

Lamp, lamb, luck

Episode description

Join Andrew as he talks about how a normal day doing some errands with his wife had a surprise ending. Along the way, he'll also give you some updates about what's new at Culips and teach you a helpful English idiom, **to weigh your options**.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Have you ever wondered how sometimes luck just seems to find you when you least expect it? How in the blink of an eye you can go from having a so-so day to a great day. Or sometimes the opposite is also true, right? And you can go from having an awesome day to a terrible one. Well, in this episode I'm going to focus on the positive, and I'm going to tell you a story about having unexpected good luck during an ordinary day. My name is Andrew, and this is bonus episode number 49 of the Culips English Podcast. Thanks for clicking play on this episode and joining me for an English study session today. It's great to have you here and in our bonus episode series, I help you improve your English fluency through telling you real stories from my daily life. And today's story is going to be about how a simple day of running an errand turned into an unforgettable dining experience complete with a lucky lottery win. Believe it or not. And as I share this story with you, you'll pick up new vocabulary, expressions, and even insights into how English speakers talk and express themselves.

But before we get started with the story, I just want to remind you that there is a free interactive transcript of this episode on our website, or you can download it as a PDF as well, and you can get the transcript just by clicking the link in the description or by visiting our website, which is Culips.com. So, feel free to check out the transcript, and you can follow along as you listen, or you can use it as a study tool for after you finish listening. If you want a double check, just to make sure that you understood everything correctly, or something like that. I'll leave how you want to study with the transcript up to you, but just know it's there for you. And if you want even more helpful lessons to boost your English skills, then you can sign up and become a Culips member. As a member, you'll get access to our best English learning tools, including full transcripts and helpful study guides for all of our episodes, plus ad-free audio, and access to our exclusive members-only series called the Fluency Files. So, if that sounds interesting to you and you want to learn more, just visit our website, Culips.com to find all the details and to sign up and become a member. And with that being said, let's get started with this week's story.

So, a few weeks ago, my wife and I visited a neighborhood here in Seoul where we live called Mapogu, and we were on a mission to find the perfect pendant lamp for our new dining room. My wife and I are currently in the middle of a very big project, and if you're a regular Culips listener you'll know all about it, and that project is that we're renovating an old house that we bought a couple of years ago. And when you're doing a renovation project like we are, which is pretty much essentially building the house again from the ground up, you need to put everything in the house. So, we need to furnish it from top to bottom. And one of the important things that we need to furnish the house with is a pendant lamp for our dining room. Now if you don't know what a pendant lamp is, don't worry because I had no idea either. A pendant lamp is just one of those hanging lamps that you hang in the kitchen. Usually, it goes over your kitchen table where you eat and that's where we're actually going to hang our pendant lamp as well. So, we'd been searching for a couple of weeks with no real luck, but then my wife found a nice-looking store through Instagram that sells vintage lighting and we're both really into vintage and antique and old things. So, we thought, hey, it could be cool to have a vintage pendant lamp in our house. So, we decided to go and browse around that store because it looked like they had a really excellent selection, and there was a high chance that we'd find something that we liked.

Now interestingly enough, the store was appointment only, and this seems to be a new trend that I've noticed here in Seoul recently. Or maybe it's just new to me. I'm not sure. But we've been shopping here and there for house things like lighting and furniture. And when we visit the kind of stores that sell these things, often we have to make an appointment before visiting the showroom. And in a way, making an appointment to go shopping is kind of nice because you can get the full attention of the staff when you visit the store. And you can also have a really comfortable shopping experience knowing that the store won't be too busy with customers. In fact, when we visited this lighting store, we were the only customers there, and we had the full attention of the staff. But on the other hand, shopping in this way does feel a little bit uncomfortable because it feels like there's slightly more pressure to make a purchase since you're the only customer and the store

and you're receiving individual attention directly from the staff. So, I don't know, there's pros and there's cons to shopping this way and who knows, maybe the furniture and housing accessory industry has always worked this way. And it's just the first time I'm noticing it because I've never really shopped for things like this before, I don't know. But I did think that it was a little bit strange that we had to make an appointment to visit the lighting showroom.

