

The good, the bad, and the ugly cry

Episode description

In this week's edition of the bonus episode, Andrew talks about what he's been up to over the last couple of weeks, including moving to his new house and a health scare with his pet dog Pinky Boy. Listen, learn, and improve your English fluency with real-life stories.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello and welcome to bonus episode number 57 of the Culips English podcast. I'm your host and study buddy Andrew and it's great to be here with you today.

So, in our bonus episode series, you'll improve your English through listening to interesting, or at least I hope interesting, stories from my everyday adventures as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And in each episode, I also break down, explain, and teach you about a useful and helpful English idiomatic expression that I recommend adding to your vocabulary to help improve your English listening and speaking skills and to make your English stronger and better than ever.

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I also want to encourage you to join our brand-new Discord server if you haven't already. I'll put the link in the episode description so that you can do that easily. Just follow the link and you can sign up and join the server. We've already had hundreds of English learners from around the world join us on the Discord and I have to say it's been very, very fun to



hang out with the Culips community there. Of course, the server is free to join, you don't have to pay anything at all and using the server gives you the opportunity to be active with your English. You can leave messages, you can chat with other members of the community, or you can even do voice chatting and practice your English speaking.

And in fact, I used one of the voice chat rooms last Friday. I hopped in just casually with a couple of users. I had an awesome conversation for about 30 minutes with Juan from Spain and Andy from Belarus. So, shout out to Andy and Juan. It was great chatting with you guys. We had a lovely conversation about all sorts of things really, but we talked about our hobbies and our weekend plans, and then we even started talking a little bit about global real estate prices and what different kinds of car brands are popular in the places where we live. It was a really wide-ranging conversation and really, really fun to chat with those guys. Personally, I'm going to try and at least do one voice chat each week on the Discord server. And I hope I'll be able to talk with some of you listeners as well.

I know that it can be a little bit intimidating to speak with others in a foreign language, right? It always gets your heartbeat racing a little bit when you have to speak in English with others. But please just remember that everyone on our Discord server is either an English learner or in my case, I'm an English teacher, and we're all here trying to help each other get better together, right? So even if you just want to practice for 10 or 15 minutes at a time, doing that is certainly better than doing nothing.

So, for this week, I want to challenge you to give our Discord server a try and specifically to try the voice chatting feature. Even for just 10 minutes, go on to Discord, join one of the voice chat and hang out channels, and practice your English speaking this week. Even if it feels scary or uncomfortable, you'll be taking a step in the right direction toward becoming a better English speaker.

You know, we have an expression in English that goes, "Money doesn't grow on trees." Money doesn't grow on trees. Have you heard that expression before? It's a pretty popular one, so you probably have. This expression essentially means that nothing in life is free,



right? Money doesn't grow on trees. We can't just pick money like we can pick apples, for example. So, if you want to make money, then you have to work for it. You have to earn it.

And I guess we could also say that English fluency doesn't grow on trees. Unfortunately, it's something that we can't just load into our brains like we can a computer program. We can't just download the English fluency app and load it into our brains. Well, not yet anyways, maybe in the future we can do that. But for now, we can't.

So, what you have to do instead is you have to put in the time and the work to achieve your goals. And you're doing that right now. If you're listening to this episode right now, you're putting in the time you're putting in the work, that's awesome. But being active and productive by writing in English or speaking in English is also very important too. So just keep that in mind. And I hope to see you all on the Culips Discord server this upcoming week practicing your English speaking.

If you listened to the last bonus episode, the one that I released last week, you'll know that I've been just crazy busy lately due to the fact that I've finally moved from my old apartment to my new house. And I have good news to report that the move went really, really well. Nothing was lost or damaged and although it was a lot of hard work, my wife and I are getting settled in at our new place here very nicely. We're not totally unpacked yet, we're not totally set up or anything like that, but we are getting closer. In fact, I don't have my office or workspace set up yet, so I'm actually working right now on the kitchen table.

But, in the next week or two, I think we'll finally be all set up and ready to go. And finally, after over a year of work, our house project will be completed, and my wife and I can return back to our normal routines and lifestyles. If you're a regular Culips listener, you'll know about my hobbies. You'll know that I love going outside and spending time outside, either running or riding my bike or hiking, but I haven't been able to do any of those things for a really long time because all of my free time has been spent on the house. So yeah, hopefully now that the house is finished and we're settling in, I'll be able to resume those hobbies ASAP and spend some time outside enjoying them this summer.



