

They Studied Happiness for 80 Years | How to Live a Good Life, Part 1

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

15 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

to chase an opportunity

DEF

To work persistently to obtain a chance, goal or professional opening.

Chase is metaphorical here and suggests active, repeated effort rather than simply waiting for an opportunity.

Julia had been chasing the live interview for eight months.

He spent weeks chasing an opportunity to present his idea.

2

to pick up the phone

DEF

To take your phone in order to call or message someone; it can also mean to answer a call.

The context decides whether pick up means physically taking the phone or answering it. In this episode, it marks the first small action toward connection.

Julia picked up her phone to share the good news.

If you feel lonely, pick up the phone and call someone you trust.

3

to follow someone over time

DEF

To observe or study the same person repeatedly during a long period.

In research, follow does not mean physically walking behind someone. It means collecting information about the same participants at different points in their lives.

The researchers followed the participants over their whole lives.

The study follows new parents over a period of five years.

4

to take part

DEF

To participate in an activity, event, project or study.

Take part is followed by in: take part in a study. It is neutral and common in both spoken and written English.

Seven hundred and twenty-four people agreed to take part in the study.

Would you like to take part in our community event?



5

to keep track of something

DEF

To continue recording, monitoring or staying informed about something as it changes.

Use keep track of plus a noun. Lose track of has the opposite meaning: to stop knowing the position, progress or amount.

The researchers kept track of every job, illness and divorce.

I use a notebook to keep track of my weekly goals.

6

the starting line

DEF

The conditions or advantages a person has at the beginning of a process or of life.

This is a race metaphor. It acknowledges that people do not begin with equal money, health, safety or opportunity.

The participants had very different starting lines.

Talent matters, but your starting line also affects the journey.

7

a recurring pattern

DEF

A repeated tendency or result that appears in different situations or over time.

Pattern is more cautious than rule or proof: it describes something observed repeatedly without claiming that it happens in every case.

The same pattern kept appearing across eighty years of data.

We noticed a recurring pattern in the customer feedback.

8

the foundations of something

DEF

The basic principles, relationships or structures that support everything else.

This metaphor comes from a building: foundations are mostly unseen, but the whole structure depends on them. It is usually plural in this abstract sense.

Reliable relationships are among the foundations of a good life.

Trust is one of the foundations of effective teamwork.

9

the postponed life

DEF

A way of living in which meaningful relationships or experiences are repeatedly delayed until some imagined calmer future.

This is a memorable metaphor rather than a fixed everyday idiom. It names the habit of saying I will live properly when work is over or life settles down.

The postponed life begins with promises such as, 'I will call when this project is over.'

She realised she had been postponing joy until after her next promotion.

10

to put something off

DEF

To delay doing something until a later time.

A very common separable phrasal verb: put off the call or put it off, never put off it. It often suggests avoidance or repeated delay.

Daniel kept putting off the call to his sister.

Do not put the difficult conversation off for another month.



11

to take someone for granted

DEF

To stop appreciating a person because you assume they will always be available or supportive.

It usually carries criticism or regret. It does not mean take someone as a fact; the natural translation must express a lack of appreciation.

We often put off the people we take for granted.

I never want to take your patience and support for granted.

12

to lose touch with someone

DEF

To stop communicating regularly with someone and gradually know less about each other's lives.

It often describes a gradual drift without a fight. Lose touch with is different from lose contact information, although the results can be similar.

Daniel slowly lost touch with his university friend.

We lost touch after school, but I still think about her.

13

to catch up with someone

DEF

To talk with someone and share what has happened since you last spoke.

In this social meaning, catch up with does not mean reach someone who is ahead. Common invitations include Can we catch up? and Let's catch up over coffee.

Can we catch up this week?

I caught up with an old colleague over lunch.

14

to make room for someone or something

DEF

To create enough physical, emotional or practical space for a person, idea or activity.

The expression can be literal, but it is metaphorical in the episode: listening creates space for another person's experience instead of dominating the conversation.

Reconnecting means making room for the other person's news.

We need to make room in the schedule for rest.

15

to be there for someone

DEF

To be available to support, listen to or help someone when they need you.

There is not mainly about physical location. The expression describes reliable emotional or practical support.

The episode asks, 'Who am I there for?'

She was there for me throughout a difficult year.

