

## Bonus episode #094 - What I've been dreaming of

### Episode description

Join Andrew as he gets ready for the Seoul Marathon. He shares his feelings of excitement and nervousness as he prepares for this big race. You'll hear all about Andrew's training - the hard workouts he has been doing to get ready. He talks about meeting up with his running buddy, Jimmy, and about his goals for the marathon, like trying to run it in under 3 hours.

Andrew also tells some funny stories, like his struggle over whether to buy expensive new "super shoes" that are supposed to help runners go faster.

Listening to his stories will keep you entertained while exposing you to real English conversation. You'll learn useful vocabulary related to running, racing, and other athletic activities. This episode provides an immersive English listening comprehension

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello everyone, my name is Andrew. I will be your humble host and your English study buddy for this episode, which is episode number 94 of our bonus series here at the Culips English Podcast. So, it's awesome to be back here with you as always for another exciting week of English learning. I hope you guys are all doing well and I'm doing well also, so that's great. What we are going to do today is, well, I'm just going to talk with you. I'm going to hang out, I'm going to chill, and I'm going to share some things that have been on my mind lately and some things that I will be up to over the course of the weekend.

Now, I am recording this episode on Friday evening. I know we release it on Monday. So, all of the things that I am going to talk about here will already have been finished, but at the time that I am recording right now, of course, they haven't taken place yet. So, I am excited for this upcoming weekend and I'm going to tell you all about my plans and why I am excited about this weekend in this episode. Before we get started, I do need to tell you that there is a free, absolutely 100% free, interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary to accompany this episode that everybody can access just by clicking the link in the description for this episode. And if you're a Culips member, well, then we're also going to give you ad-free audio and a comprehension quiz, and you can find that just on our Discord.

We have a Culips English Podcast Discord server, which if you haven't joined us yet on Discord, make sure to click the link in the episode description and join us over there. It's awesome. It's where our community hangs out and communicates with each other and practices English together. So, it's awesome. And we have a member-only channel and that's where I put the link to the ad-free audio and the comprehension quiz. So, all you Culips members, make sure to check that out. All right, I think those are the only announcements. Oh no, there's one more thing I wanted to say, and I will make it brief and short.

And that is coming up pretty soon, we have bonus episode number 100. We're in bonus episode 94 right now. And 100 is coming up soon. And to celebrate this amazing milestone here at Culips, 100 episodes of our bonus series, I'm going to throw things over to you. And I would like you guys to help me with this episode by sending in your stories. Now, I first put out this announcement last week and over the course of the last week, I did get several submissions. So, thank you to everyone who sent in a story so far, but we still need more. So, I would love for you guys to record just some little audio messages. It can be as long or as short as you like, but please try to keep it on the short side and just tell some kind of story. It could be, you know, something just like from your daily life. Maybe it's related to how you learn English or study with Culips. Maybe it's just some funny kind of experience you had. Anything is OK. And I'm going to compile your stories and we'll share them with our whole community here in the 100th episode of our bonus series. The best way to submit your audio stories is just through our Discord. You can DM them to me or DM them to Alina. And DM means direct message. You could email it to me. My email address is [andrew@Culips.com](mailto:andrew@Culips.com). Please help me out with this episode. I'm relying on you. If nobody sends in any stories, then we won't have a very exciting 100th episode. So please help me out, send in your stories and we'll have a memorable bonus episode number 100.

All right, so with that being said, let's get started in earnest with today's episode. And I wrote down a few notes here and I'm just going to go through those notes quickly as we chat together. And you will be doing more listening than chatting. I guess I will be doing all the chatting, but I want you guys to feel like we're just hanging out together. And I think that makes for a good way to learn English, right? Just spending time with friends, hanging out with friends, immersing yourself in the language. Just think of me as your English-speaking friend, and we'll hang out here for the next 20 minutes or so.

