

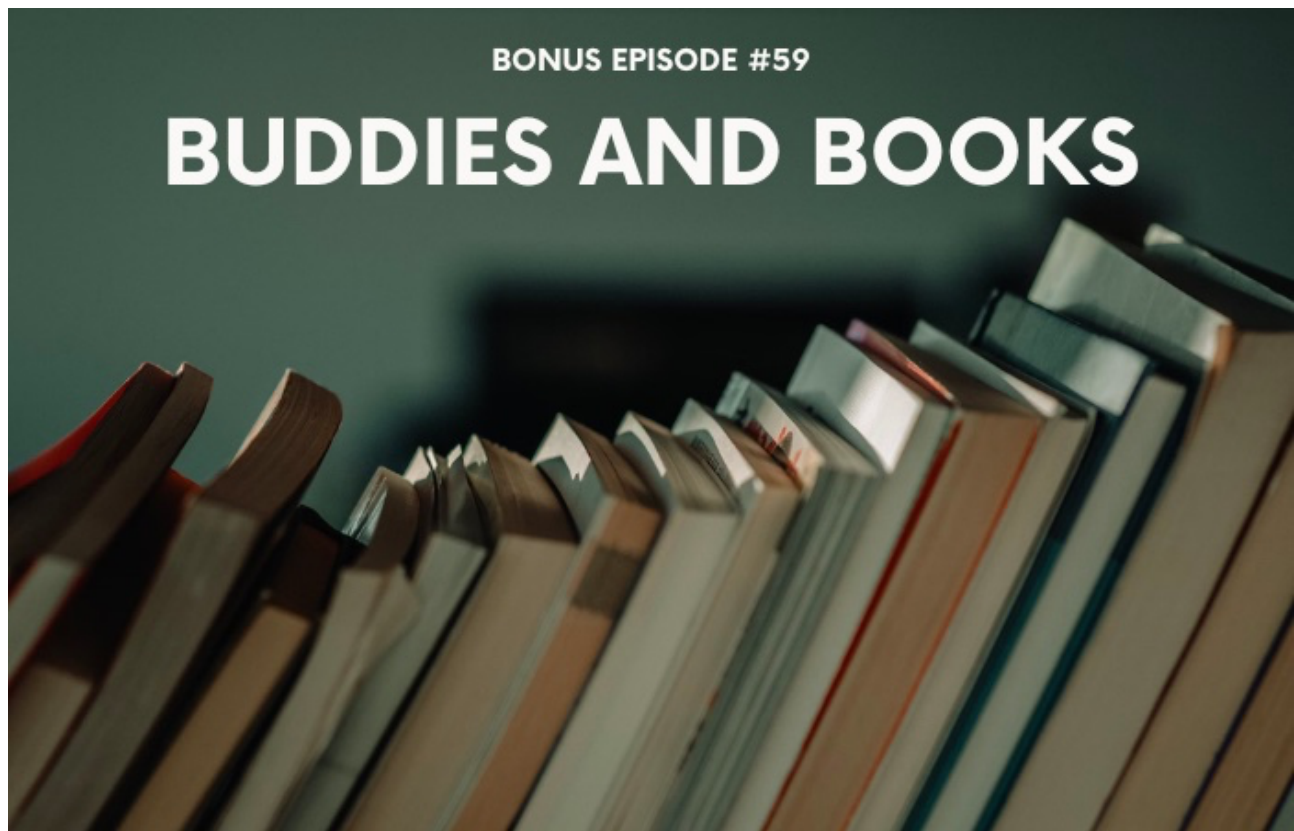
Books and buddies

Episode description

In this week's edition of the bonus episode, Andrew talks about having some guests over to his house, professional development, and a new book by one of his favorite writers. Plus, in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you about the expression **to stay on your toes**.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Welcome to bonus episode number 59 of the Culips English podcast. I'm your host Andrew and it's great to be back here with you for another week. Thank you for joining me today for an English study session.

So, in the bonus episode series, you'll improve your English through listening to interesting stories from my everyday life as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And also, in each episode I break down, explain, and teach you about a useful idiomatic English expression that I recommend adding to your vocabulary just to make your English stronger and more natural.

To accompany this episode, and every bonus episode actually, there is a 100% free transcript that comes in both an interactive version or a PDF version. Now the interactive version is great for studying with on your phone or your tablet or your computer and the PDF is best for those of you who want to print out and have a physical paper copy of the transcript. So, to get it you just need to visit our website which is Culips.com, or you could follow the link in the description for this episode.