So that's the good news, but last week I told you that the good, the bad, and the ugly has happened to me lately, and now I should share with you the bad and the ugly, right? I promised I'd do that last week. So, the story I'm going to tell you about today is about my pet dog Pinky, and I apologize in advance for those of you who aren't pet people. Because if you're not a pet person, you might find this story a little bit hard to relate to. But if you are a pet person, then I think you'll understand where I'm coming from. So here we go guys, the bad and the ugly. Let's get started with this week's story about my dog Pinky. Here we go.

The last couple of weeks have been an emotional rollercoaster for my wife and I and our precious little Pinky Boy. For those of you who don't know, my wife and I adopted a dog just a few months before we got married. And his name is Pinky Boy. Actually, he came with that name. It's not a name that we gave him when we adopted him, his name was already Pinky Boy and we just decided to keep that name. Kind of a funny, unique name, I guess, for him.

Actually, at the time, my wife was not my wife. She was just my fiancé, and she was living on her own. We hadn't moved in together yet. However, a few months before the wedding, she volunteered to temporarily foster a dog for three months. And foster means just to take care of a — could be a human, you could have a foster child, or it could be an animal like a foster dog or foster cat — and it just means to temporarily take care of either a child or an animal. So, she volunteered to foster a dog for three months and she wanted to do that before getting married because she didn't know exactly what our life would be like after getting married, and maybe having a dog would not be feasible for us. So, she signed up and became the foster guardian of Pinky. And she didn't actually choose Pinky. He was just one of the dogs that had no place to go at the animal shelter. And so, the animal shelter just sent him to my wife. So, the shelter sent Pinky to my wife. And when we met him, I have to say we both fell in love with him right away, right from day one.

When we took him to the vet for his first checkup after getting him, we learned that he's deaf and he can't hear anything. And we also learned that he was around 12 to 13 years



old at that time. It's really hard for the vet to estimate exactly how old he is, but that was the vet's best guess. Now, because he's a senior dog, 12 or 13 years old is pretty old in dog years, and that was 3 years ago, so now he's around 16 years old. So, because he's a senior dog, he moves pretty slowly and sleeps most of the day. In fact, he's lying down, sleeping beside me right now.

He's a really easy dog to take care of in that regard. But sometimes I joke with my wife that if he moved more quickly, then he'd actually be even easier to take care of because when we go out for a walk, he moves at a snail's pace. He moves really, really slowly, and sometimes it will take 20 or 30 minutes just to do one little walk around the block with him because of his slow walking speed.

Anyway, we knew from the moment that we met him that we could never send Pinky back to the shelter, and we immediately went through with the adoption procedures, and Pinky's been with us ever since. After getting married, my wife and I moved into an apartment together and after six months of being in that place, Pinky, I think, finally adjusted to living with us. Took him a while to adjust to his new family and his new living place, but finally he became comfortable, and he really started to come out of his shell.

You can imagine our surprise when this slow, quiet, chill, senior dog started running around in our apartment at full speed every night after our evening walk. We were shocked. It blew our mind that suddenly he became so playful. Outside on the street he's really slow but once he adjusted to life in our new place he loved to run around and play with my wife and even we would do tug-of-war sometimes with this little rope toy. So, my wife and I were so happy to see Pinky finally feel happy, and we felt so relieved that we were able to give him a good home and a place where he feels comfortable and safe. And in return, Pinky has of course been so sweet and loving towards us as well.

Now over time, Pinky has slowly but surely seen some little declines in his health and sometimes it's hard to get him to eat food. And when we give him something that most dogs would just wolf down in a second, like a piece of steak or chicken breast, that doesn't interest him. So, we've had to put a lot of effort into what we feed him to make sure that he



eats well and doesn't become too skinny. And funnily enough, the one thing that he'll never turn down is this kind of milk that's made specifically for dogs. It's called pet milk, I'm not exactly sure what it is, but it's some kind of dairy product, I guess. Anyways, he totally loves that pet milk and so we try to give him that because he really loves that and that's the one thing that he will always, always consume.

