

Bonus episode #079 - Life is weird

Episode description

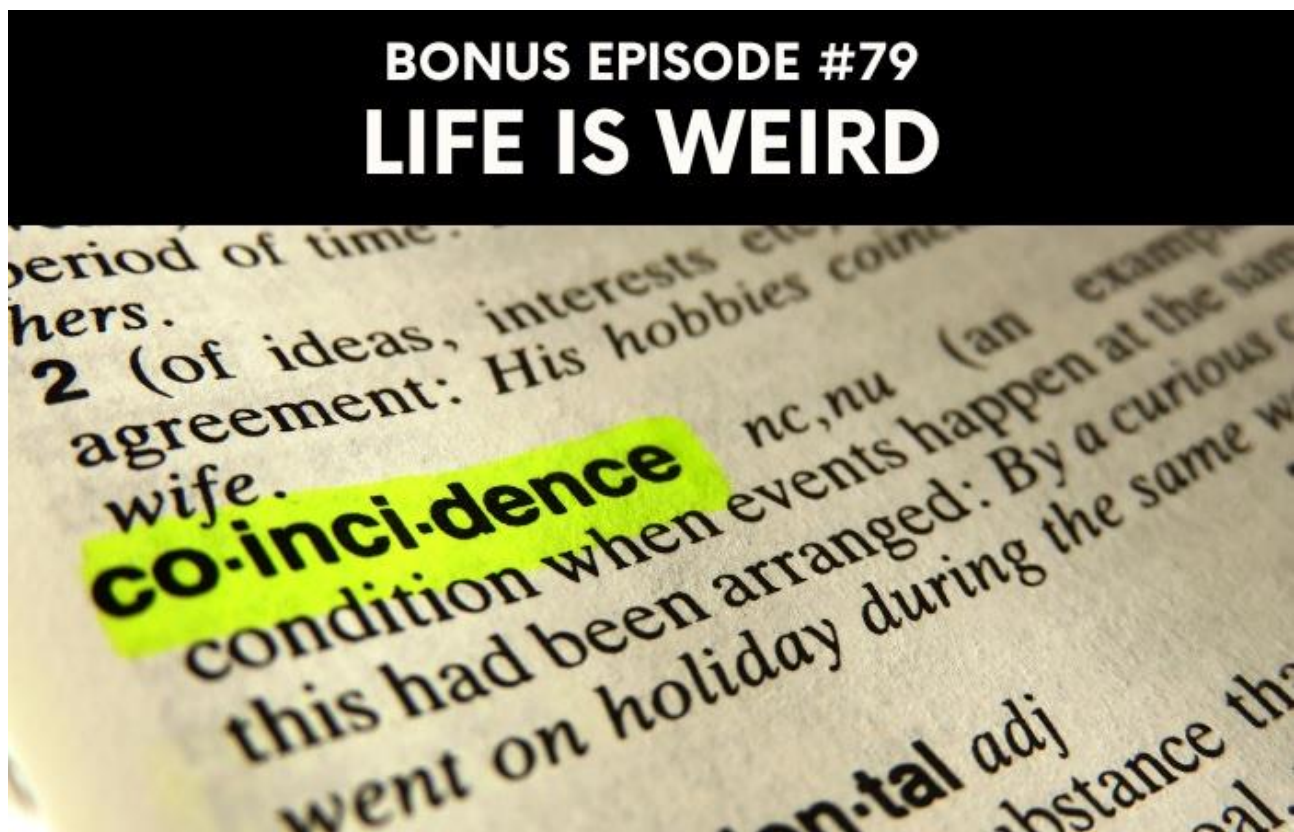
In this bonus episode, Andrew tells two stories about coincidences. He talks about buying a Nintendo, meeting one of his favorite podcast hosts, cold winds, closed stores, Hongdae cults, and meeting a Culips listener. Listen for fun and surprising tales!

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Chatterbox 251 - Interview with Jonson Lee: <https://esl.culips.com/2020/06/chatterbox-251-interview-with-jonson-lee/>

Simplified Speech 185 - Nintendo power: <https://esl.culips.com/2023/11/simplified-speech-185-nintendo-power/>



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello and welcome back to another edition of the bonus episode show here on the Culips English Podcast. My name's Andrew, and this is episode number 79 of our bonus series which is the series where we release a new episode every Monday where I tell you some stories about what I've been up to lately and what's new and interesting in my life as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And the goal is that by listening to these stories, you'll be able to improve your English fluency, build your vocabulary, and increase your knowledge of the culture of English-speaking people in a fun and entertaining way. So, I've got two stories for you today and before we get to them, I just have a couple of announcements.

