

Bonus episode #144 - A Little Bit of Everything

In this episode, Andrew shares a mix of real-life updates and personal stories, from sleeping alone in a queen-size bed to trying to fix a podcast recording disaster. He also talks about replacing social media habits with Japanese reading practice and learning how to do DIY home repairs like caulking the shower. It's a relaxed and personal episode where Andrew talks about real-life moments, challenges, and habits in clear, natural English.



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello and welcome to bonus episode number 144 of the Culips English Podcast.

How's it going? My name's Andrew. I'm your Canadian English study buddy, and it's great to be here with you for another week and another bonus episode.

If you're new to the series, let me quickly explain what it's all about. As I mentioned, I'm Canadian, but I live abroad in Seoul, South Korea. And what I do each and every week here is just tell you some stories from my everyday life. The idea is that you're going to spend some time with me, and we're going to hang out and speak English, just as if I were your friend in real life, telling you about some updates about my life.

Through listening to my stories, you'll be able to hear and learn natural vocabulary, natural expressions, and improve your English listening fluency, which eventually then will translate to thinking in English and speaking more natural English as well.

All of these stories are totally unscripted. I do have my notebook here with some notes to help me so that I can remember some interesting things to tell you guys, but I don't write a script, OK? Everything just comes out of my head in a natural way, and you're going to be listening to natural English in this series.

So, if you're down for that, if you're up for that, these are two expressions that we can use to say like, "I want to do it." So, if you're down for it or if you're up for it. It's kind of weird how we have those two expressions that mean the same thing with opposite directions, but that's just the way English works sometimes. If you're down for it, if you're up for it, then let's continue on.

And to accompany each and every episode, there is an interactive transcript and a vocabulary glossary that is free. 100% free for everyone. You can get it just by clicking the link in the description for this episode.

Plus, if you're a Culips member, and I have to say thank you to all the Culips members out there guys, we really, really appreciate your support. If you're a Culips member, then you'll also get a comprehension quiz.

If you would like to sign up and become a Culips member and support the work that we do here to help make awesome English lessons for everyone around the world, English learners around the world, each and every week, then visit our website, Culips.com. You can sign up and become a member for an affordable price.

Many of our members, actually not many, most, like the majority, 99.9% of our members have good things to say about membership, and they are really, really appreciative of the awesome study materials, and benefits, and bonuses, they get when they are a member.

You don't have to take my word for it. You could join our Discord community or read the reviews on our website. You can talk to members on our Discord community, and they'll tell you that being a member is awesome.

When you're a member, you will get. What? You get study guides, helpful study guides, interactive transcripts, quizzes, vocabulary breakdowns, and explanations for all of our episodes. You also get to join our weekly speaking classes. We have three speaking classes each and every week that you can join if you're a member.

You also get our Fluency Files series, which is our member-only series. Plus, you also get ad-free audio, so you don't have to listen to me ramble on and on about the benefits of Culips membership.

So, visit our website, Culips.com. You can sign up and become a member today. And one more time, thank you to all the members out there for your support.

OK, so guys, today I just kind of have a **mishmash** of different stories. I don't have one longer story to tell you. I've just **jotted down** three or four things here that I've been up to over the last week or two that I thought I'd give you an update on. And yeah, we might as well just jump in and get started. Here we go. Enjoy.

So, the first thing that I wrote down here in my notebook, and everyone, I wrote one, two, three, four, five, five little stories here that I can tell you about in my notebook. We'll see if I can get to them all.

But the first one is "great sleep." That is the first note that I wrote, and I had a great sleep last night. Maybe you can hear it in my voice, I'm not sure, but I feel really, really rested. But at the same time, I feel really guilty for having that great sleep. And I feel really guilty for being so rested.

And that is because last night, I slept by myself. I slept alone. My wife's parents live around an hour away from us, hour and a half away from us. So, we don't get to see them too, too often, and my wife was missing her folks, so she decided to go home and eat dinner with them. And because of the distance, she was like, "I'm just gonna sleep here, and I'll come back tomorrow."

So, I got to sleep by myself. And maybe married couples or couples in relationships where you're sleeping with your partner in the same bed, maybe you guys can relate to me and my feelings on this. I don't know. Like, of course I love sharing a bed with my wife. I wouldn't have it any other way. For us, I think this is the best sleeping arrangement for us.

