

Sober October

Episode description

In this bonus episode, Andrew talks about the Sober October challenge and shopping for new shoes. Plus, he teaches you a useful idiomatic expression ***out of pocket***.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Welcome to bonus episode number 22 of the Culips English Podcast. How's it going? I hope you're doing well and that you had a great weekend. My name is Andrew and I want to thank you for joining me today for this English study session.

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So, as you all are well aware, it is October now. And for the last few years, each October, I've participated in a monthly challenge, which is called Sober October. That's a fun rhyme, right? Sober October. Anyways, sober describes someone who doesn't drink alcohol. So, the challenge for Sober October then is not to drink any alcohol during the entire month of October. Now this challenge was originally started by a podcaster from the USA, who's named Joe Rogan. And if you haven't heard of him, he's a very important pop culture figure these days. He's very, very famous, and you should at least be aware of who he is.

His podcast is really popular, and millions of people tune into his episodes, which feature long-form interviews with a variety of guests. Sometimes there are movie stars or celebrities. There could be comedians, athletes, hunters, scientists, sometimes even conspiracy theorists or people who hold very controversial opinions. Now the interviews are long, like I said, they're long-form interviews. So, sometimes they will last for three hours or four hours. And because he sometimes has these controversial guests on his show, there are many people who really dislike him and his podcast. But on the other hand, he has millions of supporters and fans. So, that means Joe Rogan himself, he's even controversial. Some people love him, some people hate him. Me, I'm kind of in the middle, I don't really have a super strong opinion about him either way. And although I wouldn't say that I'm a big fan of his, from time to time, I do like to listen to the episodes

that feature athletes, or that talk about health and nutrition. I'm a fan of that kind of content. And he's had some really interesting guests on in the past to talk about those things.

Anyways, Joe Rogan, he's the guy that started this contest. And regardless, if you love him, or you hate him, it's hard to disagree with sober October. I think most people will agree that this is a good thing. One of the weird things about Joe Rogan is that he's not only a podcaster, but he's also a professional stand-up comedian, and a martial arts expert. He's also the commentator for the UFC, which is the mixed martial arts fighting organization, which is a really popular sport these days. So, you can see him on TV often as well, hosting and commentating on UFC fights and events. So, he really has quite the varied resume. He's an interesting guy in that regard, because he just has this very, very weird set of skills and background experiences. Now because one of the things that he does is comedy and because he's a comedian, he naturally of course has many friends who are also comedians and each year he does the Sober October challenge with several of his comedian colleagues. And together, they all encourage their social media followers, and their listeners, and their subscribers, all of the people that enjoy their content to take part in the challenge as well.

So guys, the rules for the challenge vary slightly from year to year, but this year's challenge is as follows. Number one, you have to avoid drinking any alcohol or doing any drugs during October, hence the name Sober October. Number two, you have to burn 500 calories each day through intentional exercise. And number three, you have to do 100 pushups each day. So really, the focus of this challenge is just improving your health throughout the month of October. I don't know about you, but personally, I love challenges like this. And I find them a great way to achieve some goals. And after catching Covid late last summer, I really fell out of shape. And I thought that participating in this Sober October challenge would be a great way for me to get back on track, and a great way to get back into shape. And actually, I think this challenge is not too difficult for me, really.

The first part of the challenge is to avoid using drugs and alcohol for the month. And this is extremely easy for me to do. It's extremely easy to avoid using drugs, because well, I don't do any drugs. And there's no problem there at all. Now I live in South Korea, and drug usage is very, very low in this country and it's not common at all. But I guess in many parts of the USA, and actually in all of Canada, in my home country, marijuana is legal, and it's quite commonly consumed. So, I think for all of the North American people participating in this challenge, that's part of the challenge as well, to avoid drinking alcohol, but also to

avoid staying away from other substances that can affect your clarity of mind, such as marijuana or other drugs. Now, as for the other part, avoiding drinking alcohol, I think that part of the challenge will be quite easy as well. Although I do drink occasionally, I'm a pretty light drinker. And you know, maybe I'll have a beer or two or a glass of wine on the weekend, something like that. But that's pretty much it. And my wife doesn't drink at all, so I don't have to worry about her, distracting me or tempting me or anything like that. I think the only thing that might be a little difficult is if my friends or colleagues invite me to go out to dinner this month. Although I'm from Canada, I do live in South Korea, like I mentioned, and there is a big drinking culture here, it's really common to drink alcohol in Korea. And going out to dinner usually means at least drinking a little bit of alcohol, like beer, or soju, which is Korea's drink of choice. I think this will be okay though because my friends are very supportive people. And I think even if they asked me to go out with them, they will be understanding of my challenge. And I'll be able to make it through the month without any problems at all. So all in all, part one of the challenge staying sober, that's going to be easy peasy. Gonna be super easy.