But nevertheless, make an appointment we did, and we went to the showroom a couple of Saturdays ago during the time of our appointment. So that day it was a beautiful day out, and the showroom was located in a pretty hip, cool area of town that I like to visit from time to time, that's called Sangsu. So, we arrived at the lighting store, and we spent a good amount of time browsing the aisles and discussing what we liked, what we didn't like, and weighing our options about which lamp would look best in our house. And there were so many unique and cool lamps in the store that it was almost overwhelming and really hard to make a decision. After a little while though, we did have to get out of the showroom for a break because I felt like my eyes were going to explode from having to look at so many lamps at once. It was a really bright showroom and I think in the future if I ever have to go lamp shopping again, I'm gonna bring a pair of sunglasses with me. That's a little tip for all of you out there as well. If you ever need to go lamp shopping in the future, maybe bring a pair of sunglasses with you. So anyways, my wife and I, we picked out a few of our top contenders and we decided to take a break and recharge at a nearby cafe. So, as we were walking around looking for a cafe, which to be honest really doesn't take long in this neighborhood, or really anywhere in Seoul because there are cafes everywhere in the city. But we were walking around the neighborhood, looking for a cafe and we found one that looked really inviting from the outside. And my wife said that she knew about this cafe already and had even seen it on social media, so we decided to go in and have a cup of coffee there. And I guess the reason why it's so popular is because of the cool design of the cafe's ceiling. And I don't exactly know how I could describe the ceiling to you, but there's like this really unique wooden sculpture that's attached to the ceiling. And it makes it look like the ceiling is this wavy ocean of wood that's roaring above you. But in a good

way, it's not scary at all. It's not like a mean fierce ocean. It's like a kind, welcoming sea, or something like that. And the effect is that it creates a really cozy, warm ambience in the room. And I think maybe this is one of those situations where a picture says a thousand words, especially if you're not very poetic like me. So, I think what I'm going to do is post a picture that I took of the cafe. I'll put it on Instagram so you can check it out directly for yourself. And if you don't follow us on Instagram then just search for the Culips English Podcast on there and you'll be able to find us.

So, we hung out in the cafe for a little while just drinking a coffee and talking about which lamp, we thought would be the best fit for our kitchen-dining room area. And as time passed, we started to get a little bit hungry. We'd been so consumed with our lamp search that we didn't really realize that it was already around 7.30 pm at night and definitely time for some dinner. So, we decided again to hit the streets and we walked around through the neighborhood looking for a place to grab a bite to eat. And even though I was pretty hungry, and my wife was pretty hungry too, neither of us had an idea in mind for what we wanted to eat. It was like one of those situations where I asked my wife, "Hey wife, what do you want to eat?" And she said, "I don't know, what do you want to eat?" And I said, "I don't know, what do you want to eat?" Like you're hungry, but you don't exactly know what you want to eat. So yeah, we decided just to walk around the neighborhood and try and find a restaurant that jumped out at us.

So eventually, we stumbled upon this unique lamb skewer restaurant. And I should mention that this kind of cuisine is not something that you see every day back in my home country of Canada. But I do really, really enjoy it. I think it's totally delicious. Many Canadians, I don't want to speak for everyone, but I think many Canadians are probably not too used to eating lamb or mutton. And those are the two words that we use to talk about meat from a sheep. OK, sheep meat. Lamb, I believe, is for the younger animals. And mutton is what we call the older animals. And personally, I know that I hadn't really tried lamb or mutton before moving to Korea. But once coming here, I tried it. And like I said, now I really, really enjoy it. If you ever find yourself in Korea and you're a meat eater

like I am, then I highly recommend that you try going to a lamb skewer restaurant because it's a really cool kind of unique experience and let me explain about what happens. So, in the restaurant, they put these automatic skewer rotators right over the charcoal grill at the center of your dining table. So, it's almost like having your own personal barbecue chef working for you. All you have to do is put the skewers in this machine and they'll rotate back and forth automatically. So, you can just sit back and relax and chat with your dinner companions as you wait for the meat to cook. And I took some pictures of this little machine and I'll put those on the Instagram post as well so you can see what I'm talking about. So eventually the skewers cooked, and my wife and I enjoyed a delicious meal while we talked more about lamps. I think probably I had never talked as much about lamps that day as I had in my entire life, to be honest. But the good news is we did eventually make a decision and we've chosen what I think is a very beautiful pendant lamp for our new place. Now, one other thing that I like about going to a lamb skewer restaurant in Korea is one of the side dishes that they serve is peanuts. And if you are a diligent Culips listener, then you'll know that peanuts are one of my favorite foods. So, I think that this is fantastic. It goes great with lamb. And I guess I was kind of in culinary heaven that day, it was a very delicious meal.