But we have a queen-size bed. We share a queen-size bed. Not a king-size bed. Not one of those gigantic, huge beds, but a bed made for two people. And it's good. Usually, I sleep really well, but for whatever reason, when I get the whole queen-size bed to myself, I can **starfish**, and I can sleep super, super well.

I don't know, maybe just because it's a once in a while thing. Or maybe... maybe I would have slept really well anyways, I'm not sure. But last night I was able to starfish out. And "to starfish" is an expression we use to talk about people who sleep by spreading their arms and their legs out as far as they can go. So, you look almost like a starfish, with your head being one point, and your arms being two points, and your legs being the third and fourth point, so that you have the full five points, just like a starfish does.

So yeah, I starfished last night in the bed by myself, and I slept really well. And that was the first point here in my notebook. My wife's on her way back home now, so I don't think I will be able to starfish again tonight, but I did enjoy it for one night.

The next thing that I have written down here in my notebook, everyone, is "recording gone wrong." I've been doing Culips now for over 10 years, believe it or not. It's been over a

decade, and for the first time in over a decade, I wasted my time when recording an episode, because I stupidly forgot to turn on my microphone before hitting the record button.

So, I actually recorded a whole bonus episode, and I told what I thought was a really funny and interesting story about a... well I don't want to spoil it, because I'll probably re-record this story, because I do think it's an interesting one and a funny one, so I'll re-record it.

I just couldn't do it right now, after I stupidly hit record on my camera, but I forgot to hit record on my microphone. So, that was a waste of time.

And I guess I'm kind of thankful that this is the first time it's ever happened in 10 years of doing the Culips English Podcast. But yeah, it was disappointing.

So, I recorded this great story. I'm not going to spoil it because I will record it again here because I really thought the story was funny and a good one to share with you all. But after I recorded it, I went to transfer the files to my computer. And once I did that, I realized, oh no, I didn't click record on the microphone. I only clicked record on the camera.

And my camera has a built-in microphone, so it did still pick up my voice, but the built-in mic on the camera is so, so bad. The audio quality was so, so bad. But I didn't want to accept that I had wasted my time recording that whole story. It was like a 35-minute story.

So, I tried my best to **salvage** the audio recording file from the camera. And "to salvage" means like to save or repair something so that you can use it. And so, I tried my best to salvage that audio file.

I actually ended up spending time editing the episode and doing all of the prep for it, because I was really, really confident that I could save that audio file. And, you know, I've been doing audio editing for the podcast now, again, for about a decade. And I do have some experience with music recording in the past as well.

I don't want to say I'm an audio engineer or anything like that, but I do **know a thing or two** about audio a little bit. So, I was really confident that like OK this is not going to sound

as good as a regular Culips episode where I get to use my good microphone, but I think it's going to be acceptable.

And to tell you the truth, after I **worked my magic** and tried to save that audio file, I thought it did sound pretty good. Now, when I'm doing audio editing for Culips, I'm always using my headphones. I always have my headphones on.

So, I edited the file and tried to salvage and repair the file, and I thought it sounded acceptable. Wasn't perfect, but I was like, "Meh, it's probably good enough. We can release it and, yeah, it'll be all right for just one week."

So, I went ahead, I made the video, I made the audio, I made the transcript, made the glossary, did everything. And then at the last moment, I thought, you know, I have my headphones on and I'm listening to this file, but many Culips listeners, maybe you're not listening to the audio with headphones where you get that up-close listening experience. Maybe you're listening in your car, or maybe you're listening with your iPhone speaker, or something like that, right?

There are so many different ways that people can choose to listen to audio files. So, I thought, I better give it a test with my phone speaker. So, I transferred the audio file to my phone, and I pressed play, and I took a listen, and it sounded terrible. I was like, "No, why didn't I do this from the start?"

So, I don't know, I guess this episode was cursed. **It wasn't meant to be**, because I wasted time recording it, and then trying to fix the audio, and then editing it and doing all of the steps that go into the production process. And at the end of the day, yeah, it didn't sound good through the phone.

And then my co-worker here at Culips, Yoshi, who does a lot of the work behind the scenes, I sent the episode to him, and I said, "Yoshi, can you listen to this in your car? Because I know so many Culips listeners listen to the podcast while they're driving, but I don't have a car, so I can't test it that way." And he said, "Yeah, it doesn't sound very good. I think it's best if we don't release this episode."

