

## Catch Word #236 – No biggie

### Episode description

There are many ways to say, “It’s OK” and reassure someone. In this episode, Kassy and Andrew cover ways you can calm people down or make them feel better.

### Fun fact

Everyone reacts differently to stress. In general, women tend to think, talk, and reach out to others. Men tend to use distraction, like physical activity.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Don’t sweat the small stuff
- Let [something] slide off you
- Big picture
- On that note
- No biggie
- On island time



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello there, everyone. My name's Andrew.

**Kassy:** And I'm Kassy.

**Andrew:** And this is the Culips English Podcast.

**Andrew:** Hello there, friends. Welcome back to Culips. Today we have a Catch Word episode prepared for you. Catch Word is the Culips series where we teach you idioms, phrasal verbs, expressions, and interesting vocabulary that will help you improve your English listening and speaking. Today I'm joined by Kassy. Hello there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew.

**Andrew:** And we are going to teach you all two idiomatic expressions that you can use to calm other people down or help make them feel better when they are stressed out.

**Andrew:** And we'll start the lesson here in just a moment. But before we do, I wanted to give a shout-out to one of our listeners named Appletree777 from the USA, who wrote us a nice little message and review on Apple Podcasts. And Appletree777 wrote that Culips is the best for studying English and one day, they listened and learned an expression while they were studying with Culips—maybe even in a Catch Word episode—and then later, they heard that same expression used in a movie. And I think this is awesome, right? When you learn something on Culips, and then you hear it in real life or in a movie, that just makes it come alive and makes it real, right?

**Kassy:** Yeah, it makes it feel like what you're studying really matters, you know?

**Andrew:** Exactly, exactly. And it also helps you understand the movie, right? Which is why everybody is listening to this episode right now is because you want to understand English that is used in the world. So this is great, and I just wanted to say thank you to Appletree777 for studying and learning English with us.

**Andrew:** The second thing I wanted to mention is that there is a study guide for this episode available on our website, Culips.com, for all Culips members and it is the best way to study with us. And we highly recommend following along with the study guide while you are listening to us here today. So for all the details about Culips membership and to sign up and become a Culips member, just visit our website Culips.com.

**Andrew:** All right, so let's get started. Kassy, could you please introduce our first expression?

**Kassy:** Yes, Andrew. Expression #1 today is **don't sweat the small stuff. Don't sweat the small stuff.**

**Andrew:** **Don't sweat the small stuff. Don't sweat the small stuff.** OK, so this is a really popular idiom. And maybe some of our listeners have heard it before. But let's just break it down and explain exactly what it means. So, Kassy, when you hear somebody say this to you, **don't sweat the small stuff**, in what kind of situation would you hear this? And what exactly does it mean?

**Kassy:** It means, like, don't get so worried and tense about little mistakes. You know, focus on the big problems and **let the little stuff slide off you.**

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. So sweat is the liquid that comes out of your body when you exercise, right? Or when you exert yourself. But many people, including myself, also start to sweat when we get stressed out or nervous or worried, right?

**Kassy:** Yup.

**Andrew:** So here, sweat doesn't mean, like, don't exercise. It's more like don't get nervous. Don't get worried about little things in life that, in the **big picture**, aren't really too important.

**Kassy:** I tend to do this a lot. I should follow the advice that we're talking about here today.

**Andrew:** And in fact, the motivation behind this episode is because I used this expression recently when talking with one of my coworkers, who forgot to include some information in an email, but it was, like, really not a big deal, but she was a little bit stressed out about it. So I said, hey, it's not important, just forget about it, **don't sweat the small stuff.** And this is exactly the type of context we would use it in, when somebody is worried or stressed out about something that is really not worth worrying about.

**Kassy:** OK, Andrew, **on that note**, let's jump into our first conversation example. Let's take a listen.

**Coworker 1:** What a day, what a day.

**Coworker 2:** How was your meeting this morning with the new clients? Did it go OK?

**Coworker 1:** Yeah, it was fine, I think. But I'm worried I might have offended one of them. I accidentally called him Mr. Smith, but it turns out his name is actually Mr. Smyth.