And I know I always, always, always say that I'm going to try and keep the episodes short and sweet. And then I end up talking for like 50 minutes. I apologize for that. It's something that I need to practice a little bit, is not being so wordy, but today I really mean it because

my friend from out of town, my running buddy, Jimmy, who I've talked about on Culips before and who I'm hoping to get onto the podcast very soon for an interview as well. He's coming to Seoul. So, he's on the train right now. He's on his way to Seoul and we have dinner plans. We're going to meet up and have dinner together. So, I have **a hard time limit**. I can't keep Jimmy waiting. So, I'm going to have to keep this episode quite short.

So that was the first thing that I wanted to talk about actually is that Jimmy is coming to town. And as I just told you guys, he's my running buddy. We both have the same hobby. We enjoy running and we are participating this weekend in the Seoul marathon. So, this is why I'm so excited for this upcoming weekend is that on Sunday here, I'm going to be running in the Seoul marathon and so is Jimmy. So, he's coming up and we're going to be running in it together. We ran a marathon last year, in the fall, together. That was the first marathon that we had ever run together. I think it was Jimmy's third marathon overall, and it was my second marathon overall. I ran my first one in 2019 and then the pandemic hit, and I wasn't able to run for a long time because of the pandemic. I mean, I still went outside and went running, but there were no officially organized races or anything. So, I took a long break from running in officially organized races, but once things started up again, then, you know, I jumped right back in. And so, I did my first marathon post pandemic with Jimmy last fall, and we had a great time. I won't go into all the details about that race because I talked about it extensively on Culips in the past. So, if you go back to our previous episodes from, yeah, the fall, I think it was October 2023, when we ran that race, you'll be able to find those episodes and listen to my stories about the marathon.

But yeah, it's time again. It's crazy. Time really flies. And I don't know if you have had this in your life. I think anybody who's done a race or a marathon and had a good experience with it, like maybe if you got injured while you were running, then maybe you wouldn't have this experience. But most people who sign up for a race, whether it's a marathon, half marathon, whatever, and then you finish the race, I think a lot of people have this experience and maybe you've had it in other parts of your life as well. I'm not sure. But when you finish a marathon, or at least when I finish a marathon and Jimmy's the same

way, immediately we're like, what's the next one? We can't wait to do it again. You get so psyched, you get really excited, really stoked, really pumped up. And you are just very enthusiastic about doing another marathon. So pretty much as soon as we finished that marathon in, it was called the Gyeongju Marathon in Gyeongju, South Korea, where we ran it. As soon as we finished that marathon, we were like, where's the next race? What are we going to do next? Let's go. We're all ready to go and ready to run the next race.

Now, the racing season usually occurs in the spring and the fall. There are some races sometimes in the winter and there are some races sometimes in the summer. But of course, the winter is quite cold here in Korea and the summers are really hot and humid. And there's also the rainy season, which just makes for unpleasant running. So sometimes you can find some small little races out in the countryside during these times. But the big races that occur in the cities, they happen either in the spring or either in the fall. And there are several big fall marathons in Korea, but in the spring, I think it's mostly just Seoul, Seoul Marathon. So, it's happening here on Sunday.

And yeah, pretty much as soon as we finished that Gyeongju Marathon, Jimmy and I were **scouring the internet**. There's a website here in Korea that lists all of the marathons from all over the country. And of course, we're kind of blessed in Korea here to be in a small country so you can travel really easily to go from one city to the next city. If you want to go racing or run a marathon or do whatever really. But yeah, we were scouring the internet and we thought, it's got to be Seoul. It's got to be the Seoul Marathon. This is one of the biggest races in Korea.

I think... I may be wrong about this, but I'm pretty sure there's about 50,000 people who will participate. Now that I'm saying that, that number seems really, insanely big. So, it might not be true, but anyways, there will be thousands and thousands. At least there's got to be over 20,000 people who will participate in this race. And it starts in downtown Seoul in the center of the city and sneaks all the way through the downtown area and then eventually crosses the Han River, which is in the middle of the city. And then it will end in

the southern part of the city in the Jamsil/Gangnam area. So, it's going to be a really exciting race. And that was the one that we chose.