But all good things have to come to an end, and we eventually finished our meal, and as we prepared to pay, the staff at the restaurant invited us to play a lottery game, which I believe in the Korean language they call, *bbobgi* and Korean people listening to this episode, please correct me if I'm wrong about that, but I think that's what the game is called. Now, my wife suggested that I should give this game a shot since I had never tried anything like that in Korea before, from what I can understand, this kind of game was popular in the past, but it's not so popular anymore, but I guess this restaurant is still doing it, so yeah, I decided to give it a try. And let me just explain the game to everyone, just so we're all clear. The *bbobgi* game is like a piece of cardboard with maybe a hundred or so tabs on it. And again, I'm going to try and find a picture of one of these games, and I'll put it in that Instagram post so you can check it out and see what they look like. But behind each of the cardboard tabs is a number and the number corresponds to a variety of prizes.

So, some numbers were duds and if you picked one of those numbers then you've got no prize at all. While other numbers gave you something small like maybe a free side dish or a free bottle of beer or even more lamb skewers, and you could use it for the next time you visited the restaurant. And there was also one grand prize, which was a premium lamb rib meal, which was hidden among the tabs. Now, I've never been particularly lucky when it comes to games like this, but I decided to give it a shot anyways. So, I just picked a random tab and to my astonishment and my great surprise, I had chosen the number for the premium lamb rib meal, the grand prize. So, my wife and I couldn't believe our luck. We were both really stoked about our unexpected win and the restaurant staff were excited for us too. So, it was just a good moment overall. So next time we're in the mood for lamb again, we're going to head back to that very same restaurant, and this time we can enjoy the free premium meal on the house. And on the house means for free. So, if a restaurant gives you something on the house, then it means it's free.

So, as we headed back to our home my wife and I joked about my lucky pick on the game board and it was really funny how a simple day of lamp shopping, which to be honest, was not the most exciting thing, it was kind of a chore that we both didn't really want to do but had to. It turned out to be a memorable adventure filled with good food and a stroke of good luck. So, we haven't finished the house remodeling or installed the lamp that we bought yet, but that's coming up soon. But once we do, I think that when I look at it, it'll remind me of the fun day out and the unexpected surprises that life can throw our way. You know, sometimes it's those twists and turns in life that make it so exciting, right? You wake up in the morning and you just really can never predict how the day will end. So, there you have it everyone, that's my funny little story about our lamp-shopping adventure turned lucky lottery win. And who knows, the next time you're out on a seemingly ordinary errand, maybe you too might just find yourself with a story worth sharing and a fun memory that will last a lifetime.

I'd like to give you a few updates now about a few things we got up to here at Culips last week. First off, we uploaded a brand-new Simplified Speech episode featuring me and my

cohost, Suzanne, about the topic of emotional support animals. You know, the kinds of animals that people can bring with them when they travel or stay in a hotel or sometimes even go to a restaurant to offer support and help if you feel anxious or nervous or something like that. I personally think this topic is interesting, but I also think that it might be somewhat controversial, and I expect that some of our listeners probably really support the idea of emotional support animals, while maybe some other listeners don't. So, I'd love to know what you think. Please check the episode out if you haven't already and then leave a comment or send me a message to let me know your opinion. I'd really be curious to know.

And then next up, I wanted to tell you that we're still hard at work building our new community and conversation club features on our website. Unfortunately, we've had a few setbacks over the last week or two with some of the technical aspects of things, but I can promise you that we're making progress and we're going to be launching them as soon as possible. I know many Culips members are excited about these new features, and to be honest, I really am too. So don't worry everyone, they're coming soon and of course I'll keep updating you as we get closer and closer to launching them.

Finally, I have a special announcement about April's livestream. We're going to be holding it at the end of the month on Tuesday, April 25th at 8pm Korean Standard Time and I'd like to invite all Culips members to join me for it. We had an amazing livestream last month and I'm really looking forward to this one as well. The theme for this month's stream is going to be sharing our personal language learning stories, challenges, and successes. And we'll be talking about this topic as a community and I'm dying to hear your stories. I'm even planning to open the stream up to any members who would like to call in and chat with me and the other viewers directly. Last stream, we had three members call in for a chat and it was so fun to talk with them. So, to join the stream, either as a participant or as just a viewer, you can log into your Culips account and follow the link from the dashboard, and I hope to see you all there on the 25th.