The problem I think comes with the second part of this challenge, which is burning 500 calories each day through intentional exercise. So, that means purposefully doing some exercise, OK? Everybody burns calories during their day-to-day life, right? You're just like walking around in your house, going to the supermarket, walking your dog around the block, these kinds of daily activities burn calories. They take energy and we consume energy doing them. But that's not what the challenge is about. The challenge is about, specifically, intentionally, on purpose, burning an additional 500 calories each day. And of course, everybody's body is different. But for me, that means that I would have to run about eight kilometers or so, or bike for about an hour to burn that much energy. I'm not really a big weightlifter or sports player or anything like that. So, biking and running are my two preferred forms of exercise. Now the problem isn't the amount of exercise, it's the frequency. Because every day is a lot. Now, I'm over a week into this challenge right now. And it started well, but now that it's been over a week, my body is starting to feel it. It's been great getting to go outside each day, and I love that part of it. But my body, especially my legs, are starting to feel a little tired and that they would like a rest day. But my legs will just have to wait because I'm going to try and see this challenge through to the end and complete this challenge. And you know what, come to think of it, I've been running every day. I've been thinking about biking, but I haven't biked yet I've only been running. But I think this week, I'm going to get my bike out of storage, and tune it up, and pump up the tires, and get out there and do some biking this next week, so that I can vary

the kind of exercise that I'm doing and give the muscles in my legs that I use for running a little break.

And the final part of this challenge is doing 100 push ups each day. You know what a push up is, right? It's when you lie on the floor, and you use your hands to physically push your body up off of the floor and then you go back down to the floor. It's this kind of motion. And like I said earlier, I'm not really the kind of guy who enjoys lifting weights or doing strength-based exercising. But I do occasionally do push ups here and there through my day, you know, if I'm waiting for my coffee machine to make some coffee in the morning, during that time, maybe I will do five or ten push ups, just to pass the time while I wait for the coffee to brew. I definitely cannot do 100 push ups in one set. However, I found that this challenge is not so difficult if I break it up into smaller sets. So, I've been doing four sets of 25 push ups each day, one right after waking up, one before going to work, one after lunch, and one after dinner. And doing the challenge this way has made it pretty easy. I guess it's pretty early into the challenge. But so far, I haven't noticed any improvement at all in my strength. Doing 25 push ups today is exactly as difficult as it was on October 1st. So, I think I'm going to need a lot more time than one week to notice some development in my strength. But we'll see what happens by the end of the month. And even if I don't really build too much strength through this challenge, I think it's just a nice habit to get into. And maybe it's even something that I can keep up after October is finished.

So, because of all the exercise I've been getting this last week, it's kind of been nice at the end of the day, I've been really tired. And that means that I've been sleeping really well too. My head hits the pillow at night, and I just pass out and sleep well till the next morning. And like I said, I'm early into this challenge, but my review after one week is that I've started to notice that my whole-body health is starting to get into alignment. It's like every positive change that you make affects another positive change in your life. So, for example, if you stop drinking and start exercising, then you naturally start to sleep better. And then that better sleep plus the exercise means you start to feel better and have more energy. And then once you start to feel better and have more energy, you want to keep that going and you want to do whatever you can to avoid feeling bad. So, you start to eat healthier food as well. And it's like one positive change supports another and another and another and you have this chain reaction. So, I think that's the benefit that I've noticed after a week. And I'm enjoying the challenge so far. I hope I can keep it up for the whole month. And if you're doing something similar, if you're participating in a Sober October challenge or something like that this month, or if there's a kind of challenge like this in your country

that's really popular as well, definitely leave a comment on this episode to let me know because I would love to hear about it.

