involved, we can use this expression to highlight what the result or decision ultimately depends on.

This is a versatile expression that can be used in many different scenarios that involve making decisions or choices. This expression is used when we want to focus on what really matters. For example, when someone is choosing between two jobs, weighing all the pros and cons, it ultimately **comes down to whether they get hired by the company**. That one factor is what will determine their final decision.

A similar expression is *to boil down to [something]*. Both **to come down to [something]** and *to boil down to [something]* refer to a critical aspect and crucial factor that influences the result.

Here are a couple more examples with **to come down to [something]**:

**Olivia:** I really hope I'll get a scholarship for this college. I've done everything they asked for, wrote a bunch of essays, and got all the necessary documents.

**Jackson:** Preparation is important, but **it all comes down to how well you present yourself** in the interviews. Making a good impression is what matters most.

**Amelia:** We've been trying to choose a venue for our event for hours! We really need to make a decision soon.

**Lucas:** I know. Look, it will **come down to whether they're available or not**. Let's contact them and see which ones are free on that day.

## More bang for your buck

Idiom, informal

**More bang for your buck** is an informal idiomatic expression you use when talking about getting the best value for your money. Buck is a slang word for dollar, and in this expression, it means the money you spend; and bang refers to the value you get. If you get more bang for your buck, it means you get more value for better price, a better deal. It means you get the most for your money.

There are many variations of this expression. You might hear *the most bang for your buck*, *better bang for your buck*, or *bigger bang for your buck*. In this episode, Kassy is using a variation of it as well. When talking about buying food from the perspective of quality and quantity, she says, “do you want to get *the most amount of groceries for your buck* that you can?” In this example, she replaces “most bang” with “most amount of groceries.” What she is asking is do you want to get the best value for the money you spend on groceries? Do you want to make the most of your money?

You can use this expression in many different situations, like buying clothes, eating at a restaurant, or getting a gym membership. It's about finding the best balance of quality and price. Even though this expression is informal, it's commonly used in business settings as well. It's used in the context of optimizing expenses and resources while maximizing the benefits.

Here are a couple more examples with **more bang for your buck**:

**Hannah:** Have you got travel insurance for our trip?

**Carter:** Not yet. I'm stuck trying to choose between two plans.

**Hannah:** Let's compare the benefits and see which one gives you more **bang for your buck**.

**Madison:** Have you found an apartment yet?

**Henry:** Not yet. We're still looking. It's taking a while, but we want to make sure we get **the most bang for our buck**, you know? We really want to get the best value for the price we'll be paying.



## It goes to show Phrase

**It goes to show** is an expression we use to say that something proves or demonstrates a particular point. "It" in this phrase refers to what has been said previously, serving as evidence of something. **It goes to show** means it proves an idea or belief that is being discussed. It means that the evidence provided serves as a good example of the point being made.

In this episode, Andrew shares a story about tortilla chips. He explains that he and his wife were debating over which brand to choose, and they ended up buying the more expensive one, because it was less salty, making it higher quality to them. When summarizing his example story, Andrew says, "it just **goes to show** that it's not always money that's involved." His story illustrates that sometimes there are factors other than just money to consider when making decisions. In this case, the quality and taste of the chips were more important than the price difference.

**It goes to show** is a versatile expression you can use in any situation where you want to stress the importance of an example or evidence. It can also be a powerful one to use in debates or presentations, as it makes your point more convincing. This expression is commonly used when we're expressing an opinion or persuading someone and need something to support our argument.

For instance, if someone you know has become fluent in English after years of studying, you can say, "**It goes to show** that hard work and dedication can lead to success in language learning." In this example, "**it goes to show**" emphasizes that the person's success in becoming fluent in English proves that hard work and dedication can help you become proficient in a language.

Here are a couple more examples with **it goes to show**:

**Logan:** I can't believe I was so nervous and hesitant about joining the gym! I'm enjoying it so much I can't imagine my life without it.

**Chloe:** I'm so happy to hear that! **It just goes to show** that facing our fears and stepping out of our comfort zones can lead to positive changes.

**Mason:** I have to say when I first met Larry, I didn't really like him. But I got to know him better and I see that he's a great guy now!

**Evelyn:** He really is. **It goes to show** that you can't always rely on the first impression!

## The real deal

Noun, informal

**The real deal** is an informal expression used to describe something or someone that is genuine, authentic, and of high-quality. If something is **the real deal**, it means that it's true and original, and not a fake or imitation.

