

## Simplified Speech #187 – Happy new year!

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### Episode description

In this special episode of Simplified Speech, Andrew and Kassy reflect on the highlights of 2023 and share their exciting plans for 2024. Plus, they talk about some of the exciting new things happening at Culips in the new year. Join them for a heartfelt and forward-looking conversation as they say goodbye to 2023 and look ahead to a promising 2024. Happy new year, everyone!

### Fun fact

Did you know that New Year's resolutions date back over 4,000 years to ancient Babylon? The Babylonians would make promises to the gods at the start of each year, hoping to earn favor for the year ahead. So, if you're making resolutions for the New Year, you're continuing a tradition that's been going strong for millennia!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To put out feelers
- To get a competitive edge
- To throw a number out there
- To be stuck in the groove
- Cup of tea
- To brave [something]



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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:** It's Andrew here and I just wanted to make a quick announcement before we start this episode which by the way is our last episode for 2023. I can't believe I'm actually saying that. Time really does fly. So, the announcement is good news. To kick off the new year and welcome 2024, we're going to be having a sale on Culips memberships. So even if you're already a member, don't worry, you can renew or extend your membership at the sale price. Now please note that this applies only to yearly memberships, not to monthly memberships. And the sale will run from January 1st until January 15th and during that sales period, you can save 25% when you renew or extend your Culips membership. The Culips team and I really appreciate your support and for learning English with us in 2023 and we're honored to be your English teachers and your English study buddies and we absolutely love being a part of this wonderful community and we hope you feel the same way. And we hope you'll continue to study English with us in 2024 as well. So, let's all have a great new year. Let's work hard in 2024 and continue to encourage each other to reach our English learning goals and become better and more fluent English speakers in the new year as well. OK, and now let's get started with this episode.

Simplified Speech episode 187. "Happy New Year!" Featuring Andrew and Kassy. Joining me to co-host this episode is Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew. And hey, listeners. Excited to be here for the last episode of 2023.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's the last one. Kassy, we recorded so many episodes this year and I'm going to put you on the spot and ask you, what was your favorite Simplified Speech episode of 2023? Sometimes it's hard to remember because we do make a lot, but is there one that stands out to you?

**Kassy:** Was 2023 when we started our catch-up episodes or was that 2022? I really like our catch-up episodes.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think probably that was last year in 2022, but if you were to ask me this question, Kassy, I would say the catch-up episodes because it's just fun to sit around and chat. And, you know, having a specific topic to talk about is always fun. And I think because of that, we end up talking about things that we wouldn't usually talk about, but you live in Thailand, I live here in Korea, so it's hard for us to just hang out and chat but catch-up episodes give us that opportunity. So, I'm going to say catch up episodes and you're the same way?

**Kassy:** Yeah, I really like them.

**Andrew:** Awesome. Listeners, I'm curious about what your favorite Simplified Speech episode from 2023 was. Make sure to let us know in our Discord. You can join for free just by clicking the link that will leave in the description for this episode and we'll be waiting for your answer there. So, Kassy, what we're going to do in this episode is look back and reflect on our 2023, maybe talk about some of the memorable moments from this last year, and we're going to look into the future, look forward into the future about what we're excited about for the next year, and maybe some of our plans or New Year's resolutions, those kinds of things. So, it's going to be half looking backwards and half looking forwards. I guess we're going to be like an owl in this episode looking all the way around.

**Kassy:** Sounds good.

**Andrew:** So, Kassy, why don't we start in the past with 2023 and I'll throw it over to you. Could you share with us some of your highlights from this last year?

**Kassy:** Yeah, sure. I don't remember what my goals were for 2023, probably similar, reading lots of books.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I was going to say, I'm pretty sure I know what it is. I think it was reading like 10 million books or something like that.

**Kassy:** Well, I did read, I've read about 80 books this year so far.

**Andrew:** Wow.

**Kassy:** Yeah, and this year was a little special. I started, we've talked about it on another Culips episode, but I started using a new app called StoryGraph. And they had a genre challenge on there where you had to read 10 books from 10 very different genres. And I finished it a few weeks ago and I'm super proud of myself.