Signing up for the race is actually not too easy. There are more people who want to participate in the race than there are slots available. So, you have to be really quick behind the keyboard and with your mouse. And when it was sign up day, we were both like ready in advance. We had our eyes on the clock. We were watching the time tick down, tick down until registration was open and then click really fast. In fact, here's a tip for you. If you ever have to do something like this, that is to pre-register and make your account in advance so that when it's time to go and you need to purchase whatever or sign up for whatever you're trying to do, then you already have an account. You've already entered your payment details and you can just do it really quickly. So, Jimmy and I followed that tip and we had already made an account on the marathon's website. We had all our payment details entered and ready to go. And so luckily, we were able to secure our spots for the marathon and we will be running it, yeah, on Sunday.

So last time we did a marathon, we ran together. This time we're not going to run together. I'm going to try and break my PR. I have a very lofty, very high goal for this marathon. Ultimately, my- my major goal, my big goal is to break a sub-three record. Now sub three means under three hours, completing the marathon in under three hours. And this is important to me because I think if I can do this, if I can do a sub three, it will prove to myself that I'm a **legit**, real runner, that I'm like a little bit fast. I'm like, yeah, OK. I'm a runner. I feel like I can run fast. To me, there's like this dividing line between sub three and non-sub three. If you are sub three, you're like, yeah, you're a fast runner. You're a legit runner. You're a real runner. And if you're above sub three, of course it doesn't matter. Anytime you run, this is just me in my head. And I have these foolish definitions. Anybody who runs doesn't matter your time. If you run, if you enjoy the sport, then that's all that matters. Right? But for me, my personal goal and in my definition, just for me, not for other people, it's like if I can do sub three, then I can think of myself as a legitimate runner. So, when I ran my first marathon in 2019, I finished it in three hours and seven minutes. And I

had that goal for myself at that time too. I want to do sub three. I want to, you know, achieve this goal. And I think in retrospect, it was a little foolish to think that I could achieve that goal on my very first marathon, but I came kind of close. Like seven minutes is not that far away from that goal, but at the same time, it is really far away from that goal.

So, I've been practicing, I've been training, I've been getting ready for this marathon, the Seoul marathon coming up here, but I don't know if I feel ready. I'm, you know, I felt like I did some good training sessions, but I'm apprehensive. I don't know. I don't feel super confident that I can do it to be honest. I'm going to try my best. I'm going to give it my all. Of course, I'm going to go out there and I'm going to give it my all. And it's not like I've done zero training. I've done a lot of running over the last few months. So, I've got the time in, but there's, there's always that feeling like I could do more. And I really wish that I had another three more months. Three more months would be so beautiful. But here I am just a couple of days before I have to run the race. And I'm feeling like, I don't know. I don't know if I can do it. I did a practice run a couple of weeks ago, two weeks ago, I did 30 kilometers, and I was able to hold the pace that I need to run a sub three for 30 kilometers. So that's pretty good, but a marathon is 42 kilometers. So, it's like those 12 kilometers, those final 12 kilometers are going to be the challenge.

Ultimately, at the end of the day, even if I don't hit the sub three, if I break my personal record and go under my previous best time, that three minutes, three hours rather, three hours and seven minutes that I was talking about that I did in 2019, if I break that, then I'm going to be proud of myself. And then I can work towards **chipping away** at my ultimate sub three goal after that. So yeah, as long as I break my PR, then I'll be happy. If I don't break my PR, to be honest, I think I will be pretty disappointed because I have been doing a lot of training, a lot of hard runs, a lot of work out there by myself for the most part. So yeah, I hope that everything goes well.

Of course, there are some factors that are just totally out of your control. If the weather is really bad, if it's a really windy day and there's a strong **headwind**, if the air quality is really



bad, if it's cold, there are some of these variables that can really affect how you run. And you know, I could be blessed with beautiful weather, or we could be cursed with terrible weather. And so that can have an effect on the outcome, but as long as the weather's OK, then I think I can do it. I think I can beat my PR and I hope you guys will cheer me on even though when you're listening to this, I'll be finished already.