If you're a regular Culips listener, you'll probably know that after getting married last year, my wife and I moved into a new apartment together. I mean, our building isn't new or anything like that. Our building is like 30 years old, but it was a new place to us, right? A new apartment for us. Now in my home country Canada, usually when you move into a rental apartment or a condo, the appliances are included. So, this means you can just use the fridge, the stove, the oven that are provided to you by the owner. However, here in Korea where we're currently living, this isn't the case and it's the tenant's responsibility to buy their own appliances. So, when we moved into our place last year, we had to buy all of the appliances for our house. We had to buy a fridge, an oven, a microwave, that was just for the kitchen. And then, we also bought a washing machine and a dryer for our laundry area. So, this was a pretty big purchase for us.

And as you can imagine, buying all of these things brand new is pretty expensive. Because of this, we shopped around a lot. And by the way, shop around means looking at many different stores and comparing prices before you make your purchase. So, we shopped around a lot, we went from store to store to store, and we were surprised to learn that the prices from one store to the next store can be really different. Even when buying the exact same brand and the exact same model, some stores would be \$2000 or \$3,000 different than a store offering the exact same products. So, we shopped around a lot. And eventually, we found a great store with a great saleswoman who gave us a fantastic deal, she really helped us out. And because of her, we were able to save a few thousand dollars by shopping at that store. So, it was amazing. One of the bonuses that the saleswoman threw in to sweeten the deal, and convince us to shop at her store, was a few hundred dollars worth of gift certificates to a local department store.

So, ever since we bought those appliances back in May of 2021, last year, I've had these gift certificates just burning a hole in my pocket. Have you heard that expression before? Burning a hole in your pocket. We use this expression when we're talking about having money, or in my case, gift certificates in your pocket or in your bank account, and you just want to spend them. You're really like tempted to spend them, they're burning a hole in your pocket is what we say. So, I've had these gift certificates kind of burning a hole in my pocket. I've been holding on to them for a long time, but I kinda want to spend them. And it just so happens that recently a pair of my favorite shoes that I use just for day-to-day life,

walking around doing errands, this kind of thing. Those shoes are starting to wear out on the back where my heel rubs up against it when I walk. So, I thought it would be a perfect time to use these gift certificates and go and buy some brand-new shoes for myself.

So, over the weekend, my wife and I went to the department store to look for new shoes. And Korean department stores are massive and have many, many, many shops inside. And you can just browse from shop to shop easily. It's really convenient for doing this kind of shoe shopping. Actually, one whole floor of the building that we went to to do the shoe shopping is dedicated just to sport shoes, and running shoes, and sneakers. So, I went there to look for some new sneakers. I looked at several different stores and I tried on many pairs of shoes. But there was only one pair of shoes that I really liked. And of course, can you guess what the problem was? This always happens, right? The one pair of shoes that you like, are also the pair of shoes with the big price tag, they were over \$150.

Now, I know that everyone has a different relationship with money, and that a price tag of \$150 might seem outrageous for some people and seem extremely expensive. Now on the other hand, it might seem fairly cheap for some people. I guess it all depends on your economic position and your outlook on life. Well, for me, \$150 is expensive, very expensive. That price is right about at the maximum I would ever pay just for a daily pair of shoes. Like, they would have to be the most perfect shoes for me to pay that much money for. So, I hemmed and hawed over whether I should buy the shoes or not. I hemmed and I hawed. That's a funny idiom, actually. Hem and haw. It means to be indecisive, or to not give an absolute answer about something. And I think it comes from the sounds English speakers make when we're thinking. We go "ummm" and "ahhh." Have you ever heard somebody speaking English, kind of flustered, and they don't know what to say? And they say, "uhhh... ahhh." They make these kinds of sounds. Well, I think that's where hem and haw comes from. It replicates those sounds in the idiom. And like I said, it just means to be indecisive.

So, I hemmed and I hawed when my wife asked me, "Are you going to buy those shoes?" I walked around in the store, you know, looking at them in the mirror, and really thinking about if it was worth the \$150 or not. But ultimately, I decided that I should just keep looking around and try to find something more affordable. It just didn't sit right with me to pay that much money. Even though I would be able to pay with gift certificates, I wouldn't be paying out of pocket, that price tag just seemed too high for me. So, I'm gonna keep

looking around for new shoes. And hopefully, I can find some that are comfy, and stylish, and also won't break the bank. And listeners, if you have any recommendations for a nice pair of shoes that would match what I need, then please let me know.