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

Before we wrap up today's episode, I want to focus in and teach you about one of the useful English expressions I used while telling you the story about my lucky lamp and lamb day. Wow, that's a mouthful. Lucky lamp and lamb day. So, the expression is to weigh your options. To weigh your options and weigh is spelled W-E-I-G-H. So, I used this expression when I was talking about being in the lamp store and trying to make a choice about which lamp would be the best fit for our house. Did you notice when I used this expression while I was telling my story? If not, don't worry because I'm actually going to rewind the episode and go back right now so we can take another listen in context. So why don't we do that right now actually. Let's rewind, take another listen, and yeah, here we go.

So, we arrived at the lighting store, and we spent a good amount of time browsing the aisles and discussing what we liked, what we didn't like, and weighing our options about which lamp would look best in our house.

So, to weigh your options is an idiomatic expression that English speakers use very, very often, it's a common idiom, and it means to carefully consider different choices or alternatives before making a decision. So, when you weigh your options, you think about all the pros and cons of each choice, and you try to determine which is the best one for you. So, for example imagine that you're looking for a job and you put out a lot of different job applications, and you did a lot of job interviews, and then you receive job offers from two different companies. One job offers a higher salary but has a longer commute. While the other job offers a lower salary but is close to your home. In this kind of situation, you need to weigh your options. You could say something like, "I need to weigh my options before deciding which job to accept", right? Do you want the higher salary and the longer commute? Or the lower salary but an easier commute? So, a tough decision to make. In this context then, weighing your options means that you're going to think carefully about the benefits and the drawbacks of each job before you make your decision.

And in my story from earlier, my wife and I found several lamps that we liked, but we couldn't decide which one would be the best fit for our home. So, we weighed our options. We thought about the advantages and disadvantages of each lamp that we liked, such as the design, and the size, and the color, and the price, before we made our decision about which lamp to purchase. OK, so now that you know what this expression means, let's get to some example sentences. I have three example sentences that I prepared to show you how to use this expression in a natural way, the way that English speakers would in their daily lives. So, why don't we listen to the first example sentence now? Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

After weighing all their options, they decided to buy a used car instead of a new one.

Let's break this example sentence down. In that example sentence, we hear about a family who decided to buy a used car instead of a new one, but before making that decision, they weighed their options, which means they thought about the pros and cons, right? Maybe a used car is cheaper, but the condition isn't as good, and maybe it won't last as long, but a new car is more expensive, but the condition is perfect and is expected to have a long life, right? So, they thought about all of those things, the advantages, the disadvantages, the pros, the cons, and then finally they made their decision. So that process of thinking about the pros and cons is called weighing your options.

Example Sentence number two.

I've been weighing my options for a while, but I still can't choose which university offer to accept.

Let's break this example down. In this example sentence, we hear from a student who is in a difficult spot. The student is trying to choose which university offer to accept. So maybe the student is very bright, very smart, and they have some offers from numerous universities. In that situation, you have to consider what are the pros and cons,

advantages, and disadvantages of each school before ultimately deciding which school to attend. So again, that process of considering those factors is called weighing your options and that's what the student is doing. And I guess they're having a hard time because they haven't made a decision yet.

Example sentence number three.

Before deciding to move to another city for work, he weighed his options carefully.

Let's break this final example sentence down. In this example sentence, we hear about a guy who moved to a different city for work, but before doing that, he weighed his options carefully. So, he considered the pros and the cons, the advantages, and disadvantages of the move. And then once he felt like he had all the information he needed, he made his decision and eventually did move to a different city for a new job.

So that brings us to the end of this week's bonus episode. Congratulations on completing another English study session with me today. So, keep up the great work throughout this week, and remember that what you just did here with me today is exactly the kind of thing you need to do to build your English skills and turn into an expert English speaker. So, my hope for you for the week ahead is that you'll keep practicing and keep spending time with English. And by the way, don't forget to visit Culips.com for the free transcript of this episode and to sign up as a Culips member for even more amazing learning materials and resources. So, take care, have a great week, and I hope that you stumble upon your own lucky adventure soon. Talk to you next time, bye!

Episode credits

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