**Andrew:** Cool. So, 10 books from 10 very different genres. What were some of those new genres that you explored that you really ended up maybe liking, but that you weren't sure you were going to like at first? Were there any books like that?

**Kassy:** One of them was reading a book about an event in LGBTQ history. I am not part of the LGBTQ community, and I don't really have any close friends that are. So, I never really just read about it, but that was one of the genres. So, I read a book called the Women's House of Detention about a female prison in New York city. And it was really interesting. I learned that Tupac's mom was in that prison, and I learned about a bunch of other famous people that had gone through there and how they were just a block away from the Stonewall riots, which were a big pivotal moment in LGBTQ history in the US. Another book that I read was about startups. I read about a guy who joined, I don't even remember the startup, but a crazy startup with its crazy culture of like mismanagement and overwork and, you know, 20-year-olds in charge of managing 40-year-olds with no work experience. And it was really funny to read.

**Andrew:** Well, I think it's always nice to challenge yourself to doing new things and yeah, reading new genres or exploring, you know, something like your hobby, reading the

general hobby, you can find yourself kind of **stuck in the groove**, right? Doing the same thing over and over. I find that with my running too, my hobby, is sometimes I just run the same path over and over again. And it's great to have, you know, some closeness to the genres that we read or the paths that we run, but at the same time, it's nice to challenge ourselves and push ourselves in other directions because yeah, you never know what you'll find. And you might just find a whole new genre that really connects with you. Or I might just find a whole different running path that's like, "Wow, why haven't I been doing this all along? It's so nice!" But if you don't take those steps and don't push yourself, then you'll never know. Right? So, I love it. I love challenging myself to do new things like that.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I think you're right. My other big goal that I met this year was the European trip that we talked about in a previous episode too. I think, you know, planning that trip was kind of stressful for me. I'd never planned something that big. And then also **braving the World Packer experience** that I did working on that estate in Scotland for a month and kind of just trusting that everything would be OK when I got there without, you know, planning any backup accommodation or really knowing the details of the adventure before we started it was pretty exciting. And I was happy to be able to successfully pull it off.

**Andrew:** Yeah, that's amazing. And definitely it sounds like that was one of the highlights of your year was that big Euro trip and volunteer experience. And did you do any other traveling this year? I can't quite remember. I think that was the big one for you, right?

**Kassy:** Yeah, some mini trips, a trip back home to Korea to visit family, but that was the big one.

**Andrew:** Awesome. So, then what about looking forward to 2024? Do you have any new goals or resolutions that you're going to try and accomplish?

**Kassy:** Yeah, I have two. One, I really want to try free diving.

**Andrew:** Whoa.

**Kassy:** Have you been free diving before?

**Andrew:** No, I've never been free diving, but it's funny that you mention it because my wife and I were watching TV the other day and there were some people spear fishing. Like they had a gun that they would shoot under the water, but it had a spear. So it was almost like a harpoon, a little harpoon, but they were diving with no tanks or anything. And some of the guys were under there for like five or six minutes.

**Kassy:** Crazy.

**Andrew:** Yeah. My wife's learning swimming right now. Like she's going to the swimming pool three or four times a week to take swimming lessons and to practice swimming. And so, she was like, "Andrew, let's do this. Let's go free diving. Let's learn how to do this." And there are schools here in Seoul where you can go and learn. They have like these massive swimming pools that are, I don't know how deep, like 20 or 30 meters deep or something really deep that you can practice diving down and you get used to swimming under that kind of pressure. And I don't know. The ocean scares me a little bit. So, I'm not sure if I'm on board with my wife's suggestion, but that's cool that you want to do it. Maybe you and my wife can go.

**Kassy:** Yeah. I don't want to do anything hardcore. I want to do maybe 10 to 15 meters down, but I don't have any desire to do scuba diving. I don't want to have all the heavy equipment and all the licensure for that kind of thing. But I think, you know, somewhere in between snorkeling and baby free diving would be **my cup of tea**.

**Andrew:** Yeah. That sounds about right for me as well, but that's really cool. And you're in the perfect place for it, right? In Thailand, the tropical seas all around you. So yeah, that sounds awesome. What was goal number two?

