

Simplified Speech #159 – Kassy’s new hobbies

AD-FREE

Episode description

It is always a great time picking up a new hobby! In this episode, Kassy talks with Andrew about some new hobbies of hers. Listen in to find out what they are!

Simplified Speech is a Culips series where native speakers have natural conversations about everyday topics using clear and easy to understand language. These episodes are designed to help beginner and intermediate English language learners improve their listening skills.

Fun fact

In this episode, Andrew mentions Alex Honnold, a famous free solo climber. In 2017, he climbed El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, a 3000 feet tall rock formation, without ropes or any other protective equipment. The climb took him 3 hours and 56 minutes.

Expressions included in the study guide

- If I recall correctly
- To get where [someone] is coming from
- To have a hard time [doing something]
- To blow [one’s] socks off
- Notorious
- To be on the verge of [something]



Transcript

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.

Andrew: Simplified Speech episode 159. Kassy's new hobbies, featuring Andrew and Kassy.

Let's get started with our main topic of conversation. So, our topic is your new hobbies. And, you know, I'm getting older, Kassy, and my memory isn't as good as it used to be. But **if I recall correctly**, it wasn't too long ago that we actually had a conversation about some new hobbies that you had like making kombucha. But I guess when you moved to Thailand, and you started this new life in Bangkok, maybe that was one of the hobbies that you kind of had to put aside as you moved? Am I correct with that assumption?

Kassy: Yeah, it was so sad. Actually, a lot of people make kombucha here too. But I didn't have any of my jars or my SCOBY and it just felt too irritating to start it again.

Andrew: Yeah, I can imagine that those kinds of things are items that you don't want to really bring with you on an international move, so, that makes sense that you would put that aside for a moment. But in the absence of that hobby, what have you started doing? Could you share with us some of the new hobbies that you've picked up?

Kassy: Sure. So, because of COVID craziness for the past several years, I haven't been super active. I think it's because I totally agreed with the mask wearing but it was hard for me to sweat with the mask on. So, I didn't really, like, exercise the last few years.

Andrew: I totally **get where you're coming from**. Throughout the pandemic, I still ran like that's my hobby, that's my exercise is running. But it was really uncomfortable to run

with a mask on. And thankfully now, we don't have to wear masks outside in Korea anymore, so I can run mask free. And it's much, much better, I think. But yeah, I totally get why you would put exercise on pause for a little while. But you've started again, you're active now.

Kassy: Yeah, exactly. That's probably—that's where most of my new hobbies come from. I joined this really cool, multi-sports complex. It has, as you might know from the name, a multitude of sports. It's got tennis, swimming, badminton, squash, racquet ball, a climbing gym, weights—it's got everything.

Andrew: Wow. Sounds amazing. So, have you been trying all of the different activities that are available there? Or did you become a member for one specific activity? Like, I want to play tennis, you like joined to be a tennis player? Or is this kind of an exploratory time in your life where you're trying all of the different activities?

Kassy: Yeah, I really wanted to use the pool and the climbing gym, and my husband really wanted to start taking tennis lessons. So, we signed up for those three specifically. But once we started, we've, you know, been trying out all the different sports, and I played badminton for the first time in, I'm not gonna say ever, but practically a decade and it was really fun.

Andrew: Nice. So, when you play badminton, are you just freestyling it? Are you just playing for fun or are you trying to be really serious about learning all of the rules of the game and playing an official style game?

Kassy: No, we pretty much play for fun. But we got all the gear, we got, you know, the birdies, the shuttlecocks, we got the rackets. We have our own bag that we bring.

Andrew: What about a sweat band? Do you have matching sweat bands or anything?

Kassy: You know, we don't but that is on the list, Andrew.

Andrew: Kassy, kind of interesting expression just popped up in our conversation a moment ago when I asked you if you play for fun? What does it mean if we play a game for fun? Like you are just playing badminton, for fun. What does that mean?

Kassy: It means that you're playing strictly for your enjoyment, not competitively or to win some sort of prize.

Andrew: And usually when we play for fun, we don't keep track of the score either, right? It's not like, I'm the winner. You're the loser. There's no competitive element like that. You're just what do you say, hitting the birdie, swatting the birdie? What is the verb that we use for badminton?