Anyways, I've been thinking a lot about the marathon this whole week and Jimmy and I have been texting back and forth, making sure that we're ready for it. And I've even been dreaming about the marathon. I must have had like three or four dreams this last week of me running in the marathon. And I think this is a good **omen** because in the dreams I've been performing really well. I even had... I even had a dream that I won the marathon that I was the first-place runner, which of course will never, ever, ever happen in real life. But it was cool to feel that sensation in a dream. So, I think that's good. You know, I'm not having these like anxiety dreams where I'm tripping and falling or DNFing. DNF stands for do not finish or did not finish. So, I'm not having any dreams like that. I think that's a good thing. Guys, I wanted to **circle back** and talk about an expression that I just used a moment ago. I said that I want to chip away at my time until I can reach that sub three record.

To chip away is a great phrasal verb that you can use in this kind of situation. And that's a verb that we use when we want to talk about doing something piece by piece or bit by bit, little bit by little bit. So even if I'm not successful at breaking a sub three time, well then in the future I can still work towards that. I can do it little bit by little bit. Maybe it will take me 10 more marathons to get that goal. Who knows? But if it does require me to do 10 more marathons, that's fine. I can do it little bit by little bit. I can chip away at my time and bring it, you know, faster and faster and faster until I eventually reach my goal. So that's what that means to chip away. I thought I'd explain that one because it is a very good expression to know.



So, let's see here. I'm getting close to my time limit. There's probably just one more thing that I wanted to talk about here with you before I sign off. And that is: to super shoe or not to super shoe? To super shoe or not to super shoe? Have you guys heard about these running shoes called super shoes? I don't know when they first **came on the market** exactly, but I feel like they're pretty recent inventions. Probably I first heard about super shoes, and I started seeing pro runners wear super shoes two years ago or three years ago, not too long ago. And I guess there's been a pretty big breakthrough with running shoe technology. And I'm not an expert about this. I'm interested in running, but thankfully, I'm not really a shoe or a gear guy. There are some runners who are really, really invested in following all the new shoes that come out and gear that comes out. And also, my Instagram feed is filled with influencers who are reviewing all this stuff. And some of it does look pretty cool, but to be honest, I'm not too interested in it, which is nice because it's very, very expensive.

But these new super shoes, that's what I want to talk about. And I guess how they work is they have a carbon plate in the middle and that carbon plate gives you a nice spring. So, like when you're running and your foot hits the ground, you get a bigger bounce back and this can, I don't know, help you be a better runner supposedly. And yeah, I don't know how **gimmicky** it is. Like it sounds a little bit gimmicky to me, right? It's like you have these bouncy trampoline shoes or something. But a lot of people are **singing the praises** of these super shoes. And I have to say now that marathon season has **kicked up** and like I said, all of these influencers online, there are different running podcasts that I listened to. There are some YouTubers who I watch that talk about running and, you know, hearing them talk about these shoes has really made me want to get a pair. However, they are extremely expensive. There are super shoes made by pretty much all of the big running brands, like all of the big sportswear brands that everybody knows about, these big worldwide brands. They all make a super running shoe. And I think probably the cheapest one that you could buy would be around \$250. And the most expensive one that I've seen that's marketed towards just regular runners, I'm sure professionals have these crazy, expensive super shoes that you can't even buy in stores. But the most expensive ones

that I've seen that are marketed towards just regular runners are \$400. So that's pretty expensive for just a pair of shoes.

When I got into running, I thought this was going to be an awesome hobby because it's so cheap. It's like, you know, my other sport that I like to do is cycling and that's crazy expensive. Bikes are expensive, **components** are expensive, clothing is expensive, the accessories are expensive, biking is really, really expensive. And I thought, well, running is going to be great because you just need a pair of shoes and some shorts and a t-shirt and boom, you're done. However, I didn't realize that when you run frequently, you actually can wear through a pair of running shoes pretty quickly. I also didn't realize that running shoes are really, really expensive. Like I wear just a kind of **middle-line** running shoe. It's not **top of the line**, but it's also not a terrible shoe. And it still ends up costing me around \$150 per pair. And if I were to go by the real, actual guidelines, because there are guidelines about how often you're supposed to replace a shoe. You're supposed to replace your running shoes every 500 to 800 kilometers. And I can run, you know, some months I'll come close to running almost... not 500 kilometers in a month, but maybe every six weeks, seven weeks, I can easily **hit out** 500 kilometers. So that's an expensive hobby. If you need to buy like several pairs of these shoes each year, it really, really adds up. And I've actually not been following that recommendation. I've been running around a thousand kilometers in a pair of shoes before I replace them, just because I do find that it really does become expensive. And then yeah, it's not as cheap as a hobby as I originally thought.