The first announcement is that there's an interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary for this episode that you can get for free just by following the link in the description for this episode. And there's also a listening comprehension quiz if you're a Culips member. So, members make sure to try out the quiz. It's a fun way to test how much you are able to understand from this episode and I'll post it on the member-only channel of our Discord server so you can find it there, and if you're not a member of our Discord server yet then I'll also include the link to join our Discord in the description for this episode.

And the second announcement is about Culips membership, actually. If you enjoy the English lessons that we make here at Culips each and every week, then please support us by becoming a member. Without our members, Culips wouldn't exist. So, because of that we provide tons of great perks and benefits to our members which include things like transcripts and full study guides for all of our regular episodes, ad-free audio, exclusive bonus content and extended conversations for many of our episodes. There are member-only live streams and our member-only series, the Fluency Files and as I mentioned just a second ago, we also have a member-only channel on our Discord community as well. And those are just some of the benefits you get. There are even more but for all of the details why don't you just check out our website Culips.com or you can click the link in the

description for this episode and sign up and become a Culips member today. Alright so with all of the announcements out of the way let's get started with today's episode. Enjoy!

So, I wrote some notes to tell you two stories and I made the notes here on my phone. They both happened last week. Which one should I tell you first? One is about buying a Nintendo and one was about meeting one of my Korean teachers. I guess you could call it that! Meeting one of my Korean teachers. Let's start with the Nintendo story and I'll tell you that one quickly and then we'll move on to telling you about meeting one of my Korean teachers for a coffee. It's a more interesting story than that. That kind of sounds a little bit boring but you'll have to wait and hear it for yourself, and I think you'll agree that it's a more interesting story than that. So, we'll start with telling you about buying a Nintendo. So, the reason I want to tell you this story is not to brag and say, "Oh I just bought a Nintendo!" Or anything like that. Not that that's really a big deal anyways, but because the timing was quite ironic and quite funny.

So, if you're a regular Culips listener then you'll know that we recently released a Simplified Speech episode where Kassy and I had a conversation about playing Nintendo and Kassy told me all about how she and her husband have been playing Nintendo recently and it's been a great bonding experience for them and a lot of fun and **yada yada yada**. If you want to hear all of the details about that, then you'll have to listen to the Simplified Speech episode and of course I'll put the link for that one in the description.

But in that episode, I also mentioned that I've been wanting to buy a Nintendo Switch for many years, for at least two years. I grew up playing Nintendo and it's always been one of my favorite gaming systems. I love their characters, I love their games, specifically Zelda and when the most recent edition of Zelda was released a little bit earlier this year, I especially really wanted to buy one. But my wife wasn't convinced she wasn't really sold that we needed one, and she told me like "You're always complaining Andrew that you don't have enough time as it is. Are you really going to be able to spend some time playing

the Nintendo or will you just buy it and then put it in a drawer and forget about it?" So, I guess I wasn't allowed to buy one.

Well things changed recently because my wife was involved in some kind of esports competition at her office. I'm not exactly sure about the details of what this esports competition entailed exactly, but I know that there was an esports competition at my wife's office. And one of the games that was played in this esports competition was a Nintendo Switch game and I don't think she even played this game. I think she played a different one, but some of her office mates played the Nintendo Switch and it was her role to cheer on her office mates. So, she saw the game in action and was a member of the audience and said it looked like so much fun that she wanted to try it out as well. And so later that day after work, she told me that she was in this esports competition, and she saw some of her office mates playing the Switch and she wanted to try it and so I said to her "Well then this is the perfect opportunity. Let's buy one because I'm in the same situation." I've wanted to buy a switch for so long so I can play Zelda and just enjoy some of my free time playing Nintendo. And so, my wife was pretty much **on board** for buying a Nintendo and of course I was fully on board about buying a Nintendo. The one reservation that my wife still had is that it's pretty pricey. And her concern is that buying the Nintendo would just be the first step and then after that we'd want to buy more accessories and games and we'd end up spending a lot of money.