Pinky's mental health also seems like it might be on a slow decline. Occasionally we'll catch him just standing, staring at a wall or when we're out for a walk, he'll take a few steps and then he'll turn around and stare in the opposite direction for like 20 seconds and then take a few steps forward and then do the same thing and turn around and look behind him for 20 seconds again and then do the same thing. So, we have a feeling that maybe he has some symptoms of dementia. Do you know what dementia is? Dementia is what we call it when people or animals have memory loss and cognitive decline, and dementia usually happens as you age. And like I said, Pinky is a very senior dog these days.

Still, despite these challenges, we've never been too worried about Pinky's health. We've taken him for regular health checks every six months or so, and the vet always says that he's generally healthy, even though he doesn't look like a really healthy dog. And I'll put some pictures of Pinky on our Instagram and in our Discord so you guys can check out what he looks like. He wouldn't look at Pinky and say, "Wow, he looks really healthy." He looks kind of like an old dog. But despite that fact, the vets have always told us that he's generally really healthy.

But recently we had a big scare with Pinky and this happened on the week of our move just about two weeks ago. So, I was taking Pinky out for his morning walk as I usually do, and he seemed to be totally fine just the same as always, but when we were walking suddenly, he stopped, and he threw up. Now he doesn't do this often. In fact, I think he's only done it once before in the three years that we've had him, and that and that was because he drank his milk a little too fast. He just wolfed down that milk really, really fast. And guys, actually that's an interesting word that I just used to wolf down. Wolf is spelled



W-O-L-F like the animal wolf. And to wolf down something means to eat or drink something really, really quickly, just like the animal a wolf would do. You could imagine a wolf hunting and just eating its prey really, really quickly. That is the image that this expression relates to.

So yeah, one day Pinky wolfed down his milk too quickly and he threw up after, but that's the only time he's thrown up. So, to see him randomly stop on the street and throw up was a little bit worrying. My first thought was that he ate something from the ground when we were on our walk. So of course, I checked him out to see if he was OK and he seemed to be fine. He wasn't choking on anything and there was nothing in his mouth. So I picked him up and we just went back home and when we got home I told my wife about it and my wife immediately went into doctor mode trying to find the problem and trying to nurse Pinky to make sure he was OK.

And I have to say that I think my wife and I are really a good match because in this kind of situation, unfortunately, I usually tend to underestimate the seriousness of a problem. And I'm always like, it's OK, it's fine. On the other hand, my wife tends to overestimate the seriousness of a problem and so that means that we usually meet in the middle with the correct level of response.

So at that time it was early in the morning, the vet wasn't open yet, and so we just made Pinky comfortable and we decided to let him relax and we planned to check his condition throughout the day to see how he was doing. So, as I mentioned earlier this happened just three days before we were scheduled to move and because of that my wife and I were very busy getting ready for the move we were both running around like chickens with our heads cut off and not only did we have to pack up our apartment but we also needed to make sure our new house was ready to move into as well. So, because of that we had this long list of errands that we needed to do that day and Pinky fell asleep after we got home. He seemed to be OK so we decided that it would be OK to leave the house for a couple of hours to go and run some errands while he slept and then we'd come back and check on him after a couple of hours. So that's what we did.



We went out, we ran some errands, and we came back about two hours later, and when we came back, we could immediately tell that something was wrong with Pinky. He had thrown up again, and he seemed to be just really, really weak. My wife said that we needed to go to the vet immediately, and at that time I thought she's not overreacting. I totally agreed with her, and we got Pinky ready, and we rushed to the animal hospital together. Now this is one of those situations where owning a car would be really, really handy, but unfortunately, we don't own a car. But we do have a stroller for Pinky, so we put them in the stroller, and we rushed down to the vet, which thankfully was only a five-minute walk away.

And as we were on our way to the vet, I could see that Pinky was fully lying down in the stroller. And this is something that I've never seen Pinky do before. He really isn't very comfortable relaxing outside of our house, and he rarely sits down outside, let alone lie down. So, this is actually a little bit annoying sometimes, like if we want to go to the park with Pinky, we want to just let him lie down and relax outside, he'll never do that. He's always on his feet. So, when I saw him in the stroller outside of the home lying down, it scared me, and I realized that something must be really wrong.