So anyways, back to the super shoes I've been debating, should I buy a pair of these super shoes? Will they actually make a difference? Will they make me run faster? Even if it's just like, a little bit, is it going to be worth it? And Jimmy and I, you know, my buddy who's on his way here right now, we, he was also really considering should he buy a pair of super shoes and we were going back and forth and back and forth. And the shoe that I wanted to buy and the shoe that he was interested in buying, they were actually the same one. So interestingly enough, we both did some research on our own and we came to the conclusion that the same model of shoe is the one that we want to try. So, they were sold

out in Korea for a long time or not even sold out. They just hadn't arrived in Korea yet. We saw them for sale overseas and in other countries, but they hadn't arrived to the Korean market yet, the shoe that we wanted.

But finally, this week they did come, and they were available, and Jimmy immediately went down to the shoe store to go try on a pair and to buy them, but his size was already sold out. So, he was like, "Oh man, I like this shoe just launched in Korea. And I went down to the store to buy them right away." And his size was already sold out. But the guy at the shoe store said like, "Hey, I think I can get another pair in for you. So, if you come back in a few days, I'll put a pair aside for you and you can try them on and see if that'll work out." So, Jimmy was like, "Perfect. OK. I'll come back in a few days." And I think he was pretty **set on wanting to buy the shoes** already. Me on the other hand, I was like, really **on the fence**. Should I buy them or should I not? And my size was still available online. I actually had a really busy week this week. So, it was going to be impossible for me to go to the shoe store and try them on and do shopping like that. That was just **out of the question**. But I thought, well, I could just buy them online. And probably they'll fit because I'm pretty accustomed to that brand. And if they don't fit, well, then I can always return them. It's not the end of the world. So, I was like, should I buy them? Should I not? They're \$300! \$300. So very, very expensive shoe. I've never had any pair of shoes close to that price in my life, especially shoes that I'm going to really **beat the hell** out of. You know, I'm going to run in them, and they'll get dirty and stinky and smelly, like right away, right? So, usually if you have an expensive pair of shoes or boots or clothing or something, you really **baby it**, right? But not these. I'm buying them to beat them up.

So, I was like, going back and forth, should I buy them? Should I not buy them? Should I buy them? Should I not buy them? And I told myself, OK, I'm going to sleep on this for one more night. I've been debating this in my head for like almost two weeks. I'm going to sleep on it for one more night. And if I wake up in the morning the next day and they're still available, I'm going to buy them. And if they're not, then I'm just going to **make my peace with that**. I'm going to accept it. And I'm just going to run in my regular shoes for this

marathon. And guys, I went to bed. I woke up the next day and they were sold out and I thought, wow, OK, the universe made that decision for me. I'm going to save my money for now. And there's probably something better that I can put my... my savings towards, who knows. But yeah, I decided, well, I didn't decide. The decision was made for me not to buy the shoes. And so, I'm just sticking with my regular running shoes for this race. And I hope I don't regret it. You know, if I come, you know, my goal is the three... sub three, right? So, if I run in like three hours and one minute and I'm like, "Oh! Would those shoes have made the difference? Would that be the it factor that, you know, determined if I ran faster than a sub three or non-sub three?" I don't know. Hopefully it doesn't come down to that. I really find it hard to believe that these shoes could actually make you run faster. Of course, like most things in life, it's probably a marketing gimmick, but who knows? We'll see. Jimmy will have the super shoes. I won't. And we'll have to see who comes in faster.