**Kassy:** I think I'm going to try to get my masters this year in math teaching education.

**Andrew:** Masters in math teaching. Cool. So, have you looked into that at all? Is it something that you've, you know, narrowed down to some schools or are you just **putting out the feelers** right now?

**Kassy:** I've looked at some schools for me. It's a little bit less of a passion to get my masters and more to **get a competitive edge** in the job market, I think. So, I'm looking for one that has a good program, but is affordable and not super time consuming.

**Andrew:** That's the thing they take a long time to do.

**Kassy:** How about you, Andrew? We've talked a lot about me and my future goals. What was your highlight of 2023 and what are your future goals in 2024?

**Andrew:** OK. So, I knew that we were going to record about this topic today. So, I did write a few notes down because I knew that I would forget everything. So, let's see, what did I write? I wrote 2023. We gutted and rebuilt an old house and moved into it. So yes, that was the huge, massive project for my wife and I this year was finally renovating the house that we bought several years ago. And it was a huge project. It took up a lot of my time, especially at the start of the year, but we did it and now we are living in it. I'm recording in it right now. And I have to say now that we've settled in, and we've been here for about six months now, it is a game changer. It is so much better than the apartment that we used to live in. So, I am very, very satisfied. It's been a huge bump and a huge increase in my quality of life and just my general happiness. And yeah, it's great. So that was a big thing from this year. That's great. What else did I write on my list? I wrote traveled to Canada with my wife for the first time. So that was also great. That was very early in the year. I think it was last January. So yeah, just in the first month of 2023, my wife and I traveled to Canada. She got to meet my family. I got to introduce her to some of my friends and my hometown and show her around. And so that was cool to share that



part of me with her because yeah, she never, you know, she was very trusting. Like she got married to this Canadian guy without knowing about what my life in Canada was about at all. So, I was really happy to introduce my wife to Canada. A major part of my 2023, which was a sad thing was losing Pinky, my dog.

**Kassy:** Yeah, poor Pinky.

**Andrew:** That was like a huge moment in 2023 for both my wife and I, a very difficult thing to go through. But yeah, a major, major thing, losing our sweet Pinky boy back in September. But I think this is one of the things we're looking forward to in 2024 is I think we'll probably get a new dog. I think we'll be ready for a new dog in 2024.

**Kassy:** Do you think you'll get another grandpa dog, or you'll try to get a younger one?

**Andrew:** I don't know. We haven't really thought of it that much, but we did go to this like dog adoption center recently and yeah, it was kind of this event. Like, I don't know how to describe it really because I haven't been to anything like this before, but I guess it was like this organization that rescues dogs and they had, I want to say like an open house. They like rented a cafe, but there was a terrace on the top floor of the cafe outside and they had all the dogs like running around on the terrace and just some seats set up and you could just go and play with the dogs outside. So, we went to this event, and we showed up pretty late, but there were like a ton of people there and all these dogs running around and so it was kind of chaotic. And my wife and I, we just grabbed seats in the corner, and we were like trying to get the dogs to come our way. We're like, "Here doggy doggy!" and no dogs came to us. So, we were like, I think the dogs can sense that we're not ready to adopt a new dog yet. Like that's what we're like, like they know, they know that we're not over Pinky yet. But then finally one little dog that was named Pika and this was like a toy poodle, little toy poodle. She came over to us and hung out with us and played with us. You know, there are a lot of dogs that are suffering in the world and if we can give a home to one of the dogs that is suffering. I mean, it would be awesome to have a puppy right



from the start and be with it its whole life, but I think we'll probably adopt another older dog. We'll see. I don't know. Who knows?

**Kassy:** That's good. You, the older dogs need love too.

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. And what else? On a more positive note, I finished the marathon that I wanted to run. So yeah, that was cool. And I talked all about that earlier in different Culips episodes. So, I won't recap that too much, but also on a Culips note to talk about Culips. Kassy, can you guess how many Culips episodes we released this year? Just **throw a number out there**. How many do you think we released?