And if you're looking for even more ways to study English with us, we have you covered. We have hundreds of other English lessons on our website that are all free to listen to. And if you sign up and become a Culips member, then you'll also get helpful study guides with transcripts, vocabulary explanations and examples, and quizzes for all of our content. So definitely check that out.

If you listened to last week's bonus episode, then you'll know that I asked you if we should re-title this series from "Bonus Episodes" which is kind of generic and plain and boring, to something a little more interesting. Well, over on our Discord server, we had many interesting responses from different members of the Culips community. Now, some people said that it should be something to do with diary, maybe "Andrew's Daily Diary", or

"Andrew's Weekly Diary", something like that, something to do with diary. One user suggested the name, "The Extra Mile." The extra mile. And actually, I think that might be a contender, a top contender for the series title, because I really do like that name, "The Extra Mile." Someone else suggested that we keep the name as is and there were several other ideas floated around as well on our Discord server. So, I'm going to keep taking your suggestions. We'll wait a few more weeks here and then we'll decide what to do with the name. And if you would like to make a suggestion, then just join in on the conversation that's happening over on our Discord server. It's free to join and it's a great community of like-minded English learners. To do that just follow the link in the description for this episode and you can join us there.

OK, so let's move on to this episode's stories. I have two things that I'd like to tell you about from what I got up to last week. So, I hope you enjoy them. Let's take a listen to the first story now.

In the bonus episode from a couple of weeks ago, I told you the story about moving to my new house and how it was made a lot easier thanks to a couple of my friends who watched our pet dog Pinky while we were doing the move. We couldn't have him just hanging around getting in the movers way while they were trying to do their work, so thankfully our friends agreed to watch Pinky until the move was finished. So then after the move was finished, we wanted to say thank you to our friends for doing that favor for us and take them out to dinner or something like that, but our friends had different plans for that evening and couldn't join us. So, we decided to reschedule for a different time and that different time just happened to be last weekend.

So, my wife and I contacted our friends just to remind them about our plans and to double check exactly what we were going to do together, and they came up with this idea that instead of meeting at a restaurant and having dinner at a restaurant, instead our friends were going to come and check out our new place and we'd have a little barbecue outside in our yard or something like that. So that is what we planned to do. Now I have to be

honest and say that my wife and I were just a little bit nervous because these friends were going to be our very first house guests. And they're good friends of ours. It's not like we were trying to impress them or anything, but still, you know, this was the first time that we'd have guests over to our house. So even though our house still isn't in perfect order, and it's not completely arranged and everything yet, we still decided that it could be a fun thing to do to have them over to our house, and so that's what we did.

Now the rainy season here in Korea just started on Monday last week about a week ago. And the rainy season lasts on average for three weeks to a month, something like that. And during that time, it's quite hot and humid and of course rainy. Now it's not like it rains all day every day, but it does rain fairly often. And when it rains, it really rains. It is like a downpour, it's a deluge, it's very heavy rain during the summer rainy season here in Korea. So, because of this, and also because of the Korean weather offices tendency for inaccurate weather predictions, we decided to call it safe and instead of just having a barbecue in the yard, which on the surface sounds like a great idea, well in reality we thought we might get rained out, so we should change our plan, and instead of doing that, we decided to have a pizza party instead and just order some pizza. Now pizza is one of my favorite foods of all time, so I'm always happy to eat pizza, and this plan was a great idea to me.

As our friends were on their way over, they texted us to ask if another mutual friend of ours could join along too. Now this friend lives outside of Seoul in a different city which is a few hours away. But she was on her way to Seoul at that time because she had a family event to attend the next day. So, we were happy to have her join in and it was a little bit of a surprise but a good surprise. And in these kinds of situations, I'm usually a more the merrier kind of person. So yeah, the more the merrier, I didn't mind at all if she joined in.

So anyways, since she was riding the bus up to Seoul, she wasn't able to join us until a little bit later. So, my two other friends arrived to the house first, and we gave them a tour of the new house, and they had lots of questions for us about everything, because those

two friends, who are married, by the way, they're a couple, and they recently bought their own apartment and they're going to be moving into that brand new apartment a little bit later on in the summer. So, they were really curious about a lot of the little details about our house and how we decorated and how we're setting up and the appliances and yada yada yada all of these things about the new house. So, we had a lot to talk about. And then after the house tour we ordered the pizza, and it was delivered shortly after, and we had a wonderful time eating the pizza. Now in the end, the weather was beautiful but extremely hot, around 35 degrees Celsius as the real feel and of course very humid on top of that as well. So, in the end, we actually didn't spend too much time in the yard. Instead, we just hung out in the living room under that sweet, sweet, cool breeze of the air conditioner.