Although I have to say, guys, we're not really racing against each other. Thankfully, we're sort of in different time categories. We have slightly different goals. And so, we probably won't be competing against each other, which is nice. Of course, I love competition. So, at the same time, I kind of wish we were competing against each other, but it's more fun to support your friends rather than to compete against your friends, I think. So, it will be good. And then maybe in the future we can run against each other.

But anyways, everyone, I should wrap things up here. Again, I've been talking a little bit too long and I have to run to catch up with Jimmy. So, everyone, thank you for listening. I hope that you enjoyed me rambling on here about my running, but please cheer me on, give me some positive thoughts and I'll try to do my best.

And I'll tell you about the result maybe on Instagram, probably through our Instagram. I'll upload an Instagram story or something. And I'll also maybe give you a small, short update next week. I don't want to dominate this podcast by talking about running every week. So, I'll just give you a small update next week to let you know how it went. But I'm going to sign off now. So yeah, once again, thank you for listening. Please take care. Keep those audio

stories coming in for bonus episode 100 through email or DM. And that will be it for now. OK. Talk to you next time. Bye-bye.

## Glossary

1. **Hard time limit:** A strict, non-negotiable deadline or time by which something must be completed. Example: We have a hard time limit to finish the group project by next Thursday.
2. **Scouring the internet:** Thoroughly searching the internet for information or to find something specific. Example: She spent the evening scouring the internet for the perfect birthday gift.
3. **Legit:** Short for legitimate. Used to describe something that is real, authentic, or respectable. Example: The certificate looks legit, so I think the course is accredited.
4. **Chip away:** To make progress on something little by little over time. Example: He's chipping away at his student loan debt, making a little extra payment each month.
5. **Headwind:** Wind blowing directly against the direction one is moving, often used metaphorically to describe opposition or difficulties. Example: Starting a new business during an economic downturn is like biking into a headwind.
6. **A good omen:** A sign or event considered to predict good fortune. Example: Finding a four-leaf clover in the garden must be a good omen for our family.
7. **Circle back:** To return to a previous point or topic of discussion. Example: Let's circle back to the budget issue after reviewing all department reports.
8. **Come on the market:** When a product becomes available for sale to the public. Example: When the latest smartphone model comes on the market, I'm upgrading.
9. **Gimmicky:** Something that is designed to attract attention or publicity but lacks real value or functionality. Example: The gadget seemed gimmicky at first, but it's actually quite useful.
10. **Singing the praises:** To speak highly of something or someone. Example: After visiting the new restaurant, she was singing the praises of their chef.
11. **Kicked up:** To start or become more intense, active, or lively. Example: The party really kicked up once the live band started playing.

12. **Components:** Parts or elements that make up something, often used in technical or mechanical contexts. Example: Upgrading the components of my computer made it much faster.
13. **Middle-line running shoe:** A shoe that is neither the cheapest nor the most expensive, offering a balance between quality and price. Example: I usually buy middle-line appliances because they offer the best value for the money.
14. **Top of the line:** The best in a category, the highest quality or most advanced version available. Example: She only uses top-of-the-line software for her graphic design work.
15. **Hit out 500 kms:** To achieve or reach a distance of 500 kilometers. Example: By the end of summer, he hit out 500 sales, surpassing his target.
16. **Set on wanting to buy the shoes:** To be determined in the decision to purchase the shoes. Example: After seeing the demo, she was set on wanting to buy that software for her business.
17. **I was really on the fence:** To be undecided or unsure about a decision. Example: I was really on the fence about moving to a new city for the job.
18. **That was out of the question:** Something that is not possible or not allowed. Example: Taking a vacation in the middle of the project was out of the question.
19. **Beat the hell out of:** To use something vigorously or to the point of causing damage or wear. Example: The kids beat the hell out of the soccer ball in the backyard every summer.
20. **Baby it:** To treat something with extreme care and caution. Example: He babies his vintage guitar, never letting anyone else play it.
21. **Make my peace with that:** To come to terms with something; to accept a situation. Example: If the promotion goes to someone else, I'll have to make my peace with that and continue working hard.

## Episode credits

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