So, I thought that was the wise decision, so we cut that episode out, and I'm gonna have to redo it from the start. I just couldn't do it today. I couldn't tell that story again. I need to give the story a little bit of time, a little bit of space, and I'll come back to it.

But yeah, that was a bit of a disappointment. However, first time it's ever happened in 10 years. So, in a decade, mistakes are **bound to happen** at some point.

However, I always try to look at the bright side of things and try and have a positive mental attitude, PMA. And although that was kind of a waste of time trying to prepare that episode, I think there are a couple of good things, or several good things really, that will come of it.

First of all, I'm going to be super careful going forward when I record anything to double check that all of my devices, my camera, my audio recorder, everything is plugged in and working. That's going to be a huge priority, and I hopefully won't make that mistake again.

And then also, when I do tell you that story, it's going to be even better because I've already practiced telling it once. So, probably the end result when I do record that story and that episode in the future, will be even better than the original was.

So, in the next couple of weeks, I'll re-record and upload that story for you guys so you can hear all about it. But yeah, that was a bit of a bummer from the last little while as I was working on that episode.

Let's move to the next point in my notebook, which is I am trying to replace Instagram and social media with a Japanese reading app.

So, as you guys know, I recently visited Japan, and living here in Korea is great because we are very close to Japan, so it's an easy place to go and visit. And I've been there several times over the last year or two, and I would like to go again in the future.

My last trip there ended up being not so good, in the end, because I got food poisoning and got sick, or I caught a virus and got really sick. I'm not sure what exactly happened, but I was super sick. So, I feel like I wanna go back in the future.

But one thing I noticed as I was there last time is that, wow, my Japanese really, really sucks. It's at zero, and I want to improve that. Of course, living here in Korea, my main focus is still, and will be for maybe the next 10-15 years, I'm thinking, is going to be Korean.

As tempting as it is to start learning another language, I can't do it. I have to stay true to my first love, Korean, and make sure that I spend time with that language, because I'm not really at the point where I can just be in automatic mode with Korean yet. So, I still have to focus my main language learning attention on Korean.

However, I do want to be able to do just some basic Japanese when I visit Japan in the future. And so, I thought, first thing I need to do is learn how to read Japanese. You know, they have three or four different writing systems. I guess three different writing systems. Japanese listeners, please correct me if I'm wrong.

And I would like to read at least the two of them, the two that are most like an alphabet. Of course, there are the characters as well, the Japanese characters that originally, I think, came from China. And those... **that's like a whole different ball game**, right? That's really difficult to memorize and learn. They're called the Kanji, right?

All of those different Kanji, it would be like super, super difficult for me to memorize and learn. But the other two writing systems, I think I can master. So, what I've been trying to do is spend less time on social media, on Instagram, on Reddit. Those are my two bad ones, Instagram and Reddit.

And instead, when I feel tempted to open one of those apps, just to open this Japanese reading app that I got instead. And it's been great. I'm making like slow progress. I'm not really investing a ton of time into it, but just a little bit day by day.

And I think when it comes to these things, instead of spending a ton of time with it, it's just like consistency. Doing it on a regular basis helps me to memorize something. And especially now, I'm 40 years old, memorizing things... not as easy as it used to be.

So yeah, it's been cool, and I think I'm almost there. I can almost read all of the Hiragana characters. And then next I have to go to the other writing system that is used to transcribe foreign words into Japanese. So, that will be my next. I believe that one is called Katakana.

So, yeah, slowly but surely working on Japanese and at the same time trying to minimize social media and **doom scrolling**, which is just so, so addictive for me. And yeah, I think I'm replacing a bad habit with a healthier habit, and I hope I can keep it up. Cheer me on, guys, cheer me on.

Finally, the last thing that I have written in my notebook here to tell you about is caulking. Caulking. C-A-U-L-K-I-N-G. Caulking.

Do you guys know what caulking is? Caulking is the kind of white, rubbery material that we put between two surfaces. Usually, we put it between two tiles to make sure that water doesn't go in between the tiles.

So, in my bathroom, in my shower, I have a shower that's made out of tiles. And now that we've been living in our home for two years here, the caulking is starting to peel off or disintegrate, and I'm worried that when that happens, water, when I'm taking a shower, is going to go into the tiles and then get behind the tiles and cause a big problem.