Well good news for me because I was really on **team let's buy a Nintendo** when we shopped around for one online, we found a limited-time sale where the Nintendo was on sale for not a huge discount, but I think it was 10% off and that was enough to **push** my wife **over the line** and put her fully into **let's buy a Nintendo camp** along with me. So that's what we did we went online we bought this Nintendo on sale and of course Korea here is amazing you can buy something online and get it delivered within a day and it came a little bit later that day not too long after we ordered it in fact. And the funny thing is this is why I wanted to tell you this story is because the day that we bought the Nintendo

was actually the exact same day that the Nintendo episode was released and that was completely an accident.

Usually, Culips episodes are recorded well in advance of their release date. I would say probably a month to six weeks in advance, because we have to record the episode and then we send it to our audio editor to edit and clean up and just make it sound nice and easy to listen to. And then we have to send the episode over to our transcriptionist to make a transcription for the study guide. And then we have to send it to our study guide writer to write the study guide, and then we have to send it to our editor to check the transcription and check the study guide to make sure everything is accurate. And then finally we have to upload it and that whole process takes a little while it's not something that we can just do in a day. So, because of that, there's always a slight delay, at least with our regular Culips episodes the bonus episodes are a different story I pretty much just record these and then upload them within a day or so, but the regular Culips episodes like Simplified Speech or Chatterbox those are on a delay and sometimes it **slips my mind** exactly what episode is going to be released next. So, it just so happened that that Nintendo episode was released on that day, we bought a Nintendo on that day.

And checking my DMs on Instagram and Discord our Discord server that day also, I got some messages from listeners who had already listened to that episode and were Nintendo fans and they told me "Andrew you should totally get the switch you're gonna love it it will change your life it'll be so fun!" I'm not sure if I believe them that it will change my life, but I think it will be a lot of fun. And so yeah, now my wife and I have had this Nintendo for a little bit over a week and we've been playing it every day. The game that was bundled with the Nintendo is Mario Kart which is a kart racing game. It's really fun you can select one of the Nintendo characters and race around a racetrack as that character and you can attack the other racers so there's a little bit of strategy involved with the racing and the avoiding attacks and the attacking other racers. And it just makes for a really fun game. And the thing that I love about this game is first of all it's pretty easy to play so my wife, who turns out to be quite a good gamer herself, my wife is immediately pretty good at

the game so we can compete together. It's easy to learn so if a friend comes over and we want to play together there's not a **steep learning curve** you can just kind of jump in and have fun right away. And most importantly, in my opinion, it's very quick so we can just **throw it on**, and we can play for 10 or 15 or 20 minutes and you don't have to commit to like this hour long or multiple hour-long gaming session.

So that's the only game that we have right now at the moment, but sometime in the **near-ish future** when my schedule does free up a little bit, I am planning to get the Zelda game that I was talking about earlier. There's a couple of them for the Nintendo Switch and I think I'll probably end up playing both of them. I'll start with the first Zelda and then move to the more recent one. So yeah, I thought that was a funny story it just was a weird coincidence that the day the Nintendo Culips episode was released I ended up buying a Nintendo and I've been enjoying it a lot ever since.

So, that was my Nintendo story and the second story that I want to tell you that I have written down here on my notepad is about meeting one of my Korean teachers, so let's get to that story now.

A couple of weeks ago randomly just **out of the blue** I got a Kakao Talk message from Jonson Lee. By the way, Kakao Talk is the messenger app that's really really popular in Korea you could think of it as being like a WhatsApp for Korea, super popular everybody has it installed on their phone. So. I randomly got this message from Jonson Lee. Now if you're a longtime Culips listener then you will maybe be familiar with that name because he was a previous guest on Chatterbox. In fact, if you go back and look at episode number 251 you can hear my interview with Johnson. Now, Johnson's a Korean guy that was born and raised in Seoul but has lived in California for many, many years and he is the host of the Sponge Mind podcast. Now as many of you know, I'm a Korean learner and I've been studying the Korean language for many years. It's one of my hobbies and I think I could even go as far as saying one of my passions. Unfortunately, like most of my passions in life, I don't have enough time to commit as much as I really want to with learning Korean

but it's something that I've never quit doing and has always been just a real source of joy in my life.

And a huge driver and motivation for me here at Culips is to make English audio lessons for all of the Culips community around the world that are the kind of lessons that I want to have in Korean. I know that as a language learner, you really need access to comprehensible, understandable, fun content to listen to. And of course, I try my best and my co-hosts we try our best to create fun content and interesting content and I hope we're doing a good job with that, but I know personally from experience that having access to understandable and interesting content in your second language can be a huge source of growth and development in your target language. And so that's why I make Culips for English learners around the world. I make the kind of stuff that I would want to listen to in Korean.