**Kassy:** One or two a week, right? So, it's gotta be over a hundred.

**Andrew:** I didn't count either, but I know it's over a hundred episodes this year. So, I think this was maybe our most productive Culips year ever. So, I'm really proud of the work that all of my co-hosts and all of my team here at Culips have done. And to produce over a hundred episodes is a huge milestone for us. And of course, to all the listeners out there, guys, thank you so much for listening and for studying and learning English with us in 2023. We really, really appreciate your support and we couldn't do it without you. If no one were listening or learning English with us, we wouldn't be making these episodes, but that's not the case. We have so many great people who are a part of our English-learning community from all corners of the world, and we wouldn't be here without you guys. So, thank you for tuning in and learning English with us in 2023. And to kind of segue into another thing that we accomplished at Culips this year was starting our Discord server. And I have to give a big shout out to our moderator on the server, Alina, because she has been really successful at growing the community and bringing a lot of Culips listeners together into one place where we can discuss Culips and discuss our lives and just use English every day. I know that's a real challenge for so many listeners is that they're studying English and learning English, but they have no one to speak with or no one to

practice with. Well, that's not the case anymore because of our Discord server. And when I checked just a few moments ago, Kassy, we had over 3,300 members in our Discord server. So, a big shout out to Alina, our moderator, like I said, for her help in setting that up and making a great welcoming community for all of the Culips Discord users. So yeah, that was, I guess, my 2023 in a nutshell, Kassy. In one way, it feels like I did a lot this year, but at the same time, it feels like I didn't do as much as I wanted to. Like I always have goals like you do of reading a certain amount of books or studying Korean. And I did read some books and I never quit studying Korean, but I can never also go as hard as I want with it, so.

**Kassy:** You had too many other big goals that you accomplished. I think you should be very proud of yourself.

**Andrew:** Thank you. It always feels like there's more that can be done, but I suppose that's life, right? And that feeling never really goes away no matter how much you accomplish. But anyways, in terms of looking forward into 2024, my only goal is to stay consistent with what I do. So, running, studying Korean, making Culips episodes, all of the things that I like to do. I just want to be consistent because I think being consistent has yielded the most success in my life more than anything. With learning Korean, it doesn't really matter how I study as long as I study, then I find that I improve. With running, it doesn't really matter what kind of training I do. As long as I do the training, then I notice improvement. So just being consistent will help me, I think a lot. And so that's my one goal is stay consistent.

**Kassy:** Yeah, not the most exciting goal, but a really good, mature goal.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's true. I know it's more exciting to be like, I'm going to free dive.

**Kassy:** No, yours is better. You're going to get like so good at everything.

**Andrew:** In terms of Culips, we have some goals here at Culips as well for 2024. And my personal Culips-related goal for this year is to invite more guests for interviews on the show. And I want to try and develop my interviewing skills because I realized that is kind of difficult. It's kind of difficult to interview strangers. So, I want to get more reps in, more practice with interviewing. And so, I hope to interview and have many more special guests on Culips this year. And also, of course, I want to keep working hard to develop our English-learning tools and our study methods so that we can help more people around the world reach their fluency goals faster than ever. Of course, that's our core goal at the heart of things. But of course, we'll keep pushing to improve that for the next year.

**Kassy:** Oh, Andrew, speaking of the Culips goal, before we finish this episode, I think we should make it a goal in 2024 for the girls to meet each other.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Well, there was some chatter over on our Discord server about that. There were some people who requested some Andrew-free episodes. And, you know, we talked about releasing over 100 episodes this last year, and I think I was a part of every one. So, I love it. I'm ready for a break. So, I'd love to hand over the microphone to Kassy and Suzanne and Anna and let you guys go nuts. And yeah, let's make that happen in 2024.

**Kassy:** Yeah. Even if it was just one, it would be a cool little, what's the word, not like a reunion, but you know, those TV shows where cartoon characters from one TV show would have one or two episodes with cartoon characters from another show. It was so epic. It feels like that.

**Andrew:** Yeah. It'd be like a crossover or something.

**Kassy:** Yeah. Crossover. That's it.

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**Andrew:** Well, let's do it in 2024. Sounds good. But for now, everyone, I think we will leave things here. So of course, thank you to everyone for listening to us throughout the whole year. Your support really means a lot to us, and we couldn't do Culips without you. And we hope also in 2024, you'll continue to support us, you'll continue to learn English with us, and together we can all improve our English language skills.