Kassy: Yeah, I guess, like, hitting the birdie back and forth.

Andrew: Yeah, hitting the birdie back and forth, that sounds good to me. And you're not keeping score or determining who is the winner and who is the loser. Badminton is really fun, I'm glad that you're enjoying that game. What else have you tried?

Kassy: The rock climbing, I did mention before, I've done it a couple of times in the past, but now we go, you know, several times a week. And it's really hard but super satisfying. I'm starting to get calluses on my fingers, which are, you know, like, if you do a lot of hard work, manual labour, your hands start to get kind of rough because you're dealing with materials and you gain... how would you describe calluses, Andrew? **I'm having a hard time doing it.**

Andrew: No, I think you're doing a great job. That's pretty much it. It's like when you do something physical, the skin on your hand starts to harden. And I personally get calluses on my hand from playing guitar. So, because my fingers are touching the guitar strings,

they start to become hard and yeah, I could imagine that when you're rock climbing as well, you know you're grabbing on to—well, it's an indoor rock climbing center, so you're not grabbing onto physical rocks, but you're grabbing on to those grips that look like rocks on the rock wall. And because you do that, then the skin on your hand gets harder and it gives you some protection, right? So, that you don't injure yourself or cut yourself when you're doing rock climbing. It's kind of like our body's own defense mechanism against these things that could potentially cut our skin.

Kassy: Yeah, it also gives you strength and grip. So, when I first started rock climbing, I was really bad. I'm still not very good but I can feel the finger strength growing and my ability to look at a rock wall and say, "Ah, OK, I have to move my body this way. And then I have to turn it that way so that I can reach that stone over there." It's really like a puzzle for your brain and your body.

Andrew: Yeah, that's awesome. I think many sports are like that but rock climbing seems to be particularly like that, where there's a mental challenge and a physical challenge. And then on top of that, you have this height challenge, right? Because, maybe it's not exactly the same if you're in an indoor gym, I guess it depends on how comfortable you are with heights. But definitely, if you're outside climbing, you know, a mountain, climbing a rock cliff face on a mountain, then you have that fear of potentially injuring yourself or dying even like it's a really dangerous sport, it can be if you don't take the proper safety precautions. So, you have all these elements going at once, which I think makes it so addictive for people who start the activity.

Kassy: Yeah, that's right. And also the community is really welcoming and nice. I feel like every time I go to the gym, there's people there who are like, hey, or I go, "Wow, how did you do that move? Can you show me one more time?" And they say, "Sure, why not."

Andrew: So, when you do rock climbing indoors, what kind of equipment do you need? Personally, I've done indoor rock climbing when I was like 12 years old. So, it's been over

20 years for sure since I've been rock climbing. So, I can't really remember. But do you need any specialized equipment? I'm sure it's not just like badminton, where you can just kind of have fun and go at it, you probably need some training or some gear before you can do it.

Kassy: We needed to buy a lot of stuff. We had to buy climbing shoes that are really tight, and they have a special rubber grip around the entire edge so that you can really dig your toes into the rock face. And then we had to buy harnesses to strap the rope to for—in case you fall. And we had to buy a belay device, which is a thing that you thread the rope through that sticks onto your harness. And we had to buy chalk, chalk helps your finger grip on the wall. I think that's it, maybe a bag to carry it all in.

Andrew: Do you wear a helmet when you climb?

Kassy: No, I think if you outdoor rock climb you need one, but indoors it's not necessary.

Andrew: Not necessary. And you mentioned belaying and the rope. I remember this word from when I climbed as a child, but I don't really remember the meaning I know it has something to do with the person who is holding the rope for you, is that correct?

Kassy: Well, there's two types of climbing, there's bouldering and there's rope climbing. So, bouldering you don't need anybody near you. The rocks are not that far off the ground. So, it's more working on your skills, your technique of climbing. But rope climbing, you're attached to a rope and you're climbing a wall vertically, so you're pretty high in the air. And to protect yourself, you have someone on the ground, who's your *belayer*. The belayer is also connected to the rope and their job is to make sure that if you fall off the wall, or if you're done climbing, you've reached the top, then they're going to slowly release the rope and let you back down to the ground.