And unfortunately, there's not an exact equivalent of Culips in the Korean language. There are several podcasts for learning Korean, and recently I have to say the situation has been getting way, way better for Korean learners like myself. There are a couple of new podcasts out there that I've really enjoyed, but for many, many years there just weren't any good podcasts created for Korean learners. However, there is one exception and that is this podcast hosted by Jonson called *Sponge Mind*. And *Sponge Mind*'s got an interesting concept because it's a bilingual podcast. So, each episode is released in English, and it's also released in Korean, which is perfect for someone like me. To be honest, I don't really listen to the English episodes too often I mostly focus on just spending my time with the Korean one, but I know in the past if the content was difficult or I just wanted to see how different concepts were talked about or explained between the two languages, then I could always jump over to the English version and just see how it was explained in English. So, I think the concept is just really, really cool.

One thing that I've heard from many different Culips listeners over the years and different comments and messages, is that they feel like I'm one of their friends and the reason that

they feel like I'm one of their friends is because they spend a lot of time listening to me and they get to hear about my life, and they know who I am. I think a lot of podcast hosts probably get a similar comment from their listeners because when we listen to podcasts, it's true! We do spend a lot of time with the hosts, and we develop a kind of relationship with the hosts of the podcast that we listen to. Now this kind of relationship recently has been talked a lot about in the media and it's called a **parasocial** relationship. Parasocial and that's like a one-sided relationship. So, it's the kind of relationship that podcasts hosts, and listeners have. Where the listeners feel like they know tons of information about the hosts and the hosts' lives, but the host of the podcast can't **reciprocate** because they don't really know anything about the listeners lives. Or it's the type of relationship that a celebrity has with their fans because a celebrity is worshipped, right? And people know so many details about the celebrity's lives and so much information about that person, but the celebrity doesn't know any information really about their fans lives. So, that kind of one-sided relationship is called a parasocial relationship.

Now, the relationship that I have with Jonson host of Sponge Mind isn't exactly parasocial, because I have interviewed him once for Culips way back in the day in that Chatterbox episode number 251. But other than that, it's mostly parasocial because I spend a lot of time listening to him speak and him talk about his thoughts and his life, but it's not reciprocal. Now it's true that Jonson may be a Culips listener, but I have a feeling that he's not, because to be honest, his English is fantastic. In my opinion, it's even better than some English native speakers, so I don't think he really spends too much time listening to Culips, so that's why I think we have a kind of parasocial relationship.

Or I should say we did have a parasocial relationship, because as I said, recently out of the blue I got a message from him on KakaoTalk and he said Andrew I'm in Seoul, I'm visiting. I want to meet up, let's have coffee. And I was really surprised to hear from him, so I replied yeah obviously let's do that that would be great to see you and meet in person, because we had only talked before for that interview while he was in California and I was here in Korea, so it would be nice to meet up and talk one-on-one. So, we made a plan to

meet up at a cafe just to have a coffee and hang out and have a chat, and on my way to the cafe where I was going to meet him suddenly I felt a little bit nervous. Like, I'm meeting this guy and I have a kind of parasocial relationship with him where I've listened to him speak for many, many hours but he doesn't really know me so will that be awkward will that be weird because of the one-sided nature of our relationship? But within talking to him for 30 seconds everything was cool. My worry, my stress kind of melted away and we had a great conversation about, literally guys, I would say maybe 200 topics.

Jonson it turns out is one of those guys whose mind is just like go go go and we bounced around talking about this thing, to that thing, to that thing. So, it was a really interesting and stimulating conversation, but one thing that was really cool about our conversation is that it turns out that Jonson is a really big audio guy, a really big music guy, a hi-fi stereo guy, and even writes articles about stereo equipment for an audio magazine. And for some reason, I didn't know that about him. And as you guys know from listening to Culips, I'm a huge music fan. I'm nowhere near the level of **audiophile** that Johnson is. I think I'm more of a beginner, but it was great to pick his mind and ask him questions because I'm currently assembling my own stereo, my first real stereo here at my home. And I told the story about buying a turntable back in the summer in one of our bonus episodes, but I still haven't pieced together the whole stereo yet.

I recently read a comment from one of our community members on Discord asking me to share an update about my stereo and the answer is that the stereo is still not finished. I still need to buy speakers and I still need to buy a receiver, and in fact there's a whole other long story about why I haven't assembled the stereo yet, but perhaps I'll save that story for a later day.