**Kassy:** I hope you're proud of all of your learning that you've done this year and can't wait to chat to you in the new year.

**Andrew:** Love it. All right. Well, everybody, once again, happy 2024 and we'll talk to you next year. Goodbye. See ya. That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time, bye!

## Detailed Explanations

### To put out feelers

#### Idiom

**To put out feelers** is an idiomatic expression that means to start finding out about something. It's like when you want to know more about a new idea or plan.

In the conversation between Andrew and Kassy, Andrew uses "putting out the feelers" to ask Kassy if she is just starting to look into schools for her master's degree. He wants to know if Kassy is at the beginning of finding out which school she wants to go to.

The expression comes from how some animals use their feelers or antennae to feel what's around them. But when people "put out feelers," they are not using real feelers. Instead, they are trying to get information. They might ask people questions, look up things on the internet, or talk about their ideas with friends.

For example, if someone is looking for a new job, they might talk to people in that industry or look at job postings to get an idea of what's available. This process of finding information is what "putting out feelers" means.

The expression is useful in both casual and professional contexts and is a helpful way to describe the early stages of planning or decision-making. It suggests that while someone is actively seeking information or exploring options, they have not yet made a final decision or commitment.

Here are a couple more examples with **To put out feelers**:

**Alex:** Hey, are you still thinking about moving to a new city next year?

**Sam:** Yes, I'm just **putting out feelers now**, checking job opportunities in different cities.

**Alex:** Sounds like a smart approach. Let me know if you need any help!

**Sam:** Will do, thanks!

**Tara:** Have you decided when to have your birthday party?

**Chris:** Not yet. I'm **putting out feelers** to see which of my friends can make it on different dates. I want to pick a day when most people are free.

**Tara:** Good idea. Don't forget to invite me. I'm free anytime!

## To get a competitive edge

### Expression

The expression **get a competitive edge** means gaining an advantage over others in a competitive situation. This advantage can be in terms of skills, qualifications, or any other aspect that makes a person more likely to succeed or be chosen over others. In this episode, Kassy discusses her decision to get a master's degree not just out of interest but to gain an advantage in the job market.

To understand this expression better, consider the words "competitive" and "edge." "Competitive" relates to a situation where people or groups are trying to outperform each other. An "edge" in this context means an advantage. Therefore, having a "competitive edge" means having a feature or quality that puts you ahead of others in a competitive situation.

This expression is commonly used in professional and educational settings. For example, someone might take an advanced course or develop a unique skill to "get a competitive edge" in their career.

Similar expressions include "have an upper hand," "have a leg up," or "gain an advantage." These expressions also communicate the idea of having a benefit or superiority in a competitive situation. For instance, if someone is bilingual, they might "have an upper hand" in job markets where multiple languages are an important skill.

In everyday use, these expressions can be applied to various situations, from sports to business. Remember, the key idea is about gaining superiority or an advantage in a competitive environment.

Here are some examples with **To get a competitive edge**:

**Chris:** You've been doing a lot of extra training recently.

**Taylor:** Yeah, I'm working on my speed and agility. I want to **get a competitive edge** for the upcoming soccer team tryouts.

**Chris:** That's a great idea. Extra effort could really make a difference!

**Ella:** Have you been listening to Culips lately?

**Liam:** Every day! I'm trying to improve my English skills so I can get a competitive edge in the job market.

**Ella:** That's smart. Strong language skills can open up many career opportunities.

## Throw a number out there

### Casual expression

During their conversation, Andrew asks Kassy to make a guess about the number of podcast episodes they released in 2023. Kassy doesn't know the exact number, so she gives an estimate based on her general knowledge of the Culips schedule. Andrew tells her to **throw a number out there** to provide a rough guess.

When someone says, "throw a number out there," it means they're asking you to make a guess or estimate without needing to be precise or exact. It's a way to encourage you to offer your opinion or estimate without feeling pressured to provide an accurate answer.

Similar expressions that communicate the same idea include "take a wild guess," "give it a shot," and "hazard a guess." These phrases are used in informal conversations when you want to make an educated guess but don't have all the necessary information.