So, I don't want that to happen, and I need to fix the caulking in my shower. So, this is something I've never done before and something that I must do as a homeowner.

It's kind of cool when you're a homeowner. Suddenly... well, it's not kind of cool. It's kind of annoying, actually. Of course, I would like a maintenance-free lifestyle, but nothing in life is free, and you do need to maintain your house to keep it in good order.

And so, there are little tasks here and there that I've had to learn how to do, or we've had to hire someone to come and fix in our home. Just some little, little things. But this one, I think it can be a **DIY**. I can learn how to do it myself.

So, that's my weekend plan. I'm recording this episode Saturday morning for you guys. But after I finish recording this episode, then I'm going to do some caulking, I think.

So, I need to watch some YouTube videos and figure out how to do this. I've already prepared some of the tools, but I do need to go to the local hardware store and buy some caulking that comes in the tube.

And yeah, I've seen people do this a lot. I don't want to underestimate the skill level. I'm sure when I try to do it, it will be more difficult than I'm assuming right now, but I'm gonna try my best to do.... We just need like a little three or four centimeter section. To be honest, it's really, really small, so I think I can handle that, and hopefully I won't mess it up too bad.

But yeah, I'm kind of looking forward to doing it. I get to learn a new skill, learn how to do some caulking, and keep my home safe and dry and hopefully rot free. We don't want any water getting behind the shower and, I don't know, getting some of the wood wet and then turning into rot and mold, all of those things.

So, that's my plan for today, everyone. And I think it's time for me to stop rambling here and to let you get on with your day as well.

But thank you for listening all the way to the end. You did an amazing job. This is what you need to do if you want to improve your English fluency. You need to spend time with the language, listening to the language, and you did that today. So, great job.

OK, I need to leave a completion code for you, and I think we'll go with the word "Starfish" because I talked about starfishing last night, and that led to me having a great sleep.

So, let's go with the word starfish. S-T-A-R-F-I-S-H. And if you could leave an example sentence on our YouTube page, or our Discord community, or even on our Instagram, and that will signal to me and all of our listeners that you finished this episode.

All right, so go go go. I'm looking forward to reading your example sentences. I think we'll get a lot of funny ones with this word, starfish.

OK guys, take care. Have a great week up ahead, and I'll catch you in the next episode. Until then, bye bye.

Glossary

1. **A mishmash** is a collection of different things that don't really match or belong together. Andrew shared a mishmash of short stories in this episode. Example: Her living room is a mishmash of old furniture and modern art.
2. **To jot down** means to write something quickly so you don't forget it. Andrew jotted down five short stories in his notebook to share. Example: I always jot down my ideas in a notebook before I forget them.
3. **To starfish** means to lie down with your arms and legs spread out, like a starfish. Andrew starfished in bed when he slept alone. Example: After a long hike, I starfished on the floor and didn't move for an hour.
4. **To salvage** means to save or fix something that's damaged or going wrong. Andrew tried to salvage the audio from a failed recording. Example: She salvaged the burnt cookies by scraping off the bottoms.
5. **To know a thing or two** means to have some knowledge or experience with something. Andrew said he knows a thing or two about audio editing. Example: My grandpa knows a thing or two about fixing old cars.
6. **To work your magic** means to use your special skills to make something better or fix a problem. Andrew worked his magic to try and fix the poor-quality audio. Example: The editor worked her magic and made the article sound amazing.
7. **Wasn't meant to be** means something didn't work out because it just wasn't supposed to happen. Andrew said the failed episode wasn't meant to be. Example: I tried to get tickets, but they were sold out. I guess it wasn't meant to be.
8. **Bound to happen** means something is very likely to happen eventually. Andrew said mistakes are bound to happen after ten years of podcasting. Example: With that much snow, an accident was bound to happen.
9. **A whole different ball game** means something is completely different and usually more challenging. Andrew said learning kanji is a whole different ballgame. Example: Cooking for two people is easy, but cooking for a wedding is a whole different ball game.

10. **Doom scrolling** means continuously scrolling through bad or upsetting news on your phone. Andrew said he's trying to replace doom scrolling with studying Japanese.

Example: I stayed up too late last night doom scrolling through depressing news.

11. **DIY** stands for "do it yourself" and means doing something on your own without hiring a professional. Andrew plans to do a DIY project to fix the shower caulking. Example: We saved money by doing a DIY paint job in the bedroom.

Episode credits

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