But it was awesome, like I said, to pick Jonson's mind and to ask him some questions about what kind of speakers I should buy, how I should arrange them in the room that I had, and he took a look at some pictures of my living room and gave me some tips and so it was very valuable information. And it was just great to talk shop with another audio geek

because in my social circle here in Seoul, I do have a lot of friends who are music lovers, but I don't have anyone who really cares too much about the audio quality of the music that they listen to. So, it was really fun and cool for me to have somebody that I could **geek out** with and talk shop with about audio and about putting a stereo system together.

Now after I finished hanging out with Jonson, we had this great conversation lasting for a couple of hours, but finally it was time for us to go our own separate ways. And Johnson and I met up for coffee in a neighborhood called Edae and Eade is close to another neighborhood maybe about a 20-minute walk away from another neighborhood called Hongdae. And that neighborhood is really famous in Korea for being the center, the heartbeat, of Korea's live music scene. And because of that there are many venues where you can see concerts from all sorts of different genres, but particularly indie music and rock music, and there's buskers there, and there are also record stores there. And one of my favorite used record stores in Seoul is in that Hongdae neighborhood, but it happens to be a little bit far from my house and I don't really hang out in Hongdae very often.

But I was close by, I was in the neighborhood, and I was all pumped up from my audio talk with Jonson that I decided to go over and just look through the used record store and spend my evening that way. So, when I left the cafe to walk over to Hongdae after I said goodbye to Jonson, I was immediately **blasted**, almost blown over **by** this huge gust of Arctic wind. That night that Johnson and I met up turned out to be just a freezing cold night. And I was even prepared like I had a hoodie on, I had a winter-ish jacket on. It wasn't like a down-filled parka or anything, but it was a winter jacket. But it turned out that it wasn't very warm at all because as I was walking towards Hongdae, which like I said is about a 20-minute walk, the wind was just howling and the air temperature itself wasn't too cold it was like -1 or 0 just around the freezing level. But because the wind was so strong it was just absolutely freezing.

So, I was trying to speed walk as fast as I could to the record store and the whole time I was walking I was just freezing cold trying not to blow over. And the wind was like blowing

into the holes of my ears, and I haven't had the sensation in a really long time where it just felt like my brain was freezing from the cold wind blowing into my ears. I ended up taking my Air Pods out of my backpack and putting them in my ears. Not because I wanted to listen to music or a podcast in that moment, but just because I wanted to block the cold air from going into my ears. And although the walk only took me about 15 minutes because I was power walking there, it felt like forever. And finally, finally I arrived in Hongdae and I went to go to this record store, and as I approached the door, I was like "No!" because it was closed. So, I struggled and walked in the cold, wintery weather for what felt like forever for absolutely no reason at all. And I was really kind of shocked because it was only like 7:30 p.m. on a Friday night, which for most Korean stores means business as usual. But for whatever reason, this record store closed early, and I was pretty disappointed.

So, because I was absolutely freezing cold and I couldn't go warm myself up in the record store which was what I was planning to do actually, I decided quickly just to run over to the subway station and then take a train back home. So, I **bolted into** the subway station and thankfully I got some relief from the cold in the subway station because the Hongdae subway station is usually jam-packed with people and around that time 7:30 p.m. on a Friday night was no exception, there were just a ton of people down there. It was really hot and I warmed up quite quickly. And as I was walking to the train I heard this voice behind me be like "Excuse me, excuse me!" Which was a little bit surprising because it was in English so I thought it must be addressed to me.

But to be honest, there are many non-Korean people who hang out in Hongdae, it's a really popular spot for tourists to visit. There are tons of guest houses in that neighborhood, so as far as Korea goes it's one of the more multicultural neighborhoods. There are always a lot of non-Korean people hanging out there. So, when I heard the excuse me excuse me I didn't immediately turn back and see what was up. And also, in the back of my mind, I thought that it might be a scammer trying to approach me.