And now it's time for today's vocabulary lesson.

Let's wrap up today's bonus episode by taking a closer look at one of the interesting expressions I used when I was telling you about shopping for new shoes. It is: out of pocket. Out of pocket. To be out of pocket. It's a common idiom in everyday English and also in business English situations as well. And if you're out of pocket, it means that you have to pay for something using your own money. OK? You're not using somebody else's money, you're using your own money. And when I was talking about shoe shopping just a moment ago, I said that I wouldn't be out of pocket when buying the shoes. And that's because I would be able to use gift certificates, not my own money, to buy the shoes. So, I wouldn't be using my own money, so I wouldn't be out of pocket. You know what, why don't we go back and listen to that part of the episode where I use this idiom a couple more times, and we'll listen to that part again. So, let's do it. Here we go.

Even though I would be able to pay with gift certificates, I wouldn't be paying out of pocket, that price tag just seemed too high for me.

So, as we just heard, I used the expression to be out of pocket to communicate that I wouldn't be using my own money when shoe shopping. But that instead I would be using gift certificates. As always, I've prepared some example sentences that we can listen to, so that we can get a better feel for how to use this expression in a natural way. So, let's listen to the first example now.

Example sentence number one

Whenever I visit the doctor, I have to pay out of pocket. But then if I send the invoice to my insurance provider, they reimburse me. Whenever I visit the doctor, I have to pay out of pocket. But then if I send the invoice to my insurance provider, they reimburse me.

Let's break this example sentence down. In that example, we heard about a guy who has to pay out of pocket when he visits the doctor. So, after visiting the doctor, he pays the

doctor's bill with his own money. But then the doctor's office gives him an invoice, and he can send that invoice to his insurance company. And his insurance company reimburses him. To reimburse means to pay back. So, he gets that money back from his insurance company after submitting the invoice.

Example sentence number two

My office finally gave me a credit card. Now I don't have to pay out of pocket and file expense reports whenever I have meetings with clients.

Let's break this example down. So, in this example sentence, the speaker just received a credit card from his employer. And he's happy about this because now, going forward into the future, when he has business meetings with clients, he can just use the credit card and he doesn't have to pay out of his pocket. So, I guess in the past, he paid out of pocket. He used his own personal money when doing business meetings. And then he would fill out a report, an expense report, and submit that to his company, and then he would get that money back from his company, which sounds like a pretty complicated procedure, and kind of not very cool to have to pay your own money when doing business expenses. So, I think he has a good reason to be happy because it sounds like his life is going to be a lot easier going forward.

Example sentence number three

My sister just got a scholarship from her university, she has to pay her tuition at the start of the semester out of pocket. But if she completes all her classes without quitting, then she gets the whole amount of money back.

Let's break this final example down. So, in that sentence, we heard about a woman who is getting a scholarship from her university. And it's kind of an interesting scholarship, she has to pay for her university classes out of pocket. So, she uses her own money to pay for her tuition. However, if she passes and completes all of her courses, then the university gives her that money back and they pay for the courses. So, it's an interesting scholarship where if you complete all of the courses, then you don't have to pay anything. But at the start of the semester, you do have to use your own money, you have to pay out of pocket to cover the tuition.

One final note about this expression out of pocket, guys, is that there is also an additional meaning. To be out of pocket in other contexts can also mean losing money. So, for example, if you went to Las Vegas and went gambling, and you had a terrible night in the casino, maybe after you finished, you could say, "Oh, I'm out of pocket \$1,000! I just lost all my money!" You could say a sentence like that. So, just be careful. You have to know the context because it can mean paying using your own money upfront for something as we learned in this episode, but it also has another meaning of losing money. So, just pay close attention to the context where you hear this expression in, so that you can understand it correctly.

That brings us to the end of another bonus episode, everyone. Thanks again for studying with me today. I hope you learned something new and of course also had a good time along the way. I think you made a great choice to spend some time working on your English today, and make sure to keep it up throughout the week. If you need any help with that, please remember that we have hundreds of lessons on Culips.com that you can learn with and improve your English fluency with. Take care and I'll talk with you next time. Goodbye.

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