**Coworker 2:** Oh, no. Well, those names are really similar, that's a mistake anyone could make. Did he look offended?

**Coworker 1:** No, he just smiled and corrected me.

**Coworker 2:** Oh, well, then I'm sure it's fine.

**Coworker 1:** But I hate making mistakes like that.

**Coworker 2:** Yeah. But, OK, did he sign the contract in the end? That's the important thing.

**Coworker 1:** Yeah, he did.

**Coworker 2:** Well, then, I think you **don't need to sweat the small stuff** like that. If he was really offended, he wouldn't have signed the deal, right?

**Coworker 1:** Yeah, you're right.

**Andrew:** So in this conversation example, we heard two coworkers talk about a mistake. So the coworker was stressed out and worried that she had made a big, costly mistake. But, really, at the end of the day, the client wasn't offended, he still signed the deal. So they were still able to proceed with their business and there was nothing worth worrying about. So she **didn't have to sweat the small stuff** like that because, really, she didn't make a big mistake.

**Kassy:** In this example, Mr. Smyth probably doesn't even remember that it happened at this point. It's only in the person who made the mistake's mind.

**Andrew:** All right. Let's take a listen to another conversation example using this key expression from today, **don't sweat the small stuff**.

**Roommate 1:** Ah, shoot.

**Roommate 2:** What is it?

**Roommate 1:** I forgot to pick up the bread from the supermarket. I should go back and buy some.

**Roommate 2:** Ah, you don't need to do that.

**Roommate 1:** Are you sure?

**Roommate 2:** Yeah. **Don't sweat the small stuff.** It's fine, just relax tonight, and you can buy some tomorrow.

**Roommate 1:** OK, sure.

**Kassy:** OK, so in this example, we have a guy who forgot to pick up bread from the supermarket and he felt really bad about it. But picking up bread is not a big deal, right? There's always tomorrow. So his friend recommended him **to not sweat the small stuff.**

**Andrew:** Exactly. Like, there's bigger things that we need to worry about in the world, right? War, disease.

**Kassy:** But, Andrew, not the bread.

**Andrew:** Like, it's all right, I think, to spend your time worrying about some of these big issues that are facing the world but, man, if you just forgot some bread at the supermarket, like, it's OK. You can just worry about that tomorrow, right?

**Andrew:** OK, Kassy, let's move on to expression #2 for today which is **no biggie. No biggie.** And usually we say, like, it's **no biggie** or that's **no biggie.** OK? And biggie is spelt by the way B-I-G-G-I-E. B-I-G-G-I-E, biggie. So what does it mean if something is **no biggie**?

**Kassy:** I think this originally came from the expression it's not a big deal, but we shortened it into a kind of slang term. Ah, **no biggie.**

**Andrew:** Exactly. So something that's **no biggie** is just something that's not a big deal. It's not important. It's not a big problem. Not a big issue. Not worth stressing out about, right? It's just like not a big thing that you should be concerned about.

**Kassy:** Andrew, this is not an expression that we would use with our boss, correct?

**Andrew:** Yes, I think this is a very, very casual expression. So if you told your boss, like, oh, it's **no biggie**, then it might sound a little too casual for the office. Yeah. And, really, your boss could be telling you something is **no biggie**, right? Like, maybe you apologize to your boss for something, like, oh, boss, I'm sorry, I was 2 minutes late for work this morning. He'd say, oh, it's **no biggie**, it's only 2 minutes, right? You might hear this expression from your boss, but you wouldn't usually say it to your boss. I agree with that.

**Kassy:** Well, then, let's take a listen to our first conversation example.

**Friend 1:** Hey, I'm so sorry. I'm late. I got here as fast as I could.

**Friend 2:** Don't worry about it. It's **no biggie**.

**Friend 1:** Were you waiting a long time?

**Friend 2:** No, I just got here myself, like, 5 minutes ago.

**Andrew:** So in this conversation example, one friend apologizes because she is late. She arrived to the meeting a little bit behind schedule, but her friend says it's **no biggie**. Don't worry about it. OK, so biggie here means, like, a big deal, a big issue. In fact, he was only waiting for 5 minutes. So, yeah, not really important. It's **no biggie**.