"Throw a number out there" is commonly used in everyday spoken English, particularly in casual conversations. However, in more formal or academic contexts, it's best to use more precise language when estimating or guessing.

In addition to estimating numbers, you can use "throw a [something] out there" in many other situations. For example, you can use it to introduce ideas casually, by saying "Let me throw an idea out there for our next project." It's also useful for making suggestions without being forceful, such as by saying, "I'd like to throw a suggestion out there regarding our upcoming event. How about we consider a different venue?"

Here are some examples with **Throw a number out there**:

**Sarah:** I've been thinking about training for a half marathon, but I'm not sure how long it will take to prepare.

**Mike:** Well, **to throw a number out there**, it typically takes around 12 to 16 weeks of training to get ready for a half marathon.

**Sarah:** Thanks, Mike. That gives me a good idea about how to plan my training schedule.

**Sophia:** I have a big presentation to make in class next week, and I'm not sure how to start it. Any ideas?

**Ethan:** Let me **throw an idea out there**. How about starting with a funny story to grab the audience's attention?

**Sophia:** That's a great suggestion. I'll definitely consider it. Thanks!



## To be stuck in the groove

Idiom

In this episode, Andrew compares his running habits to Kassy's reading habits. He says that running the same routes and reading the same genres of books can become boring and monotonous. He mentions that following the same routine or habit can lead us to become **stuck in the groove**. This expression describes how repeating the same actions over and over again might make our experiences seem dull, boring, and unvaried.

"Stuck in the groove" means you are in a repetitive and unchanging pattern, just like when a needle on a record player repeats the same part of a song repeatedly. It describes a situation where someone continues doing the same activity without introducing anything new or different. This expression is commonly used to talk about habits or routines that have become too comfortable and always the same, resulting in a lack of excitement or variety. For example, if a friend keeps ordering the same type of dish, you might encourage them to try something new by saying, "You're stuck in the groove, how about trying something different today?" It's a casual way to suggest exploring new things, whether in hobbies, food, travel, or even work-related tasks.

Additionally, there are expressions with similar meanings. "In a rut" means being in a boring or unproductive state due to repetitive actions. "Going through the motions" refers to doing something routinely, but without real interest or effort. "On autopilot" means to perform actions automatically, without much conscious thought. Just like "stuck in the groove," these expressions highlight the need for variety and new experiences in life.

Here are a few more examples with **To be stuck in the groove**:

**Alice:** Have you noticed that Jon always goes to the same cafe?

**Bob:** Yeah, always the same coffee, same table. He's really **stuck in the groove**.

**Alice:** We should suggest he tries that new place downtown. A little change might be good for him.

**Bob:** I don't think he'll listen. He loves following the same routine each day.

**Alex:** I've been feeling **stuck in the groove** lately, just repeating the same daily routine.

**Jordan:** Why not try something new? Like joining a class or picking up a new hobby.

**Alex:** Good idea. Maybe it's time to take those dance classes I've always dreamt about

## Cup of tea Idiom

The expression **cup of tea** is a common idiom in English. It's used to describe something that a person finds enjoyable or well-suited to their tastes. This expression doesn't actually refer to a beverage but is a metaphorical way of expressing a preference or liking for something.

For example, in this episode, Kassy mentions her lack of desire to do scuba diving with heavy equipment and prefers something less intense. She says a simpler form of diving would be her "cup of tea." Here, Kassy is using the expression to communicate that a more relaxed form of diving is what she would enjoy or prefer, similar to how she might prefer a specific type of tea.

This expression is often used in informal conversations and can apply to a wide range of contexts, from hobbies and activities to types of food, music, or movies. It's a polite way of stating a preference, especially when discussing options or alternatives. For example, if someone asks if you like extreme sports, you might reply, "Not really, gentle hikes are more my cup of tea." This communicates your preference for less intense activities without being rude or offensive.