So yeah, we hung out, we ate pizza, we listened to some music, we all took some turns being the DJ and choosing the music to listen to. And a few hours later, our out-of-town friend arrived as well to join us, and she brought a ton of kimbap with her, like 7 or 8 rolls of kimbap. And if you're not familiar with Korean food, let me just quickly explain what kimbap is. I think maybe most people know what sushi is and a sushi roll. It actually looks quite similar to a sushi roll, but it has a very different flavor. So essentially, kimbap is just a dish that consists of rice and vegetables and meat or seafood which is rolled in seaweed, which is the kim. Kim means the seaweed, dried seaweed, and bap means rice. So Kimbap is like dried seaweed rice roll. So, between the pizza and the kimbap, we had a real feast.

Now in a situation like this, it's always interesting to me to observe how the linguistic situation shakes down. Of course, I was the only English speaker there and the rest are all native Korean speakers. So Korean was the main language of communication, which I love because I am a student of the language, but all of my friends have studied English to some degree and although they might not speak it too regularly in their everyday normal lives, it's like one of those situations where if I'm speaking in Korean and I can't remember vocabulary or something, I can say some words in English and most of the time at least

one person will understand and can help me out. So interestingly, when it was just my first two friends who were visiting. The conversation was pretty calm and straightforward and easy to follow, but as soon as the third friend joined, then we went from having three native Korean speakers in the conversation to four, and suddenly the dynamic really changed. It was interesting. The conversation became quicker and more intense, and I noticed that sometimes two conversations were going on at the same time and there was a lot more cross chatter and in general, the conversation just got a lot harder to stay involved in.

And I'm telling you this because probably you can relate at some point maybe in your life, you've been in a situation like this in English. So, I think maybe many Culips listeners know what I'm talking about. Speaking English in a small group sometimes can be just way easier than speaking English in a larger group of people. And it seems to me like the dynamic changes once you get over three people. But like I said, I'm a student of the language and I love learning Korean. Plus, I'm always up for a good challenge and I liked how the conversation dynamic changed and I had to stay on my toes to keep up with the flow of conversation.

So anyways, as the afternoon turned to the evening, we decided to go for a little walk through the neighborhood and check some things out. And we also stopped by at a pub nearby that's really popular and has great reviews and just looks really awesome from the outside. So we went into the pub, we had a drink together, and then we called it a night. My wife and I walked our friends back to the subway station and we set our goodbyes and saw them off on their way.

So, we made it really clear to our friends that this wasn't our official housewarming party. We're gonna have our official housewarming party maybe next month or sometime in the near future, but nonetheless it was really great to have some friends over to our house for the first time, our first visitors and also to be able to spend some time with them. And I hope that was just the first hangout of many, many more to come in the future.

Question for you. Do you have to do any professional development for your job?

Professional development means doing something to help you improve the skills or knowledge that you need to do your job effectively. So, this could be something like attending a workshop or taking a course, maybe studying something, and getting certified for it or going to a conference, anything like this could be called professional development.

Something my wife has to do for professional development at her job is participate in a book club with the other staff members in her department. So, each month they have to read and discuss a book together that is related to their line of work. The idea being that by doing this they can stay informed about changes and developments and trends in their field, and I think this is a really cool idea. So, starting here in July my wife will be reading a new book with her team. So that means that my wife has to buy the book and visit a bookstore to buy the book. So, she wanted to do that over the weekend, and I decided that it would be a great idea to go and tag along with her.

Since we've mostly just been staying at home over the last little while getting our house set up, we decided to go to a bookstore in a different neighborhood just to get out and get some fresh air and have a change of scenery. You know, it can be just a little bit boring if you stay in the same place over and over again even if it's a new house. So, we decided to go out and get some fresh air and check out a different neighborhood for a while. And so, we decided to go to a big bookstore in the traditional downtown, if I can call it that, which is the Jongro district. So, we rode the subway down there and we headed to the bookstore.