**Kassy:** Our listeners might even agree that being 5 minutes late is early in some places. Isn't that right, Andrew?

**Andrew:** Yeah, like, I've heard that different countries have very different concepts of time, right? So, like, in North America, where we're from, Kassy, we usually are pretty strict about arriving on time. And if you don't arrive on time, it can be kind of rude or offensive. But in other countries, I've heard especially about Jamaica, there's, like, this expression on **island time**, where things just happen at a slower, more relaxed pace, and people don't stress out if you're not on time. I know we have some listeners in Jamaica. If that is true, guys, please let me know about this expression on **island time**. But, yeah, it's different around the world, I think so, for sure.

**Kassy:** So listeners, remember, some friends might say, ah, **no biggie**, if you're a little late, but others may not be so nice.

**Andrew:** That is true. That is true. Why don't we listen to our final conversation example with this expression, **no biggie**?

**Kassy:** Let's do it.

**Friend 1:** Oh, no.

**Friend 2:** What?

**Friend 1:** My mom called earlier and I missed her call.

**Friend 2:** Ah, that's **no biggie**. Just call her back now.

**Friend 1:** Yeah, OK. I'll do that.

**Kassy:** OK, so in this example, one guy forgot to call his mom, and he was stressing over it. And his friend told him, oh, it's **no biggie**. It's not a big deal, just call her back when you have a chance.

**Andrew:** I do that from time to time. Sometimes I put my phone into airplane mode when I'm working so that I don't get any interruptions. And then later, I'll notice that I have a missed call from someone. And I'm like, oh, man, whoops, I missed that call. I wanted to get that call. I wanted to talk with that person. But then you just call them back. And it's **no biggie**, right?

**Kassy:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** Well, that brings us to the end of our episode today, everyone. So thank you so much for listening. We hope that you learned a lot with us today. Just to recap what we covered, we learned two idiomatic English expressions that you can use when you want to tell somebody to relax and not feel worried or stressed out. The first expression was **don't sweat the small stuff**. The second was **no biggie**.

**Andrew:** If you like listening to Culips and learn a lot with us, then please support us. You can do that in many different ways. You could sign up and become a Culips member. And remember that when you are a Culips member, you get unlimited access to our study guide library and many other perks, like you can study with our members-only series, which is called the Fluency Files. You also get an invitation to our monthly YouTube livestreams that are happening only for Culips members where you can come and chat and interact with some of the Culips staff, and so much more. So if you'd like to become a Culips member, you can do that on our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com).

**Andrew:** But that's not the only way you could support us. You could follow us on social media or tell your friends who are learning English about Culips or, even, you could leave us a nice little review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts, just like Appletree777 did.

**Andrew:** If you'd like to get in touch with us and ask us a question or send us a message, you can do that through email. Our address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com).

**Andrew:** We will be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye, everyone.

**Kassy:** See ya.

## Detailed Explanations

### Don't sweat the small stuff

#### Idiom

**Don't sweat the small stuff** is used to tell someone not to worry about the small details or unimportant things. As Andrew and Kassy explain in this episode, the idiom comes from the idea that people sweat when they're stressed. So you shouldn't waste your efforts (sweat) on small matters. The expression is used for any negative emotion, not just stress. You can use this idiom to calm someone who is worried, angry, or sad.

**Don't sweat it** is a variation on this idiom. It means the same thing, but it's used as a response to someone doing something directly to you. For example, in the situation with the roommates, if the second roommate had specifically asked the first roommate to buy bread but he forgot, then she could have said, "**Don't sweat it**" instead of "**Don't sweat the small stuff.**"

Here are a couple more examples with **don't sweat the small stuff**:

**Yasmina:** It's almost done, I promise.

**Jalil:** Yasmina! This was due to the printers today. We need to submit it now, or we're going to mess up the production schedule.

**Yasmina:** I know, I know! Everyone keeps telling me **not to sweat the small stuff**, but I know, I just know, that the perfect font will set our book apart from all the others in the contest.