So, we got to the vet and first of all, I was happy that the vet was even open because that day it was a public holiday in Korea, and I thought that the animal hospital might be closed. But nope, thankfully it was open so that was a huge relief. However, the vet took a really quick look at Pinky and told us that there was nothing he could do. Since Pinky's an old dog, he'd need some specific tests and the hospital that we were at didn't have the equipment to do that. So, the vet told us to try a bigger hospital and recommended one for us to visit. And again, thankfully it was only a few minutes away. That's one thing that is awesome about living in Seoul is that everything that you need is really, really close by and we were able to go to that hospital right away without any problems at all.

So anyways, let's get back to the story. We ran down to the next animal hospital and luckily, we were able to meet with a really kind vet right away. We went into her office, and she asked a bunch of questions about Pinky's health history and as my wife was



answering the questions and talking about Pinky's life story, she started to cry. And then to my surprise, also the vet started crying a little bit as well. And in this moment, I was a little bit shocked because my wife is definitely the more stoic and calm one in our relationship, if you can believe it or not. I am the more emotional person, and she is the more stoic and calm person.

Especially in the last few years for whatever reason, I don't know what exactly has caused this to happen, but I've grown a lot softer as I've aged, and I do find myself crying much more easily than I did when I was younger. Now, I have to say that the vet and my wife were really nice criers or beautiful criers? I don't know how I should explain it, but I'll say beautiful criers or nice criers. Let's say nice criers. So, what I mean is that they just had some simple tears fall down their face, but they still looked very nice and composed and put together. But on the other hand, when I cry, I ugly cry.

Have you heard that expression in English before ugly cry? Okay, when I cry, my face turns red, my nose runs, I usually can't control my breathing, I huff and I puff, and my eyes turn extremely red as well. It's really not pretty. My whole face looks very ugly when I cry, which is why I call it ugly crying. So, in that moment, it was really emotional. My wife is crying, the vet was crying, we were all sad and concerned about Pinky. And my body wanted to cry, but I really had to resist crying with all of my strength in that moment because I was too embarrassed to ugly cry in the vet's office in front of this vet who I had never met before. And at this time, we didn't even know what the problem with Pinky was.

So thankfully, I was able to hold back my tears and Pinky went back with the vet into the hospital to do some tests while my wife and I waited in the waiting room. Now I have to say the waiting room vibe was really, really heavy. The hospital was a nice hospital but there were 5 or 6 other people waiting in the waiting room and all of them looked really worried or sad. There was a woman talking on the phone and she was kind of hanging out in the corner because she was also ugly crying. And there were two sisters in the waiting room, and they just kept pacing back and forth and they looked really stressed out and concerned about their pet. There was this university age student, and she came out of the



back part of the hospital, and she was crying as well. She was carrying this big box in her hands, and I assumed that box probably contained the remains of her pet that she had just put down. And on top of this, my wife was also still a little bit weepy as well. Now again, in this kind of situation, I felt very emotional as well, but I really, really didn't want to ugly cry in the waiting room either.

So, I again tried my best to fight back my tears. And being in that waiting room though was just really overwhelming, and thankfully I had an escape because at that point of the day it was around 5pm and my wife and I hadn't had anything for dinner or lunch or really, we hadn't eaten at all that day. So, we decided to go to a little restaurant that was beside the hospital and get some food and just wait for Pinky because the vet told us that the testing was going to take a couple of hours. So, we escaped the sad waiting room, and we had some food while we waited.

When we were finished, we went back to check on Pinky and the doctor told us that she did some tests, but she was concerned about something that she found when she gave Pinky an ultrasound. However, the ultrasound image wasn't too clear because Pinky's not good at taking an ultrasound. He's super chill and calm 99% of the time but he gets stressed out at the vet's and if the vet has to take an ultrasound, then he really moves around a lot and so because of that the vet wasn't able to take a clear image and she said that she'd need to take some more specific tests and do a CT scan to get more details about the thing that she thinks she found on the ultrasound. So, she recommended that we make an appointment and come back the next day for more tests.