In this episode, Kassy shares a story about her favourite cereal, Lucky Charms. She explains that it's very expensive in Thailand, which is why she opted for a cheaper brand. However, the quality was much worse, and Andrew then says that she'll have to buy **the real deal** next time. By using this expression, Andrew is referring to the cereal that Kassy originally wanted, Lucky Charms. It means that Lucky Charms are authentic, of great quality, and not an imitation like that other brand.

**The real deal** is usually used in a positive way to express approval or admiration for something or someone, emphasizing their authenticity and genuineness. It can be used in various contexts and applied to different things or people. If a person is described as **the real deal**, it means they're genuinely talented and skilled.

Here are a couple more examples with **the real deal**:

**Lily:** What do you think about the pizza?

**Liam:** I mean, it's fine. But it can't compete with the authentic Italian pizza though. The pizza I've had in Italy was **the real deal**!

**Lily:** Oh, I'd love to try it someday too.

**Abigail:** We need a website for our company.

**James:** I can ask my sister to do that. She's quite skilled with computers, so I'm sure she'd be interested.

**Abigail:** I appreciate the suggestion, but we need **the real deal** for something like this. We should hire an experienced professional web designer.

**James:** Good point, I totally agree. I'll start looking for someone today.

## When/if push comes to shove

Idiom, informal

**When/if push comes to shove** is an idiomatic expression used to describe a situation when things become so difficult or challenging that action needs to be taken or a decision made. The word “shove” means a strong push, and in this expression this word represents a moment when an action is needed. The idiom **when/if push comes to shove** emphasizes the moment of making a choice or taking action, as if something is literally pushing us to do so.

In this episode, Kassy shares that as she gets older and her life becomes busier, she finds it more practical to have a larger social circle with more friends, even if they are not as close. Andrew agrees that he’d rather have a big network of friends and an active social life, even if he’s not very close to anyone. Kassy uses the phrase **when push comes to shove** to express that in the end, despite their initial preferences, both Kassy and Andrew end up choosing the option of having more friends rather than just one or two very close friends. It means that when faced with the actual decision, their choices change.

This idiom can be used in different scenarios where a situation becomes critical and a decision has to be made, especially when we are faced with challenges or difficulties. The variation **if push comes to shove** is used in conditional sentences to express what will have to be done in case the situation gets worse. For instance, if someone wants to become an actor, but they’re not sure if that’s going to be a stable job that will pay the bills, they might say, “**If push comes to shove**, I can always work as a waiter.” This means that they have a backup plan in case their first choice doesn’t work out.

Here are a couple more examples with **when/if push comes to shove**:

**Michael:** I’ve been working overtime for a good while, and I think I should ask for a raise. I just don’t know how my boss will react to it.

**Grace:** I know how you’re feeling, but **when push comes to shove**, you need to be confident and tell your boss about all the effort you’ve put in to show you deserve a raise.

**Emma:** I’m thinking about moving to a new city for a job opportunity, but I feel so bad about leaving my friends and family behind.

**Ethan:** It’s a tough decision, but **if push comes to shove**, you can always come back!

## Quiz

1. **If a friend tells you that your email slipped through the cracks, they mean that \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a) they didn't see your email or forgot about it
  - b) they answered your email
  - c) you never sent any email
  - d) they shredded your email
  
2. **Which of the following is used when talking about the most important factor that influenced the decision?**
  - a) It goes down to
  - b) It goes up to
  - c) It comes up to
  - d) It comes down to
  
3. **If someone says “It goes to show...”, they \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a) are inviting you to a performance
  - b) are disagreeing with what you said
  - c) are trying to prove a point
  - d) are about to show you something
  
4. **If you describe a personal coach as the real deal, you mean that the coach \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a) lacks professionalism
  - b) is qualified and skillful
  - c) is overpriced
  - d) offers services at a low cost
  
5. **The expression when push comes to shove refers to a situation \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a) where there's a crowd
  - b) where people are pushing each other
  - c) where a decision has to be made
  - d) where someone is scared

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. When it comes to buying things, do you prefer quality or quantity?
2. Would you rather have one or two very close friends, or a large network of casual friends?
3. Describe a situation where something slipped through the cracks. What happened?
4. How do you ensure you get more bang for your buck when buying something?
5. Can you recall a time when you opted for the real deal while choosing between alternatives?

## Quiz Answers

1.a    2.d    3.c    4.b    5.c

### Episode credits

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