**Jalil:** It's just a font! Pick one that looks halfway nice and let's get this done.

**Mitsuko:** I wish Tony wouldn't say stuff like that.

**Lena:** What? That your handwriting is messy?

**Mitsuko:** Yeah. It's mean.

**Lena:** Sweetie, it's not an insult. **Don't sweat the small stuff.** Just keep being you and writing the way you write.

## Let [something] slide off you

Verb

**Let [something] slide off you** means to not let it bother or affect you. While don't sweat the small stuff means don't worry about unimportant things, **let [something] slide off you** refers to a reaction to a negative situation.

The "something" in this expression is usually an insult or argument. If you **let [something] slide off you**, you don't react to it happening. The full phrase is **to let [something] slide off your back**. You could also say **let it roll off your back**.

This comes from a simile commonly used in England, **like water off a duck's back**. Water doesn't soak into a duck's feathers; it slides off without getting the duck wet. When you use this phrase, you're telling someone to **let the problem slide off of them** like water slides off a duck.

Here are a couple more examples with **let [something] slide off you**:

**Chandra:** Wow, that was intense. You didn't deserve to be yelled at like that. How did you keep your cool with Mr. Johnson in your face?

**Jeremy:** Why shouldn't I have kept my cool? It wasn't my fault, so I just let it all **slide off my back**. Mr. Johnson just needed to yell at someone.

**Chandra:** I wish I had your attitude about stuff like that.

**Ian:** I hate all these tabloids. How can they get away with spreading all those lies?

**Laureanne:** I have no idea. But I do have a lot of respect for the celebrities they gossip about.

**Ian:** Me too. I don't know how they manage to just let the insults **roll off their backs** like they do.

**Laureanne:** I bet it's not as easy as it looks.

## Big picture

Noun

**Big picture** means the broad, overall view or entire perspective of a situation or issue. The term is used when you want to emphasize that there are important facts about a situation that someone is overlooking. For example, saying, “We need to focus on the **big picture**” means that one should think about the future or other factors that might be important, rather than thinking about the small details or steps involved in the situation or issue.

You can also use **big picture** as an adjective to describe a situation, issue, or scheme. For example, you could say, “These are **big picture** projections. We’ll worry about the details later.”

Here are a couple more examples with **big picture**:

**Mira:** At the meeting, the board of directors asked that we improve our annual sales and move into at least one new market this year.

**Jamie:** Did they give us any idea of how they want us to do that? We’ve been trying to boost sales—that’s our jobs as salesmen—but moving into a new market is a big request.

**Mira:** I don’t know. I asked but they just said they’re looking at the **big picture**, and this is the way of the future.

**Jamie:** I’ll ask the team to start coming up with some ideas.

**Dipak:** How’s it going, man?

**Simon:** So bad. Today just is not going my way.

**Dipak:** What happened?

**Simon:** Well, first I slept in. Then someone was parked in my spot at the office, so I had to park on the street. I had to walk 5 minutes to get to the office, making me even more late.

**Dipak:** Oh, man. That sucks.

**Simon:** Oh, wait, dude. It gets worse. I parked on the street all day, which of course got me a parking ticket. I know one parking ticket isn’t important in the **big picture**, but it was just that on top of everything else, and now I’m really annoyed.

**Dipak:** Sounds like you need a drink. Come on, it’s my treat.

## On that note

### Phrase

**On that note** is a transition phrase, like the word “anyways.” The word “note” in this expression means topic, theme, or emotion. You’re saying, “Let’s move on to the next thing, which is related to what was just said.” **On that note** is used at the start of a paragraph or sentence to show a change from one topic to a similar topic. It’s also used to transition to a conclusion. If you were making a speech, your final concluding statement could start with **on that note**.

You could expand on the phrase to show an emotional change by saying **on a happier note** or **on a sad note**. For example, if you’re talking about something sad that happened to a friend, you could say **on a happier note** before mentioning a positive thing that happened to you or your friend.