Apart from just wanting to hang out and spend some good quality time with my wife, one of the reasons that I wanted to go to the bookstore along with her is because one of my favorite Korean writers has a brand-new novel out and I wanted to buy it. The writer's name is one that is difficult for English speakers to say but it is Jang Ryu Jin and I've read two of her books so far. The first book I read by her was a short story collection and the other one was a novel, and they were both not only really fun to read and just enjoyable to read but also, they were super helpful for helping me build my Korean reading skills and

my vocabulary. The short story collection especially was very, very helpful. I guess if I tried to translate it into English, I would say the title would be something like "The Highs and Lows of Working" or maybe "The Sorrows and Joys of Work" something like that. I don't think the short story collection has been officially translated into English, as far as I know, but that's my stab at translating the title. In fact, I would love to try and translate one of the stories from that collection one day into English if I could find the time to- to try and do that.

But anyways, the book was great, and I even got the audiobook as well, so I could listen to the stories again and again and again and like I said this was just very, very useful for helping me learn Korean. As I've said on Culips many, many times language learning should be fun because if it's fun you'll want to spend time with the language and if you spend a lot of time with the language then your skills will grow. So, that's one of the ways I was able to have fun and spend time with the language was with this great audiobook. Anyways, I've also read her first novel, which was called "Let's Go to the Moon". I guess if I had to translate it. And again, that's just my literal direct translation of the title, but it was also a very fun book to read, and I loved it. And I don't know if there's an audiobook for that one or not, but I should look into it because I think if there is then I would like to listen to the audiobook as well.

So anyways, what I'm trying to say here is that I'm just a fan of her books and I'm excited to dive into her new novel as well. It's the third book in my queue right now because I'm currently reading a book at the moment, and I don't know about you, but I can never stop reading a book halfway into it. Once I start, I always want to try and finish. So, I have to finish the book that I'm reading now and then next up will be a book that my wife gave me for my birthday. Of course, a birthday present like that from my wife will take first priority so then that will be book number two in the queue but then after that finally I'll be able to read this new novel.

Now something that really shocked me and made me feel a little bit starstruck actually was that recently I learned that this writer is also a follower of the Culips Instagram account,

and I thought who knows maybe she even listens to Culips too. Actually, I have no idea if she listens to Culips or not, but I did think it was kind of funny because this is something that Kassy and I have joked about in the past before. Like huh I wonder who listens to Culips around the world because of course Kassy and I both have actors and singers and writers and movie directors who were huge fans of but they're not native English speakers. So perhaps we thought maybe some of those people who we really, really admire could be learning English by listening to Culips. Who knows? I don't know. But we did joke about that, and we thought that would be cool.

So anyways to get back to the story and just to wrap it up, my wife and I, we bought our books and then we went for a walk around some of the surrounding neighborhoods around the downtown area in Seoul here. And as I said last weekend was just really, really hot, the heat was super intense, but thankfully we waited until the evening to go and the temperature at night was just absolutely perfect. There was a nice breeze blowing so it made for just a nice time to go for a walk through the city. After we returned home, can you guess what I did? That's right, I did some reading because now I have some great motivation to push me through the books that are in my queue so that I can power through them and to get on to the new book that I just bought, and I can't wait.

Last week was a busy one here at Culips. We released a brand-new episode about Kassy's big summer adventure, and in that episode, she tells us the story of how she'll be volunteering this summer abroad in Europe. If you haven't heard that one yet, definitely check it out, I think you'll enjoy it. There's also been some great discussions happening on our Discord server about this episode and some community members have been sharing their stories about doing similar volunteer experiences and it's been fun to read through all of those stories so it's just great to see how many Culips listeners are using our Discord server to be active with their English and to tell stories and share their opinions and their thoughts. So, if you haven't tried the Discord server out then I really encourage you to do so as well.

Speaking of our Discord, we also held our Culips member livestream on the Discord last week on Tuesday and I was joined by Alina as my co-host. Alina is one of our staff members who works behind the scenes at Culips. She's a study guide writer and our Discord moderator and it was great to have her on the livestream with us. We had fun just chatting and spending some time with our Culips member community on the discord for about an hour on Tuesday evening.

Also, I met up with Anna last week and we recorded a brand-new Chatterbox episode which is about the topic of quiet quitting, quiet quitting. Now I'm not going to spoil the episode by going into any details right now, but I'm not sure if you've been able to tell from listening to past Chatterbox episodes or not but both Anna and I, we love talking about different topics related to work culture. And so, this was perfect for both of us, and we had a very interesting chat about this topic. The episode has now been sent off to our audio editor and he's going to do his magic and make sure that everything sounds good and then we'll send it off to our study guide writing team for them to make the study guide for it. And then we'll be able to release it. So please stay tuned for that episode coming up soon in the near future.