Andrew: So, you need an activity partner to do this, it sounds like?

Kassy: A lot of gyms do have auto belays where, like it sounds, it's automatic. You don't need a partner but that's only usually a small fraction of the ropes in the gym.

Andrew: Nice. Well, that sounds amazing. I'm glad that you've got into these new activities. How is your climbing skill so far? Like have you made it to the top of any of the courses?

Kassy: Yeah, definitely. I know there's different standards like levels depending on what country or region you're in. I think in the US, they call it like five point. I don't even remember I'm not a huge climber yet. 5.8 to 5.12 maybe or six point anyway. But in Thailand, they have the levels 5A all the way to 6C or something like that. So, I can climb the 5C-6A range which is, you know, it's not too bad. It's solid, novice high level.

Andrew: OK, all of those numbers just went over my head. But I like the summary at the end. Solid novice high level sounds like you're making a good start with your new hobby. Kassy, I have to ask, have you ever seen the Olympic speed climbing events on TV or on YouTube or anything?

Kassy: I really haven't watched them much but I would love to now that I'm getting more into the sport, I think it would be really cool to watch some professionals in action.

Andrew: **Your socks are going to be blown** off, Kassy. It is insane. So, it's a race. You have two climbers, climbing at the same time, and it's a sprint, they're like, almost running up the wall to hit the bell at the top of the wall first. So, whoever hits the bell first, rings the bell first, is the winner. And they don't even look like people. They look like climbing monkeys or something the way that they can climb so quickly is just absolutely incredible. So, I definitely think once you see that maybe you'll feel inspired or motivated to climb even more.

Kassy: Sounds good. Will do.

Andrew: And another recommendation that I have about climbing is there's this documentary movie called *Free Solo*. Have you heard of this movie, *Free Solo*?

Kassy: I haven't watched it. But yes, I've heard of it.

Andrew: Yeah, so there's a climber an American climber. His name is Alex... something. I can't remember his last name. Alex Honnin? (*His actual last name is Honnold*) I want to say, but I may have that incorrect. I'm sorry if I'm mispronouncing his name. But this climber is **notorious** for climbing the world's most dangerous mountains outside. So, he's on cliffs and his special characteristic is that he doesn't use a rope.

Kassy: Crazy.

Andrew: So, he does all of these with no rope and watching that movie I felt like I was **on the verge of having a heart attack** the whole time. So nervous, and just panicked for him that he was going to lose his grip and fall off the mountain and die. But yeah, spoiler alert, he's OK.

Kassy: That's good.

Andrew: Well, Kassy, thanks for catching us up on these new hobbies. I'm glad that you're keeping yourself busy in your new Thai life.

Kassy: Yes, it's been a really great adventure so far.

Andrew: That's it for now but we'll be back soon with another brand-new episode, and we'll talk to you all then. Goodbye!

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

If I recall correctly Phrase

If I recall correctly is a phrase used when you are not certain about something you are trying to remember. You can use this expression when you think that something you remember is correct, but you're not 100% positive, and you want to express this uncertainty.

In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **if I recall correctly** when asking Kassy if they have already talked about some of her hobbies before. This means he is not 100% sure if they had talked about her hobbies, but he thinks that they had.

A variation of this expression is *if I remember correctly*. Both variations can be used at the beginning or at the end of a sentence.

Here are a couple more examples with **if I recall correctly**:

Police officer: Good morning, Mr. Smith. We're just going to ask you a couple of questions if that's OK. Did you see your neighbor coming back home last night?

Mr. Smith: Yes. I woke up because I heard a strange noise. I looked out my window and saw her walking to her front door. I went back to bed after that.

Police officer: Can you remember what time it happened?

Mr. Smith: I'm not sure. I think it was around 2am, **if I recall correctly**.

Laura: Hey, do you have any plans for the weekend?

Rob: Not really. Why?

Laura: So, there's a local music festival beginning on Saturday and some guys from work are going. There're going to be a lot of country bands there. **If I recall correctly**, you're into that kind of music, right? So, I thought you'd like to go, too.