Here are a couple more examples with **on that note**:

**Jonathan:** I just had the worst date ever.

**Suriya:** What happened?

**Jonathan:** She was beautiful and made great conversation for most of the night. But she wouldn’t stop burping. Really big belches without covering her mouth. When she offered to burp out the alphabet, I decided I needed to leave.

**Suriya:** Oh ... Wow. How did you tell her?

**Jonathan:** I said, “**On that note**, I need to get home.” I had no idea what else to say and couldn’t continue to have a normal conversation because I was so grossed out.

**Rafal:** I’m sorry, but you are too young to get your ears pierced.

**Vesna:** You’re always telling me to try new things. Getting my ears pierced would be a new thing.

**Rafal:** **On that note**, I have some new food here for you to try.

**Vesna:** No!

**Rafal:** If you try this new food, you can pierce your ears.

**Vesna:** Deal!

## No biggie

### Slang

**No biggie** means something is not important or not a problem. As Kassy mentions in this episode, this slang term is shortened from **it's not a big deal**. This is a very informal expression that is most often used between friends, family, or anyone who has a close relationship. You probably won't hear this expression in professional situations or work environments.

Here are a couple more examples with **no biggie**:

**Topias:** Is Saturday the only day you're free?

**Mackenzie:** No, if you can't meet me Saturday, it's **no biggie**. Shall we reschedule?

**Topias:** Yeah, my parents need my help this weekend. Can we meet up Monday?

**Mackenzie:** Monday works for me.

**Ju:** I like your sunglasses.

**Fiona:** Thanks! This is my third pair this summer. I keep misplacing them.

**Ju:** What? You lost two other pairs? You need one of those straps for your glasses.

**Fiona:** I don't mind buying new ones. I get them at the dollar store so they're cheap and losing a pair is **no biggie**.

## Island time

Noun

**Island time** refers to the leisurely, relaxed attitude most commonly found in people who live on islands. When someone is on **island time**, they are not worried about appointments or schedules, and they will most likely be late for everything. It is the same as being in vacation mode. You have a carefree attitude, and being late is completely acceptable.

This is most often used in a humorous or funny way. **Island time** isn't an official time zone like Standard Time, Greenwich Mean Time, or Coordinated Universal Time. Be careful, though: some islanders may consider this an insult.

Here are a couple more examples with **island time**:

**Karen:** Where is the cashier? She should be here! I need to catch the boat!

**Rin:** I think she went to the back to check something.

**Karen:** Service this slow is unacceptable.

**Rin:** Relax. They're on **island time**, Karen. We'll catch the boat just fine.

**Kathryn:** How's your vacation treating you?

**Jeong:** Amazing. I'm so relaxed, it's kind of crazy.

**Kathryn:** That must be wonderful.

**Jeong:** Well, after my second nap, I walked around, looked out the window, and had a cocktail. So, yeah, it's pretty wonderful.

**Kathryn:** You're definitely on **island time** now.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following means you don't let something bother you?**

- a) you keep it balanced on your head
- b) you let it roll off your ankle
- c) you let it slide off your back
- d) you hold it tight to your chest

**2. During a conversation, what does it mean when someone says, "on that note"?**

- a) they are changing the topic to a related topic
- b) they are admiring the music
- c) they are playing music
- d) they are talking about the music

**3. Which of the following describes the relaxed, leisurely attitude of someone on vacation?**

- a) mountain minute
- b) sea second
- c) city speed
- d) island time

**4. What is the big picture?**

- a) a movie watched in a theatre
- b) the broad, overall view or entire perspective
- c) a large poster on a wall
- d) the specific facts of a situation

**5. Which of the following could you say to let someone know that something is not a problem?**

- a) no biggie
- b) that's huge
- c) whatever
- d) how could you

## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Describe a situation where you might use “on that note.”
2. Tell about a situation during which you decided not to sweat the small stuff.
3. When was a time you managed to let something slide off you?
4. Describe a time you were so focused on the details that you needed to step back to look at the big picture.
5. Have you ever experienced island time? If so, what made it so different from your usual, everyday experience? If not, what do you think island time would be like?

## Quiz Answers

1.c 2.a 3.d 4.b 5.a

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