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

Before I let you go, I want to teach you a useful expression that you heard me use while I was telling you the story of my friends coming over to my house for a visit. I recommend adding this expression to your vocabulary. It's one of those expressions that can really help take your English to the next level and kind of add some flavor to your English. Instead of just using basic vocabulary, idiomatic expressions like this can make your English come alive and really pop. So, let's get into it. The expression that I'm going to tell you about today is: to stay on your toes, to stay on your toes. Now maybe you noticed when I used this expression earlier, I'm not sure, but it doesn't really matter if you noticed it earlier or not because we're going to rewind and go back and take a listen to it a couple of more times in the context of when I was telling you that story. So, in fact, why don't we do

this now? Let's rewind. We'll go back to the part of the story where I used this expression. We'll listen to it a couple of more times. And then after that, I'll explain what it means and give you some more examples about how you can use it in a daily real-life kind of situation. So, let's rewind now and go back and take another listen. Here we go.

I'm always up for a good challenge and I liked how the conversation dynamic changed and I had to stay on my toes to keep up with the flow of conversation.

OK, now let's talk about what this expression means and maybe you can guess just from hearing it, I'm not sure, but to stay on your toes essentially means to remain alert or diligent or ready for any situation that might occur. So as far as I know, this idiom comes from sports, in particular boxing. So, you can imagine two boxers in the boxing ring and how are they walking around in the ring? They're not just walking using their whole foot, right? They are just walking on their toes, right? They're using their toes to spring up and jump around through the boxing ring. And why are they doing that? Why are they walking around in that way? Well, it's because they need to be very quick and very fast. They need to be on alert, right? because they don't want to get punched or attacked by their opponent. So, if you keep that image in mind, I think that will help you out a lot and you can just think that when you're on your toes, you're ready to move or react at any moment, you're alert for anything that can happen.

So, when I used this expression, I said that I had to stay on my toes during the conversation with my friends that was happening in Korean because I'm not a Korean native speaker and if I didn't pay attention, then I could easily get lost and lose the flow and the meaning of what was being talked about. So now that we know that to stay on your toes means to pay attention and be alert for any situation that can occur, let's listen to some example sentences. So, I have three for you and they'll show you how English speakers use this expression in our everyday daily lives. Let's listen to the first example now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

Our teacher is known for giving pop quizzes, so we always have to stay on our toes in our class.

In this example we hear a student talking about his teacher and his teacher is infamous for giving pop quizzes. Now a pop quiz is a surprise quiz, one that you don't know is coming. So that means in that class you have to stay on your toes. You have to always be ready for a surprise quiz, so no slacking off, no skipping your homework or skipping the readings. You have to make sure that you're ready because you never know when one of those pop quizzes will be given by the teacher.

Example sentence number two.

You need to stay on your toes in the stock market or you might miss a good investment opportunity.

Let's break the second example sentence down. So, in this example sentence, we hear that if you want to participate and invest in the stock market, well, then you have to stay on your toes. You have to be ready. You have to be alert because you never know when a good investment opportunity will be available for you. Likewise, you also have to stay on your toes so that you don't lose any money in the stock market, right? You need to know when there's a good opportunity to buy and a good opportunity to sell. So, you always have to be alert. You always have to be paying attention. You always have to stay on your toes.

Example sentence number three.

Being a parent of twins really requires you to stay on your toes. They're always up to something.

Let's break that final example sentence down. In that example, we heard from the father of a set of twins, I guess. That would be the speaker of the sentence, at least not me, but the speaker of that sentence. And in that sentence, he said that you have to stay on your toes if you are the father of twins, OK, if you are a parent of twins, why? Because they're always up to something. They're always getting into trouble. You have to stay alert and always pay attention so that they don't hurt themselves or get into trouble, right? You have to stay on your toes.

Alright, we did it! That brings us to the end of this week's bonus episode. So, thank you for joining me and congratulations on completing an English study session here with me today. Nice job! If you enjoy learning English with Culips, please support what we do by becoming a Culips member. For all the details about the benefits of being a Culips member please visit our website, Culips.com. So, until next time take care and I'll talk to you soon, bye!

Episode credits

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