So that's what we decided to do and then we went back home with Pinky. So, we got Pinky home and thankfully he was able just to sleep for the rest of the day. I guess the stress of being in the hospital combined with being sick was just very exhausting for him. So, we got Pinky home but when I saw Pinky looking so weak when we got home, I couldn't hold back my tears anymore and it was my turn. I finally totally broke down into an ugly crying session and my wife said that it was a really good thing that I was able to control my emotion at the hospital because seeing me ugly cry and sob like that is



something that no one should have to do, and I agree with her. So yeah, I did break down because I was just so worried about our precious little Pinky Boy.

So, the next day we went back to the hospital and Pinky still seems pretty weak. He did get the CT scan and some other tests as well and the tests confirmed that unfortunately Pinky has a cancerous tumor in his intestines. It's quite large and it's probably blocking food from being able to be properly digested, which is the vet's explanation for why Pinky threw up that day. Of course, hearing this news was terrible and we were really sad to learn about this, but my wife and I at the same time weren't totally surprised to hear a diagnosis like that.

Of course, Pinky's an old dog and we had some time to prepare over the night to kind of guess what we think the problem might be and Pinky having cancer I could say of course was unfortunate to hear but didn't come as a huge surprise. So, after we heard that diagnosis from the vet, we met with one of the other doctors at the hospital and that vet told us about some of the treatment options for Pinky and unfortunately, they're all really bad. There are a couple of surgery options. They could try to remove the tumor, but both of them are high risk and also extremely expensive. And on top of that, the doctor told us that there's no guarantee that they could even fix the problem in the first place, and doing a surgery like that might actually result in something way, way worse, which would be Pinky having to go back and forth to the hospital for treatment constantly, maybe even during the last days of his life, which is just something that I really don't want to put him through.

So, for now, we've decided to not do a surgery and to just see how Pinky does for the time being. And the story is not all gloom and doom because I do have some good news to report and that is a few days after the hospital checkup, Pinky has seemed to bounce back to his regular self, and now he's eating fine, he hasn't thrown up, and there seems to be nothing wrong with him, he's totally back to his regular self right now.

Now the vet was unable to tell us how old the tumor is. And that's kind of a good thing in a way, because if the tumor is new and it's a new growth, then it's probably really bad news,



because that means that it might keep growing and completely block Pinky's ability to eat food in the future. On the other hand, it could be that this tumor has been there for many, many years and it's just something that Pinky's been living with for years and we just discovered it now. And I think that would probably be the best-case scenario because it would mean that Pinky has been able to live successfully with that tumor without any real issues since who knows when could have been for years, right?

So, we're kind of crossing our fingers that this is not something new and it's been there all along. So yeah, Pinky seems to be fine for now and we've adjusted the food that we're giving him based on the doctor's recommendations.

And I don't want to tell you guys how much the vet bill for all of this was, but it was very, very expensive. And it made me realize just how awesome my wife is because the whole time that we've had Pinky, she has been keeping a savings account for Pinky, and we were able to use that money during this health emergency to pay for Pinky's hospital bill. And I'm just really thankful that my wife had the foresightedness to do that, and I definitely recommend if you are a pet owner that you do exactly the same, have a little savings account for your cat or dog, because you never know when there could be a health scare, and thankfully, in that moment, we didn't really have to worry about the costs of the testing because we had that savings account ready for Pinky.

So anyways, this whole ordeal was a reality shock for me and my wife. Obviously, we know that Pinky isn't going to live forever, and he is an old dog, but having to come face to face with the fact that he now has cancer and that most of his days are behind him and not ahead of him was a really tough pill to swallow. So, we don't know how many days Pinky has left in the future, but we do know that we can try to enjoy those days as much as possible and also to make sure that Pinky is as comfortable as possible as well.

So, like I said this all went down just a few days before we moved and I have to say that a couple of my friends, and I won't mention those friends by name, but if they're listening, they know who they are. Those two friends really helped my wife and I out big time by watching Pinky on the moving day and given his weak condition at that time, we were



pretty worried about exactly how the move was going to go down, but everything has turned out just fine. So, thanks to my friends for helping us out, taking care of Pinky on moving day. So yeah, now we're all moved in here, we're in the new house and Pinky's enjoying it just as much as my wife and I are. We've been enjoying going for some little walks around the neighborhood and exploring it together.