Rob: I love country music! I'll be happy to go. Thanks!

To get where [someone] is coming from Idiom

In this episode, Kassy shares that it was hard for her to exercise with a mask on. In response to this, Andrew says, “I totally **get where you’re coming from.**” **To get where [someone] is coming from** is an expression you would use to talk about the reason for someone’s point of view or the way they feel. What Andrew means is that he understands why it was hard for Kassy to exercise with a mask on. The verb “to get” in this example means “to understand”.

You can also use this expression when you want to politely disagree with a person. For example, you can say “I **get where you’re coming from**, but I have a different opinion.” It’s a good way to express disagreement without being rude.

This expression is also used with a few different verbs. You might hear I *understand where you’re coming from*, I *see where you’re coming from*, or I *know where you’re coming from*. All of these versions indicate understanding of the other persons comments or arguments.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get where [someone] is coming from**:

Hank: It’s good to be back in the office, don’t you think?

Jade: Absolutely. I didn’t enjoy working from home at all! It was really hard with all the distractions around the house. I’m just not that disciplined, I guess.

Hank: I totally **understand where you’re coming from.** I felt the same way, it was a real challenge for me to get the work done. And I felt so lonely, I missed having people around. I definitely prefer working in the office!

Bridget: I’ve got amazing news! We bought a house!

Darren: Congratulations! So where are you going to live now?

Bridget: It’s a small cottage in the village where my parents live. I’ve always wanted to have a house there too. I love the peace and quiet of that area, it’s so relaxing.

Darren: I **see where you’re coming from**, but I don’t think I could live anywhere but the city. I grew up in a big city and I actually enjoy how loud and busy it is.

To have a hard time [doing something] Idiom

To have a hard time [doing something] means to experience difficulty when performing a task. In this episode, Kassy talks about calluses and asks Andrew to describe them, because **she's having a hard time describing them**. That means she's having difficulty trying to explain what a callus is.

When someone has a **hard time [doing something]**, they are having trouble, or struggling with it. They are trying hard to do something, but they are not able to do it. For example, someone might **have a hard time understanding English grammar**. That means that they are trying to understand the rules of English grammar, but it's too difficult for them.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have a hard time [doing something]**:

Darryl: Go! No! Ah, come on!

Pam: What's all that noise? What are you doing?

Darryl: I'm watching the game, and my team just lost!

Pam: I see. But do you have to be so loud? I'm **having a hard time concentrating** on my essay, and I have to finish it today.

Darryl: Oh. Sorry. Of course. I'll be quiet. The match is over anyway.

Luke: Hey! What's wrong? You look upset.

Susan: It's my daughter.

Luke: What did she do?

Susan: I just got a call from her school. She wasn't there today! And it's not the first time she's been absent. I don't know what to do, I've been **having a hard time talking to her** these days.

Luke: Teenagers! Do you remember yourself at that age? I had problems with my parents too. It's normal, I guess. It will be easier when she gets a bit older.

To blow [one's] socks off

Idiom, informal

To blow [one's] socks off means to really impress or amaze someone. When **something blows your socks off**, it has a very strong positive effect on you.

In this episode, Andrew recommends that Kassy watch Olympic speed climbing videos. He says, "**Your socks are going to be blown off.**" He means that she is going to be very impressed by what is in those videos.

This expression can be used in both the active and the passive voice. That is, something can blow your socks off (active) or your socks can be blown off by something (passive). A similar idiom also used is *to knock [one's] socks off*.

Here are a couple more examples with **to blow [one's] socks off**:

Billy: Hey Holly! Good to see you again.

Holly: You too, Billy.

Billy: I love your tan!

Holly: Thanks! My husband and I spent a month in Italy. It was amazing! I loved everything about that country: the views, the language, the people. And especially the food! It just **blew my socks off**. Have you been to Italy?

Billy: I haven't, but I really want to!

Ellie: Is this your video game collection? Can I take a look?

Mike: It's my brother's, but sure.

Ellie: Oh, I know this one! Have you played it?

Mike: I don't really have time to play these days, to be honest.