There are other expressions in English with a similar meaning. For instance, "right up my alley" or "just my thing" also indicate that something aligns with your interests or preferences. On the other hand, if something is not to your liking, you could say "it's not my cup of tea" or "it's not really my thing." These expressions allow you to express your personal tastes in a conversational and casual way. Here are a few more examples with **Cup of tea**:

**Ryan:** Your bookshelf is full of sci-fi novels. You must really love the genre!

**Lily:** Yes, sci-fi is totally my cup of tea. I love the imagination in them.

**Ryan:** Me too! What's your favorite sci-fi book?

**Lily:** It's hard to choose, but I really like *Dune*.

**Max:** Are you into hiking and outdoor adventures?

**Emily:** Definitely, it's my cup of tea. I love being in nature.

**Max:** That's great! If you'd like to go for a hike together sometime, let me know!

## To brave [something]

Verb

In this episode, Kassy talks about her experience of braving a unique volunteer opportunity through World Packers. She faced an unfamiliar and potentially challenging scenario by committing to work on an estate in Scotland for a month. This decision required her to step into an unknown situation with courage and determination, without the comfort of detailed planning or backup options.

**To brave [something]** means to do something even if it's difficult or scary. It shows you are strong and have courage. You go ahead with it, despite feeling afraid or not sure. For example, imagine a student braving their first public speaking event. Despite feeling nervous and uncertain, if this student decides to speak in front of a class, that's braving their fear. They are scared, but they still choose to do it.

There are many ways we can use this expression. For example, we can say "brave the storm," to mean keeping going even when life is very tough. When you "brave new things," you're trying things you've never done before. "Brave the odds" is about doing something even when it looks like you might not win. And "brave a journey" means to start a trip even if you are not sure what will happen. You can use all these expressions to describe situations where you or others show courage.

Expressions similar to "to brave [something]" include "to confront a challenge," where one directly faces a difficult situation, or "to tackle an obstacle," which involves actively working to overcome difficult circumstances. Here are a few more examples with **To brave [something]**:

**Sally:** I'm planning to backpack across Europe next summer.

**Carlos:** That's amazing, Sally! You'll be **braving a whole continent** on your own.

**Sally:** Thanks, Carlos. It's a bit scary, but I can't wait to explore new places.

**Juan:** I heard you're switching to a completely different role at work.

**Gretta:** That's right! I'm **braving the transition** from marketing to sales. It's a big change for me.

**Juan:** That's impressive! I'm sure you'll love the change though! Good luck with your new position!

**Gretta:** Thanks so much!

## Quiz

1. What does the expression "stuck in the groove" typically mean?
  - a) Feeling lost and confused
  - b) Having a sharp and clear focus
  - c) Feeling adventurous and spontaneous
  - d) Experiencing a repetitive and unchanging routine
  
2. Complete the sentence: "When discussing their movie preferences, Sarah mentioned that romantic comedies are her \_\_\_\_\_."
  - a) Delight
  - b) Favorite drink
  - c) Cup of tea
  - d) Acquired taste
  
3. When someone says they want to "put out feelers" what do they mean?
  - a) They want to touch something to see if it's hot
  - b) They want to express their feelings openly
  - c) They want to find out information or see if something is possible
  - d) They want to organize a social gathering with friends
  
4. Which of the following situations best shows the usage of the expression "to throw a number out there"?
  - a) Emily accurately counted the number of apples in the basket
  - b) Mike guessed the weight of the watermelon
  - c) Sarah carefully calculated her monthly expenses
  - d) Tom bought a lottery ticket hoping to win a million dollars
  
5. What does "to brave something" mean?
  - a) To avoid a difficult situation
  - b) To face a challenging situation with courage
  - c) To ignore challenges and hope they go away
  - d) To complain about a difficult situation

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a situation where it would be important to **put out feelers** before taking action?
2. Can you provide examples of strategies people use **to gain a competitive edge** in different fields?
3. Can you share a personal experience or give an example of someone you know who was **stuck in the groove**? How can people break out of such patterns and make changes in their lives?
4. What are some hobbies, activities, or things that are **your cup of tea**?
5. Can you think of a situation where you had to **brave a difficult circumstance or challenge**? How did you feel before and after overcoming it? What advice would you give to others who need to brave something in their lives?

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## Quiz Answers

1.d    2.c    3.c    4.b    5.b

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### Episode credits

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