At least for now, Pinky seems to be back to his old self. And I have to say that this health scare made me realize that the old, cliched English expression that "dogs are a man's best friend" couldn't be more true.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson.

In each bonus episode, I like to focus in on and teach you about one of the useful idiomatic expressions that I use when I tell you my stories. And today, I'd like to teach you about the expression "to come out of one's shell." To come out of one's shell. And of course, we can change the pronoun in that expression, so we could say something like to come out of my shell or to come out of your shell, for example.

So, I used this expression a little earlier when I was talking about how Pinky came out of his shell about six months after my wife and I moved into our old apartment after getting married. So, to put this in context, let's go back and listen to that part of the story just a couple of more times. And then I'm going to break down and explain exactly what this expression means and how you can use it to improve your speaking and listening. So, let's go back and take a listen to that part of the story now. Here we go.

After getting married, my wife and I moved into an apartment together, and after six months of being in that place, Pinky, I think, finally adjusted to living with us. Took him a while to adjust to his new family and his new living place, but finally he became comfortable, and he really started to come out of his shell.

And now let's break down what this idiom means to come out of one's shell. So of course, it's a common English expression, maybe you've even heard it before, and we use it to



describe someone who has become more confident and comfortable at expressing their thoughts and feelings, especially in a social setting. It's often used to describe someone who's normally quiet, shy, or introverted, but gradually becomes more outgoing and social, just like how Pinky became more social and playful with us.

And there's actually a metaphor in this idiom. So, imagine a turtle or a snail. They're both animals that live in shells, right? These creatures have hard shells that they can retreat into when they feel threatened, or uncomfortable, or in danger, and these animals use their shells as a kind of protection from the outside world. When the danger has passed though, then they feel more comfortable, and they come out of their shells. So metaphorically, a person who comes out of their shell is more comfortable with others and more willing to interact socially. They're not as guarded, or on edge, or defensive, as they were before.

So as always, I've prepared three example sentences that we can listen to so we can learn how English speakers use an idiom like this in their regular, everyday lives. So, let's check out those example sentences now, here's the first one.

Example sentence number one.

When I first met Maria, she was really shy and didn't talk much, but after joining the drama club, she's really come out of her shell. Now she's always chatting and laughing with everyone.

Let's break this first example down. In this example, we hear about someone named Maria. And Maria was quite shy at first. She didn't really talk much in social situations, but then she joined a drama club. And from participating in that club, she came out of her shell. She started to feel more comfortable and now she has a good relationship with everyone and is very social, even though she was initially very shy.



Example sentence number two.

When Alex first moved to the city, he didn't know anyone and kept to himself. But after joining a local sports team, it helped him to come out of his shell and make new friends.

Let's break this example down. So, in this example, we hear about a guy named Alex who moved to a new city. And if you've ever done this before, then you know that when you move to a new place, it can be hard to settle in and make friends. However, Alex was able to join a local sports team and through that team, Alex was able to come out of his shell. So, although in the past, he kept to himself, now he was more social. He came out of his shell.

Example sentence number three.

After her breakup, Jill spent a lot of time alone. But gradually, with the support of her friends, she started to come out of her shell and now she's even started dating again.

Let's break this final example sentence down in this example sentence we hear about a woman named Jill who went through a tough breakup it sounds like and after her breakup then she spent a lot of time alone, but her friends helped her they supported her and now she's come out of her shell so she doesn't spend as much time alone anymore and she's even started dating again.

So, that's gonna bring us to the end of this episode everyone and I think I have to go because Pinky is just starting to wake up here beside me and I bet he's gonna want to go outside. So, that means it's time for me to take off, but I do want to hand things over to you now and let's keep the conversation going on our discord server. Even though this episode was a little bit of a sad one I think we'll have lots to talk about and besides life isn't always happy, right? And we do need to develop our range in English to talk about a wide variety of topics, even the sad ones, right? We need to know how to talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly crying. So, join the Discord by following the link in the description for this episode and I'll talk with you there.

So guys, that's it for now, take care and I will talk to you next time, goodbye!



Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

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