Ellie: You should try it, it's unreal! It has the most impressive game graphics I've ever seen. Trust me, it's going to **knock your socks off!**

Mike: Okay, I'll check it out!

Notorious Adjective

Notorious means a person, place or thing widely known for a particular reason, and typically not a very good reason. In this episode, Andrew mentions a documentary movie about a climber who is **notorious** for climbing the world's most dangerous mountains free solo—alone and without a rope. That means this climber is known for his free solo climbing. This climbing style is criticized by a lot of people for being too risky. It can very easily cause the climbers death, and that's why it's not very positive to be known for participating in this dangerous sport.

The adjective **notorious** is used to describe something that is famous, but not in a good way. For example, a café can be **notorious** for its overpriced food, or a shoe company can be **notorious** for their low-quality shoes.

Here are a couple more examples with **notorious**:

Rory: Do you want to see some pictures from my trip to Thailand?

Emily: Sure. Wow, this place is beautiful! Wait, what is that strange looking thing?

Rory: It's a durian fruit. It's actually very tasty.

Emily: I can't believe you ate that! Isn't it **notorious** for having the worst smell in the world?

Rory: I have to say it did smell terrible. But the taste was nice!

Thomas: Is everything okay? You look nervous.

Celia: I'm participating in a school competition today. And I just found out that Mr. Berry is going to be one of the judges.

Thomas: I know him! He's **notorious** for asking the trickiest questions.

Celia: Yeah, exactly.

Thomas: Don't worry. You can do this!

To be on the verge of [something] Idiom

To be on the verge of [something] means to be very close to doing or experiencing something. The word “verge” means edge. If someone is **on the verge of [something]**, it means they’re about to do something, or something is about to happen to them. It might not actually happen, but it’s in the process of being complete.

In this episode, Andrew tells Kassy about *Free Solo*, the 2018 movie. He says that he felt like he was **on the verge of having a heart attack** while watching it. He was so nervous that he felt like he was very close to having a heart attack. “Having a heart attack” in this case doesn’t mean that he felt like he might actually suffer a medical emergency; it’s an idiomatic expression we use to exaggerate how shocked or frightened we feel.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be on the verge of [something]**:

Secretary: Here are the dossiers you were looking for.

Detective: Thank you.

Secretary: Sir, it’s 7:30. Everyone left already.

Detective: I think I’ll stay for a while. I’m working on this robbery case and I think I know who the thief is. I think I might **be on the verge of solving it!**

Secretary: Okay. I’ll leave the keys on my desk then.

Kelly: Look, is that your roommate James? He’s in the newspaper!

Ryan: It is him! I can’t believe he’s still in business!

Kelly: Oh, really? Why?

Ryan: Last time I talked to him he was in real trouble. He lost a lot of money, and his company was **on the verge of bankruptcy**.

Kelly: The article says he’s made a fortune selling cars.

Ryan: I guess he didn’t give up. Good for him!

Quiz

1. Which of the following does NOT mean “I understand why you think this way”?

- a) I know where you’re coming from
- b) I get where you’re coming from
- c) I take where you’re coming from
- d) I see where you’re coming from

2. True or false? If you have a hard time doing something, you do it easily.

- a) True
- b) False

3. If something impresses you greatly, it _____.

- a) blocks your socks off
- b) wows your socks off
- c) flows your socks off
- d) blows your socks off

4. Which of the following means famous for a bad reason?

- a) notorious
- b) noticed
- c) noted
- d) notary

5. If a person is close to bankruptcy, they are _____.

- a) of the verge on bankruptcy
- b) over the verge of bankruptcy
- c) the verge from bankruptcy
- d) on the verge of bankruptcy

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Are there any hobbies you've picked up lately? Any hobbies you would like to pick up?
2. What do you think of rock climbing? Would you be interested in trying rock climbing yourself?
3. Describe a moment when you had a hard time doing something. What happened?
4. Describe a time when your socks were blown off. What happened?
5. What is a person or a place that you would describe as notorious? Why is it notorious?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Kassy White

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Kevin Moorehouse

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Aline Morozova

English editor: Edden Yohanes

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Karolina Grabowska (Pexels.com)