There's a really famous scam in Korea that's kind of unique and if you ever do visit the country be aware of this scam. It really only happens around the Hongdae Station area, but there's this scam where a couple of pretty girls will come up to somebody and ask them for directions to a landmark and **strike up a conversation** with them and then eventually they try to get that person to come back to this kind of **cult** that they have like a church for their cult, and they don't let you leave unless you give them some money. Now Korea is in general a very, very safe place and I don't want that story at all to **dissuade** you from coming and visiting Korea if you ever want to in the future, but Korea is not perfect. It's just like any place on earth and there are good people and bad people and there is this really well-known scam that happens here in Seoul around the Hongdae station area. And in fact, as I was power walking to the record store, I actually passed a couple of those girls who are approaching people trying to ask them for directions to a popular landmark. So, I think that was in the back of my mind and I've honestly even been approached by these people before who asked me for directions, and thankfully I was aware of the scam and knew what they were up to, so I told them to pound dirt.

But when I heard the excuse me excuse me in the subway station, I immediately thought that it might be a scammer trying to approach me. But then, it changed from excuse me to "Andrew!" And that immediately got my attention. Oh, this is not just some random person, this is someone who knows me. So, then I thought "Oh it must be my friend or maybe even one of my students." So, I turned around and the person who was talking to me was somebody who I didn't recognize. So, when I turned around I was a little bit confused but then that person continued and said "Oh are you Andrew from Culips?" And it turned out that the guy who stopped me was a Culips listener and he just wanted to say hello he was surprised to see me in the subway station, and I was very surprised to be stopped and recognized like that.

Of course, I'm always behind the mic almost all of the time. We do do some videos for Culips, but not too many to be honest. So yeah, I was pleasantly surprised to be recognized and it was great to have a conversation with that listener and we even stopped

and took a couple of pictures together and so I wanted to give a shout out to the guy that I met in the subway station at Hongdae, I apologize I didn't **get his name**. But his English is great, so thank you so much to that listener for stopping me and saying hello. It really made my day and it was a really cool way to end the day, because I got to spend the afternoon talking to Jonson one of my Korean teachers and a podcast host who I've spent a lot of time listening to, and then on my way home I had that experience with the Culips listener who was in the exact same boat as me who had the exact same situation with me except I was the host and he was the listener.

So, that is how I ended my evening and as I was riding the subway home, I just thought about how weird life is and how big of a coincidence it is that that kind of event could happen. Anyways, I arrived home and when I got home, I said hello to my wife and then we played Nintendo Switch.

So, that is it for this episode, everyone. Thank you if you made it all the way to this point in the episode, all the way to the end, thank you so much for listening and congratulations on getting another English study session in with me! Keep up the great work. This is what you need to do to increase your fluency in English. You need to spend time with the language, and you did that here today, so please feel proud of yourself, but as you know learning English is a lifelong journey and you just have to keep going day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, and be consistent with your learning. So, for this week up ahead, I challenge you to do that.

And one of the ways that you can be consistent with your English learning is by joining our Discord community, because there you can connect with English learners from around the world. You can interact with them and communicate with them by text, by voice messages, or by speaking in one of the voice chat rooms. It's completely free to join and you can do that just by clicking the link in the description for this episode.

So have a great week up ahead everyone, please take care, happy English studies as always! I'll be back soon with another brand-new episode, but until then I'll be hanging out in the Discord, so see you there, and talk to you next time, bye!

Glossary

1. **Out of the blue:** Something happens surprisingly or without any warning.
2. **Yada yada yada:** Used to skip over boring or known details.
3. **Throw on:** To quickly put on clothes.
4. **Parasocial relationship:** A relationship where one person knows a lot about another, but it's not mutual, like fans knowing a lot about a celebrity.
5. **Geek out:** To talk a lot and excitedly about something you really like.
6. **Team Let's Buy a Nintendo / Let's Buy a Nintendo camp:** A funny way to talk about People who are really excited about the idea of buying a Nintendo.
7. **Slips my mind:** To forget something.
8. **Steep learning curve:** Describes something that is hard to learn.
9. **Near-ish future:** A time that is not too far away.
10. **Reciprocate:** To do something similar in return when someone does something for you.
11. **Audiophile:** A person who loves and knows a lot about good quality sound.
12. **On board:** To agree with an idea or plan.
13. **Push over the line:** To convince someone to agree to do something.
14. **Blasted by:** To be strongly affected or hit by something.
15. **Bolt into:** To run fast into a place.
16. **Strike up a conversation:** To start talking to someone, usually someone you don't know well.

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17. **Cult:** A group that is very devoted to something or someone, often in an extreme way.
18. **Dissuade:** To convince someone not to do something.
19. **Pound dirt:** A casual way to tell someone to go away or show you're upset.
20. **To get someone's name:** To learn what someone's name is, often when you first meet them.

Episode credits

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Image: Canva.com